



First Courthouse

# THE VOICE OF MORGAN COUNTY

*Keeping you informed / Telling untold stories*



Current Courthouse

Postal Customer

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
DECATUR AL  
PERMIT #869

MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSION

September 2014

VOLUME 2, NO. 4

## Commission poised to adopt county budget for fiscal 2015

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

Every Morgan County department will be adequately funded and a 2% pay hike is on tap for employees in the fiscal 2015 budget.

The County Commission is poised to pass a level-funded budget later this month close to the fiscal

2014 budget.

“We’re not cutting anybody’s budget,” said Chairman Long. “Everything that was funded last year will be funded this year. We expect revenue to be down a little, but we’re going into reserve to give our employees a 2% raise to reward them for helping us stay within budget.”

When the current commission took office four years ago they faced the task of re-building the county’s reserve fund, and to start the process budgets were reduced.

“If everybody hadn’t come on board to help us

**Please see budget , page 7**



*The County Commission reviews Coroner Jeff Chunn’s budget with him during 2015 budget hearings with elected officials.*



*Allen Green, a man of many talents, completed 31 years of employment with the county on June 27th.*

## Green’s skills, personality will be missed

*Retired after 31 years of county service*

By Sheryl Marsh  
**Communications Director**

When Allen Green reported for work at the courthouse on Feb. 7, 1983 no one knew about the many talents he brought with him.

His primary duty

was to supervise a janitorial staff, but it wasn’t long before his secret skills began to surface.

“I started doing so much maintenance that they realized what they needed to do with me,” said Green. “I guess my

main skill is cabinet building.”

Thirty-one years later

Green, 62, retired in

Please see Green, page 7

## Chairman Long moves into ACCA first vice presidency

During the 86<sup>th</sup> convention of the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama Chairman Ray Long was unanimously elected first vice president of ACCA Board of Direc-

tors.

He was elected second vice president last year. County commissioners from the state’s 67 counties make up the ACCA

**Please see Long, page 5**

### INSIDE:



District 4 seniors get new, upscale community center, pages 10, 11, 14

Chairman Long exceeds requirements in government studies, page 2

Farmers yield good crops despite harvest delays due to rain, page 8

# Chairman Ray Long exceeds requirements in government studies

County Commission Chairman Ray Long exceeded requirements to complete government training for holding public office, and was highly commended by officials of Auburn University.

“It is a real accomplishment to have achieved success beyond the basic requirements of the program in your service to your county and its citizens,” wrote Auburn President Jay Gogue. “Your achievement in complet-

ing the 70-hour graduate program, over and above the legislatively mandated 50-hour program is evidence of your commitment to improving the quality of life in your county.”

Long, who has been chairman since 2010, completed the Alabama Local Government Training Institute at Auburn recently and received a graduate program certificate.

“I am elated to have completed

the studies, which will help me better serve the people of Morgan County,” Long said. “I ran for office to serve our residents and I want to do it with vast knowledge and efficiency.”

The university’s Center for



Chairman Long

Governmental Services has an agreement with the Association of County Commissions of Alabama to provide training for county commissioners throughout the state.

Long, who had experience in being in charge of a municipal government entity, said he welcomed the learning experience for his chairman’s post.

“You can always learn and should be willing to learn more

about what you do,” he said.

“The training provided a wealth of knowledge for me and others. My focus is totally on doing a good job for the people of Morgan County and I hope I exceed their expectations as well. We are proud to serve Morgan County residents.”

The other commissioners praised the chairman for the major achievement and said they work well together.

## Over a century ago

### Remembering the Battle of Decatur through Civil War events, display

150 years have passed since Civil War soldiers stirred the dust on dirt roads in Decatur.

The 1864 skirmish is etched in history as the Battle of Decatur, and Archivist John Allison along with other history enthusiasts are planning a commemorative celebration for October 25-28.

“We’re working on emphasizing something different,” said Allison. We’ll have re-enactment groups of confederate and

African American Union soldiers representing the US CT (U.S. Colored Troops Unit) to present the living history of the war.”

The setting will be at the Dancy Polk Home on Railroad Street.

