

# THE VOICE OF MORGAN COUNTY



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MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSION

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## GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FOR A DAY



Students from four area high schools packed Circuit Judge Steve Haddock's courtroom to participate in Government Day on April 28th.

## Area high school students chosen for Morgan County Government Day at courthouse

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

They were attentive and eager to learn about all aspects of the executive branch of county government and the judicial system.

Juniors and seniors from four high schools in Decatur and Morgan County were chosen for each elected position in the local government operation, and they got to see the inside workings. Some received hands-on experience during Government Day at the courthouse on

April 28<sup>th</sup>.

American Legion Post 15 sponsored and conducted the event, which offers high school students an opportunity to participate in local government.

Americanism Chairwoman Earnestine Doubek coordinated the event, which entailed working with schools and county officials.

The day began in Circuit Judge Steve Haddock's courtroom where a general assembly was held.

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## A special celebration for children

## Final phase of John Mark Stallings playground finished

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

It's a place where all children can play, and it's named for one special child who won't get to play there.— After almost 10 years the John Mark Stallings Special Needs Accessible Playground (SNAP) is finished.

Hundreds gathered at the playground in May to celebrate completion of its final phase.

Keynote speaker for the event was former University of Alabama football coach Gene Stallings, father of John Mark.

He said he'd been to Hartselle



Children had a fun time at the event.

many times before, but this day was extra special.

"My life wouldn't be nearly as rich

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## Judge Langham meets sponsored child on mission

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

A mission trip to Haiti afforded Morgan District Court Judge Charles Langham an opportunity to meet a child he and his wife Sonja have been financially sponsoring for three years. Langham, who is a member of Rotary Club of Decatur Daybreak, traveled with members

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# SNAP

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if I hadn't raised a child with special needs," Stallings said.

Before introducing Stallings, Chairman Ray Long acknowledged the hard work that Robert "Bob" Francis devoted to SNAP.

He said Francis didn't want any praise, and just wanted to blend with the crowd.

"This whole dream came about and it was led by Mr. Francis," Long said. "We're so proud of it."

Senator Author Orr and Hartselle Mayor Bill Smelser each presented Francis with plaques in honor of his work on SNAP.

Francis was urged to speak and he did so briefly.

Gov. Robert Bentley praised Stallings and the community.

"Coach Stallings has done so much for so many people," Bentley said. "When someone had a down-syndrome child he would call them and tell them that God was going to make it alright. I learned a long time ago that the best government is local government. I just want to thank the people of Hartselle because you have good hearts."

Long told the crowd about the services that District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest and District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher provided for SNAP.

Each commissioner assisted with equipment and labor from their district shops.

Circuit Judge Glenn Thompson was mas-



Former Crimson Tide Coach Gene Stallings delivers keynote address for SNAP, named for his son, John Mark Stallings. In top inset, Gov. Robert Bentley arrives with Sen. Arthur Orr and Chairman Ray Long.

ter of ceremony.

Adjacent to Sparkman Civic Center, the playground is the result of municipalities, the County Commission, other entities and individuals combining resources to provide recreation that's focused on special needs children while catering to other kids as well.

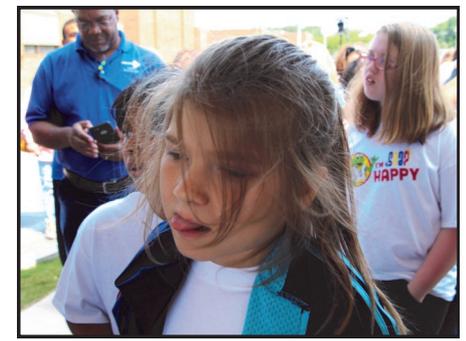
Built in phases, Playground A has an aquatic feature and offers sensory activities, sliding, spinning, swinging, climbing,

social and tactile (touch).

The final phase, Playground B is a ramped, elevated and shaded play area with 18 features, and 7 features at ground level. The equipment is constructed on a colorful, rubberized 'safe fall' surface, Francis said.

