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# COUNTY COMMISSION

Volume 61, Number 4  
August 2017

## GET **IN** THE GAME

ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONS OF ALABAMA  
89th Annual Convention // August 22-24, 2017



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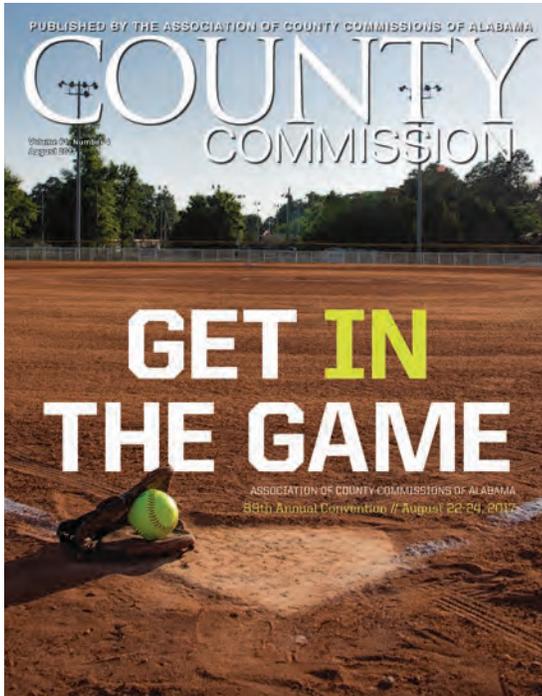
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# in this **issue**

VOLUME 61, NUMBER 4



***It's time to get off the sidelines. It's time to stop watching others score big while you and your county fall further behind. It's time to make a difference in your community. It's time to Get in the Game at the Association's 89th Annual Convention on Aug. 22-24.***



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**Hon. Bill Strickland**  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Strickland', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

## They were right

**This year has gone quickly, been most rewarding**

**A**lmost every former Association president told me the same thing. They said this year would be one of the most rewarding of my tenure in public service and that it would pass much more quickly than I could expect.

And they were right. As I am nearing the end of my term as president of this Association, it is important that everyone know this year has meant more to me and to my growth as a leader for my community than I ever imagined.

We've accomplished much in the last year. But, as was the case with my friend Ray Long, I have left a very important task on the table for our next president, Steve McKinnon.

As commissioners, we know well the unique electricity of election night. Months and months of effort to bring about the outcome you believe is best for the future of your community, but then the ultimate decision is out of your hands. Voters have a dozen hours to cast their ballots, and then you wait for numbers to be tallied.

Technically, my name wasn't even on the ballot last November, but Amendment 4 might as well have been a referendum on all 351 commissioners across 67 counties. When the results came in, more than 70 percent of Alabamians had voted to grant additional administrative and management authority to counties (except Jefferson County). Local decision-making without the need for local legislation.

I went to bed that night with the knowledge that our friends and neighbors had publicly stated that they trust county government – you and me and all the many essential

public services that counties provide every day. Despite all the negative comments, Facebook posts and tweets to the contrary, the people of Alabama spoke loud and clear.

They want decisions made at the local level. It is that simple.

Amendment 4 definitely goes on the highlight reel, and like you I am eager to hear more on implementation when we are together for the Annual Convention in a couple of weeks. And let's not forget that counties had two other wins at the general election with the approval of Amendment 3 to improve the local constitutional amendment process and Amendment 14 to affirm existing local laws.

In my inaugural remarks, I took a point from the Team 2021 Report and set it as a priority. I can just see the video montage ESPN would put together with all the evidence of re-energized affiliate groups. I have to believe the strategic planning committee is pleased with progress on that front this year.

The Legislative Review Task Force brought county professionals from engineering, administration, 9-1-1, emergency management and revenue collection into the heart of legislative preparations in a new and high-impact way. Not to mention the accomplishments of individual affiliate groups – district meetings of administrators, collective work of emergency managers on certification and the engineer's new training program for motor grader operators.

And I'm proud of the progress we made on transportation funding. I'm not satisfied, and I know you are not either. None of us can be satisfied until counties have the

resources necessary to provide the local road and bridge infrastructure that can meet the needs of our citizens and our economy.

For my part, I can't wait for football season to kick off. But I am reminded that sometimes the memorable, game-changing plays happen a down or two before anyone crosses the goal line. We covered

some yardage the hard way this year. We moved the chains, and we get to keep our offense on the field.

It might be tempting to look at those

accomplishments and puff my chest out with pride, but to be brutally

honest with you: I am humbled. This hasn't been "my year" – it has been yours.

Unlike a turnaround specialist brought in to shake up a struggling organization, I have had the immense privilege of serving as your president at a time when county government already had positive momentum.

The way I look at it, my job has been to keep that momentum going and build on it wherever possible. I hope you agree that we have

succeeded in that. What's more, I am fully confident that

President-Elect Steve McKinnon is ready to step forward and lead us through the 2017-18 year.

While my term of office is ending, my commitment to you and this Association is not. I plan to keep going as a past president who is an actively engaged member of the Board of Directors.

The drive to improve and protect county government did not start with me. It didn't start with my predecessor, Ray Long, or his predecessor, Merceria Ludgood. For a starting point, look no further than July 9, 1929 – the day this Association was officially established.

We are part of something much bigger than you or me, bigger than our accomplishments this year. The one voice of county government has kept going for 88 years, and I trust it will keep going long after the singular accomplishments of this year are in the rear-view mirror. ■

***I went to bed that night with the knowledge that our friends and neighbors had publicly stated that they trust county government – you and me and all the many essential public services that counties provide every day.***

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Executive Director

*Sonny Brasfield*

## Leadership in unexpected places

**In times of stress, we need leadership – not panic and finger pointing**

Sometimes it takes a little leadership – even from unexpected places.

Time was ticking away on a sidewalk in Columbus, Ohio. Escambia County Commissioner Larry White and I were pacing around, watching a gathering mob. Our luggage was inside the trunk of a taxi, with the engine running and the keys locked in the ignition. After just a few short minutes, a dozen taxi drivers had stopped to help with the situation.

The usual approach to solving such a problem – using a twisted coat hanger to unlock the driver's door – had failed miserably. Failed, in fact, over and over. The guys with the coat hangers had finally given up and driven away. And the opportunity to make it to the airport in time to get home before midnight was slipping away too.

Then the driver of another taxi decided that if he untwisted the car's radio antenna, it might be stiff enough to push the "unlock" button on the armrest of the driver's seat. This effort, too, proved unsuccessful. The shouts of ideas grew louder.

Call the police. Break out a window. Find a locksmith.

Each idea was screamed in the direction of the driver, who was clearly at the center of a problem he was unprepared to solve.

All the while, Larry and I wondered if anyone understood the real problem. We were simply two guys from Alabama, minding their own business, who wanted to get home. And, to be honest, both of us had decided that we'd leave the luggage in the trunk if someone would get us to the airport on time.

Then, some leadership showed up.

An Alabama county engineer and a friend we've made over the years from Minnesota strolled down the sidewalk and calmly took over the project. The fella from Minnesota sized up the situation and took the antenna from one of the screaming taxi drivers. He refocused the efforts to the passenger side of the car, altered the approach of his plan and, somehow, tuned out the screaming chaos around him. Within three minutes, the car was unlocked and the crisis was over.

It just takes a little leadership.

For more than 30 minutes, several taxi drivers (and other passers-by) had frantically tried to solve the problem by shouting out ideas, directing traffic and blaming the driver who had locked the keys in the car. Trouble is, in times of stress, we need leadership – not panic and finger pointing.

Today, many objective observers would say communities in Alabama face the same kind of crisis that Larry and I encountered in Columbus. The leaders of Alabama have frantically searched for some easy solution that does not require any of us to invest very much in our communities. We've finger pointed, shouted obvious ideas and created discord among folks that should be allies. And, like the gathering crowd of taxi drivers, we have quickly proven ourselves to be ineffective.

What we need now, of course, is for some leadership to stroll down the sidewalk. The kind of leadership that sizes up the problem, discounts the usual solutions and gets us all on the road to the airport.

At the Association's convention in August we will focus attention on that kind of leadership. For today, at the local level, this Association is committed to growing leaders. It is too easy to run for office, pledge to do something that you can never do, and then settle into the daily routine of blaming and screaming. Alabama and its counties have suffered for way too long because of that approach to problem solving.

Many of the convention's sessions will focus on real opportunities that exist for elected officials and staff members to take up the challenge of being real leaders. During one segment of the program, seven members of the

county family will talk about their experiences as leadership from a variety of angles. Somewhere in that discussion, each and every county official and employee in attendance should be able to find information that will allow them to unlock the

---

***The solution lies not in solving the individual crisis at hand, but in equipping people with a passion for leading inside their community.***

---

door in their community.

For far too long in Alabama, especially in the last few years, leaders have been more interested in pointing out the failings of other leaders, blaming the problems on

someone else and have shouted out obvious – and unproductive – ideas that serve only to generate new, and even more complicated, problems.

The solution lies not in solving the individual crisis at hand, but in equipping people with a passion for leading inside their community. At the local level, that's really the only hope for our state to make any significant improvement. Clearly, today our local communities are at a crossroad.

Alabama's plane home is about to pull out of the gate. And, unfortunately, we are standing around on a sidewalk watching people yell at each other. Our only hope is that there is at least one person in every county who will resolve to lead the community away from the screaming crowd and toward a real solution.

I hope you'll join us in August as we focus on those opportunities. ■



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# Time to Get in the Game

It's time to get off the sidelines. It's time to stop watching others score big while you and your county fall further behind. It's time to make a difference in your community.

It's time to Get in the Game at the Association's 89th Annual Convention on Aug. 22-24.

You'll find everything you need during the Association's yearly gathering of everyone in Alabama government. This year's General Session will feature Gov. Kay Ivey, Attorney General Steve Marshall, and veteran county officials who have become All-Americans in their local communities.

Educational sessions to give you the information and insight to "tackle" your problems. Advice and experiences from your peers that will help you "hit a home run" back in your community. And the inside scoop on the newest trends and resources to give you the edge on the "competition."

The Convention kicks off with a day of committee and affiliate meetings and the jam-packed Exhibitors Showcase on Tuesday, Aug. 22. Close out the evening with a reception and then you can turn your focus to two days of education to help you Get in the Game.

## New Leadership and New Ideas

This year the people of Alabama have welcomed many new leaders to the forefront of state government. These new leaders come with distinct perspectives and fresh ideas, but they're looking to you to be the continued voice of local government. The Association is honored to welcome Gov. Kay Ivey, Attorney General Steve Marshall, Alabama Department of Economic

and Community Affairs (ADECA) Director Kenneth Boswell and the candidates for Alabama's U.S. Senate seat as speakers at this year's Convention. These leaders will share their vision for Alabama's future and address ways that federal, state and county governments can work together toward a better Alabama.

You can't Get in the Game if you don't know the players.

## Improving your Swing

County government begins and ends with you. The Annual Convention will give you the opportunity to learn something new, listen to different perspectives, ask questions, and become a better leader. Voices from the Courthouse is a new session that will feature county leaders sharing insight, lessons-learned and guidance in a roundtable discussion moderated by NPR National Correspondent Debbie Elliott.

