

# THE VOICE OF MORGAN COUNTY



*Keeping you informed / Telling untold stories*



Postal  
Customer

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
DECATUR AL  
PERMIT #869

MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSION

June 2015

Volume 3, No. 3

## Parents to be accountable for school truancy

*Officials seek to  
alleviate absences*

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

School systems throughout Morgan County could see a decline in truancy next school term as officials are clamping down on parents, making them responsible for getting their children to school.

Morgan County Juvenile Court began a revised truancy program in January. "Of all the complaints we receive in juvenile court truancy has been number one," said program coordinator Jon Laidley. "Truancy sends up a flag that there is a real problem in the home."

The number of absences before court action is taken varies. After students age 12 and under accumulate five unexcused absences juvenile officials will contact parents for a meeting; and for those 13 and over parents and students will be called for a conference.

After seven unexcused absences warrants are issued for parents charging them with violation of the state's parental responsibility law, which is a misdemeanor.

Presiding District Court Judge Shelly Waters holds court every month for adults.

They're given the options to enter a plea of guilty or one of not guilty and go before the judge, or to Morgan County System of Services to complete a program that includes juvenile officials monitoring the child's attendance.

If successful, and the child stays in school, with no unexcused absences, the case against the parent would be dismissed, Chief Probation Officer Jeff Simmons said.

If excessive absenteeism continues the parents could face jail time.

They will go before the judge.

Please see Truancy, page 7

## Your Commissioner at work *Shadowing District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher*



*District 3 Commissioner Stisher helps a resident unload a truckload of castaway items he brought to the old District 3 shop for disposal during the county's annual spring cleanup in April.*

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

On a drive through Southern Morgan County you will likely see District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher out of his office working throughout the area, which includes two towns and about 15 communities.

District 3 sprawls 320 miles. You see an abundance of poultry farms with fancy chicken houses, and a lot of cattle farms as well.

"It's a very rural, diverse district," he said. "We've still got a lot of agriculture. The

district has its mountains and its valleys. I have fought snowstorms on the east and west in the higher elevations and floodwaters down in the valleys during the same day because of the extreme difference in temperatures."

A four-term commissioner, Stisher's day begins at 6 a.m., the time his employees begin work at the county shop on Buster Road in Falkville.

For decades he ran shop in a barn-like facility established by Leon Nelson, a former commissioner. The county bought

and renovated the current building a year ago.

Stisher spends only a short period of time in his office before going out to check on and if needed, help with various projects on which employees are working.

"That's looking real good," he told a crew of his employees, who were working on a renovation project at Falkville High School in April.

From there, he went to check on a paving project.

Please see Stisher, page 8

## Keeney retiring After 20 years with commission

*Wore multiple HR hats*

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

When employees get hired to work for Morgan County they were required to go by Payroll/Benefits Officer Marsha Keeney's office before beginning their duties.

There, Keeney conducted human resources orientation with them, explaining details of documents she gave them to sign for record keeping and others in a packet for them to keep.

After 20 years of employment in the County Commission office, Keeney has retired.

"I'm going to spend time with my children and grandchildren, work in my yard and volunteer more with Pamela Bolding at the Neighborhood Christian Center and Leigh Littrell at Refuge of

Please see Keeney, page 6

## INSIDE

Senior Citizens

Spring Fling,

Pages 10, 11



Scanning court records completed, Page 6

Beware of online scams, Page 7

Law Enforcement Memorial Day, Page 5

Sheriff's rodeo, pages 3,4

# Chamber Corner

## Strong relationship with Morgan County opens door for opportunities

### *Commission involvement a plus*

By Executive Director  
John Seymour

The Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce relies heavily on our partnerships with other organizations and governing bodies. We count our relationship with the Morgan County Commission as one of our stronger bonds and we are thankful for the collaboration and work being done for the benefit of the community.

Each year, the County sends representatives on our annual public policy trips to the Alabama Legislature in Montgomery and to meet with federal leaders in Washington, D.C. During the past several years, Chairman Ray Long has attended, and it adds tremendous strength and prestige to the group when our state and federal elected officials see the unified effort between private sector businesses and public officials.

The entire process begins each fall when the Chamber invites members and elected officials to meet and develop a legislative agenda focusing on local, state and federal issues. These agendas are delivered by hand to our leadership in Montgomery and Washington.

We also host the annual State of the County breakfast. This event is generally held in the spring and more than 200 attend each year. At this event, the chairman presents to the business community an update of activities in each of the Morgan County districts, an overall report of the state of the county and a financial “snapshot” of county government. This access is another example of the Chamber helping foster the relationship between local business and government. Each must rely on the other to make this a healthy business and community environment.

While not as publicized or recognized, several other programs are ongoing initiatives partnering with the County – but just as important to building a stronger community. Programs such as Partners-in- Education, Endless Opportunities, and our Leadership program series (Equip, Edge, Experience and Excellence) provide development opportunities to residents from eighth grade through adulthood. These programs are available to citizens throughout Morgan County and all schools



*John Seymour*

within our county lines.

Many, many other opportunities are available and made possible because of the strong partnership we have with Morgan County and the Morgan County Commission. We invite you to learn more by contacting a member of the Commission or the Chamber of Commerce. After all, we are YOUR Chamber!

***John Seymour is the president and CEO of the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber. He has served in the role since coming to Decatur in 1991. He can be reached at john@dcc.org.***



***Morgan County Engineer Greg Bodley, left, holds plaque after being named County Engineer of the Year by the Association of County Engineers of Alabama. Awards Chairman Dan Dahlke, right presented the plaque to Bodley.***

## Morgan County Engineer Greg Bodley receives high honor from ACEA

### ***Named County Engineer of the Year***

For years the Morgan County Commission has called Engineer Greg Bodley the best in the state, and now others have added accolades.