The grand opening/ribbon cutting celebrated total completion of the facility.

The children could hardly wait to get on the playgrounds where they laughed and played.



Top, a child enjoying the event. Center, An attendee heads to the ribbon cutting. Beneath, Bob Francis, second from left, a major driving force behind SNAP's development, didn't want praise. He just wanted to be in the crowd.



Hundreds gathered at the playground. In the foreground are members of Hartselle High Chorus. Students came from Decatur, Hartselle and Morgan County school districts.



From left, Chairman Ray Long, District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest, former Alabama Coach Gene Stallings and District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher.

# Commissioners' Report

## All four districts busy with various projects

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

Commissioners are busy clearing rights-of-way, mowing grass and completing capital and road/ bridge projects as summer approaches.

"We are clearing trees off Red Bank Road and the right-of-way for safety," said District 1 Commissioner Jeff Clark. "We're cutting grass and spraying for mosquitos, and we're working with Decatur Utilities to extend the water main on Marsha Avenue."

District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest's employees are busy mowing rights-of-way and rebuilding shoulders on roads that were recently paved.

"The wet winter and spring have contributed to extreme growth of grass and it is making it hard to cut without getting stuck," Vest said. "We ask for understanding as we make our way through the district. We have already completed 259 work orders this calendar year with six driveway culverts to install for new houses this week. Hopefully, this is a positive sign for our local economy."

Also, employees are working on a handicap parking area at Danville High School that's scheduled to be finished close to the beginning of the next school year.

District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher's employees did the pad preparation for storm shelters placed in Eva, one behind a medical clinic on Morgan County 35 and two behind the town's Park and Recreation facility.

"We also scheduled for the connection of utilities for the shelters," Stisher said. "The Town of Eva owns the shelters."

In addition, District 3 employees helped with completion of the Special Needs Assessment Playground in Hartselle.

Other ongoing work in Stisher's district includes bush hogging, clearing timber off Old Highway 31, clearing rights-of-



Clark



Vest



Stisher



Abercrombie

way, patching potholes and mowing grass.

District 4 Commissioner Greg

Abercrombie's employees are putting the finishing touches (striping) on the parking lot of the Lacey's

Spring Senior Center that should

**Please see Commissioners, page 6**



**District 3 employees prepared sites for placement of storm shelters in Eva.**



**Drainage project on Culver Road in District 3**

### Televised County Commission meetings

You may watch County Commission meetings on Saturday on WYAM TV 51 in the 8 a.m. time slot. The commission meeting airs immediately after the Decatur City Council meeting. The commission meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

# Students

Continued from page 1

County Commission Chairman Ray Long welcomed the students, and told them about the executive branch of government.

“We work for and represent you all, your siblings, parents and grandparents...your whole family,” Long told the students. “I’m happy to see so many of you interested in your local government and I encourage you to learn all you can about it.”

Haddock explained the judicial branch to the students.

The judge told them about interesting experiences that led to his career in the legal system, and he encouraged them to do their best in whatever field they chose.

The students paid close attention to Long and Haddock, and applauded their speeches.

After the assembly students were assigned to each elected official: Judges, district attorney, revenue commissioner, license commissioner, probate judge, sheriff, county commissioners and chairman. They shadowed the officials.

The group selected for the County Commission seats participated in a mock meeting. Long and Commissioners Jeff Clark, Randy Vest and Greg Abercrombie coached the student officials as they conducted the meeting.

All 17 students got an opportunity to act in the position for which they were selected.

They did a great job.

After lunch at the American Legion facility, students and officials returned to the courthouse, and a mock trial was held.

District judges Shelly Waters and Charles Langham coached the student judges on how to preside over a trial; and District Attorney Scott Anderson coached the student DAs on prosecuting the mock case. Attorney Kevin Cousta helped student lawyers with their defense.



Circuit Judge Steve Haddock addresses students during a general assembly to begin Government Day.