## Educational Sessions Targeted for Everyone

Thursday's events are highlighted by educational sessions that are focused and detailed for every affiliate group and for county commissioners from throughout the state.

No matter your role in county government, this year's sessions will be relevant to you. The breakout sessions are the most important piece of this year's Annual Convention, and the Association staff has chosen unique topics to ensure that county leaders in every position have the opportunity to learn something new. Highlights from the breakout sessions include:

- How does a county implement Amendment 4 programs such as employee safety programs,

community litter control programs, or procedures for disposal of unclaimed property?

- Where does ATRIP-2 go from here?
- What are the requirements for the new solid waste permitting process?
- What impact does the new exemption certificate process have on county revenue?
- What steps must be taken to implement the new "Medicaid for Inmates" law?
- And many, many more

## Developing the Game Plan

All county officials and employees will be given the opportunity to provide insight and comment on the Association's policy direction for the coming year during an interactive and lively afternoon session on Thursday. You won't want to miss the chance to offer your opinions and to shape how the Association will Get in the Game in the coming months.

County employees and officials will be honored for their accomplishments and achievements during the past year at the Association's Awards Ceremony, and then the counties will select their leadership for 2018 during the Business Session.

## Close it Out

The convention will again conclude with its annual banquet, giving all county officials and employees the chance to hear President-Elect Steve McKinnon of Dale County outline his vision for the unified voice of county government over the coming year. ■

# TALKING POINTS



**Safety Drills** 9 counties that have made measurable gains in safety will receive award checks – and 58 other counties will get to hear some homegrown best practices.



## 51 Education Credits

Convention sessions are approved for a total of 51 education credits for commissioners and county employees.

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- County Government Education Institute
- Certified County Administrator
- Certificate in County Engineering Administration
- Certificate in Emergency Communication Administration
- Certified County Revenue Officers
- Certified Local Emergency Manager
- Alabama Local Tax Institute of Standards and Training
- Certified Revenue Examiner



## Revised Rulebook

Practical tips and specialized advice about new statutory and constitutional laws governing county operations, including Medicaid for County Inmates • Solid Waste Permitting Process • Amendment 4/Administrative Powers • Excess Funds from Tax Sales • Tax Exemptions for United Way Agencies • Lodging Taxes for Meeting Rooms

## Connect with MVPs

- Gov. Kay Ivey
- Attorney General Steve Marshall
- Rep. Chris Pringle
- ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell
- Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn
- Revenue Commissioner Vernon Barnett



## U.S. Senate Prospects

Take your own measure of Alabama's leading candidates and their perspectives on county government.



## Exhibitors

Some 80 exhibitors, representing more than 20 different types of goods and services, will be under one roof. That means county leaders have an unparalleled opportunity to comparison shop for anything from road materials

to financial services to inmate medical care – all for the purpose of providing taxpayers with the best services at the best value.

- Inmate Medical Care
- Heavy Equipment Supplies
- Tax Collection
- Employee Benefits
- Engineering Services
- Purchasing Cooperative
- Motor Vehicles
- Resellers of Used Equipment
- Prescription Drug Discount
- Tourism/Economic Development
- Architects
- Contractors specialized in roads, bridges & public buildings
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- Communication Technology
- Roadbuilding Equipment
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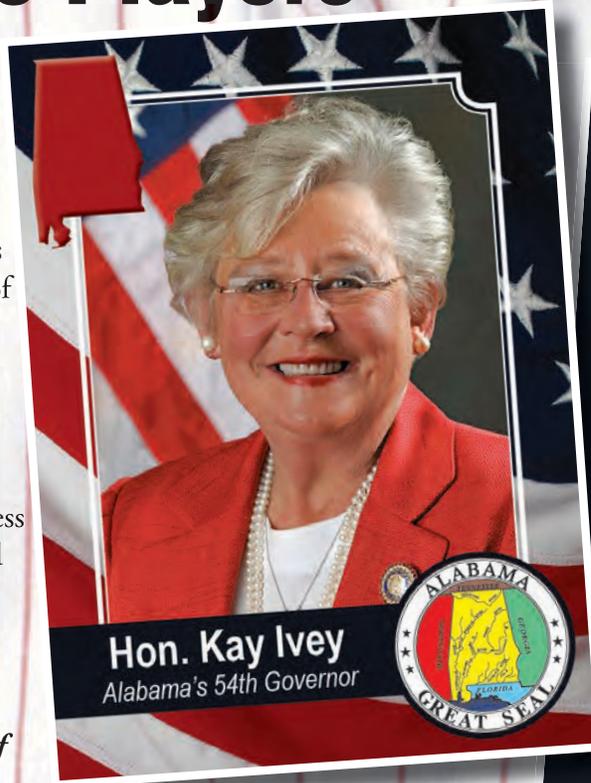
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# Know the Players

This year the people of Alabama have welcomed many new leaders to the forefront of state government. Each one brings distinct perspectives and fresh ideas, and each of them is counting on you to be the continued voice of county government. These leaders will share their vision for Alabama's future and address ways that federal, state and county governments can work together towards a better Alabama.

*You can't Get in the Game if you don't know the players.*



**Hon. Kay Ivey**  
Alabama's 54th Governor

- Sworn in April 10, 2017
- Lieutenant Governor, 2011-17
- State Treasurer, 2003-2011
- Administration Priorities: Education, Economic development/job creation, Infrastructure (roads, bridges and high-speed internet)
- During Ivey's first 100 days in office, Alabama recruited more than \$800 million in new business investments and more than 2,000 new jobs.
- Backed 2017 legislation to increase Alabama's gas tax, saying, "Road and bridges are an essential service of government, and investing in them will bring more jobs and businesses to our state, creating opportunities for everyone."
- Met with President Trump and others in June about needs for infrastructure improvements

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**Hon. Steve Marshall**  
*Alabama's 48th Attorney General*

- Sworn in February 13, 2017
- Marshall County District Attorney, 2001-2017
- Background: private practice; legal analyst for the Alabama House of Representatives; municipal prosecutor in Arab and Albertville; Arab municipal attorney, past chairman, Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center Commission; and past president, Alabama District Attorneys' Association
- In his own words: "I will enforce the law fairly, I will stand up for victims, and I will do the hard work of attacking the underlying problems that threaten the safety of our communities. As attorney general, a top priority will be to maintain an effective working relationship with our local law enforcement. Sheriffs, district attorneys, police, and investigators are the front lines of public safety and we will support them in every way possible."

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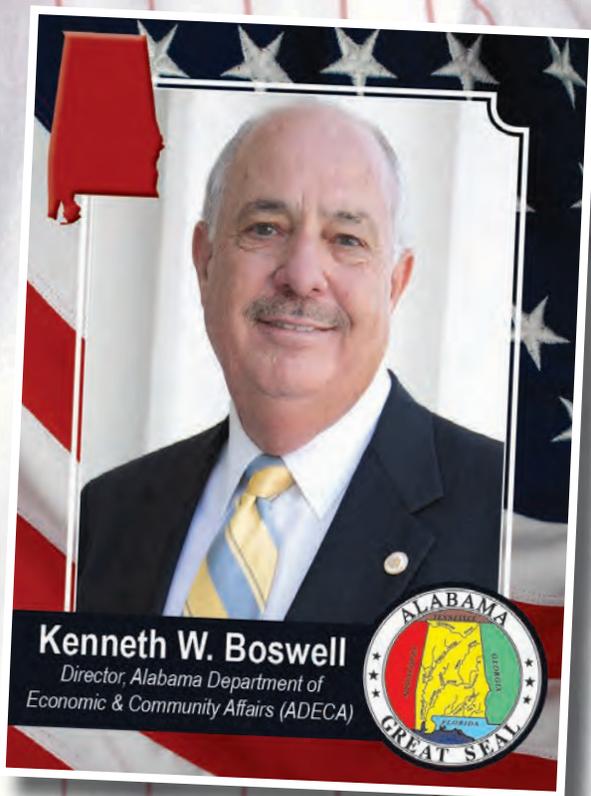
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**Kenneth W. Boswell**  
 Director, Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)

- Appointed by Gov. Kay Ivey, May 2017
- Mayor of Enterprise, 2003-2017
- Enterprise City Council, 2000-2003
- Enterprise was recognized as one of the "Best Alabama Towns," a top city for young families and among U.S. cities with the fastest-growing middle class populations. Coffee County was recognized by the Alabama Department of Commerce as one of the counties leading the state in economic expansion.
- He was also in the mayor's office when an F4 tornado killed nine people in Enterprise and left \$307 million in damage.
- In his own words: "ADECA is committed to our mission: Building Better Alabama Communities. Through partnerships with local governments, nonprofit groups, state and federal agencies, and other agencies, the men and women of ADECA work every day to improve the quality of life for Alabamians."

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# GET IN THE GAME

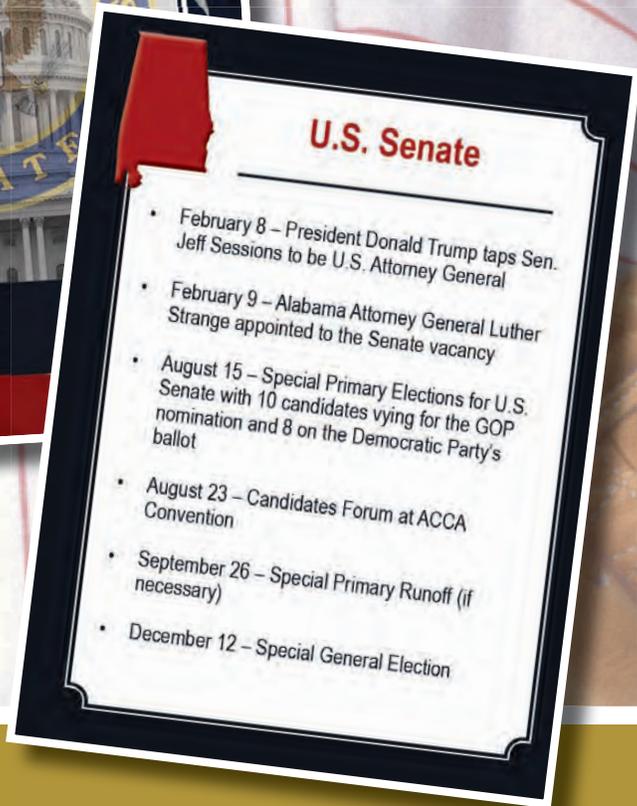
Wednesday, Aug. 23  
Know the Players to  
Get in the Game

Gov. Kay Ivey,  
Attorney General Steve Marshall &  
ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell  
Opening General Session

U.S. Senate Candidates Forum  
Afternoon General Session



U.S. Senate



## U.S. Senate

- February 8 – President Donald Trump taps Sen. Jeff Sessions to be U.S. Attorney General
- February 9 – Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange appointed to the Senate vacancy
- August 15 – Special Primary Elections for U.S. Senate with 10 candidates vying for the GOP nomination and 8 on the Democratic Party's ballot
- August 23 – Candidates Forum at ACCA Convention
- September 26 – Special Primary Runoff (if necessary)
- December 12 – Special General Election



## Special Agenda for Sheriffs

ACCA is honored to once again welcome sheriffs and their staff leaders to the Annual Convention in Orange Beach. It's been said that when it comes to serving county citizens, commissioners and sheriffs are in the same harness, and this time together each year can be a valuable investment in those working relationships.