A group of Bodley’s peers, who make up the Association of County Engineers of Alabama chose him County Engineer of the Year during a conference in May.

“Counties do a tremendous job taking care of more than 59,000 miles of roads and 8,600 bridges throughout the state, often with very limited resources, ACEA President John Bedford said. “This association is proud to be able to highlight the outstanding work of our members.”

When money is made available for road and bridge projects Bodley has hastened to the drawing board to prepare necessary packets required to get the funding.

Bodley has been the county’s engineer since 1997 when the county

started replacing bridges. Then, in 2000 Bodley led the way in getting GARVEE funds, which he said accelerated bridge replacements.

The funding, also known as the Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle program bonds, was used for road and bridge projects prioritized by urgent need.

More recently, Bodley put together a package to submit for funding through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program, which yielded \$11.9 million of a \$19.1 million allotment for the county. The remainder went to municipalities throughout the county.

“Greg has done an outstanding job for Morgan County,” said Chairman Ray Long. “We are extremely proud of him receiving the award. Getting honored by peers like that speaks volumes. He’s highly respected by this commission and across the state.”

# Roping, bull riding... at the sheriff's RODEO

*Fifth annual rodeos lure  
hundreds, fun time for all*

Roping, bull riding, glitz and glam lured hundreds to Morgan County Sheriff Ana Franklin's fifth annual rodeo events at Celebration Arena in April.

The Special Needs Rodeo on April 9<sup>th</sup> was indeed special for the children and adults who watched them participate.

"This is the best day of the rodeo," said Franklin. "We had approximately 1,090 guests at the arena. This day was a huge success with face painting, mechanical bull riding, a dunking booth, hay rides, buggy rides, petting zoos, bowling, photo booth pictures and the list goes on and on. We also had the mini rodeo that is put on for the children, which they all enjoy so much. We can't wait until next year."

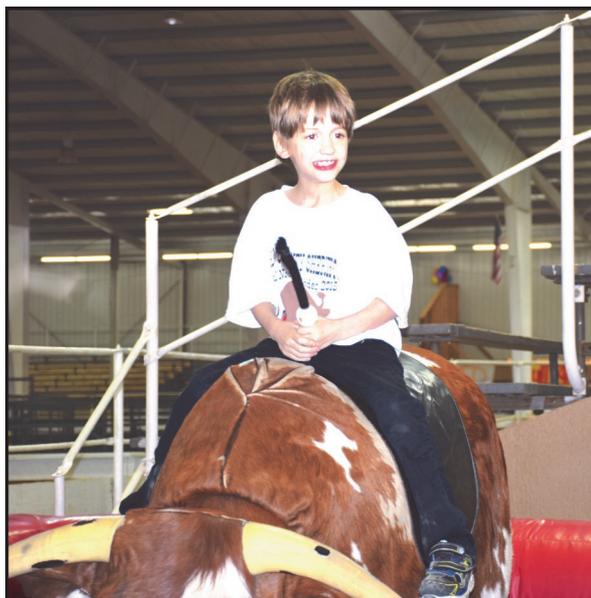
The rodeo was held April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

"Both nights were packed full and filled with family fun," the sheriff said. "We had more vendors this year than ever before. There were door prizes, raffle ticket sales and a constant flow of games for kids and adults. We want to thank

Please see Rodeo, page 4

## Scenes from Special Needs Rodeo

*(Please see more photos on page 4)*



# Rodeo

Continued from page 3

Bo Campbell of the Professional Cowboys Association, along with our sponsors for helping make our rodeo a success. "We couldn't have done it without our volunteers and sponsors," Franklin said.

The rodeo kicked off at this year's first Third Friday in downtown Decatur with a street dance. A rodeo parade was held April 4<sup>th</sup> with the sheriff's Posse riding through Hartselle. Then, came the glitz and glam of the cowgirls when contestants signed up to compete for rodeo queen.

Katelyn Wright was crowned queen. "Congratulations to all of our beautiful contestants. We hope they'll come again next year," Franklin said. "These events are fun and there's something for everyone. It's great for families."



## Morgan County District Court Judge Charles Langham makes annual trip to celebrate Dr. Seuss with students

Morgan County District Court Judge Charles Langham is a huge supporter of education and he likes to participate in various school activities whenever the opportunity arises.

For seven years now he has celebrated Dr. Seuss Week with elementary students in the Decatur City Schools district. The week is in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday and is celebrated nationally with reading.

Judge Langham made his seventh trip for Dr. Seuss activities to Eva School on March 3. "I read them the readers' oath and talked about what an oath is," Langham said. "I told them that it's a promise to your teacher and

parents that you are going to read all these books. They raised their hands and took the oath. It was a lot of fun and I'm glad to go each year."

The students are successful in their reading endeavors.

"It amazes me how bright and eager to learn these children are," he said. "They have to read so many books and they always exceed their goal."

"These are our future leaders, and we must encourage them to strive to achieve all they can to be excellent in their respective fields that they will choose. Reading is priority for success."



Judge Langham surrounded by children at Somerville Road Elementary School during a Dr. Seuss celebration.

# Badge of Honor

*Attorney General Luther Strange highly esteems men and women in uniform*

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange was the keynote speaker for the local celebration of National Law Enforcement Memorial Day on May 13th in Cotaco Park at the courthouse.