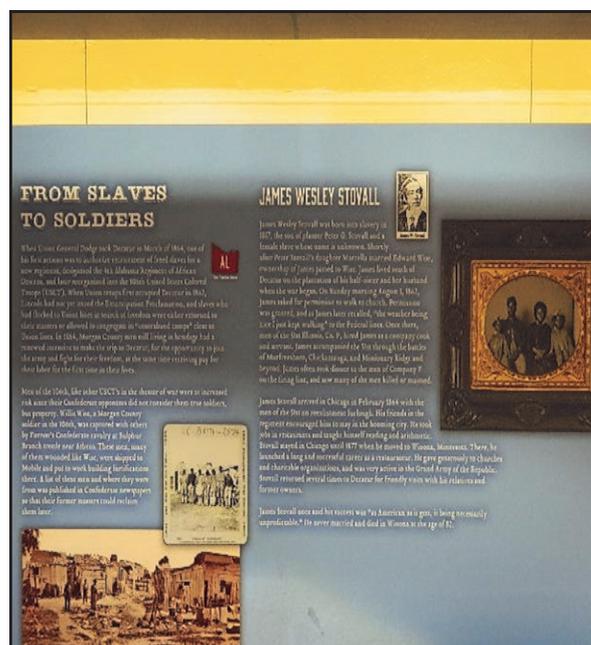
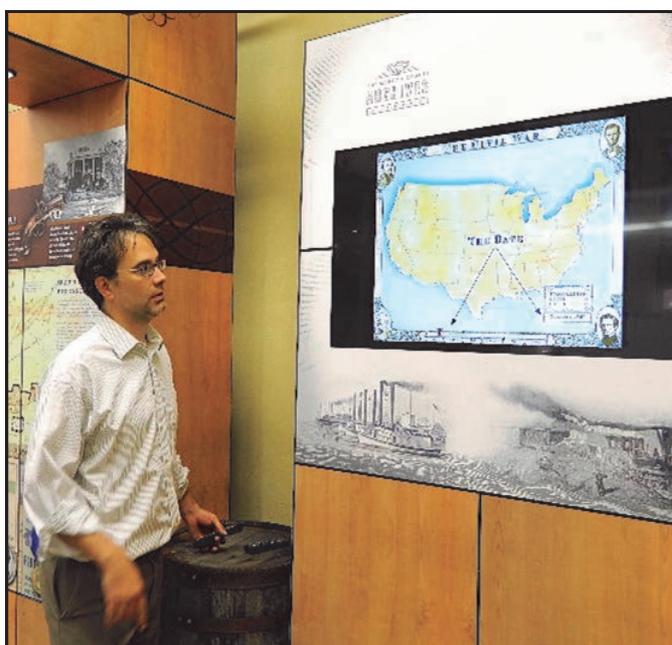
“They’ll demonstrate camp life and talk about life as soldiers during the war,” Allison said. “Civilians will talk about how life would’ve been during that period.”

The event will begin at the archives building on Bank Street where attendees will see the Civil War display that will include a timeline and photos. It will also include weaponry from the war.

“Some of the battle was right at the corner of Bank and Vine streets. There were federal troops just outside the fortification,” Allison said. “We wanted it to be the same dates that the battle took place and we want it to be as huge as possible.”

State Sen. Arthur Orr played a major role in the Civil War and Scottsboro Boys projects.

“Sen. Orr helped arrange a lot of grant funding and put us in touch with all the right people and we are very thankful for his help,” Allison said. “We couldn’t have done all that we’ve done without his help, and we are most appreciative that he’s always been here to assist our efforts.” Cost of the Civil War project is \$85,757.



Archivist John Allison, left, operates a remote to an electronic screen that’s part of the Civil War display. Center, the story and photos of the war’s first black troops. A lot is in store for those who attend the 150th celebration of the Battle of Decatur. They will have a lot to take in, including a living history at Dancy Polk Home on Railroad Street.

# Absentee voting for General Election begins September 10

Morgan County Circuit Clerk Chris Priest is preparing to start accepting applications for absentee voting on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> for the General Election on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>.

The voting process will first open to Morgan voters who are away serving in military service.

“We must begin absentee voting for military troops 55 days prior to the election to comply with the new law,” Priest explained.

Absentee voting is for those who will be out of town or a work a 10-hour shift outside the county, or people who are unable to go to polling places.

Applications for an absentee ballot may be obtained by going to the circuit clerk’s office on the fourth floor of the courthouse, or to the office’s website at [morgan.alacourt.gov](http://morgan.alacourt.gov)

“They need to completely fill out the application

and turn it in at the office where they may also vote, or mail it to our office and we will send them a ballot,” Priest said.

The address for the circuit clerk’s office is PO Box 668, Decatur, AL 35602. The envelope should be addressed to Chris Priest, Absentee Election Manager.

When returning the application (s) and there’s more than one, each application has to be in a separate envelope, Priest said.

Ballots will be mailed for those who elect to mail ballots, and when mailing them back photo identification must be included.

“The ID must be placed in one of the outer envelopes included in the package,” Priest said.

Photo IDs include: Valid Alabama Driver’s license; state issued non-driver ID; valid state or

federal ID; U.S. passport; county, municipality, ID from a board or other entity of this state; student or employee ID from a public or private college or university in the state (including post graduate technical or professional schools); valid student or employee ID issued by another state institution in other states; valid military ID; and valid tribal ID.

“For voters who do not have one of those IDs they may go to the Board of Registrars and obtain a voter photo ID,” Priest said. “They can only get one if they do not possess one of the others.”

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>. The only people who may request ballots on Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> and Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> are people who have a medical emergency or an unplanned business trip.

The county has 67,488 registered voters.

## Circuit Clerk office

### hours of operation

The Morgan County Circuit Clerk’s office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Offices are located on first, third and fourth floors of the courthouse.

Although doors may be closed to filter hallway noise, the offices are open to the public. The offices no longer close on Wednesday.

## Rx discount cards

### Still available

Morgan County Still has Rx discount cards available. They are free to county residents and have resulted in over \$200,000 in savings collectively 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.

# Keeney completes course work , receives certification

The Morgan County Commission encourages training and education among its employees, and it is paying off for some who have pursued additional studies.

Recently, Payroll/Benefits Officer Marsha Keeney became an Alabama Certified Public Personnel Specialist and received her certificate during a conference in August.

Keeney completed the additional education at Auburn University’s Center for Governmental Services through Alabama Association of Public Personnel Administrators.