A special one-day convention registration is available for sheriffs and their staff leaders who would like to participate on Wednesday, Aug. 23. Activities of interest begin at 1:30 p.m. with a forum of the U.S. Senate candidates followed by a discussion of state prisons with Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn and others key players.

Beginning at 3:15 p.m., sheriffs are invited to shift gears for a breakout session created specifically for them. The 2017 act affecting Medicaid eligibility for county jail inmates is intended to help with medical expenses typically borne by the county, and Morgan Arrington, an ACCA attorney, will outline implementation steps in detail.

With a legislatively-created task force actively seeking reforms, juvenile justice remains a high-priority issue in Alabama. One of the national experts who is advising the task force has been invited to address sheriffs during their breakout.

## ATTN: SHERIFFS

Wednesday, Aug. 23

### 1:30-3 p.m. Afternoon General Session

- U.S. Senate Candidates Forum
- "The Future of Alabama's Prisons" with Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn

### 3:15-5 p.m. Sheriffs Breakout Session

- "Enrolling and Participating in the New Medicaid for Inmates Program"
- "National Perspective on Juvenile Detention" with The Pew Charitable Trusts
- State Legislative Update

If you have any questions about the special one-day registration for sheriffs, please contact Jennifer Datcher (334-263-7594 // [jdatcher@alabamacounties.org](mailto:jdatcher@alabamacounties.org)) in the ACCA office.

# Straight Talk from Real Experts in County Government

If the Annual Convention is a training camp, designed to equip county leaders to “Get in the Game,” there is only one place to look for experts to help you hit it out of the park. That’s right, you’ve got to look in county courthouses.

“Voices from the County Courthouse” is a unique session that will focus on the leadership qualities and commitment necessary to be a successful commissioner in Alabama.

It’s arguably the toughest league in the country for commissioners. Alabama counties operate within a one-of-a-kind legal framework, and the Association is bringing together a diverse group of panelists representing both major political parties. Some have served for decades; another is wrapping up his second term of office. There will be perspective from one of the fastest-growing counties in the state, bisected by Interstate 65, as well as a county with dwindling population and no interstate.

What all the panelists have in common is the experience of working day in and day out for their counties. They have taken calls and texts at all hours of the day and night, wrestled with the most challenging issues and weathered the bumps and bruises along the way. That’s why their observations and lessons learned will be so valuable to their colleagues.

ACCA is proud to welcome a special guest moderator for this roundtable discussion. National Public Radio’s award-winning political reporter Debbie Elliott will employ her expert interviewing skills to provide attendees with unique insight from some of the most effective county leaders in the state

Don’t miss this session if you want to “Get in the Game.” ■

## Debbie Elliott

CORRESPONDENT, NATIONAL DESK, NPR



@NPRDEELLIOTT

After a stint on Capitol Hill, NPR National Correspondent Debbie Elliott is back covering her native South. From a giant sinkhole swallowing up a bayou community in Louisiana to new state restrictions on abortion providers, Elliott keeps track of the region’s news. She also reports on cultural treasures such as a historic church in need of preservation in Helena, Arkansas; the magical House of Dance and Feathers in New Orleans’ lower 9th ward; and the hidden-away Coon Dog Cemetery in north Alabama.

She’s looking back at the legacy of landmark civil rights events, and following the legal battles between states and the federal government over immigration enforcement, healthcare, and voting rights.

Her coverage of the BP oil spill has focused on the human impact of the spill, the complex litigation to determine responsibility for the disaster, and how the region is recovering. She launched the series, “The Disappearing Coast,” to examine the history and culture of south Louisiana, the state’s complicated relationship with the oil and gas industry, and the oil spill’s lasting impact on a fragile coastline.

During her tenure in Washington, D.C., Elliott covered Congress and hosted NPR’s All Things Considered on the weekends. In that role, she interviewed a variety of luminaries and world leaders, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Since joining NPR in 1995, Elliott has covered the legal battle over displaying the Ten Commandments in courthouses, the Elian Gonzales custody dispute from Miami, and a number of major hurricanes, from Andrew to Katrina. NPR has sent her to cover a Super Bowl, the Summer Olympics, Bama football fans, and baseball spring training.

Elliott was born in Atlanta, grew up in the Memphis area, and is a graduate of the University of Alabama. She’s the former news director of member station WUAL (now Alabama Public Radio).



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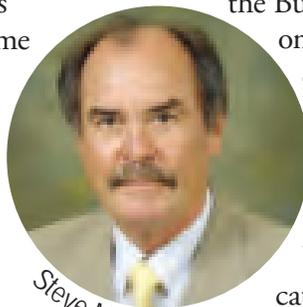
# New Association Leadership Steps Up

In the life of the Association, each year builds up to a single 24-hour span that is Election Day and Inauguration Day rolled into one.

In 2017, this eventful day of choosing and transitioning to new leadership falls on August 24, which is the grand finale of ACCA's 89th Annual Convention.

That day's luncheon will be devoted to saluting Marshall County Commissioner Bill Stricklend, who has faithfully served as Association president for the 2016-17 year. Stricklend will be recognized for his distinguished service to all 67 counties, and he will rotate into the position of immediate past president for 2017-18. As a past president, he will continue to serve on the Association's board while he is in office.

However, that day he will retain the gavel for a few more hours until the afternoon Business Session. Dale County Commissioner Steve McKinnon currently serves as president-elect, and he is expected to officially become president during that meeting. At the same time, the current vice president, Commissioner Tony Cherry of Choctaw County, is expected to move into the position of president-elect.



Steve McKinnon

A change has been proposed to the ACCA bylaws that would expand the Legislative Committee so that every county is represented. The ACCA Board of Directors recommended the change in June, and it will be decided during the Business Session.

Also during that session, the Nominating Committee will officially report recommendations for a new vice president and minority director. Candidates for these positions were required to come forward in July to allow time for advance interviews with the committee, and the committee's recommendations will have been announced to convention-goers the day before during a General Session.

Much of the day's suspense comes from selection of the next year's Board of Directors. Counties from each of the Association's 12 districts will caucus to fill these positions during the Business Session. To be listed on a district's official ballot, candidates for the Board must submit their form to the ACCA office no later than Friday, August 11. Every county will want to be represented during the caucuses, and each county has one vote.

The convention's last day is capped off by the President's Banquet, where McKinnon will present his priorities for the coming year, and then the President's Inaugural Celebration Dance.

Anyone with questions about election procedures is encouraged to contact Jennifer Datcher (334-263-7594 // [jdatcher@alabamacounties.org](mailto:jdatcher@alabamacounties.org)). Additional details and forms are available online at [www.alabamacounties.org/candidates](http://www.alabamacounties.org/candidates).

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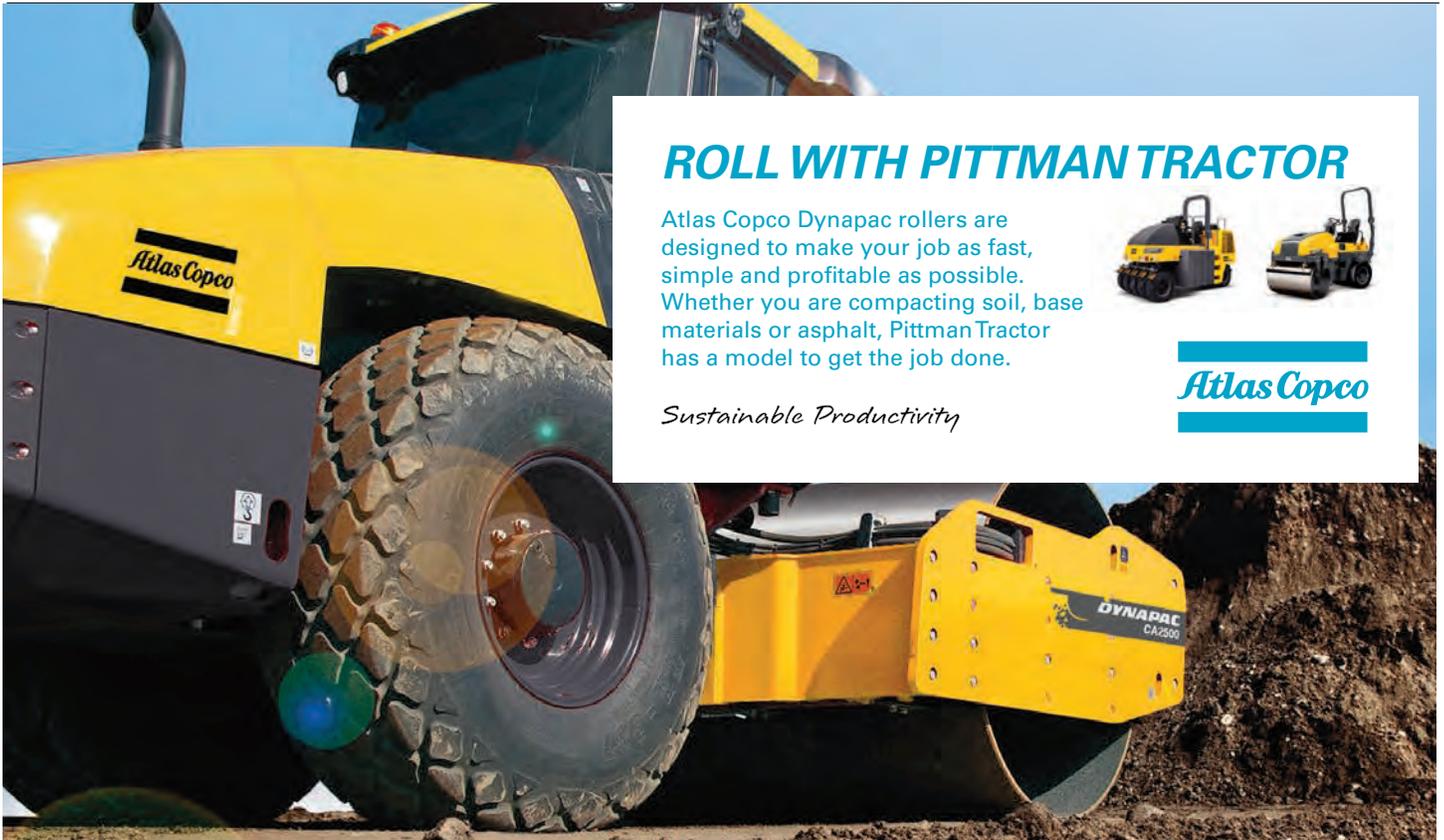
**Tuesday, Aug. 22**

**11 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.**

**EXHIBIT SHOWCASE**

*With Strolling Lunch Noon – 1 p.m.*

*With Opening Reception 5-6:30 p.m.*



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# Rural Health: A Crisis for All of Alabama