He was introduced by District Attorney Scott Anderson, who said he knows first-hand that the attorney general has a heart for law enforcement.

Strange told the crowd that law enforcement officers are under attack throughout the country and unjustly.

"The vast majority does excellent work for us every day," Strange said. "None of these men and women do the job for the money, and certainly not for the glamour. We should rally behind the men and women who wear the badge. We honor you today and pay respect to the victims and their families. Strange said Morgan's ceremony was one of the most beautiful he's

attended in the state.

Chairman Ray Long presented a proclamation adopted by the County Commission on Tuesday designating today as Law Enforcement Memorial Day in the county; Decatur Mayor Don Kyle presented a proclamation adopted by the City Council.

"We do this every year because we appreciate the job you do," Long told officers from various municipalities and the county. "Without law enforcement this would be a terrible place to live. You don't do it for the pay because it's not where it should be. It's a sacrifice and we appreciate you."

Law enforcement officers and family members of fallen law enforcement officers placed roses in a vase at a monument as retired Decatur Police Lieut. Frank Debuty called roll of the fallen officers.

Debuty told brief stories about incidents that claimed each of the nine officers' lives.

The program concluded with a 21-dove salute, and the release of nine

doves in honor of Morgan County's law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. A 21-gun salute and the playing of taps followed the dove release.

### Fallen Heroes

Officer E. L. Steele—4-28-1905  
Officer William (Bill) A. Baber—7-2-1905  
Officer Jessie Lemuel Jones—11-25-1906  
Deputy Burns Almon—9-10-1927  
Officer Thomas E. Wright—3-26-1930  
Capt. Thomas E. Maxwell—10-4-1962  
Officer Loyd Hays—5-1-1964  
State Trooper David E. Temple—9-13-1979  
Deputy Charles W. Biles—5-21-1985

Please see more photos, page



Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange addresses crowd on Law Enforcement Memorial Day at the courthouse on May 13th.

# Scanning, shredding in circuit clerk's office completed

*Over 2 million documents cleared from shelves*

**By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director**

Four temporary workers have scanned, and a contractor has shredded over 2 million court records in the Morgan County Circuit Clerk's office.

Scanning records began with one person in April 2014 and three more workers came later during the year. They scanned the final documents on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Ella Cauthen, Jan Kalonick, Kenneth Allen and Kathy Allen did the scanning, and Florence-based Lambert's shredded the documents.

"They were phenomenal, said Circuit Clerk Chris Priest. "They have scanned over two million documents. These were all completed cases and it's a step process. After prepping the documents for scanning they had to open

up the cases in an online system to make sure they were the right files. Once they validated the cases they scanned them into the system on a high grade commercial scanner which did 60 pages per minute."

After scanning they electronically filed the cases, but that wasn't completion. "Because we are dealing with court records, before shredding they had to go to a different program to make sure documents had been scanned properly," Priest explained. "They had to be checked twice.

Lambert's shredded documents at the courthouse every two weeks.



**Priest**

The records dated to 1990 and comprised circuit criminal/civil cases; district, domestic relations, child support, and juvenile cases.

The first scanning of district court records was in 2007, and digital is more efficient, Priest said.

"They were old files taking up a lot of space," said Priest. "State law mandates that once we've made it digital the digital copy becomes the official court record. "What's nice is these records are secure online. Those that are confidential cannot be accessed by anyone except those authorized to do so."

Priest added that if anything happened to the courthouse records would not be destroyed because they are digital.

"They're backed up in two locations," he said. They're on

the servers in Montgomery. I would be able to go to another county courthouse if I need to and log in to our records."

The transition to digital records makes it possible for multiple people to view cases at the same time. In the past if someone wanted to view a paper file and a judge had it checked out, the person would have to wait until it was returned, which could be days later.

The change will benefit officials and the general public.



*Jan Kalonick scanning court documents.*

## Keeney

**Continued from page 1**

Grace," Keeney said. "I love helping with the organizations and now I'll have more time to do so."

She says she may even cook more frequently for her husband, Mike Keeney.

She has three daughters, Nikki Wynn, Kate Boschert and Laura Dean, step-daughter Michelle Keeney, and seven grandchildren.

Keeney wore many hats in her line of work. In addition to performing HR duties, she did payroll for more than 400 county employees, kept abreast of employment laws and changes, as well as benefits, which include health/life insurance.

Through continuing education Keeney became a certified public personnel specialist for the human resources field.

"I enjoyed what I did, but it was time to go and pursue some of the things that I've not had time to do," she said. "Over the years I've made a lot of good friends and met a lot of good people. I wish everybody the best in the future."

Chairman Ray Long said Keeney was an excellent employee.

"We will miss Marsha. She did a great job for the county," Long said. "We wish her well on her retirement."

Keeney's immediate plans include vacationing with her family."

"We're looking forward to



*Marsha Keeney in her office before retiring in May.*

having a wonderful time," she said.

"Her last day on the job was May 29<sup>th</sup>.

During her career she worked under three chairmen and several county commissioners.

## Fundraising in Falkville



**Falkville held its first Top Cop fundraiser for Special Olympics on April 24th and raised \$3,358. From left, District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher, Steve Shelton, police officers Keith Pepper, Sgt. Lynn Dean and Police Chief Chris Free.**

## Morgan Coroner member of two state organizations

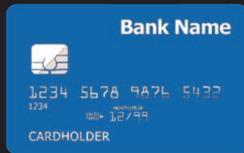
Morgan County Coroner Jeff Chunn was recently elected to the Board of Directors for the Alabama Coroners Association; and subsequently he was appointed to the Alabama Coroners Training Commission, which is a separate entity.