Above, top left, Chairman Ray Long speaks to students at the general assembly. Top right, and beneath students act as the County Commission in mock meeting. They alternated from a group of 17 students who won the respective offices.

Continued on next page

# Government Day

Continued from page 4

The students did a wonderful job and had fun while doing it.

The junior officials came from Decatur, Austin, Falkville and Danville high schools.

In the past the county had hosted Government Day annually, but due to changes at the American Legion the event had not been held in several years before this year.

Doubek said she was pleased with the event.

“The purpose of the American Legion County Government Day program is to teach students about the importance of county government before they turn 18, so they have the information and confidence necessary to increase the voting numbers at the polls,” said Doubek. The students who participated were enthusiastic and interested in learning about a typical day in the life of a county official. The American Legion Post 15 thanks everyone who made this day a success.”

She said the American Legion will plan for the event again next year.

## Government Day student officials

**Decatur High:** Dan Fite, Mary Catherine Beggs

**Austin High:** Joe Nguyen, Cordale Parker, Luiz Minardi, Kane Smith, Phoebe Miller, Taylor Lucas, Alivia Briggs, Haley Beth Hillard, Selena Romero, Hollie Nelson, Alexis VeraCruz, Bryson Hills, Alyssa Pace, Erin Wiley, Ashlyn Wheat and Riley William

**Falkville High:** Drake Hamilton, Katie Evans, Kaitlyn Boyer, Emily Mickelson, Galen Smith, Hannah Smith, Jacob Walling, Autumn Eddy, Josie Luker, Makayla Naylor, Erin Randolph, Kelly Lockamy, Zac Bryant, Andy Dove, Taylor Davis, Ryan Sullivan and Snezhana Tuttle.

**Danville High:** Drew Cooper, Sara Beth Turner, Keely Templeton, Kaitee Henderson, Colton McCay, Christina Brown, Hannah Campbell, Danielle Nevins, Tabetha Hutto, Gracie George, Bre Tuck, Kristin Dobbins, Regan Burcham, Madison Langston and Jada Harris.



State health officials warn:

## Don't give breeding grounds for Zika carrying mosquitos

A state public health official has declared a state of emergency due to the Zika virus, which is spread by Aedes mosquitos and has been linked to birth defects.

“The Zika virus is a growing threat in Alabama as our weather warms and Alabamians continue to travel to Zika-affected areas for business, tourism and mission work,” Alabama Health Officer Tom Miller wrote. All county districts are spraying for mosquitos.

### Breeding turfs

Stagnant water, septic tanks as well as other elements offer breeding beds for mosquitos and residents should try to keep areas around their homes, including basements, dry.

Zika is spread primarily through the

Please see Zika, page 8

Above, left, students in mock commission meeting. Right, Attorney Kevin Cousta coaches the defense team; and below, left, district judges Shelley Waters and Charles Langham coach student judges as a student court reporter takes witness testimony. Right, District Attorney Scott Anderson coaches student district attorneys in a mock trial.



# A GLIMPSE OF WORKING GOVERNMENT

## West Morgan ninth graders tour courthouse, learn about government, career opportunities

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

Wow! This is cool!  
That was one of several verbal expressions from West Morgan High School students as they entered the Morgan County Emergency Manage-

ment Agency operation center on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

County Commission Chairman Ray Long sparked laughter from the group as he mixed a few colorful comments when telling the students about the executive branch of gov-

ernment.

And, District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest made them think as he popped a question, asking them to name the county commissioners in exchange for a prize.

Eighty ninth graders of a Career

Preparedness class, their instructor Nathan Sawyer and other school faculty came to the courthouse for a tour. In addition, they toured the county jail.

**Please see Tour, page 11**



Left, Chairman Ray Long addresses the students about county government. Right, District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest gives a student a prize for naming members of the County Commission.

## Commissioners

Continued from page 3

open soon.