“County (Morgan) leaders are to be commended for supporting Mrs. Keeney’s efforts to complete this structured and tested professional development program,” said AAP-PA President Donald Dees. “They recognize that all of the citizens of Morgan County benefit from quality services provided by highly motivated and well trained county employees like Marsha Keeney.”

Keeney was among 45 human resource officers in the state to receive the certification.

Graduates of the program

had to pass a comprehensive examination and complete at least 86 hours of course work involving all aspects of human resource management.

Dr. Don Terry Veal, director of the Center for Government services, said of Keeney’s accomplishment:

“Mrs. Keeney’s achievement underscores a strong commitment and dedication to public service in our state and the commitment of the Morgan County Commission to the betterment and improvement of local government in Alabama.”



Keeney

# Morgan employees gather information, have fun at benefits fair

Door prizes, posing with the Heisman trophy and health screening were all attractions of the county's annual Benefits Fair on Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>.

Twenty-seven vendors had tables spread with products and information in the EMA auditorium. A couple of

vendors were outside with the Aflac/Heisman Mobile where employees got their pictures made with the Heisman, and Decatur Morgan Hospital provided a mobile unit where they could get wellness checks.

Courthouse employees and

some from off-site locations attended the fair.

"I appreciate the opportunity to come to see all the benefits offered, to see if there are any changes and to see what's new," said District 3 Shop Foreman Roger Shipley. "I also like fellowship-

ping with all fellow employees."

District 3 employee Chris Gandy said he likes coming to the fair, also.

"I like to see if anything has changed and what they're offering," said Gandy. "The blood pressure and hearing

checks are nice, too."

Human Resource Officer Marsh Keeney and County Administrator Belinda Ealey spearheaded the event.

"They did an outstanding job," said Chairman Ray Long. "We always look forward to the fair each year."



## Morgan County Chief Administrator Belinda Ealey earns certification

Belinda Ealey is now a certified county administrator after completing 60 hours of study through the County Government Education Institute.

Ealey received a certification plaque recently during the Association of County Commissions of Alabama annual convention.

In addition to continuing education a certification can-

didate must have been working in the position for three years.

Classes that Ealey completed included conflict management, general management and supervision, disaster preparedness and response, general accounting, communication and media relations, legislative and governmental relations.

Chairman Ray Long ap-

pointed Ealey county administrator after he took office in 2010. Prior to being administrator she was Falkville's town clerk.

"Belinda does a great job for the county and we're happy to have her," Long said. "We like for our people to receive all the training they can get, and we have plenty of opportunities through ACCA."



*County Administrator Belinda Ealey holds certification plaque she received recently during the annual ACCA convention.*

# Thanks Vendors!

We are grateful for these companies, and agencies that help us have another successful benefits fair:

Aflac  
 Stovall-Marks Insurance  
 Occupational Health Group  
 Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama  
 Liberty National Insurance  
 Edward Jones Agent Terry White  
 Decatur/Morgan Hospital  
 Costco  
 Sam's Club  
 Renasant Bank  
 LIFESouth  
 American Red Cross  
 Family Security Credit Union  
 Dental Associates  
 Chenault Martial Arts  
 Morgan County Sheriff's Dept.  
 Millar Chiropractic  
 The Enrichment Center  
 Rite Aid  
 Decatur Optical  
 SS Nesbitt MD Live  
 Rehab Access  
 Decatur Allergy Clinic  
 Legal Shield  
 Gloria's Good Health

**A special thanks to Volkert for providing the hospitality room for our vendors**



*Chairman Ray Long addresses crowd at ACCA's 86th annual convention where he was named first vice president.*

## Long

### Continued from page 1

membership and elected Long to each position.

"I am grateful to other county leaders from throughout the state who gave their approval for me to hold each of the positions," Long said. "I look forward to serving in this capacity to help move government forward."

ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield said Long has great leadership skills as well as other qualities.

"We are excited about the leadership, energy and dedication Chairman Long will provide for our Association and our members," Brasfield said. "I believe Ray thoroughly understands the challenges of both urban and rural county governments in Alabama, and he has vision to help move county government forward statewide."

Morgan voters elected Long chairman in 2010. Prior to the election he was Mayor of Somerville.

The recent ACCA election positions Long for board president in 2015.

Other commissioners represent Morgan County in the organization, also.

District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher was re-elected to the Legislative Committee, and District 1 Commissioner Jeff Clark kept his position on the board of directors.

"It's all about team work and looking out for the best interests of our residents," Stisher said. "In doing so it's productive to be active on various boards and committees at the state level."

Brasfield lauded Stisher and Clark.

ACCA is governed by the board which comprises three officers, past presidents and representatives elected from 12 state districts.

# Judge Langham travels to Australia for international Rotary Club gathering

It's not every day that people get to lodge at a hotel with their name on it, but Morgan County District Court Judge Charles Langham and his wife Sonja did so in Australia.

They were attending the 105<sup>th</sup> annual Rotary International Convention Down Under along with others from Decatur in Sydney.

"We had a wonderful time. It was a great experience," the judge said.

He chuckled as he talked about staying at The Langham Hotel.

"It was thrilling and amazing," he said. "I knew where we would be lodging well before we went, so there were a lot of jokes."

More than 18,000 Rotarians from around the world attended the convention, which was held in June at Sydney Olympic Park.

"Even though the Rotary Convention was held over 9,000 miles away Morgan County was well represented," Langham said. "Mark Malone, the convention chairman was accompanied by his wife Gay, who is also a Rotarian."