The Coroners Association's goals include elevating the

standards of the coroner's office in each county of the state and promoting unity among coroners and deputy coroners. "I am proud to be associated with the organization and other affiliates," he said.



**Chunn**



# Protect Yourself



## Beware of fake websites designed by scammers

Beware!

Cyber crooks have gone to new levels in their quest to steal identity and get money they did not earn.

One of the latest scams is establishing fake government websites, according to information from Circuit Judge Jennifer Howell.

"I received valuable information from our Information Technology staff in Montgomery," Howell said. "I think it's extremely important for us all to be aware of current internet fraud techniques and scams. Offenders stay abreast of current trends and habits of

internet users and they use that knowledge to attack vulnerable people. The best advice is to stay informed and be proactive to keep yourself, your family and your children safe on the internet."

Officials say the scammers have managed to get prominent display through search engine optimization, which makes the fraudulent sites some of the first to show when you're searching for an agency such as the Social Security Administration.

This is the scenario provided by state IT staff: A victim needs to replace a Social Security card and

decides to search for the agency's website. The search engine, like Google, Yahoo, etc., shows results and the victim automatically clicks on the first result that is displayed. The website appears to be valid with official logos, etc. The victim completes the required information on the form provided and submits the form. Some of the fake websites ask the victim to pay for the service and request a credit card number. Also, they sometimes ask the victim to scan and email a birth certificate, driver's license and other official documents to a specified address.

The scammers then tell the victim to wait a few weeks for processing, and because of the expected waiting period the victim goes unsuspecting. By the time a victim realizes that it was a scam the perpetrators will have used the credit card numerous times as well as have possession of official identifying documents such as a birth certificate.

### Ways to keep from becoming a victim:

1. Rather than using a search engine, type the URL directly into the address bar of your browser, such as <http://www.irs.gov>, or

<http://www.ssa.gov>.

2. If the address is unknown and a search engine is necessary, make sure that the site selected ends with a domain of .gov. A strict process is in place to register a .gov or .mil site. Although fake sites appear similar, they will not end with .gov. Some fake sites will use official looking addresses such as <http://www.ssa.gov.net>. (Notice that it ends with .net)

3. If a website doesn't end with .gov, do basic research based on a listed phone number to make sure it goes to the agency that's shown on the site. If an email address is displayed make sure it is an official email address rather than a free account email from Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.

4. After finding the agency's phone number call and ask a representative for the official website address.

5. Do not respond or click on any advertisements or special offerings that display on websites. Most advertisement and special offers are not genuine on the sites and contain malware or scams.

6. Report any suspicious .gov or .mil sites to IT Security so that the site can be properly verified.

## Truancy

Continued from page 1

"They would pretty much have to tell me why they shouldn't go to jail," Waters said. "If they don't tell us why, we go back and try them."

Students are given an opportunity to make up the absences at SOS.

"To redeem lost SEAT (SOS Evening Attendance Track) time" from school they go to SOS once a week if they agree with the recommendation of the court order," said Laidley. "It's one night a week. If they miss five days of school they have to go to SOS five nights. SOS has two certified teachers and the teacher gets with the school counselor to decide what the students need. If they make good grades, they may need to work on ACT."

Although the truancy program is just four months old, results are impressive.

"We have 15 kids in the program and three have graduated," Laidley said. That's what this is all about. The big thing is the evening school program to make sure students get an education."

Judge Waters is an advocate for education.

"It's got to be frustrating to be 15 years old and in the eighth grade," Waters said. These children have so much potential and to give them this time is what they need. They are going to have options that were otherwise off limits to them. "One of the largest issues is parents not emphasizing the need for higher education because they didn't have to have it to get a job, but these

children do."

### Help with academics

Decatur, Morgan County and Hartselle school districts participate in the truancy program.

Simmons, Laidley and Waters praised Mary Copeland, lead teacher for the SOS program for working with the students.

"Ms. Copeland sets goals and she expects them to reach them," Simmons said. "She does an outstanding job of helping them and encouraging them to succeed."

Copeland is proud of the children's accomplishments.

"There are a lot of positive results," Copeland said. "I have one student who attended Horizon and had three classes she was not going to have time to finish at the school. She completed all of her classes and graduated."

The student was determined to achieve her goal. In order to do that she voluntarily went to SOS an extra evening each week Copeland said.

Copeland identified problems in the children's lives.

"I think for some of them it's the home situation, and for some it's just poor choices," Copeland said. "This (program) lets them see that there are consequences for their choices. We talk about how they can turn their situations around and make it a positive thing. We've had 15 students and eight of them have had classes they didn't pass, but they are given an opportunity to get credits while they're here and I believe most of them will succeed."

Overall, Morgan officials are optimistic about the program.

### About

### The Voice of

### Morgan County

*The Voice of Morgan County* is published quarterly and mailed to 40,000 homes. It is a product of the County Commission and no portion of it may be re-produced. This is the third edition of the third volume.

The publication is produced solely by Communications/Community Relations Director Sheryl Marsh.

Please be sure to view community videos on our website by going to [www.co.morgan.al.us](http://www.co.morgan.al.us) There, click on county departments, then select Communications/Community Relations and click on multimedia.

### Rx cards still available

The Morgan County Commission still has free Rx discount cards for county residents. Collectively, the cards have resulted in more than \$200,000 in savings for people who have used them.

To get your card please go to our website: [www.co.morgan.al.us](http://www.co.morgan.al.us) and click on Coast to Coast to request one. We will mail it to you. There are no eligibility requirements.