“We’re also looking at building soccer fields at Brindlee Mountain Park; and we’ve cleaned off a lot at Lacey’s Spring and we’re looking at building a facility there for the Morgan County Rescue Squad,” Abercrombie explained. “They would respond to calls on the river from the Lacey’s Spring area to Somerville.”

District 4 Employees are bush hogging and paving roads, also.

All districts are spraying for mosquitos.



District 2 employees are re-building shoulders on roads that were recently paved throughout the district.

# 60 years of experience retired from Circuit Clerk's office

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

When they first began careers in the state's judicial system Donna Palmer and Charlotte Pidcock worked with clanking typewriters and mounds of documents that had to be placed in folders.

Imagine the noisiness from the typewriters and thousands of the paper files stored in metal cabinets throughout the circuit clerk's office, and a room designated just for various case files.

Palmer and Pidcock were there when typewriters were tossed and replaced with computers, and they witnessed paper files scanned and shredded.

Electronic files are now permanent records.

The two women retired from Circuit Clerk Chris Priest's office in March, and collectively 60 years of experience went with them.



Left, Donna Palmer finished 31.5 years in the judicial system in April; and right, Charlotte Pidcock completed 28.5 years in the system. Both women worked in the circuit clerk's office.

"I have worked nine years in the circuit clerk's office in Morgan County and I worked 22 years in the Madison County circuit clerk's office, a total of 31 ½ years of my life," Palmer

said. "I look forward to retirement and I wish everyone the best of everything." Pidcock, who worked 28 ½ years in the circuit clerk's office, says she will miss her job, but she welcomes retire-



ment.

"I'm retiring to spend time with my family," said Pidcock. "I really enjoyed working with people and helping people."

Pidcock worked for a short

period of time for another state agency which brought her employment total to 30 years.

Circuit Clerk Chris Priest

Please see **Retirees, page 13**

## County Commission authorizes NARCOG to seek funds

The County Commission took action last month that moved the transfer of its transportation program to North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments a step closer.

The commission adopted a resolution giving Chairman Ray Long authorization to designate NARCOG as the local agency for public transportation in the county. The resolution authorizes NARCOG's

Board of Directors to apply for funding for the program through the Alabama Department of Transportation as well as funding from other sources.

District 1 Commissioner Jeff Clark says nothing has been finalized, yet.

"They're still working out the details, but this gives them (NARCOG) enough to legally pursue funding," Clark said.

Morgan County Area Transportation System has become costly over a period of time, depending on withdrawals from the general fund for fiscal year budgets. This year the commission transferred \$300,000 and last year the transfer of funds was \$414,000.

Commissioners don't anticipate any problems with NARCOG taking over the system.

Check out

Our new Morgan County Video

[www.co.morgan.al.us](http://www.co.morgan.al.us)

About

*The Voice of*

*Morgan County*

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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.



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### 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.

# Haiti

Continued from page 1

Bill O'Brien, Faye McWhorter and a Gardendale Rotarian to Haiti in March to teach Bayonnais Rotary members how to install water filtration systems.

Decatur Daybreak Rotary gave 30 systems to the effort, which will provide up to 25 gallons of clean, safe drinking water for a Haitian family each day.

A double blessing for Judge Langham was when he got to meet a little girl named Loudjie for the first time.

"Sonja and I have sponsored her since 2013 and it was a joy to get to see her," said Langham. "I never expected that I would actually get to meet Loudjie, but while planning my trip I discovered that I would be traveling through Saint Marc, Haiti where she lives."

An interpreter, who accompanied the judge sought help in finding the child.

"The interpreter asked a young man on a motorbike, who lived in Loudjie's neighborhood, if he knew her and he confirmed that he did," Langham shared. "In about 15 minutes the young man returned with Loudjie and her older sister riding his motorbike. It was wonderful."

Judge Langham gave Loudjie a book: *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein along with pencils, sharpeners and bubbles.

"She was thrilled with her gifts, and I was so excited to meet her," he said. "This mission trip was great overall."