Also making the trip were: Roger Ferrell, current president of Rotary Noon Day Club of Decatur and his wife Kitty; Ken and Lynn Schuppert of Decatur were present, also and will serve as personal liaisons to 2014-15 Rotary International President Gary C.K. Huang of Taipei, Taiwan.

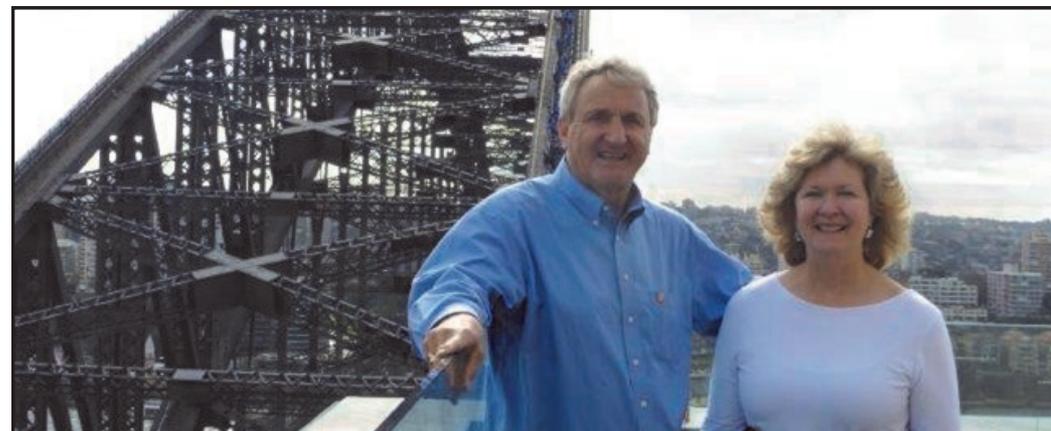
During the convention Rotarians climbed the Harborview Bridge to support the Rotary's END POLIO campaign and broke the previous world record of bridge climbers set by Oprah Winfrey.



*They lodged here.*



*Judge Lanaham and Mark Maloney*



*Judge Langham and wife Sonja*

Judge Langham received the Rotary Service Award from 2013-14 Rotary International President Ron Burton at the convention. "The highlights of the trip included a performance by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the

famed Sydney Opera House; witnessing the Sydney laser light show from a boat in Sydney Harbor; and visiting the Supreme Court of New South Wales," he said. "Wonderful memories were made."

## In honor of 9-11 victims, heroes

# Morgan, LIFESouth partner to host annual "Patriot Day" Blood Drive

Sept. 11, 2001 was a horrible day—one that we will remember forever.

The memories of victims and the bravery of uniformed men and women, who serve this country in various capacities, are celebrated on this date each year.

For the second year Morgan County will partner with LIFESouth Community Blood Centers for a blood drive in honor of the victims and the men and women in uniform, including U.S. soldiers, firefighters and law enforcement officers, who

risked their lives to save others.

The event will be held at the courthouse on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> from at 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The LIFESouth blood mobile will be located in the parking lot on the Lee Street side of the courthouse.

We are asking that the community come and support our efforts to get blood donations that will help save lives.

When terrorists attacked this country blood was in high demand to treat those who were injured, and one way to show that we care about their plight is

to give blood in their honor.

Blood donors will receive T-shirts with images that represent those who serve and fight for safety and freedom. In addition, they will receive coupons for free food items from local restaurants, and LIFESouth representatives will grill hotdogs on location for lunch.

"It's all worth it," said Donor Recruiter Cherry Hammonds. "We are remembering and honoring those who gave their lives by giving the gift of life. Please donate blood."



*Each donor will receive a T-shirt with this graphic on it during the county's 9-11 blood drive at the courthouse .*

# Green

Continued from page 1

June as assistant superintendent of the Maintenance Department.

“Allen will be missed. He was a hard worker and knew how to do a lot of things,” said Maintenance Superintendent Wayne Lindley.

In addition to carpentry and other valuable skills, Green was known as “mail man” for the courthouse. He would make daily morning and evening treks to the post office to pick up and drop off mail. When he returned to the courthouse he would go distribute mail for the various departments.

Green is good at pencil-pushing, also. He helped Lindley prepare annual budgets for the maintenance department, and Green wrote bid specifications for the department.

During his tenure as a county employee Green has worked under four County Commis-

sion chairmen: Junior Waddell, Larry Bennich, John Glasscock and current Chairman Ray Long.

“Words cannot express the great work ethic Allen possesses,” Long said. “He will be greatly missed as an employee and for just being himself. We wish him much success for a happy and peaceful retirement.”

A native of Morgan County, Green grew up in Eva. He has two daughters, both graduates of the University of Alabama. Amy Hagadorn is a speech pathologist, working with special needs children at the University of Alabama. Emily Boggas works with a business firm in Philadelphia.

“I am most proud of my girls and we are very close,” Green shared. “During retirement I plan to spend more time with them.”

He has other plans for retirement as well.

“I like to fish and I like to travel. I will do both,” he said.