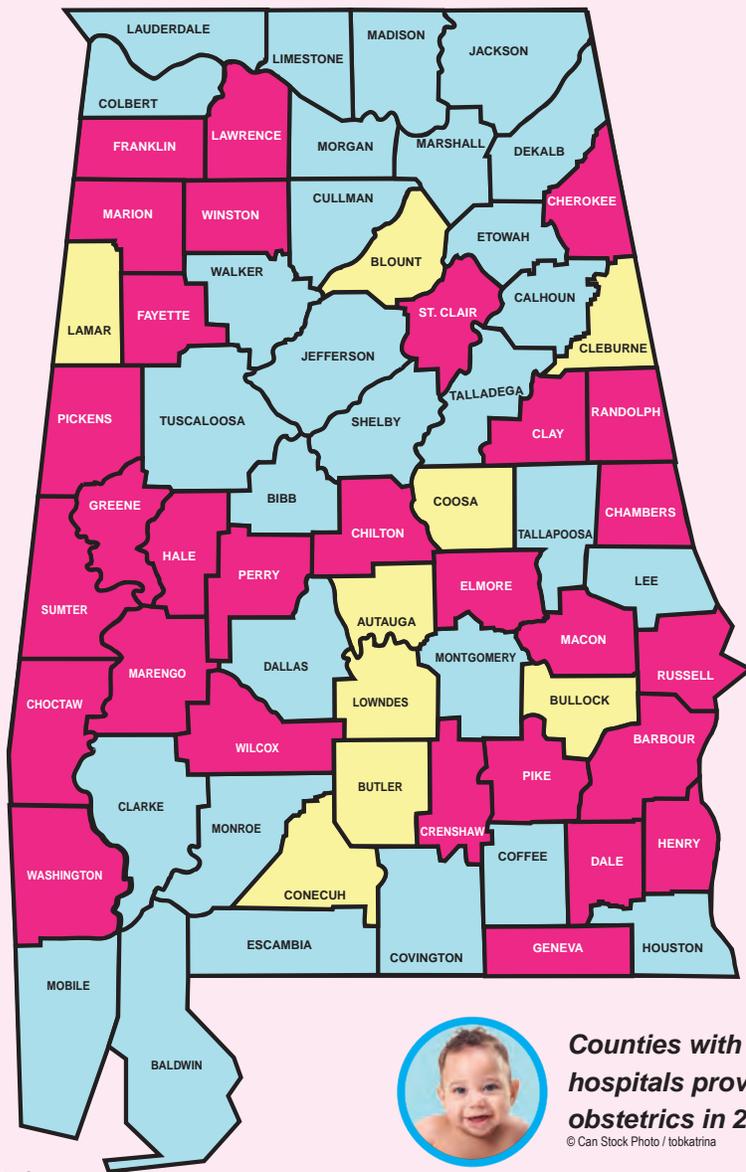
By Dale E. Quinney, MPH  
Executive Director, Alabama Rural Health Association

Alabama's rural areas are involved in a health care access and health status crisis that involves much more than just health care. Having greater concern for areas with larger populations, to get the biggest bang for your buck, does not apply when considering rural health. So much that is vital to the survival of everyone is produced in our rural areas or produced using materials and resources that come from our rural areas. Healthy rural areas are in the best interest of everyone.

Perhaps the most visible evidence of this crisis in our rural areas is the lack of healthy population growth. Twenty-four of the 54 counties that are considered rural by the Alabama Rural Health Association actually lost population during the 100 years between 1910 and 2010. More alarming is the projection that 41 of Alabama's 67 counties will lose population between 2010 and 2040. Alabama is projected to have the lowest population growth among all southern states, less than half of the growth expected in Mississippi.

This trend reflects a lack of economic opportunity in our rural areas. Rural youth continue to have to leave their homes to establish careers. There is a strong relationship between the presence of economic opportunity and having adequate health care and a quality educational system locally available. It is difficult to be adequate in any one of these areas without being adequate in all three. Health care alone is one of the largest employers and most powerful economic engines in rural areas. In

## DECLINING RURAL OBSTETRICAL SERVICE IN ALABAMA



### THEN

45 of the 54 counties currently considered rural\* had hospitals providing obstetrical service in 1980



Counties with hospitals providing obstetrics in 2016  
© Can Stock Photo / tobkatrina



Counties that have lost obstetric services since 1980  
© Can Stock Photo / Hannamariah

### NOW

16 of the 54 rural\* counties have hospitals providing obstetrical service in 2016



No obstetrical services  
© Can Stock Photo / andreykuzmin

Source: Alabama Rural Health Association | \*As defined by Alabama Department of Public Health.

addition, having adequate health care locally available also attracts non-health related businesses to the area.

Other major indicators of Alabama's rural health crisis include the following:

- Alabama has the 4th highest death rate among all 50 states, with the rate in our rural counties being 11 percent higher than that for our urban counties.
- Alabama's life expectancy at birth is three years less than that for the nation and three-and-a-half years less for our rural residents.
- Only two rural counties (Coffee and Pike) are recognized by the federal government as having enough primary care physician service available to meet the minimal (not optimal) needs of the population. No rural counties have enough dental service for the Medicaid population to meet the minimal needs. No rural counties have enough mental health care to meet the minimal needs.
- According to iVantage Health Analytics, 32 of 46 rural Alabama hospitals are operating in the red. It is common for hospitals with chronic financial difficulty to eliminate services that are a financial drain. Obstetrics is such a service at most smaller hospitals. In 1980, 45 of Alabama's 54 rural counties had hospital obstetrical service available. Today, only 16 of the 54 rural counties have this basic service available.

While the lack of health care access and poor population health status are complex issues with many needs to correct the entire problem, the following are possibilities for improvement:

- Expand the scope of practice for nurse practitioners. Alabama is one of the most restrictive states

in utilizing these highly-trained health care practitioners.

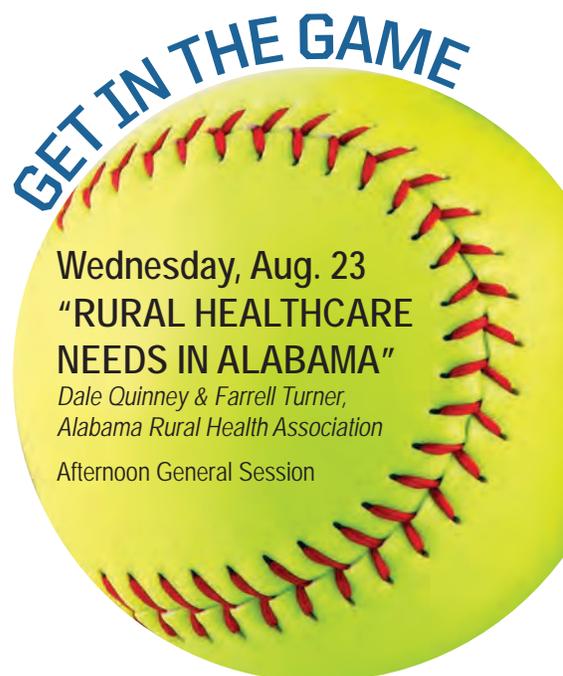
Nurse practitioners are working with rural physicians to expand clinical hours to provide health care access during non-typical rural clinical hours, and clinical days are being expanded to include weekends. More adequate use of nurse practitioners is increasing access to health care in our rural areas and can do much more if restrictive rules are relaxed.

- With the health care access issues that we have in Alabama, we should be a leader in the expansion of telemedicine. This very promising technology is expanding in Alabama, but we lag behind most states in promoting this expansion. Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee have passed legislation requiring private insurance reimbursement for telemedicine services. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama is to be applauded for voluntarily providing reimbursement for several major types of telemedicine services. To fully take advantage of this technology, Alabama needs to enhance reimbursement and expand broadband access.
- Alabama needs to authorize a type of rural hospital with only a few beds where these can financially survive without threatening existing rural hospitals. Currently, hospitals with fewer than 15 beds cannot be licensed in Alabama. Such facilities exist in many rural areas in other states, including Mississippi and Tennessee. The national trend is moving to small bed count rural hospitals that utilize telemedicine access and have patient transfer agreements with more comprehensive medical centers. Alabama's health care

stakeholders also need to assist our rural hospitals in developing new streams of revenue.

- Rural county residents and officials can become more involved in local health care by establishing a county health coalition, similar to the Coalition for a Healthier Escambia County. These coalitions can have members from hospitals, physicians, dentists, mental health, public health, EMS, dialysis, education, law enforcement, domestic counseling, county and city government, the religious community, local businesses, etc. Together, local health issues and needs are identified and this coalition works together with a loud voice to secure what is needed. It is possible that such a coalition could expand its interests and activity beyond health care to include other areas of local need.

The Alabama Rural Health Association works for the preservation and enhancement of health to rural citizens of Alabama. For additional information, contact ARHA at 334-546-3502 or [arha@arhaonline.org](mailto:arha@arhaonline.org). ■



# 2017 Convention Agenda

ACCA 89th Annual Convention

August 22-24, 2017

Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, Ala.



## Monday, August 21

1:00

Golf Tournament (*Lunch at Noon*) Gulf Shores Golf Club

1:00-7:00

Fishing Expedition  
Reel Surprise Charter Docks

## Tuesday, August 22

9:30-5:00

Affiliate Meetings

- 9:30 a.m.  
ACEA Membership Meeting
- 1 p.m.  
ACAA Membership Meeting
- 3 p.m.  
AAND Membership Meeting
- 4 p.m.  
AAEM Board/Membership Meeting

11:00-5:00

Registration Desk Open

11:00-6:30

Exhibit Showcase

11:00-12:00

ACCA Board of Directors Meeting

12:00-1:00

Strolling Lunch in the Exhibit Hall

1:00-5:00

CROAA Education Meeting

2:00-3:00

ACCA Workers' Compensation and  
Liability Insurance Funds Meeting

3:00-4:00

Minority Issues Committee Meeting

5:00-6:30

Opening Reception in the Exhibit Hall

## Wednesday, August 23

7:30 - 8:30

Convention Breakfast

7:30 - 3:30

Informational Tables

7:45 - 8:30

Nominating Committee Meeting

8:00-11:30

Registration Desk Open

8:30-12:00

Opening General Session

- **Welcome and Announcements**,  
*Chris Elliott, Chair, Baldwin County Commission*
- **Get in the Game: Looking Forward**, *Governor Kay Ivey*
- **Get in the Game: Welcoming Alabama's New Attorney General**, *Steve Marshall, Attorney General, State of Alabama*
- **Get in the Game: Economic Development**, *Kenneth Boswell, Director, ADECA*
- **Get in the Game: Voices from the County Courthouse**
- **Report of the Nominating Committee**

12:00-1:15

County Agents Kitchen Lunch

1:30 - 4:45

Afternoon General Session

- **Candidates for U.S. Senate**
- **Get in the Game: The Future of Alabama's Prisons**, *Commissioner Jeff Dunn, Alabama Department of Corrections; Meredith Barnes, Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles*
- **Rural Healthcare Needs in Alabama**, *Dale Quinney & Farrell Turner, Alabama Rural Health Association*
- **Gamechanger: Coffee County Capital Improvement Plan**, *Randy Tindell, Coffee County Engineer*
- **By the Numbers: Impact of County Population Shifts**, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director*

3:15-5:00

Sheriffs Breakout Session

5:00-5:30

Resolutions Committee Meeting

# 2017 Convention Agenda

ACCA 89th Annual Convention

August 22-24, 2017

Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, Ala.