# Stisher

Continued from page 1

Prior to those rounds, Stisher assisted a resident with unloading old castaway items in a dump area behind his old county shop at the end of the annual spring cleanup week.

"It's all about the people we serve and that's why we're here," he said. "We assist our residents any way we can."

During a tour through the various communities, the commissioner points to landmarks, noting the significance of each. "That was once a community store, and that used to be one, too," he said, pointing to two vacant structures at the intersection of County Highway 55 and Wilhite Road. "The property was donated to the county and we have great future plans for it."

Before being elected in 1996 Stisher served as foreman of the District 3 shop under the late Commissioner Joe Summerford.

Since 1999 Stisher worked with the county's engineering department to replace 15 bridges that were in poor condition. One on Wilhite Road was replaced last year in July.

Dotted with industrial operations like rock quarries, a Jim 'N Nick's pork processing plant and a few others. Stisher is working

on future growth.

"Over the past four years we've really been aggressive in preparing for industrial growth," he said. "We have been talking with three companies that cannot be disclosed at this time, and we're excited about one of them. We are working diligently on the other two. We have seen industrial opportunities. CSX has put in a rail spur to add more rail cars, which transport grain to the poultry industry in the area. The spur gives more service capabilities and makes it attractive for future growth. We work with our towns on infrastructure such as water lines, and we are working with the state on a grant to assist with an industrial road to accommodate tractor-trailer traffic to industries."

Helping schools is huge with Stisher.

"The county has a huge footprint in Eva School's campus," Stisher said. "We built the pad for the vocational building and constructed a loop road to keep parents from having to extend out to Highway 55 when picking up their children. We helped take down the old school, also. We're involved with the county schools and they know we are always here to help with what-

ever project they have planned."

Also, Stisher's crew helped with construction of a field house, and rebuilding a football field at Falkville High; and he provides assistance for the towns of Eva and Falkville.

"The towns rely on us heavily for certain projects and we are more than happy to assist them. It's all about Morgan County as a whole," he said.

Eva Mayor Gary Livingston said Stisher consistently comes through for all the communities in the district.

"Although he's got a lot of road miles he has to take care of and he has a limited budget, he helps us out a great deal," Livingston said. "He usually comes out and gets a bunch of projects done at one time, and then he'll go from community to community. He's a good commissioner, and he's level-headed. He looks at things in a lot of different directions and that helps on down the road."

Falkville Mayor Bob Ramey echoed the praise for Stisher.

"In my personal opinion he's great, and as far as helping the town he's better than that," Ramey said. "Since I've been Mayor I have had the opportunity to work with him a whole lot. He does a great job for the town

and for the people in his district. He helped with a drainage project for the town. He put in drain lines and worked with Falkville off and on for about two years. He put a lot into that project and he put a lot of extra work in for the town itself. He re-did the intersection at Second Street and Fifth Avenue to accommodate traffic to Jack McCaig Park and Eva School. I think he does a

very good job. He's all about his district and he'll do anything to help."

Although Stisher's nine employees work 40-hour work weeks, his duties as commissioner never end.

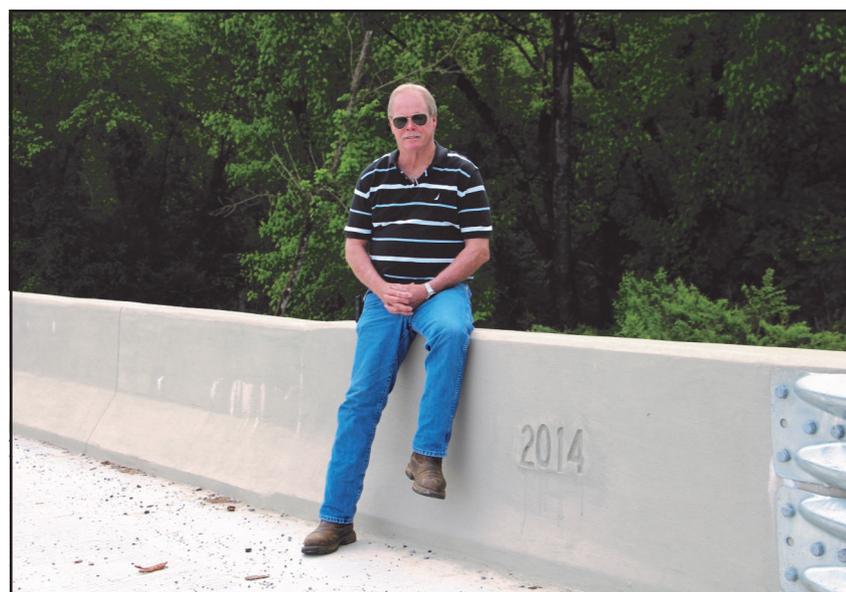
"I get phone calls from residents, and dispatch," said Stisher. "If I need to go out to respond to a call I do that as well. I do not shift my responsibilities. If I'm out on business trips for the county I have a foreman,

who responds in my absence. We've got an excellent crew working that does a great job."

Stisher's job is not limited to the district he represents.

Twice each month he attends County Commission meetings where he and other commissioners make decisions for the public. Also, he and others meet

Continued on page 9



Top, Stisher poses on the new Wilhite Road bridge that was completed last year. Bottom left, Stisher gets update from shop employees on progress with project at Falkville High School. Bottom right, Stisher stands in his office under mantle that holds photos of all former District 3 commissioners.

Continued from page 8

during the summer to establish the county's fiscal budget for departments and for overall operations.