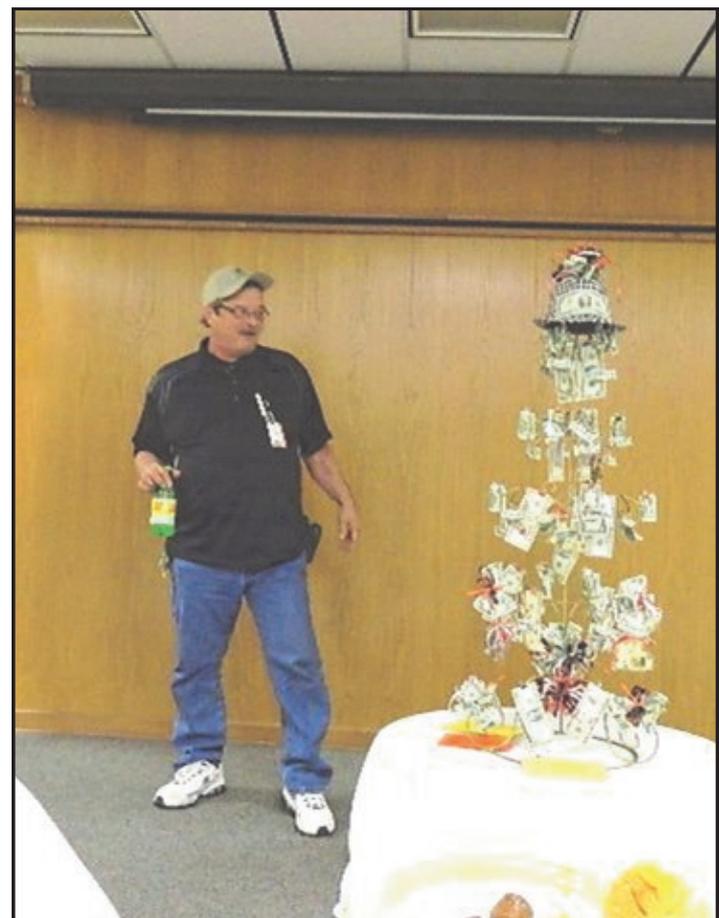
Looking at a cap he was wearing, Green added: “This Hawaii cap is about worn out. It’s about time for me to go over there and get another one.”

On his final day of work co-workers threw a big party where he was presented a money tree decked in \$2, \$50 and \$100 bills. The idea behind the \$2 bills was significant and memorable because whenever Green would perform a task for someone he would joke and say: “That’ll be two dollars”.

He chuckled when he received the money tree.

Green said he will miss his co-workers but they hold a special place with him.

“It’s been a joy working with everybody,” he said. “The people in this building are more than friends. They are like family and I will miss them, but there’s a season change for everyone and this is mine. I’m looking forward to this new chapter in my life.”



*Green was surprised by a retirement party in June with lots of good food and the money tree he’s admiring in this photo.*

## Budget

Continued from page 1

cut budgets to get our reserve back up things wouldn’t be as good as they are now,” Long said. “Although the economy is still struggling we are doing pretty good. We were able to give merit raises to employees who were in line for them in May. We wanted them to know how much we appreciate their work.”

Long said preliminary figures

show a projection of \$20.9 million for the general fund. The amended 2014 general fund budget is \$21.2 million, but usage through August was a little over \$20 million.

“We expect the 2015 general fund budget to be close to that amount,” said District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher. “We appreciate department heads and elected officials being as frugal as they are with taxpayer dollars.”



Morgan County Commission



@MorganCoComm

### 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 reproduced. This is the fourth edition of the second 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.

# Farmers yield bumper crops in spite of delays

By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director

Excessive rain and a period of dryness this season caused delays in crop harvesting for area farmers, but overall they had great yields of produce with little loss.

Tables spread with colorful fruits and vegetables show that crops are plentiful.

“It’s been slow because of inadequate rain and too much rain,” said Christie Clark, of Clark’s Farm in Priceville. “We are chemical free, so we lost a lot of things like squash and zucchini to bugs.”

She and her husband Lee were at the Morgan County-Decatur Farmers Market in August selling a variety of veggies, including okra, tomatoes and butternut squash.

Jackie Letson of Scott’s Orchard in Hazel Green, reported miniscule loss, and a good season.

“They’ve been good so far,” Letson said. “We could’ve used a little rain, but we’ve got the irrigation system. We lost a few peaches, but the Lord blessed us. We’ll be picking a variety of apples soon and we’ve got peaches to go through September.”

James Hanserd of Hanserd Farms in Athens, says his season has fluctuated.

“It’s been up and down,” said Hanserd. “It’s a little up right now. When it first started rain was too much. We can do better with it than without it, though.”

Decatur gardener Bill Sheffield said he’s had a good crop of watermelons, cucumbers and squash.

“The deer ate up my peas, but other than that I had good crops,” Sheffield said.

Jenny Graham of Graham Farms in Morgan County had no complaints.

“It’s been good,” Graham said. “Everything has been just right.”

Joseph Walker of Walker Farms in Blount County is pleased, also.

“It’s been fair, a little dry, but overall it’s been pretty good.”

Most of the farmers had watermelons, tomatoes, squash and peas.

Burl Slaten, manager of

the farmers market is optimistic about future crops.

“We had good crops up until now,” Slaten said.

“Everybody’s got a lot of stuff going on, but the rain is a hindrance. “Some will be late, but we should have

pretty good crops through September.”

The market will close for the season on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>.



# Morgan officials proud to have staff with varied skills

Each year the county's maintenance employees perform duties for major projects that save thousands of taxpayer dollars.