## Thursday, August 24

7:30 - 8:30

### County Agents Kitchen Breakfast

8:30- 11:45

Breakout Sessions

Commissioners and Engineers

Breakout Session

- **ATRIP-2: What's Next?**, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director*
- **Federal Infrastructure Plans and the Future of Federal Funds**, *Kevan Stone, NACo*
- **Use of Federal Funding for Counties**, *Ed Phillips, ALDOT*
- **Solid Waste Revisions**, *Randy Tindell, Coffee County Engineer*

Commissioners and

Administrators Breakout Session

- **Alabama Veterans**, *Paula Stokes, U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Commissioner George Bowman, Jefferson County*
- **Implementing "Amendment 4,"** *Terri Reynolds, Director of Public Affairs, ACCA*
- **Implementing Medicaid Coverage for Inmates**, *Morgan Arrington, Attorney, ACCA*

Engineers Breakout Session

- **Engineers Licensure Board Update**, *Griffin Pritchard, BELS*
- **Unveiling the New Website**, *Houston Matthews, Madison Co.*
- **Innovative Bridge Projects**, *Brian Keierleber, NACE President*
- **ATRIP Final Details**, *Ed Austin, ALDOT*

Administrators Breakout Session

- **Snazzy Traveler**, *Bob Minnigan*
- **Legislative Reform of the Department of Examiners**, *Representative Chris Pringle*
- **Litigation on Excess Funds and Implementation of New Law**, *Ken Webb, Attorney, Webb & Eley, P.C.*
- **RSA Reporting Changes**, *Caroline C. Boyd, RSA*

AAEM and AAND Breakout Session

- **A Career in EMA**, *Art Faulkner, Retired Director, Alabama EMA*
- **Web EOC**, *Jeff Byard, Alabama EMA*
- **Virtual Alabama**, *Phillip Henderson, Virtual Alabama*

AAEM Breakout Session

- **A Project in Mobile**, *Dale Dickens, Alabama Forestry Commission*
- **ALGTI Certification**, *Jeff Byard, Alabama EMA*
- **Legislative Update**

AAND Breakout Session

- **Legislative Update**
- **Adjustment to 9-1-1 Rates in 2018**, *Leah Missildine, Executive Director, Alabama 9-1-1 Board*
- **ANGEN Status Update**, *Alan Campbell, Executive Director, Shelby County 9-1-1*

CROAA Breakout Session

- **Working with Counties**, *Vernon Barnett, Commissioner, ADOR*
- **Digital Delivery of Tangible Personal Property**, *Joe Garrett, Deputy Commissioner, ADOR*
- **Contractor Sales Tax Exemption for Certain Projects**, *Rouen Reynolds, ADOR*
- **Non-Profit Exemption Reporting Process and 2017 United Way Legislation**, *Rouen Reynolds, ADOR*
- **MAT System/One Spot Committee Roundtable**

12:00-1:15

Convention Luncheon Honoring 2016-17 President Bill Strickland

1:30 - 5:00

Afternoon General Session

- **Report from North Jackson Street**, *Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA*
- **Get in the Game: How, When, and Where**, *Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA*
- **Awards Ceremony**
- **ACCA Business Session**

6:30

**President's Banquet** Honoring 2017-18 President Steve McKinnon

8:30

**President's Inaugural Celebration Dance** featuring the MAXX Band



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# County-by-County Population Trends, 2010-2040

Alabama County Population Change, 2010-2040

Winning coaches know they have to take the long view and build a program if they really want to get in the game. For county leaders, population trends are an essential part of that long view.

Fortunately, the University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research has recently released county-by-county population estimates through 2040.

If you look no further than the state-level data, the state's outlook for the coming decades falls somewhere short of fascinating. As a whole, Alabama's population is projected to grow slowly for the next 20+ years, swelling by about 500,000 people (11.3 percent), according to researchers.

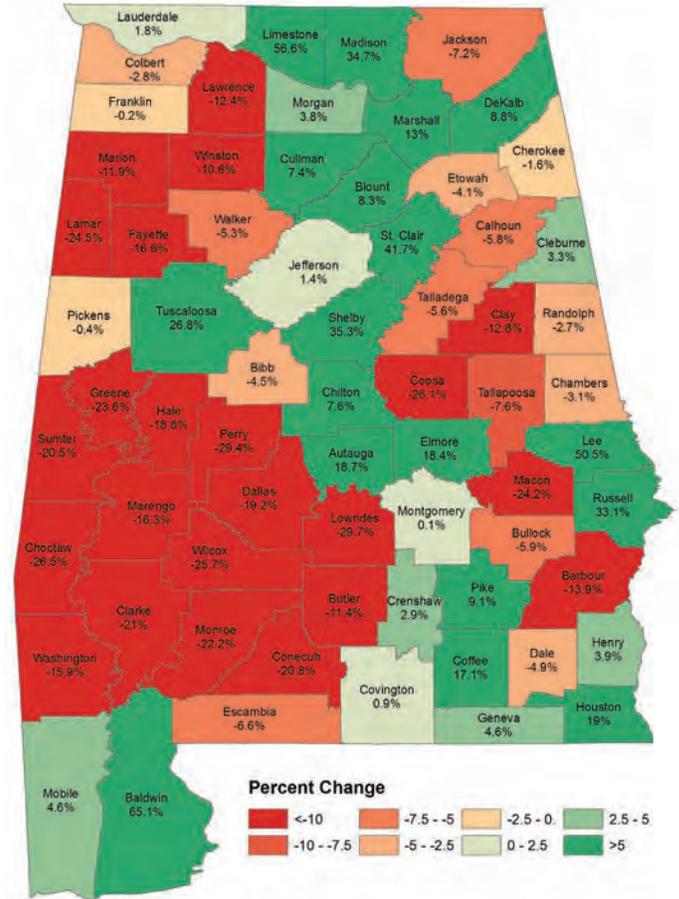
An entirely different and much more dynamic picture emerges when you drill down to the local level.

County-level projections for 2040 generally tell two stories: metro-area growth and rural decline. Individual counties can expect swings as big as 65 percent growth (Baldwin Co.) on one side and 30 percent decline (Lowndes Co.) on the other.

County leaders know that change in either direction means challenges. Some commissioners will wrestle with traffic congestion and more people clamoring for public services of all sorts. Others will have just as many miles of road as ever, but fewer dollars to maintain them with because of population-driven funding allocations.

Researchers said the numbers projected in Alabama mirror a nationwide trend of population losses in counties that are outside large metropolitan areas, which has also been the pattern in the Yellowhammer State.

In these latest projections, growth is concentrated in about 40 percent of Alabama's counties, basically those that boast faster-recovering economies, solid employment forecasts and the highest or most-improved



Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama, March 2017

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quality of life, said Viktoria Riiman, socioeconomic analyst at the university.

Taken together, metro-area counties are expected to grow 16.2 percent by 2040, with an average decline of 3 percent everywhere else during the same time period.

Looking at the line-up of 10 largest counties in 2010 and 2040:

- Limestone County is projected as the biggest mover, jumping from No. 16 to No. 9 and knocking Etowah County out of the top 10.
- Jefferson County will stay on top; Madison County will leapfrog to No. 2 over Mobile County.
- Unprecedented growth in the Daphne-Fairhope-Foley area will help Baldwin County advance three notches to the No. 4 spot.
- With continued growth, Shelby County is projected to hold steady as the fifth-largest.

The 2010 Census indicated that only Greene County numbered fewer than 10,000 people. By 2040, it is expected to remain the smallest, with four others (Lowndes, Perry, Coosa and Wilcox counties) also dipping below the 10,000 mark.

Focusing back on the statewide picture for a moment, total population is expected to grow 3-4 percent per decade, which is similar to Alabama's pattern in the 1980s. In contrast, Alabama's growth in the 1990s came in at about 10 percent, dropping to 7.5 percent in the 2000s, researchers said.

According to Riiman's analysis, three big

factors driving these upcoming years of slow growth are declining births, more people leaving Alabama than are moving in and aging baby boomers. ■

**GET IN THE GAME**

**Wednesday, Aug. 23**  
**"BY THE NUMBERS: IMPACT OF COUNTY POPULATION SHIFTS"**  
*Sonny Brasfield,*  
*ACCA Executive Director*  
 Afternoon General Session

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2017 Regular Session of  
the Alabama Legislature

# COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



England



Ward



Pittman



Scott



Wood



Hurst



Beasley



Blackshear



Waggoner

*County leaders this year successfully advocated for these ACCA Legislative Priorities, each one an "action item" from the Alabama County Platform. Once again, these new protections and enhancements of county government would not exist without the combined efforts of 67 counties speaking with One Voice.*

## **MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR INMATES**

**Act 2017-298 by Rep. England and Sen. Ward**

Currently, inmates that enter county jails or juvenile detention facilities forfeit their Medicaid eligibility under the law. This ACCA Priority Bill provides that persons who enter county custody as Medicaid participants will have their benefits automatically reinstated when treated for medical or other eligible programs at in-patient facilities. The inmate must be in the Medicaid care facility at least 24 hours before the benefits are restored. Counties wishing to participate in the program will have some reporting requirements and will be responsible for paying the state match, which is approximately 30 percent of the Medicaid rate. Details will be provided on the implementation of this act during the ACCA convention in August. The act was effective May 16, 2017, but the benefits will not begin until Jan. 1, 2018.

The Association is grateful to Rep. Chris England and Sen. Cam Ward for their leadership and sponsorship of this important new law that can save revenue and provide needed benefits to inmates and juveniles statewide.

## **SIMPLIFIED SELLERS USE TAX**

**Act 2017-82 by Sen. Pittman and Rep. Scott**

This ACCA priority legislation made several technical changes to the successful Simplified Sellers Use Tax Remittance program, including adding provisions that

the Alabama Department of Revenue will distribute the proceeds of the tax on a monthly, rather than quarterly, basis and that the Department can disclose the names of those companies participating in the program. The other changes are designed to allow the internet-based companies which volunteer to remit the substitute tax to remain in the program, under very specific circumstances, should their relationship with the state of Alabama be changed. The act was effective July 1, 2017.

The Association expresses its gratitude to Sen. Trip Pittman and Rep. Rod Scott, who sponsored this legislation and the original 2013 bill that is expected to provide more than \$10 million to counties during this fiscal year.

### **TAX SALES AND EXCESS FUNDS**

*Act 2017-130 by Sen. Pittman and Rep. Wood*

For the last several years the Association has worked to clarify the procedures for the distribution of proceeds of the so-called "overbid" for those properties that are sold for unpaid taxes. Earlier amendments to the statute have led to litigation regarding open tax years. This ACCA priority bill confirmed prior distributions made by county officials and clarified the specific requirements that are to be followed when distributing the moneys or transferring them to the county general fund. The Association will provide details on this new law to county administrators during the ACCA Annual Convention. The act was effective on July 3, 2017.

The Association is grateful to Sen. Trip Pittman for his leadership in making repeated revisions to this confusing statute and to former Calhoun County Commissioner and Rep. Randy Wood for his sponsorship in the House of Representatives.

### **BID THRESHOLD FOR REPAIR OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT**

*Act 2017-466 by Rep. Hurst and Sen. Beasley*

The Alabama Competitive Bid Law exempts certain expenditures for repair parts and the repair of heavy

equipment costing \$15,000 or less. However, the repair of heavy-duty equipment often exceeds the \$15,000 threshold limit, requiring the county to go through the competitive bid process. This often results in lost time and delays at the county level. This bill raises the repair exemption threshold from \$15,000 to \$22,500. The new exemption threshold was determined by the rate of inflation applied to the last adjustment to the threshold limit.