He represents the county on numerous boards, including The Convention and Business Bureau, Princess Theater Board of Directors, Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, the Legislative Committee of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, for which he serves on the nominating committee

for ACCA officers, the Alabama Cattlemen Association/Morgan County Chapter, and he's upcoming president of the Association of Tennessee Valley Governments.

As a veteran commissioner Stisher completed all the commissioner colleges and all courses of governmental training for county com-

missioners.

"Being a commissioner is not just a job," he said. "It's about making a difference in the everyday lives of the people we serve. I grasp every opportunity to be an effective leader and the boards on which I serve help me be able to do that."

District 3 Bridge Replacements	Date	Cost
Crow Bridge	Nov. 4, 1999	\$490,519.60
Rock Creek Road Bridge	Nov. 6, 2001	\$540,949.75
Lawrence Cove Road Bridge	June 4, 2002	\$149,846.85
Gandys Cove Road Bridge	June 20, 2002	\$117,658.83
Gum Pond Road	July 11, 2003	\$5392,425.48
East Lacon Road	July 11, 2003	\$105,508

District 3 Communities	Towns
Leesdale	Falkville
Massey	Eva
McGlathery Town	
Cole Springs	
Friendship	
Gandy's Cove	
Oden Ridge	
Lawrence Cove	
Welcome Falls	
Gum Pond	
Mill Creek	
Lebanon	
Ebenezer	
Andrews Chapel	
Rock Creek	



Stisher in front of his county shop on Buster Road in Falkville.

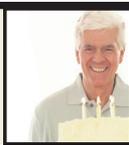


### State Champs honored

The Morgan County Commission honored two local champion sports teams on Tuesday by adopting a resolution commending them on their state wins. Left, District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher presents a plaque to the Falkville High School Boys Track Team for winning the state 2A championship. Coach Jace Wilmon received the plaque. Right, District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest presented a plaque to Hartselle High School Golf Coach Chad Gladden for his team winning the state 6A championship. Chairman Ray Long read both resolutions the commission adopted to honor the teams.



# Senior Living



## Eva Spring Fling

*Seniors having fun!*



**By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director**

Safety pins on a jacket made a pin-striped suit for a senior male model. Spoons, forks, knives and cups were placed on another coat for a male's dinner jacket.

A decorated stuffed bear made a "bare-back" dress for one of the female models, and another lady sported supplies for bathing on her garment, which was called a bathing suit.

The Eva Senior Citizen Center's Spring Fling showcased the creativity of residents who attend the facility daily for fun, games and lunch.

Linda Bush was MC for the event and started the program with singing old songs. She went around the room working the crowd, encouraging them to sing along.

Then, came time for the senior models to hit the runway in fashions they created.

Greta Eady, manager of the Eva center, was first in the "bathing suit", that had items such as soap, bath cloth and toothpaste placed on back of the housecoat she wore.

Dean Couch wore a can-can skirt that had cans around the hem. She also wore the dress that had the decorated bear on it and was called a "bare back" dress.



Please see **Seniors**, page 11



# Seniors

Continued from page 10

Of course, a fashion show of this sort wouldn't be complete without hats.

Another model wore a hat that held pill and vitamin bottles and it was called a pillbox hat.

A gentleman wore a crayon covered jacket called a "coat of many colors" and his accessory was a plastic container labeled a "10-gallon" hat.

"This is just a lot of fun," Couch said.

The seniors' laughter was proof that they shared Couch's sentiment.

MCATS/Commission on Aging Director Debra Rains said the event was one of the best.

"I just love how creative they are," Rains said. "This was one of our better events, with all the fun outfits they created reminiscent of the past, and they're all having a good time."



*Senior models dressed in their creative fashions at Eva's Spring Fling.*



*Above, left, pin-striped jacket with bow tie; right, dinner jacket. Below, left, the usual card games in session, and right, quilting under way during Spring Fling.*



# Roads, school projects and mowing grass underway in districts

*Maintenance for county roads, rights-of-way never ends*

**By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director**

In addition to various road projects and in-kind service for other entities county commissioners have crews out cutting grass and trimming trees in their respective districts. “We’re still helping with school projects for the (Morgan County) Board of Education, which includes Priceville High School, the administration and maintenance buildings,

District 1 Commissioner Jeff Clark said. “And, we plan to finish improvements at the intersection of Bethel and East River roads.”

District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest has several projects going on as well. Projects include resurfacing common areas; walking track and parking lot at West Park and prepping roads for resurfacing next year.

District 4 Commissioner Greg Abercrombie is looking forward to

opening Brindlee Mountain Ball Park and he has crews working on roads.

Grass cutting is priority for all districts.

“We’ve just started the second round of mowing,” said Clark. “We’ve been over every area twice.”

District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher has crews patching, chip sealing and mowing.

Soon, the commissioners and



Clark



Vest

spend a lot of time at the courthouse in meetings.