Recently, the six-member crew headed by Maintenance Superintendent Wayne Lindley replaced flooring in circuit and district courtrooms; and they renovated Circuit Clerk Chris Priest's office, adding break room. The projects were in addition to their regular duties which entail keeping the lawns immaculate and making repairs throughout the building.

"It would've been real pricey if we had contracted the work," said Commission Chairman Ray Long. "These guys share a wealth of knowledge in various areas of construction, landscaping and many other fields that you don't find every day. We are proud to have each of them on our staff."

District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher said the employees work without complaining.

"They save the county a lot of money and we are appreciative of their work ethic and skills," said Stisher. They never grumble or complain. They just do the work."

Long said from restrooms to light fixtures to heating and cooling, the maintenance crew keeps everything in excellent working order.



From left, Maintenance Superintendent Wayne Lindley, Daryl Bolding and Jackie Fortenberry replace tile in Circuit Judge Steve Haddock's courtroom.



Circuit Clerk Chris Priest and wife Ruth admire break room that maintenance employees added to office.

## Sponsor of this publication

For nearly 50 years, BP Decatur has played a vital role in the Morgan County business community.



One of the many ways BP Decatur employees support the community is by participating in the Decatur Morgan Hospital Foundation Dragonboat Races. 2014 will be our third year of competition.

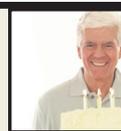
One Team, One Dream!

1401 Finley Island Rd.  
Decatur, AL  
256-340-5200

Find your career at  
[www.bp.com/careers](http://www.bp.com/careers)



# Senior Living



## Morgan County Senior Center makes impact

*Newest county asset improves quality of life*

**By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director**

When he took office in 2008 District 4 Commissioner Greg Abercrombie had plans to improve the quality of life for Morgan County residents.

He envisioned nice facilities where senior citizens could go to enjoy activities and get a nutritious meal.

So, in 2009 he began his mission. He found 11 acres on Union Hill Road and asked fellow commissioners to support his request to purchase the land at an auction.

After the land purchase Abercrombie planned its usage.

“The first thing I did was research the cost of road re-construction, which included straightening a curve and re-making a four-way stop on the road,” he said. “We received a cost estimate of \$1.1 million from our county engineer, and there was no way we could afford that. I went to the guys in the shop and told them and they agreed that we could do it internally.”

The total cost was \$270,000 and Abercrombie saved more than \$800,000 of taxpayer money by not contracting the job.

After four years Abercrombie and other officials welcomed residents for open house of the center on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

About 100 people, including county and state officials attended the event.

“This is probably one of the largest and best senior centers in the state,” Chairman Ray Long said at open house. “This is a place of which our residents can be proud. Greg (Abercrombie) is to be given kudos for what he has done for the people of this county. He took money from his road and bridge fund to build it and this facility will serve the county for years to come.”

Soil from the property had multiple uses. “We hauled dirt from the road project to help build Brindlee Park,” Abercrombie said. “It has benefited the county in several different ways.”

Now, Abercrombie has re-focused his attention to building a new senior center at Lacey’s Spring. He estimates construction of it within the next year.



**District 4 Commissioner chats with senior residents on back porch of new facility he had constructed for them to attend daily for activities and nutritious meal.**

## Seniors express feelings about center

**By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director**

Smiles on faces of senior citizens and their spoken words expressed how they felt about the new Morgan County Senior Center on Union Hill Road.

Several commented: “Wow!”

They looked up to vaulted ceilings and touched new furnishings, admiring the facility’s beauty.

“It’s awesome to walk in. It’s nicer than what we imagined and a whole lot better than what we had,” said Nadine Hardin of Morgan City. “It’s

like walking into a nice hotel. It’s super.”

Others would tell what the center meant to them.

“It provides a nice meeting place for

**Please see Center, page 11**

**Please see Seniors, page 11**

## CRT shares information

# Decatur seniors get lesson about lung health

By Sheryl Marsh  
Communications Director

Senior citizens listened closely to what Certified Respiratory Therapist Al Keith told them about lung health in June during a presentation at the county's nutrition site inside Turner-Surles Community Center.

Keith used power-point to relay information about illnesses such as asthma and COPD that cause labored breathing and oxygen usage. He showed graphics to depict diseased and healthy organs.

"People need to know how to manage conditions and education is the only way to

do that," Keith said. "I am elated to share information with you."

Keith paused throughout the presentation to answer questions from several of the senior citizens.

Due to time restraints Keith didn't get to share a program he created called "The Asthma Blues", but during an interview he discussed it and the equipment that assists people in managing lung disorders.

"Music is a universal communicator in which you can deliver anything because music has the ability to store itself in memory," said Keith. "Asthma Blues" de-

livers national guidelines for asthma management."

The program is about managing and controlling asthma.

"It's music with a message," said Keith. "Asthma Blues empowers people with asthma and their caregivers with evidence-based information, delivers key concepts that help them manage asthma effectively and equips them with the tools to keep asthma controlled."

Keith has been a respiratory therapist for 26 years and says he is currently a contract trainer for Advanced Respiratory, Inc., a



Hill-Rom Company, for which he provides training for using the "Vest", a

machine used on people with breathing issues. As a consultant for Ad-

vanced Respiratory, Please see Lungs, page 13

## Seniors

Continued from page 10

us seniors to gather and play games and eat," said Ebbie Thomas of Lacey's Spring. I think it's the prettiest thing I've ever seen. I hope the good Lord lets us live like this for a while."