This change should make it easier for counties and county engineers to use a more efficient and expedient path for heavy equipment repairs. The new law was part of the Association's priority legislation for the 2017 session and was effective May 26, 2107.

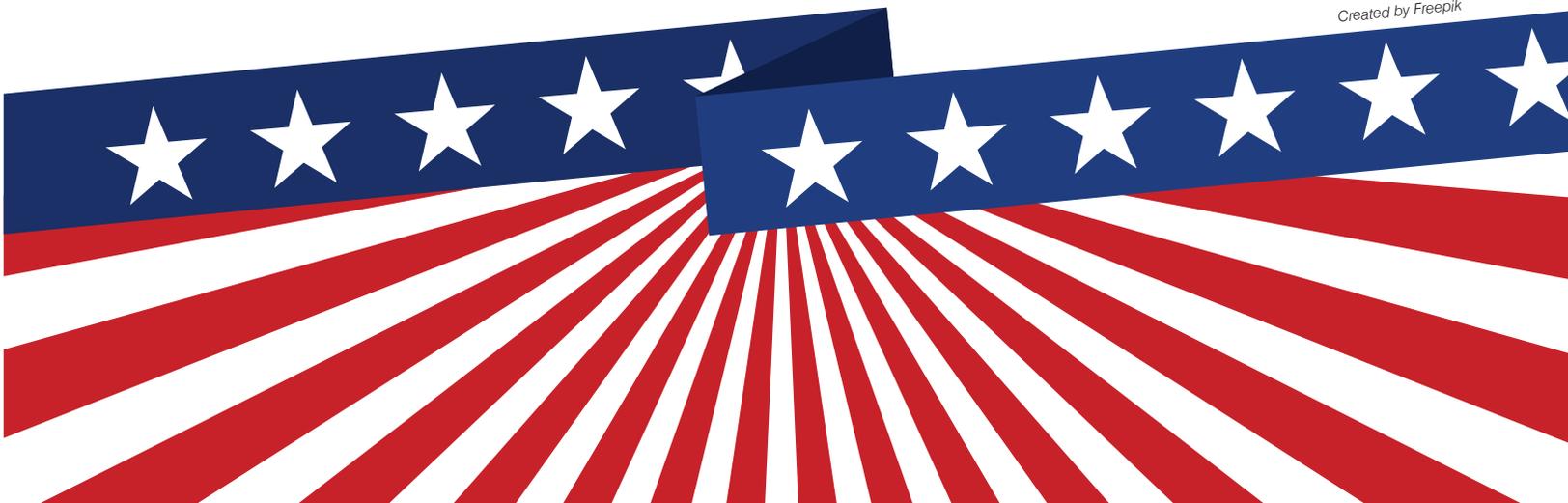
Appreciation is expressed to former Talladega County Commissioner and Rep. Steve Hurst for his sponsorship and leadership in the House as well as Sen. Billy Beasley who helped ensure that the legislation passed on the final day of the session.

### **ALABAMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING INSTITUTE**

*Act 2017-440 by Rep. Blackshear and Sen. Waggoner*

The membership of the Board of Directors of the Alabama Local Government Training Institute has been expanded by this new act. Two county members are added to the board and the minimum number of persons necessary to make a quorum is reduced in this ACCA Priority Legislation. The law also allows the ALGTI Board to award certification to local programs (such as EMA programs) that meet statewide standards. The act was effective May 26, 2017.

The Association expresses its appreciation to Rep. Chris Blackshear for his sponsorship in the House and to Sen. Jabo Waggoner for making the passage of this new law a priority during the last work day of the session.



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## Actual results from March 2017 J.M. Wood Auction

### 2017 Mack, Tri-axle, Allison Automatic Transmission

Six units sold with an average sales price of \$155,833.00. 2018 replacement cost \$143,549.00

### 2017 Mack, Tri-axle, Mack T-300 Manual Transmission

Twenty-four units sold with an average sales price of \$148,208.00. 2018 replacement cost \$131,674.00

### 2017 Mack, Tandem, Allison Automatic Transmission

Four units sold with an average sales price of \$144,000.00. 2018 replacement cost \$126,860.00



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# Task Forces Take on Tough Issues: *Juvenile Justice and Railway Safety*

For David Money and Randy Cole, the 2017 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature had barely ended when they took on new responsibilities to prepare for the next year's session.

During this interim period, they are representing counties on a pair of legislative study commissions.

Money, who is probate judge and commission chairman in Henry County, was nominated by ACCA to serve on the Alabama Juvenile Justice Task Force. This 17-member task force is charged with completing a comprehensive review of the state's juvenile justice system and developing evidence-based policy recommendations.



David Money

Recommendations must comply with four principles. They must:

- Protect public safety
- Hold juvenile offenders accountable
- Contain costs
- Improve outcomes for youth, families and communities in Alabama.

The group, which met for the first time in June, is working with experts from the Pew Charitable Trusts who are providing perspective on reform efforts in other states.



Randy Cole

Roundtable discussions are being planned to gather feedback from additional stakeholder groups such as families, probation officer, judges, crime victim advocates, faith

leaders, prosecutors, educators and others.

This is a high-priority issue for Alabama counties, which will spend \$26 million on juvenile housing, transportation and medical care this year. Recommendations from this group, which can build on work of a similar panel last year, are due to the governor, the legislature and Alabama's chief justice by February 2018.

The juvenile justice task force was created by a legislative resolution sponsored by Sen. Cam Ward, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Ward, who hails from Shelby County, also sponsored a resolution creating the Alabama Commission on Railway Safety.

Cole, engineer in Shelby County, is ACCA's representative on this commission. This 17-member commission includes representation from the Alabama Public Service Commission, Alabama Department of Transportation, Alabama Emergency Management Agency, state and local public safety agencies as well as the railroad industry.

This body is tasked with reviewing current railroad safety laws, regulations and procedures and then recommending improvements to promote and enhance public railway safety in this state. Improvements could include implementing innovative technology, improving highway traffic flow and grade separation, closing redundant grade crossings and increasing funding for the Department of Transportation's Section 130 Program.

The commission must submit findings and recommendations to the legislature early in the 2018 regular session, set to begin January 9. ■

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# Protecting Law Enforcement with Below 100

On an overcast Wednesday in June, two dozen law enforcement officers gathered in Chilton County for training. News out of the nation's capital that morning had been grim, with a congressman shot at softball practice and injuries to the security detail too.

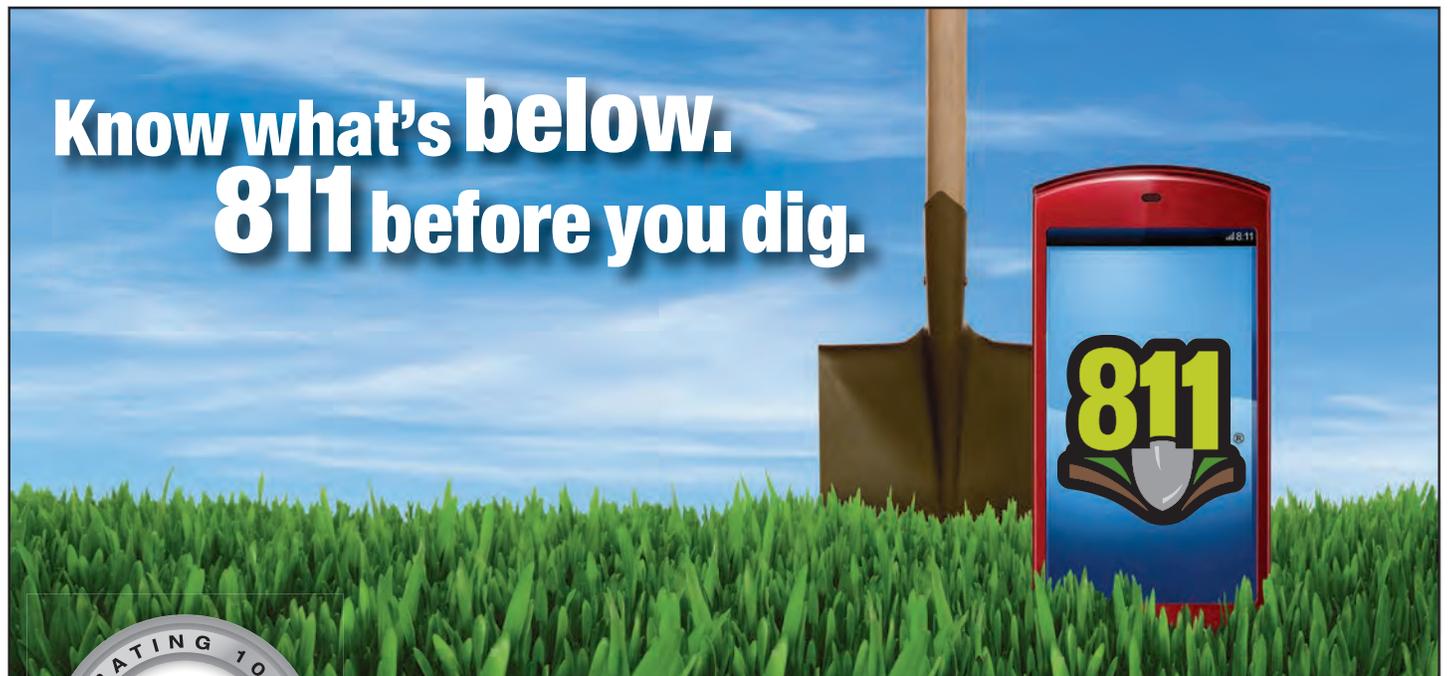
But before the instructor led them in reviewing dash camera footage or talked through statistics about the dangers of their work, they heard a bagpipe version of "Amazing Grace" while seeing images of funeral services for fallen officers.

Hymns may not be standard in safety training for most county employees, and the Below 100 Intensive is no ordinary class. The emotional tug goes along with extremely practical techniques for



*Instructor Douglas Howard, with 20-plus years of law enforcement experience himself, works as law enforcement coordinator in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Alabama. Class participants convened at the Chilton-Clanton Campus of Jefferson State Community College.*

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reducing preventable line-of-duty deaths, techniques known as the five tenets:

- Wear your belt.
- Wear your vest.
- Watch your speed.
- WIN! (What's Important Now?).
- Remember – Complacency Kills.

Below 100 began in 2011, a year marked by 180 line-of-duty deaths. While risk can never be eliminated fully from the work of law enforcement, the program is based on addressing the issues most under an officer's control, and the concepts are increasingly being incorporated into training for new law enforcement officers.

Officers can put on their bullet-proof vests every day, though they cannot control who is armed. Nor can they control how safely or recklessly others drive, but they can wear their seatbelts every time and train themselves how to exit a vehicle quickly. They can control the speed of their own vehicles, giving themselves more time to react to the unexpected, say when a kid on a bicycle darts in front of the patrol car.

On the day of the class, the year-to-date count for line-of-duty deaths nationally was 61. Data shows that 23 of those deaths were from gunfire, and another 23 were auto-related, which seemed to surprise some class members. In fact, 18 of the last 20 years, the leading cause of death has been vehicle-related, said instructor Douglas Howard, U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District.

