

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONS OF ALABAMA

# COUNTY COMMISSION

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FUEL UP  
FOR A NEW DAY

87th Annual Convention  
AUGUST 18-20, 2015

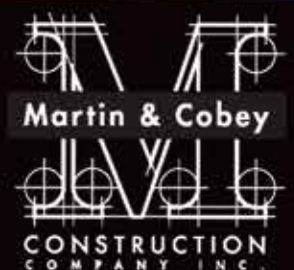


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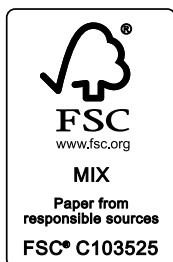


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VOLUME 59, NUMBER 4



***With the Legislature facing a special session to iron out details for a budget, much is unclear about the upcoming year. One thing that is clear is that changes are on the horizon. As county officials and employees it will be important to continue to provide services to county citizens. So let's get ready to Fuel Up for a New Day in Alabama!***



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# President's CORNER



**Hon. Merceria Ludgood**  
President

A handwritten signature of Merceria Ludgood in black ink, written in a cursive style.

**Our counties &  
our state still  
need us to be  
pioneers**

**Though we are not  
promised the full fruits  
of our labors**

It seems like only yesterday that I assumed duties as president of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. This year has been bittersweet; we have accomplished much but some of our members and some of our counties have struggled with difficult challenges, both personally and professionally. Through it all, we bear one another's burdens and we bounce back, continuing to do the work needed in our respective communities.

I firmly believe that my life's journey is directed by God, that every stop along the way is intentional and that I am to learn from those stops, whether pleasant or not. This tour of duty as ACCA president is no different. Some lessons are new; others serve to reinforce some things I already knew, yet others suggested some new trails for me and for ACCA.

These last 12 months have reminded me of some of the characteristics that make ACCA the effective and respected organization it is. First, we learned long ago to dwell on the things that unite us and not the things that have the potential to divide. At some point during this year it dawned on me that, for the most part, I have no idea about which commissioners are Democrats and which are Republicans. Why is that significant? Because it says that our focus is neither party nor politics, it is what is best for Alabama counties.

Similarly, our ideal of "67 Counties, One Voice" has added meaning. We can speak with one voice but some of us are sopranos, some altos, others tenor, bass or baritone. All different voices, but in

concert, we read from the same page of music creating the harmony that defines our work.

This has been a tough legislative year for our state generally and counties in particular. Never have I been more aware of the sacred trust which citizens give their elected officials. The vote is the engine of democracy; without its meaningful exercise democracy becomes an empty promise. Having someone vote for you is a singular honor, and I believe you should treat it as such. That sacred trust demands that we tell them the "truth"—not a political truth—but the truth about whatever the issue, even if it is an inconvenient truth. One example of that truth is that our state does not have sufficient revenue to run its operations with the level of service that our residents have the right to expect.

That sacred trust demands that we act expeditiously and not "kick the can" down the road. To mix a metaphor, sooner or later the chickens come home to roost. We were not elected to delay the hard decisions. Rather, we were elected to lead. Notwithstanding, this year has reminded me of the importance of knowing when to "fall on your sword" and when to retreat so you can live to fight another day. Despite the critical need for enhanced revenue for roads and bridges, we had to accept that due to factors beyond our control, this was simply not the time to make that issue the centerpiece of our legislative agenda. I know that Ray Long will take up the challenge next year and I look forward to working with him as he leads our efforts on this most important issue.

While our jurisdiction is county government, our influence is much broader. When I mentioned new trails, perhaps it is time that we use that influence as pioneers. During his presentation at a 2015 ALGTI session, Keivan Deravi, dean of the Auburn University Montgomery College of Public Policy and Justice Administration, said the following: “pioneers get the arrows and the settlers get the land.” My most relaxing pastime is watching old Westerns. If you can recall, the pioneers were those who came into unexplored and unsettled land and prepared it for those who would

come later. Some of them died in the process, never fully enjoying the

“

***We still need pioneers – people who are willing to venture out into uncharted territory, who have the courage of their convictions, whose only motivation is to do what is right, to achieve the greater good.***

”

fruits of their labors. We still need pioneers – people who are willing to venture out into uncharted territory, who have the courage of their convictions, whose only motivation is to do what is right, to achieve the greater good. They are the people

who are willing to do the right thing, the hard thing that might cost them an election. For the pioneers it really doesn’t matter because they have the assurance they left it better than they found it, that they have blazed a trail for the “settlers.”

Is it time for us to “take the arrow,” so that the settlers, those who entrusted us with their vote, can have the quality of life to which they can reasonably aspire?

Thank you for the confidence you placed in me by electing me to serve as ACCA president.