Stisher



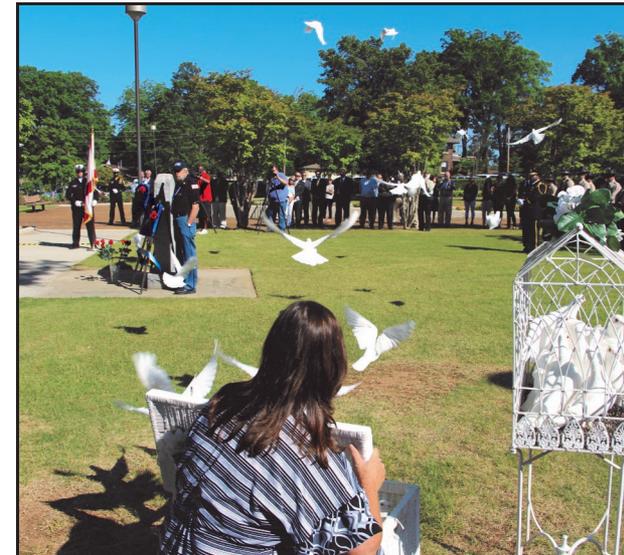
Abercrombie

Chairman Ray Long will begin the budgeting process for fiscal 2016. At that time, the commissioners will

# Scenes from law enforcement memorial ceremony



Left, Decatur Mayor Don Kyle, Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange, Sheriff Ana Franklin and Chairman Ray Long. Right, Widow Dot Biles is escorted back to her seat after placing a rose at monument. Below, left, a game warden places a rose at monument; center, law enforcement officers in background and cage holding doves in forefront; right, doves are released in honor of fallen officers.



# Priceville Cruise-In is August 15th

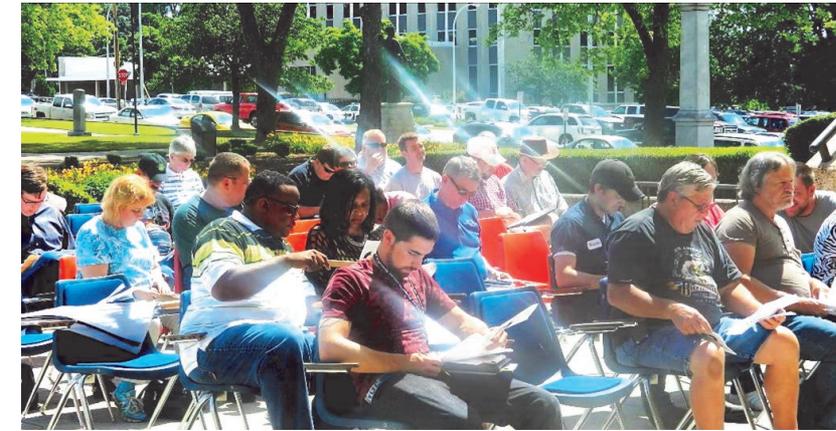
If you're looking for something exciting to add to your summer calendar you should consider Priceville's annual Cruise-In on Aug. 15<sup>th</sup> at Veterans Park.

Natchez Trace Band will provide entertainment, and participants will have

a chance to win a 350 Chevrolet engine. Also, door prizes and a 50/50 raffle will be available for everyone.

The event will be from 6 to 10 p.m.

For additional information please call the Priceville Municipal building at 256-355-5476.



## Property tax auction

Revenue Commissioner Amanda Scott held the county's annual property tax auction in May. All counties in the state are required by law to hold auctions each year for properties for which taxes were not paid.

Morgan County American Legion  
Post 15 Sponsor of this publication



The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization focusing on service to veterans, service members and communities.



Smoke Free Building



**American Legion Auxiliary**

- World's largest women's patriotic service organization.



**Sons of The American Legion**

- Males of eligible parents or grandparents.



**American Legion Riders**

- Supporting schools, veterans, and service members.

**-Meetings 7 PM – The 4th Monday Of Each Month**  
(Except 2nd Monday in May & December)

**-Dancing Every Friday**  
Live Band and Dance Starts at 7 PM.

**-BINGO Every Saturday**  
Guaranteed Thousands in Prizes Each Week.  
Cards Go On Sale at 5 PM - Play Starts at 6 PM.

[allegionpost15.com](http://allegionpost15.com)  
[facebook.com/allegionpost15](https://facebook.com/allegionpost15)

2607 Highway 31 S, Decatur, AL 35603

PH: (256) 353-5501



# ROGERS GROUP INC.

*Building better communities from the ground up*

Sponsor of this publication

# Morgan Bar celebrates Law Day

You see some of the fine work they do when you visit the courthouse.

They've created offices out of space that you never imagined was there.

When finished, each job looks as if the County Commission hired a contractor to do the work.

Others have noticed, and on May 1<sup>st</sup> the Morgan County Bar Association gave each maintenance employee an Award of Merit during a local celebration of National Law Day.

Officials and employees were given an opportunity to nominate employees for the first-time ever Merit Award.

Before announcing the winner of the award Morgan Bar President Gay Maloney told how the courthouse is well maintained and attributed the upkeep to the maintenance staff.

Maloney and County Commission Chairman Ray Long presented the awards to each of the employees. Four Heritage Christian

Academy students received awards and gifts for poster drawings they entered for a contest for Law Day; and former Morgan District Court Judge David Breland received the A.P. Brewer Award.

Members of Austin High School JROTC presented colors.

This year's theme for Law Day was The Magna Carta, which is known also as the Great Charter to the Liberties of England. The document, which is 800 years old, was issued in 1215 so that leaders, specifically King John, could not have arbitrary power, and to make them subject to the laws of the land. It is said to be the inspiration behind this country's forefathers' penning of the U.S. Constitution.

A highlight of the event was Law Bowl where Circuit Judge Jennifer Howell quizzed a panel of three attorneys: Takisha Guster and Britt Cauthen, and Assistant District Attorney Garrick Vickery.

It was a fun time.