## On the mission trail in Haiti

Above, District Judge Charles Langham hugs Loudjie, for whom he and his wife Sonja have been sponsors since 2013.



Below, top, is Daybreak Rotary member Bill O'Brien and village children.

Beneath, from left, a minister/interpreter, Faye McWhorter, Judge Langham, O'Brien, three Haitian Rotarians and Gardendale Rotarian Richard Bradley.



# Zika

Continued from page 5

**Common symptoms include:** Fever, rash joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other symptoms are muscle pain and headache.

**Statistics:** Four out of five people carrying the virus will not have any symptoms. The illness is generally mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week. Usually, the virus is not severe enough to go to a hospital and death is rare.

The first case of the virus surfaced in Zika Forest of Uganda in 1947.

The first confirmed transmission of Zika was reported in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, in December 2015.

**SOURCE: ACCA/ ALABAMA Department of PUBLIC HEALTH**

## KEEPING CHILDREN OUT OF TROUBLE

# Local attorney teaches Hartselle middle school students about laws that affect their age group

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

Attorney Patrick Caver goes out of his way to inform junior high school students about the dangers of this world and the consequences for bad behavior.

He talks their talk, and even tries doing their dance to get his message across to seventh graders at Hartselle Junior High.

“I research to learn their newest lingo and latest dance,” Caver said. “I even ‘Hit the Quan’, one of their dances, to get on their level, and they listen. One parent called me and told me that her child told her everything she learned and about the illustrations I gave. She said her child even shared that I was not a good dancer.”

For almost eight years Caver has been going to the school to talk to seventh graders about various topics that could lead to juvenile court cases. He made his last trek for this school year on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Caver told them it’s important to have friends of good character.

“I told them that if four people are in a car and they get pulled over, and drugs are found in the car, all of them go to jail,” Caver said. “Another example I gave them was that if they were standing around with friends and one broke a window they would all go to jail.”

He explained to the students that those offenses and more landed kids in the county’s juvenile system, from arrest to possible confinement.

“I told them how rough it is in juvenile detention, or to be sent to the Department of Youth Services at a facility in Montgomery,” Caver said. “It’s hard for a juvenile from this region to go there for confinement with kids



Left, Caver places real handcuffs on a student during an illustration. Right, Caver uses a student for another illustration to teach them about hypothetical situations involving juveniles.



from all over the state.”

Caver told the children about various incidents that could lead to criminal charges.

Shoplifting, fighting, harassment, and threats, in person and through social media are charges that could be leveled at their young ages of 13 and 14.

Sexting, when someone sends obscene photos to each other, is a serious offense.

“When a child takes an inappropriate picture of himself or herself and sends it to someone, the sender and receiver can be charged,” Caver said. “Certain sexual charges will ruin them for the rest of their lives, causing them to have to register as

a sex offender. It would be impossible for them to work in certain professional fields. They would be prohibited from living in many places. They can be charged with a sex crime as early as age 14.”

Dana Sharp, who teaches seventh grade civics at the school, said Caver does a great job with her students.

“For the past seven years Mr. Caver has come to my classroom to discuss the juvenile legal system with my students,” Sharp said. “I teach several parts of the Play by the Rules: Alabama Laws for Youth, a booklet produced by the Alabama Center for Law and Civic Education. My students love Mr. Caver. He’s

funny, engaging and speaks to them in their language. He has a true heart for young people. He comes on his day off because he believes in reaching teenagers. He really is a great guy.”

Caver spoke with them about parties where they serve prescription drugs, usually taken from a medicine cabinet at home.

He illustrated with the candy shaped like pills, telling them to take certain colors and explaining that each represented a prescription drug.

The attorney said he explained to them, that when children take

Please see Caver , page 10

# Morgan Circuit Clerk Chris Priest chairman of Hospice Board

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

Morgan County Circuit Clerk Chris Priest is passionate about his work in the judicial branch of government, and there is no disparity when it comes to giving back to the community.