Collectively, the class of 24 – representing state, county, municipal and tribal police – had more than 350 years of law enforcement experience. The Chilton County Sheriff's Office hosted the training in partnership with ACCA's self-insurance funds.

"Douglas did an excellent job of instruction and opened the eyes of the tenured staff. This rekindled our drive to advise and mentor the younger class of law enforcement officers working here for the Sheriff's Office and encouraged us to take a second look at ourselves also," said Chief Deputy Gerald Mims, who recommended the Below 100 Intensive for other law enforcement agencies.

"It helps a lot," said Sgt. Dewayne Sanders from Dallas County. "I just wish maybe the whole department could go through."

Class members were encouraged to share what they had learned with their colleagues, and Howard was pleased with the session. "I think it went well," he said. "A lot of them probably buckled up on the way home." ■

## What is Below 100?

*Created by the law enforcement community, Below 100 works to permanently*

*eliminate preventable line-of-duty deaths and injuries through innovative training and awareness.*

*The last year the number of line-of-duty officer deaths was below 100 was 1944.*



## How can I get Below 100 training in my county?

*Alabama sheriffs and ACCA's self-insurance funds have partnered to host Below 100 Intensive and Train-the-Trainer sessions throughout the state over the last several years, and there is no registration fee for participants. To schedule a Below 100 class in your area, visit [www.below100.org](http://www.below100.org) or contact ACCA and ask for Marcia Collier (334-263-7594 // [mcollier@alabamacounties.org](mailto:mcollier@alabamacounties.org)).*

*To count toward the 2016-17 Safety Incentive Discount Program (SIDP), the training must be led by a certified Below 100 instructor and must occur prior to Oct. 31, 2017.*

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## COUNTY FAMILY FEATURE



# An Albritton Family Tradition: *Do What You Can*

If some things are meant to be, then Bill Albritton was bound to serve in local government sooner or later. Public office is a family tradition, and he is doing what he can to see it continue.

He freely chose a path to becoming the fourth generation of Albrittons elected by the people of Wilcox County, though he is the first to serve as a district commissioner.

"For a long time there, there was nearly always an Albritton in county government," said the commissioner, whose father, great uncle, grandfather and great-grandfather all served in county-wide office at intervals off and on as far back as 1900. His own father was sheriff for six years and then probate judge for a dozen more.

Compared to some aspiring officeholders, Albritton went in with

fewer illusions. He knew he would be called to make personal sacrifices.

"It's not for everybody, and sometimes I wonder if it's for me, but



*Family photos courtesy of Peggy Albritton Terry*

**Commissioner Bill Albritton, right, completed the Alabama Local Government Training Institute's Level I program in 2013.**

everybody has to do what they can," he said, noting that he was always interested in public affairs from being around his father. He is the third of four siblings but the only one to hold office.

"I don't think it was ever an obligation to 'carry on the family business,'" explained older sister Peggy Terry. "It was ingrained in us for people to step up and do what you can."

Initially, doing what Albritton could meant serving in Camden's municipal government much as their father had. Then in 2013, the governor tapped the city councilman and small business owner to fill a vacancy on the county commission.

Wilcox County is part of Alabama's often struggling Black Belt region, but there have been bright spots. The Gee's Bend quilters have become world famous for their unique artistry, and just a few years ago Golden Dragon Copper USA Inc. opened in the Thomasville/West Wilcox Industrial Park, with a payroll that today numbers about 300.

"Roads and bridges – that's my No. 1 call," the commissioner said, ticking off other projects and challenges such as rebuilding public trust in county government and establishing a water authority. County buildings need significant repairs, including a new air conditioner for the courthouse annex. "Those are major things for us," he said.

**William Wood ("Bill") Albritton**

County Commission | 2013 to present  
Camden City Council | 3 terms

**Commissioner Albritton's Father  
Felix Reginald Albritton Jr.**

Probate Judge | 1977-89  
Sheriff | 1971-77  
Camden City Council (1948-64)  
& Mayor (1965-70)

**Commissioner Albritton's Grandfather  
Felix Reginald "Reg" Albritton Sr.**

Probate Judge | 1941-42 (after his untimely death, his brother Clifford "Clip" Albritton finished out this term)  
Sheriff | 1936-40 (succeeded his father)



*Felix Reginald Albritton Jr. in his sheriff's uniform.*



*The family tradition of public service to Wilcox County began with George "Lee" Albritton Sr. (in coat and tie). The bowtie-wearing gentleman at the lower left is Clifford "Clip" Albritton, who completed his late brother's term as probate judge in the 1940s.*

Albritton credits the Association's PLAN 2018 leadership program for helping him look beyond the daily grind. "It's given me a new way of thinking," he said. "There's so much more to being a commissioner than just keeping the roads patched."

If Judge Albritton did not deliberately apprentice his younger son in preparation for public service, he did set an example that is still evident more than a quarter century after his death.

As Terry put it, "He treated everybody the same."

To this day, citizens of Wilcox County will ask the commissioner if Reginald Albritton was his dad, as if trying to confirm his credibility.

"My daddy was known for being able to build some bridges across racial barriers," Albritton said.

Judge Albritton's lengthy career did not necessarily come easily. Leading up to many elections, there would be three generations working on the campaign, headquartered in the living room and dining room of the family home. As for technology, they had a telephone and a typewriter; everything else – including addressing envelopes to every household in the county – was done by hand.

"The grit behind it was my mother," the commissioner recalled. "She could organize."

He and his wife, Lou Anne, have two adult children, though neither of them moved back to the area after finishing college.

If family tradition holds, perhaps they will be able to look back on his years in office and say, as their aunt does of her own father, "There was a sense of pride that he was making the sacrifice to make a better place."

In other words, he did what he could. ■

**Commissioner Albritton's  
Great-Grandfather  
George "Lee" Albritton Sr.**

---

Sheriff | 1900-1904, 1932-36



## Wilcox County Clout

*Considering its small population, you might not expect Wilcox County to qualify as a political powerhouse, but it is native soil for U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey. Ivey is the state's second governor from the county. Benjamin Meek Miller served as chief executive 1931-35.*

*In more recent years, the Bonner family of Camden has been prominent, with Jo serving a decade in Congress and his sister Judy in the president's mansion at the University of Alabama until 2015.*

*"It's pretty amazing to have that much substantial political clout," said County Commissioner Bill Albritton.*



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### Property Insurance

Another important process is well underway for the newly-established ACCA Liability Self-Insurance Fund Inc. – Property Program. This calendar year, the fund's first appraisals of county-owned buildings are being conducted in more than a dozen participating counties in north Alabama.

The fund has contracted with an independent appraisal firm, AssetWorks, to calculate accurate replacement costs for these structures. During 2018, appraisals will be completed in the central portion of the state followed by the southern portion in 2019. Beginning in 2020, appraisals will be conducted on a four-year rotation with 25 percent of counties each year.

If you have any questions or concerns, fund members are encouraged to contact **Marcia Collier** (334-263-7594 // [mcollier@alabamacounties.org](mailto:mcollier@alabamacounties.org)) in the ACCA office rather than the appraisal firm.

### Debt Setoff

The ACCA Debt Setoff Program is a unique service allowing counties (and county-created entities) to recover unpaid debts by intercepting a debtor's state income tax refund. The program reached a new milestone this year, when total dollars returned to counties exceeded \$1.5 million. Solid waste services, water authorities, county hospitals, community corrections and EMS services are just a few examples of entities that may qualify for participation. New entities that would like to participate for the 2017-18 must complete requirements by September 15. If your county is interested in participating in the ACCA Debt Setoff Program or would like to discuss potential eligibility for a county entity, please contact **Chase Cobb** in the ACCA office (334-263-7594 // [ccobb@alabamacounties.org](mailto:ccobb@alabamacounties.org)).

### CROAA

It has been a busy summer for members of the **County Revenue Officers Association of Alabama (CROAA)**, between implementing legislation that passed this year and building relationships with new faces in key state positions. ACCA's Annual Convention will provide opportunities to connect with **Alabama Revenue Commissioner Vernon Barnett**, newly appointed by Gov. Kay Ivey, as well as **Jeff Patterson**, the new chief judge of the **Alabama Tax Tribunal**. Educational sessions will provide actionable information on timely topics including digital delivery of tangible personal property, contractor sales tax exemptions, non-profit exemption reporting process and the 2017 United Way legislation.

*Mark your calendar! CROAA Membership Meeting and Business Session, 4:15 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 22 (at ACCA Convention)*

### AAEM

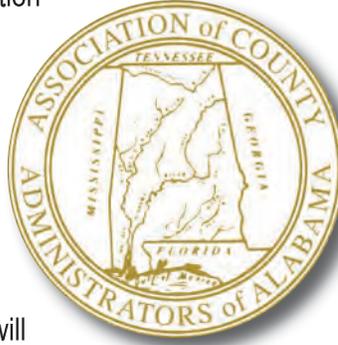
Members of the **Alabama Association of Emergency Managers (AAEM)** can look forward to presentations that are specially focused on EMA's role as the hub that connects all the players. AAEM President **Jonathan Gaddy** will preside over a breakout session Aug. 24 with speakers representing the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, Alabama Law Enforcement Agency and Alabama Forestry Commission as well as discussion of next steps for the Alabama Local Government Training Institute certification process.



*Mark your calendar! AAEM Board and Membership Meeting, 4 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 22 (at ACCA Convention).*

## ACAA

Association of County Administrators of Alabama (ACAA) members are sure to find the 88th Annual ACCA Convention a valuable investment of time. In addition to sessions appealing to staff leaders throughout the county, there's a half-day custom-tailored for administrators and their unique combination of responsibilities. **ACAA President Mary Wood** will preside over a breakout session covering saving money on travel, legislative reform of the Department of Examiners and updates on excess funds that will touch on both litigation and legislative changes made this year. ACAA members will then join commissioners for presentations on Alabama VetNet, using Amendment 4/Administrative Powers and implementing Medicaid coverage for inmates.



*Mark your calendar! ACAA Membership Meeting and Business Session, 1 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 22 (at ACCA Convention). Agenda will include review of 2017 legislative program and opportunity for input on the 2018 program.*

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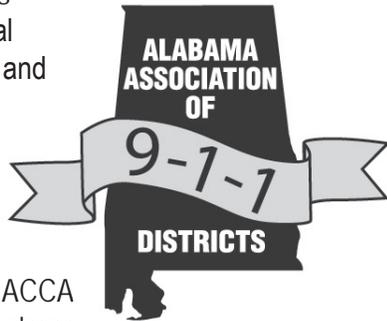


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## AAND

The Alabama Association of 9-1-1 Districts (AAND) Workshop in July grabbed members' attention from the beginning with this question: "Do you deal with difficult people?" and then delivered on practical strategies for effectively interacting with challenging people.

Looking ahead to the ACCA Convention, there's a strong agenda for emergency communication pros, anchored by a session about rates. Executive Director Leah Missildine, Alabama 9-1-1 Board, is set to address "Adjustment in 9-1-1 Rates in 2018" during the AAND Breakout Session before lunch Aug. 24.