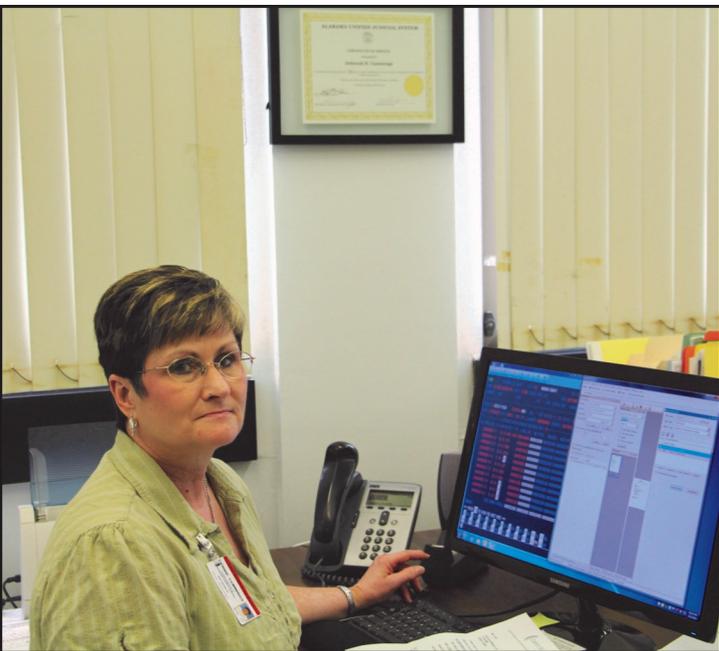


*Above, Morgan probate, district and circuit judges. Below, top left, Judge Jennifer Howell presides over Law Bowl with attorneys Takisha Guster, Britt Cauthen and Assistant District Attorney Garrick Vickery; and right, Austin High School JROTC. Bottom left, members of the Bar and others; and right, Bar President Gay Maloney presents former District Judge David Breland with A.P. Brewer Award.*



*Above, Chairman Ray Long and Morgan Bar President Gay Maloney present merit awards to the courthouse maintenance staff. Below, Attorney Carl Cole presents art contest awards to students of Heritage Christian Academy.*





### Honored for service

Court Specialist III Debbie Cummings celebrated 35 years of employment in the circuit clerk's office in March. Circuit Clerk Chris Priest presented her with a framed certificate and pin from the Administrative Office of Courts in April and held a small celebration before the office opened. Priest said Cummings is an excellent employee who does her job extremely well.

Sponsor of this publication



**DECATUR**  
GASTROENTEROLOGY  
*Your North Alabama GI Care Specialists*

**BHIP**

*Believe Health Is Possible*

**Dr. Jeanette Keith, M.D.**

Decatur Gastroenterology Associates

1103 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, SE  
Decatur, AL 35601  
P. 256.350.0153  
F. 256.350.0156

[www.bhip.us.com](http://www.bhip.us.com)  
**BHIP. Be Healthy. Live Well**  
**Accepting new patients**

Sponsor of this publication

[www.decaturmorganhospital.net](http://www.decaturmorganhospital.net) 



**FOOD** KIDS ACTIVITIES  
FAMILY FUN  
CLASSIC CAR  
CRUISE IN **MUSIC**

FOUNDERS PARK AMPHITHEATER | DOWNTOWN DECATUR

**JUNE 6**

**STARTS 3 PM**  
**ENDS 10 PM**

 Decatur Morgan Hospital

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MEDIA PARTNERS



 **BRIDGES**  
THE ULTIMATE EAGLES EXPERIENCE



# Commission supports Polaris, expecting 500 jobs for residents

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

The County Commission's pledge of a \$300,000 incentive for a new plant that will be built in Limestone County, is an investment for jobs for Morgan County residents.

The commission approved the incentive for the Polaris plant, that's to be constructed in Greenbrier, at its May 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The county's contribution is part of a joint incentive package from state, county and municipal government entities. Decatur is giving \$300,000, also. Athens is contributing \$350,000 and Limestone is giving \$1 million, which will be combined with state contributions for a total incentive package of almost \$80 million for the plant that will build all-terrain vehicles.

The 600,000 square-foot plant will be located in Huntsville's annexed portion of Limestone County and its projected cost is about \$172 million.

Commission Chairman Ray Long is optimistic about jobs for local residents.

"They're going to have about 2,000 jobs and we expect at least 500 for Morgan County residents," Long said. "We're al-

ready seeing benefits from it and the plant isn't even up yet."

Long was referring to Vision Wheel, which recently announced expansion of its facility to become a supplier for Polaris.

An official for Vision Wheel said the expansion would create about 18 jobs for tire and wheel mounting.

Other commissioners shared Long's beliefs about the plant being beneficial to county residents.

"It will be good for Morgan County like the other plants with high paying jobs that many of our residents have had to travel across the river to," said District 4 Commissioner Greg Abercrombie.

"It's a great investment for our people and those in surrounding areas," District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher said.

District 1 Commissioner Jeff Clark and District 2 Commissioner agreed.

The plant is scheduled to open in March 2016. Like any construction, weather plays a role in completion.

The county will pay \$100,000 installments for three years. "We look forward to its opening," said Long

# Community Corrections has new office

Morgan County Community Corrections has moved across the hall from its original location. The courthouse maintenance staff renovated space that once housed district court offices. Maintenance employees created a reception area at the entrance, built restrooms for internal drug screening, and created individual offices for the director

and employees.

"Our maintenance staff saves us thousands of dollars on renovations, which we would otherwise have to pay a contractor," said Chairman Ray Long. "The new offices are nice and will fill a need for Community Corrections." The offices are located on the first floor of the courthouse



*Maintenance Director Wayne Lindley at the entrance of the new Community Corrections office.*



Sponsor of this publication



Understanding You.®

Branch Locations

211 Lee St. NE

1830 Modaus Road SW

1309 Stratford Road SE