After three years on the Hospice of the Valley Board of Directors Priest is now chairman and looks forward to leading in the volunteer capacity.

Working with Hospice of the Valley is a tremendous honor and privilege,” said Priest. “The care this organization supplies to the patients and the support to families are unmatched. Without a doubt, Hospice of the Valley provides exceptional care and support for those facing serious illness, death and grief. I could not imag-

ine working with a better, more compassionate organization.”

Hospice Chief Executive Officer Debbie Heard says Priest is valuable to the organization.

“We are honored to have Chris Priest as our Board Chair,” Heard said. “Chris has been a member of our board since 2013 and is beginning his second three-year term on the board. We value his expertise and commitment.”

A non-profit organization, Hospice of the Valley has touched over 10,000 lives during its 30-year existence.

“We consider it a privilege to provide end of life care for anyone in our community regardless of ability to pay,” Heard said. “Our mission is to ensure that no one dies alone and no one dies in pain.”

In addition to providing free indi-



Left, Hospice of the Valley Chief Executive Officer Debbie Heard and Circuit Clerk / Chairman of Hospice Board of Directors Chris Priest stand in garden area outside the facility.

vidual and group grief counseling to patients and families, the bereavement center offers the service to the community at large.

“This is unique to the North Alabama area,” Heard said.

Also, Hospice hosts support groups for adults, and children at its facility at no charge.

Although Priest has a rigorous daily schedule of running his offices at the

courthouse, he’s always willing to help with community efforts.

“I’m elated to be a part of this agency,” Priest said. “It’s beyond one’s imagination what it does for individuals and families who are grieving.”

Heard has been CEO of Hospice since 2012 after having served as executive director of the Morgan-Lawrence Chapter of the American Red Cross.

## Morgan EMA to host disaster response symposium in Hartselle

Limited seating, early registration suggested

Morgan County Emergency Management Agency will conduct a disaster response symposium July 30<sup>th</sup> at Hartselle High School’s auditorium from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

Topics will include: Law enforcement, ICS, NIMS, power and gas, communications, wildfires, mutual aid, EMS, time keeping, EOC, IC teams and disaster plan.

Continuing Education Units will be available.

Limited seating. You may register early at <http://goo.gl/forms/j4nISC9ut0>

Vendor setup is at 7 a.m. and sign-in begins at 7:30 a.m.

Lunch will be provided, and there will be door prizes.

Hartselle High is located at 1000 Bethel Road.

## Caver

Continued from page 9

drugs from their homes they don’t know what they’re prescribed for. Some are for hypertension, or some other illness, and some are for pain, which could all lead to serious health problems for them.

“Parents need to lock up their medicine... all of it, not just the pain killers,” he said. Being in juvenile is not about punishment. It’s about saving the kids. If a child is walking toward a cliff juvenile court is going to grab the child and pull them back; but once they turn 18 there’s no one there to grab them.”

Caver said he’s available for other school systems to consider.

He may be reached at: 256-751-5991 or, Pat-

rickcaveresq@hotmail.com

# Tour

Continued from page 6

Forty students came to the courthouse and 40 went to the jail. Then, the groups switched places for the full tour.

At the courthouse their first meeting was with Long and Vest in the County Commission meeting room.

Vest pointed to portraits on the wall of former commissioners, engineers and attorneys; and then pointed to the seating area of the current commissioners. "Can anyone name the members of the commission? Vest asked.

One student caught on right away, and began reading from the name plates in front of each of the commissioner's seats.

Vest gave the student a piece of candy.

When the second group arrived Vest did the same thing and the prize was the same.

The students' next stop was in a circuit courtroom where they heard from Circuit Clerk Chris Priest, District Attorney Scott Anderson, who told them about the judicial system and Probate Judge Greg Cain who explained county probate court.

Also, the officials told them about career opportunities in state and county government.