Katherine White of Morgan City echoed the others.

"We're happy with it," White said. "It's got plenty of room. It's bigger than I expected it to be. I know we will enjoy it."

MCATS/Commission on Aging Director Debra Rains, who oversees operations of the county's nine senior centers, praised the County Commission for working to improve the quality of life for residents.

"They are very supportive of programs to help our seniors and for that we are appreciative," said Rains. "Commissioner Greg Abercrombie has done an outstanding job in getting this facility built and the other

commissioners have been behind him from the time he started. We really have good county leaders."

Earnest Simpson, of Morgan City, who attends the center daily, is optimistic that others will come to the new facility.

"It (the center) should attract more people because it will be an easy commute for the seniors around here," Simpson said. "We look forward to the growth."

## Center

Continued from page 10

The Morgan Senior Center was built for residents who attended a deteriorating facility at Morgan City, and they will share the facility with Lacey's Spring residents until theirs is built.

At the opening in July Abercrombie told the crowd that Sen. Arthur Orr was responsible for furnishing the center, and has helped him with other projects as well.

Orr addressed the crowd. "This center is the nicest facility in Morgan County and that's because of all of

the hard work and efforts of your District 4 Commissioner Greg Abercrombie," Orr said.

Main attractions of the center include a huge great room, safe room and a porch the length of the building that's lined with rocking chairs.

## Scenes from open house for senior center

(Please see more photos on page 14)



# Commissioners working on road /bridge projects, 2015 budget

Morgan County Commissioners are working on the fiscal 2015 budget and they've been completing projects to improve the quality of life for residents.

They juggled overseeing road and bridge projects while participating in budget meetings that Chairman Ray Long scheduled.

District 1 Commissioner Jeff Clark's employees completed a parking lot project at West Morgan Elementary School, and he said it should be paved in the next couple of weeks.

"We're currently working on a cul-de-sac on Pisgah Road,"



**Clark**

Clark said, "We also completed prep work at the new jail annex site. "The work continues throughout the district with new projects getting started."

District 1 employees filled the courthouse pond with dirt for a



**Vest**



**Abercrombie**

flower bed, also.

District 2 Commissioner Randy Vest's shop employees are finishing work at West Park on concession stands and restrooms. They finished work on the park's football field. A new



**Stisher**

driveway was installed that leads to the pavilion; and the parking lot and walking trail are being resurfaced.

Means Bridge is under construction.

District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher's shop employees completed several projects. Paving on Piney Grove Road is finished and new drainage pipes were installed on Key-Turney Road.

"There were drainage problems on Key-Turney due to inadequate size pipes," Stisher explained. "We replaced the pipes and added culverts. We are ex-

tremely proud of having finished these projects, and Wilhite Road Bridge is finished."

Stisher has several paving projects on tap, also.

District 4 Commissioner Greg Abercrombie spent a lot of time getting the senior citizen center at Union Hill completed and opened. His employees are paving throughout the district and restoration of Brindlee Mountain Park is nearing completion.

Mowing grass on rights-of-way is continual for all districts.



*Left, District 3 employees replaced drainage pipes on Key Turnery Road and the surface was paved. Right, paving of South Piney Grove Road was completed.*

## District shops to open for Morgan County cleanup week Sept. 22-27

Morgan County commissioners will open their district shops to the public for residents to bring unwanted items for disposal during Fall Cleanup Week Sept. 22-27.

Residents may also discard items at the landfill for free during that time.

All shops, with the exception of District 1, will receive items from Monday through Thursday

from 6 a.m. until 4 p.m. during cleanup week. The district 1 shop does not receive items on those days due to its close proximity to the landfill.

District 1, however, will open on Saturday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> along with the other district shops and the landfill to receive items from 7 to 11 a.m.

Hours for the landfill Monday through Friday are 6 a.m. until

3:30 p.m.

County shops are closed on Friday.

Participants in the Adopt-a-Mile program will be out clearing litter from roadways as well.

Each year the County Commission approves cleanup weeks for spring and fall.

"We have always had good success with these events, said District 3 Commissioner Don Stisher.

"This is a service we are proud to provide for our residents with the added benefit of no cost for landfill disposal. We encourage everyone who has things they need to discard to take them to a county shop or the landfill."

Residents should go to the county shop in their respective districts or to the landfill. They must present proof of residency

when taking items to the landfill.

Acceptable items include furniture and household appliances.

Unacceptable items include shingles, tires, household garbage, lumber and hazardous chemicals.

Commissioners said they enjoy seeing residents come to county shops during cleanup events, and they have a good turnout.

# Lungs

Continued from page 11

Keith says he works with the Vest, a machine that's used to clear breathing passages for any patient with chronic problems, including those who have COPD.

"The Vest is great for COPD patients," he said. "It is used to clear breathing passages for any patient with severe breathing problems and has contributed to various forms of lung health and that's why I continue to work with the company."

In 2002 Keith founded CTK Clinical Consultants LLC, coupling music with patient education to birth Asthma Blues.

Keith plays the bass guitar and sings the songs that tell patients what to do to avoid breathing distress. The final lyric in the blues song is: *"If I manage asthma with a plan I know I can beat these asthma blues."*

After the first blues song, Keith pursued other genres of music, including country/western, rock and roll, hip hop and reggae for the musical therapy.