*Mark your calendar! AAND Membership & Business Meeting, 3 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 22 (at ACCA Convention).*

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# FAMILY ALBUM



Photos from Alabama Counties

*New trustees for the ACCA-sponsored self-insurance funds attended their first board meetings and a special orientation session at Association headquarters in June. Insurance coverage that is custom-tailored for county government is not possible without the expertise and leadership of county officials and staff leaders. From left: Commissioners Kelvin Cunningham (Talladega) and Skip Gruber (Baldwin), Clerk/Treasurer Kim Creech (Baldwin), Commissioners Charles "Chic" Gary (Dale), Tommy Bowers (St. Clair) and Cattie Epps (Russell); Probate Judge/Chairman Arthur Crawford (Hale), Administrator Meredith Hammond (Marengo) and Commissioner Michael Williams (Greene).*



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*There's no doubt about the Mobile County Commission's stance on this event, as Commissioners Connie Hudson and Jerry Carl pose with the commission's banner and a pair of Mobile Azalea Trail Maids at the Mobile County Recycling Center. The commission marked Earth Day by planting butterfly gardens in two sites and kicking off a "Saving Our Pollinators" campaign.*



FACEBOOK @MOBILECOUNTYAL

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***Please send your photos to ACCA for the Family Album!***

County Commission magazine wants to publish a selection of member photos in every issue to showcase the many ways county government touches the lives of Alabamians and to recognize the dedicated men and women who make counties work. Please send photos (large file sizes preferred) to Jeannie Gaines, ACCA Public Relations Manager, [jgaines@alabamacounties.org](mailto:jgaines@alabamacounties.org).

# FAMILY ALBUM



Photos from Alabama Counties



Jamie Martin/Governor's Office

*Gov. Kay Ivey welcomed supporters of Act 2017-298 to the Capitol for a bill signing ceremony in June. This ACCA Legislative Priority amended Alabama's Medicaid law so that Medicaid benefits are suspended for individuals in county jail custody rather than terminated. Advocates included (standing second from left) Sonny Brasfield, ACCA executive director; Chase Cobb, ACCA governmental affairs specialist; and Sen. Cam Ward, bill sponsor.*



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*Pike County (at left) and Butler County (at right) hosted two of the inaugural sessions of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama (ACEA) Motor Grader Operator Training in June.*

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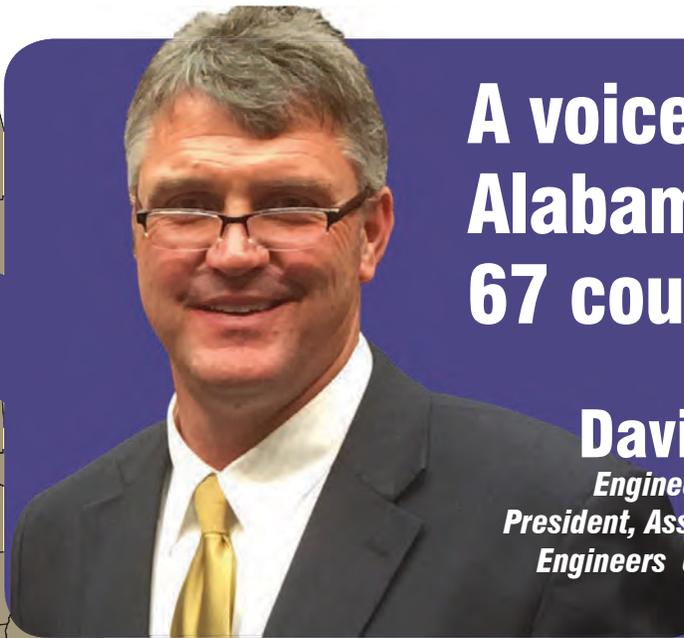
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## A voice from Alabama's 67 counties

**David Palmer**

*Engineer, Franklin County  
President, Association of County Engineers of Alabama (ACEA)*

**Q** As you come to the end of your term as ACEA president, what stands out to you when you think back over the last year?

**A** The last year has been a very productive year for county engineers in my opinion. The completion and addition of the Pavement Preservation section to the already invaluable County Road Design Policy was a great accomplishment. County engineers also worked diligently with ALDOT materials and tests personnel to improve and adopt positive changes to the state specifications, especially those that apply to full-depth reclamation. Two other notable accomplishments this past year were the completion and adoption of a new County Road Maintenance Certification Policy and a mutual agreement to

expand the use of “force account” work on Federal-Aid projects. These new policies and agreements stand out in my mind as benchmark accomplishments that will provide tremendous benefits and cost savings to counties moving forward. These improvements are a direct result of the cooperation and collaboration by many individuals, representing a variety of departments, across several political boundaries. It is a credit to the hard work and dedication of county engineers, ALDOT personnel, and FHWA representatives who chose to work together to provide a better quality of life for the citizens of the great state of Alabama. I want to thank all those involved for your hard work and helpful contributions to this important effort.

**Q** What can you say about the leadership role your fellow engineers played in the 2017 effort to enact legislation raising revenue for roads and bridges?

**A** County engineers have worked very hard for several years to try and get additional revenue. I believe the 2017 session was sort of a culmination of those efforts that was more focused and better organized as a result of the coordination and leadership of the ACCA. It is a tough balancing act for county engineers to run their departments and play a role in political action. Most county engineers are almost overwhelmed with the responsibilities that come with the design, construction and maintenance of hundreds of bridges and hundreds of miles of roads with, by the way, very little help. That being said, a tremendous amount of gratitude is owed to those county engineers that find the time and energy to step up and do it all so well.

**Q** Because legislation was not passed this session, the condition of county roads and bridges will continue to decline. What's the next step in this quest?

**A** We all should ask ourselves three questions. The first question is: *At what level of service should a given transportation network be maintained?* The next question should be: *Is that network being maintained in the most efficient manner possible?*

If the second question is answered in some form of “yes,” then the last question should be: *Does the current tax rate provide a consistent and stable funding source that will allow for a reasonable level of service at the lowest possible cost?*

Stopgap spending is the result of not providing a consistent and stable funding source. Stopgap spending only occurs when the system is in a totally failed condition, and it is the absolute worst and most expensive method of maintaining anything. To make

matters worse, stopgap spending usually comes in the form of borrowed money that is paid back over years that usually exceed the life of the improvement. I realize that some may see our efforts thus far as unsuccessful, but I believe we have made notable improvements and positive steps toward eventual success. As we strive we are learning more about the collective answers to the foregoing questions from those we serve. As we move forward in our quest, I believe the answers to these questions are becoming and will continue to become self-evident. It is our job to accept the will of the people we serve and to provide, in a reasonable manner, that system which is demanded.

**Q** What are some other major issues that are on the horizon for county engineers?

**A** Future engineers may have to deal with more intense localized weather events that may result in huge losses that are not widespread enough to allow for federal or state emergency funds (FEMA, ER, etc.), potable water shortages, changing energy sources, technology gaps in rural counties (broadband, smart grids, etc.), growing liability issues and a declining trained workforce.

**Q** With self-driving cars moving from science fiction to reality, what does that mean for local transportation systems?

**A** Not a whole lot in Franklin County! A movement in that direction, in my opinion, will be another step in the destruction of rural America as we know it. The lack of adequate funding and



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many technological advances will push the majority of rural America toward the metropolitan areas where the population density will be greater and the cost to serve each individual is much less.

good thing. Don't get discouraged. Understand that sometimes those things that you believe are so important and so obvious today have a way of changing and adjusting upon further reflection.

**Q** Now that you are preparing to become a "past" president, what advice would you have for those county engineers who will be leading this organization 20 years from now?

**A** For those of us, who have been around for a little while, we know that the wheels of government turn ever so slowly and that political progress occurs at a snail's pace which is, by the way, probably a

**Favorite college football team:** *Seriously?*  
**| Cats or dogs?** *Dogs.* **| Favorite holiday:** *Thanksgiving.* **| No. 1 quality you look for in colleagues?** *Sense of humor* **| First paying job?** *Palmer Truss Company.* **| Dine in or eat out?** *Eat out.* **| As a child, I wanted to be \_\_\_\_ when I grew up.** *Superman!.* **| The next thing I want to binge-watch is** *Ancient Aliens.* **| If I had a whole day completely free of commitments and obligations, I would spend it** *going fishing.*

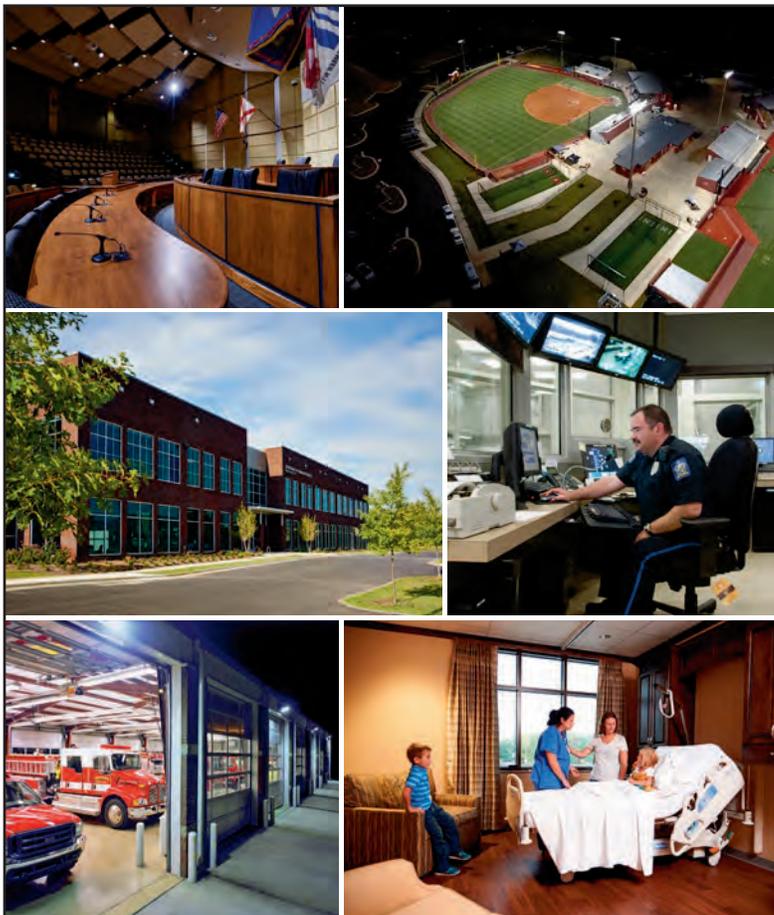
laziness which destroys the soul, not to mention making your wife angry. Be innovative, be humble, be compassionate, be tough, and be tenacious. The late Jim Valvano

Be persistent but be patient. We are engineers and every problem to us is just another opportunity to excel. Don't let yourself get too comfortable. Comfort leads to complacency which leads to

said that there are three things you should do every day: You should laugh, you should think, and you should cry. He also said, "Don't give up ... don't ever give up." I believe he nailed it!

**Q** What does "67 counties, One voice" mean to you?

**A** It obviously implies power in numbers. But, I think to me, it means that we are all trying to accomplish the same result. That result being a better quality of life for all those we serve. I'm a firm believer that there is no government entity that is more capable of understanding and providing for the people than local government. That being said, a powerful and unified local government voice should always reverberate throughout all levels of government. ■



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### COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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