The last trip was to the basement where EMA Director Eddie Hicks told them about the workings of his department and asked questions of them about situations they deemed disasters

and emergencies. Many hands went up to answer the questions.

Then, the group left for the jail tour as the students who went to the jail first came to the courthouse. The second tour group at the courthouse

met with the same officials, and got to hear from Circuit Court Judge Glenn Thompson.

As they left, many of the students and all of the school staff thanked officials for the tour and said it was quite informative.



EMA Director Eddie Hicks explains various weather patterns to students.

## State official praises Animal Shelter Director Mark Palmer for work with animals

Morgan County Animal Shelter Director Mark Palmer received praise from a state official for the great job he does with animals prior to their adoption.

### The story goes:

It is with great pleasure that I announce the graduation of Bandit from the Alabama Canine Law Enforcement Training Center in Northport, AL on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Bandit graduated from an eight-week basic obedience course and has gone to work in the collections business for a repo company.

Bandit stands guard and accompanies his owner while patrolling the streets at all hours of the night or day, and was recently rewarded for coming to his owner's aid while outnumbered by un-

friendly customers.

Bandit was standing watch from a half open window of his owner's vehicle when one unfriendly customer decided to put his hands on Bandit's owner. Bandit responded by exposing all of his teeth while barking and slinging slobber out the window. The unruly customer was uncertain if Bandit would be able to fit the rest of the way through the window, but was not going to stick around to find out. Up until that day Bandit's owner had not heard him bark at all, showing that Bandit has attached himself to his owner and now feels like part of the family.

Bandit came from the Morgan County Animal Shelter under the care of Mark Palmer. Mark takes the time and effort to ensure that the animals under his watch are cared for and placed in

the areas that not only benefit the animals, but the owners as well. I have a feeling that Bandit will enjoy his new job and the adventures that will follow.

Lee Hamilton  
Chief Pilot  
ALEA Aviation  
334-284-2658



Bandit

# REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

Law enforcement officers from various branches gathered May 17<sup>th</sup> in Cotaco Park at the courthouse to honor slain and active comrades.

Nationally, this day is set aside for those who serve and protect their communities.

Sheriff Ana Franklin presided over the program.

County Commission Chairman Ray Long presented a resolution the commission adopted linking Morgan County to the national day of honor; and Decatur Mayor Don Kyle presented a proclamation from the City Council representing the same.

Interim Police Chief Capt. Nadis Carlisle led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance and Somerville Police Reserve Chaplain Ryan Childers gave the invocation.

Former, retired Decatur Police Chief Ed Taylor delivered a moving keynote address about what men and women in law enforcement mean locally and throughout the country.



From left, Capt. Nadis Carlisle, Sheriff Ana Franklin, Hartselle Police Chief Ron Puckett, Chairman Ray Long, Mayor Don Kyle, and retired Decatur Police Chief Ed Taylor at the podium.

Please see **Remembering**, page 14

## Rodeos successful again this year

Morgan County Sheriff Ana Franklin's rodeos were successful again this year with almost 2,000 in attendance.

Over an eight-year span the special needs attendance has grown from 400 to 1,700, according to the sheriff's office.

The special needs rodeo was held April 7<sup>th</sup> and the regular rodeo followed April 8-9 at Celebration Arena.

Activities for the special needs rodeo included a petting zoo, a mechanical bull, face painting, Disney characters and buggy rides as well as many more features. The arena was packed for the regular rodeo, also.

Bo Campbell PCA Rodeo Productions presented a spectacular show!



Left, Sheriff Ana Franklin hugs a child at the regular rodeo. Right, the sheriff devotes attention to a child who attended the Special Needs Rodeo.

# Retirees

Continued from page 7

said both employees were valuable members of his staff.

“Ms. Pidcock’s service to the Morgan County clerk’s office will be sincerely missed,” Priest said. “She came into the office almost every day before 7 a.m. to make sure that her area would run smoothly. The high quality of her work and how hard she worked for the office will be missed. What we all will miss most about of Ms. Pidcock was that she was a friend to all.”