"If we're going to reach a wide range of people we must have something for everybody," he said.

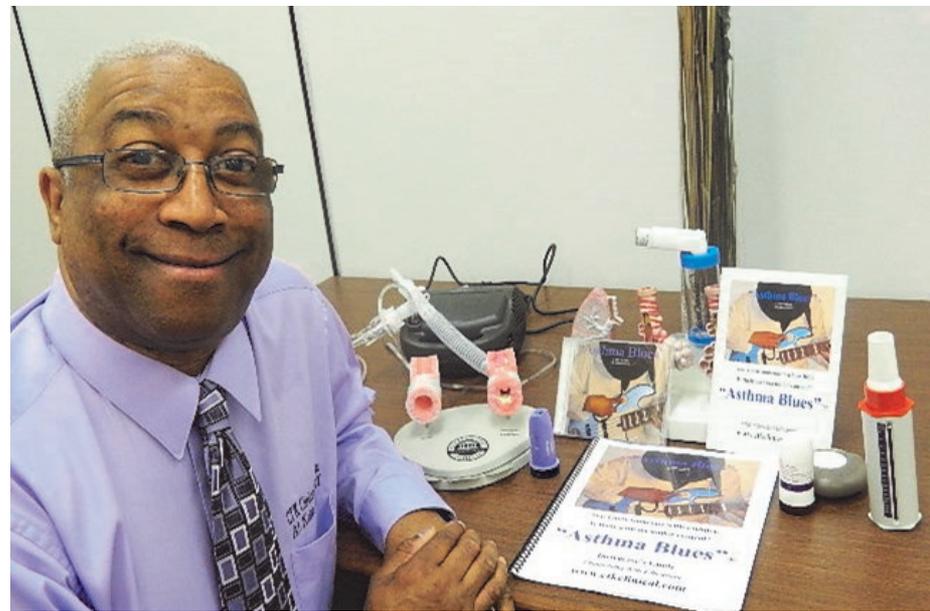
A Chicago native, Keith's career path began in 1988 at University of Chicago Hospitals/Clinics in the Respiratory Therapy Department. His wife, Dr. Jeanette Keith, MD is a gastroenterologist and works with Decatur Gastroenterology Associates. The couple moved here from Birmingham more than a year ago.

Keith has presented Asthma Blues to entities including public school systems, universities, senior citizen centers and others throughout the country. He has also presented the program at national conferences of asthma educators.

Since moving to Decatur, he has been making connections in efforts to share his program to help asthma sufferers manage and control the illness.

May was Asthma Awareness Month and he made a lot of rounds presenting Asthma Blues, Keith is still reaching out to groups and organizations.

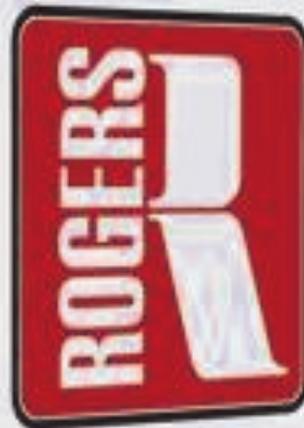
"Most people wait until they're in trouble



**Certified Respiratory Therapist Al Keith and his display.**

before they do anything and they have to go to the hospital," he said. "They don't have to go to the emergency room. They just need to know what to do and

when to do it." To learn more about Asthma Blues you may contact Al Keith at [www.ctkclinical.com](http://www.ctkclinical.com)



**ROGERS GROUP INC.**

*Building better communities from the ground up*

**Sponsor of this publication**

# More from Morgan Senior Center opening



*Safe room for use during storms*



*Screened back porch lined with rocking chairs*



*The great room and dining area*



*The center's kitchen*





### EMA gets donation

Members of the Decatur Kennel Club presented Emergency Management Director Eddie Hicks with a \$200 check they received from the Nashville Kennel Club. The money will be used for a Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailer.

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**



Halo  
Sleepsac  
NEWBORN  
SWADDLE

Keeps baby  
perfectly  
swaddled and  
safe on its  
back.



Panda  
Warmer

Provides the  
most advanced  
care while  
keeping little  
ones warm.



Sponsor of this publication

babies  
sleep  
safe



The Newborn  
center

We encourage you to schedule a tour and meet our staff  
256.341.3400



Decatur Morgan  
Hospital

DECATUR GENERAL CAMPUS  
[www.decaturmorganhospital.net](http://www.decaturmorganhospital.net)





*Chairman Ray Long and Dr. Herman Stringer stand beside a historic marker provided by the state and placed at the "Katy-Did" B-26C crash site on Highway 157 in the Massey area. The event was Aug. 16th. at the crash site. Other officials present included Commissioners Don Stisher, Randy Vest and State. Sen. Arthur Orr, Rep. Ed Henry and Sheriff Ana Franklin. Dr. Stringer was instrumental in helping get the site marked.*



Sponsor of this publication



**UNDERWOOD ASSOCIATES**  
**ARCHITECTURE**

601 JOHNSTON ST., EAST 3 / DECATUR, ALABAMA / (256) 355-1301

*AT THE BEGINNING OF PROGRESSIVE THOUGHTS AND PLANS*  
**FOR**  
**MORGAN (PROGRESSIVE) COUNTY**

Sponsor of this publication



**RENASANT**

**BANK**