He praised Palmer’s leadership skills.

“We will miss Donna’s “can do” attitude,” Priest said. “If we ever had a new project or new idea Donna was always one of the

first to volunteer and assist to make the project be the best. She was instrumental in the digitalization of our office. From training new employees to leading those who have been here, Donna’s leadership will be missed by the entire office. We are sad to see her retire, but we are all happy for her to have this opportunity.”

*Best Wishes!*

*Charlotte  
And  
Donna*

Morgan County American Legion  
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The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization

focusing on service to veterans, service members and communities.



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## JOIN THE LEGION IN SUPPORTING VETERANS AND COMMUNITY



**American Legion Auxiliary**

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- 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**  
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**-BINGO Every Saturday**  
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# REMEMBERING

Continued from page 12

He said law enforcement officers share a bond that unifies them across municipalities, counties and state lines.

After Hartselle Police Chief Ron Puckett called roll of fallen officers doves were released and a 21-gun salute followed.

## Officers who died in line of duty

E.L Steele, 1905  
 William A. Baber, 1905  
 Lemuel Jones, 1906  
 Burns Almon, 1927  
 Thomas E. Wright, 1930  
 Thomas E. Maxwell, 1962  
 Loyd Hays, 1964  
 David E. Temple, 1979  
 Charles W. Biles, 1985



## CIRCUIT CLERK CHRIS PRIEST

### WHY HAVE A PASSPORT?

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies the identity and nationality of the bearer. A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue or verify United States passports.



MORGAN.ALACOURT.GOV



### Requirements for a passport

#### PHOTOGRAPHS:

You must submit ONE 2" X 2" color passport photo taken within the last six months. Photographs must meet U.S. government requirements, which are listed on their website.

#### PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP:

Expired passport issued to an adult or Naturalization Certificate (must be original) or Certified Copy of your Birth Certificate in the state in which you were born). Persons born in Alabama can go to any local Health Department to purchase a certified copy of their Birth Certificate. It will be issued at the time of purchase. If you were born in another state, you must contact that state's Division of Vital Statistics. There are several sites on the Internet that can assist you in this matter. Persons 15 and older, who held a prior passport, can use that Passport in lieu of the certified birth certificate. This instrument will be submitted with your application and returned within two weeks after receipt of your passport.

#### PASSPORT FEE:

Personal check, cashiers check or money order payable to U.S. Department of State. (cash not accepted). Fees can be combined for persons applying at the same time.

#### Book Fees:

**\$110.00** 16 years of age or older  
**\$80.00** 15 years of age or younger

#### Card Fees:

**\$30.00** 16 years of age or older  
**\$15.00** 15 years of age or younger

#### IMPORTANT:

If you are flying, a book is REQUIRED. The card is valid only for travel by car or ship. Be aware that any emergency requiring flight will require a passport book.

- Children 16 or 17 may appear with one parent or legal guardian to sign the application in the office.
- Children 15 and younger must appear with both parents or legal guardian to sign the application in the office.

#### EXECUTION FEE (Book and Card):

**\$25.00** cash or check made payable to Chris Priest, Circuit Clerk.

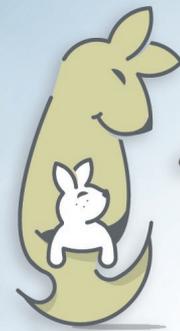
#### IDENTIFICATION:

A State issued ID (i.e. Driver's License) or federally issued ID (i.e military) is required. We cannot accept privately issued forms of identification (i.e work badges). If you do not hold identification issued by the State of Alabama, you must present a second form of identification.

Passport Acceptance Office hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday.

**You must arrive so that all transactions are completed by closing.**

**Chris Priest, Circuit Clerk**  
**Morgan County Courthouse**  
**302 Lee Street NE**  
**Decatur, Alabama 35601**  
**Phone 256-351-4790**  
**chris.priest@alacourt.gov**



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