It has been an honor and a privilege. “May God bless and keep each of you” is my prayer. ■

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**Sonny Brasfield**  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Sonny Brasfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light background.

## Leadership key to future of 67 Counties, One Voice

### ACCA membership revised election process in 2014

Near the close of the convention in August, the Association will once again elect its leaders for the next 12 months – officers and members of the Board of Directors and Legislative Committee. But this year's votes will be counted under a more formal election procedure, envisioned during the Association's most-recent strategic planning process and adopted last December.

In fact, the changes are already underway as the deadline has passed for those wishing to seek the position of Vice President or Minority Director. The Association's Nominating Committee will interview the qualified candidates at the Association's headquarters building in late July and vote on its recommended officers for 2015-16 at the August Convention.

The slate, which will include Morgan County's Ray Long as the new Association President and Bill Strickland of Marshall County as President-Elect, will be announced to the membership at the close of the Opening General Session and will be subject to vote of the membership during the Business Session on the convention's last afternoon.

Three candidates have indicated interest in serving as Vice President. In just two short years one of them – Sumter County Commissioner Drucilla Jackson, Chilton County Commissioner Allen Caton and Dale County Commissioner Steve McKinnon – is expected to be ready to assume the position of President of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama.

Choctaw County Commissioner Tony Cherry is the only candidate to qualify for Minority Director. As the current Minority Director, Cherry would be serving his second year on the ACCA Board of Directors in this role and would also chair the

12-member Minority Issues Steering Committee.

The new election procedures provide that the Nominating Committee can only consider officer candidates who qualified by the July 6 deadline. Any other candidates wishing to seek election as Vice President or Minority Director can only do so by being nominated from the floor during the Business Session.

Approved as part of a bylaw revision last December, the formal procedure implements one of the goals identified in the Association's existing long-range plan, "Looking Backward...Pressing Forward." A change in the election process was detailed as a unifying step to fully "involve the membership of the Association" by ensuring that "each district elects only those board and legislative committee members who are dedicated to actively participating in the leadership role."

Also in the Business Session, counties will caucus by district to elect the ACCA Board of Directors and Legislative Committee. Each county has one vote for the district's board representative and one vote for the district's Legislative Committee representative. A county can only vote using the official ballot that will be distributed to commissioners present at the Business Session. Counties without commissioners present at the Business Session will not be eligible to participate in the election.

The Nominating Committee representative for each district will preside over the district caucuses during the Business Session – distributing ballots, conducting the election process and counting votes. The committee representative is authorized to resolve any conflicts that may arise during the caucus meetings.

The deadline for those wishing to qualify for election to the Board or

Legislative positions is getting close – Thursday, Aug. 6. This date is two weeks prior to the Business Session and will provide the ACCA staff with an opportunity to prepare for the convention and will also afford the candidates time to make contact with the counties in their districts.

The form to officially qualify is available at [www.alabamacounties.org/about-acca/candidates/](http://www.alabamacounties.org/about-acca/candidates/) and must be completed and returned to the ACCA office by close of business on Aug. 6.

It is important to recognize that the new procedures prohibit nominations from the caucus floor if there is at least one qualified candidate for a district position. Should there be no announced candidates for a particular position in a district, the Nominating Committee representative will accept nominations from the caucus floor. Otherwise, all counties must choose from the candidates who qualified by the Aug. 6 deadline.

Although the official ballot will not be distributed to each county until the Business Session, each member attending the convention will receive a list of all the candidates for Board and Legislative Committee positions during the registration process.

This listing will ensure that all counties have ample time to decide how to cast their vote.

Once the district ballots are counted, a runoff will be necessary if no candidate receives a majority of the vote. A special runoff ballot will be available and distributed at that time.

The new election procedures are certainly not designed to make the Association's elections more confusing or complicated, but to help produce a slate of leaders that can effectively direct the growing organization in its mission to ensure that all 67 counties in Alabama speak with one strong, unified and consistent voice.

In the past two decades the Association's strength has been the commitment and vision of its leadership, and this more formal election process is consistent with continuing that remarkable level of service. This year's election will clearly present a time of transition. All commissions are encourage to be patient with their colleagues and with their fellow commissioners from throughout the state as we work to implement the vision from our existing long-range plan.

All-the-while, the process of developing an updated strategic plan for the Association is also ongoing. In a few short months, new recommendations will be formulated and presented to the membership for approval.

The new initiatives – whatever they turn out to be – will also require support from the membership as the Association continues to represent 67 unique county governments speaking with ONE Voice. ■

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**Mary E. Pons**  
Association Counsel

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary E. Pons', written over a light blue background.

## Open Meetings changes generally positive for counties

### Revisions to serial meetings, economic development & hiring department heads

**A**labama's Open Meetings Law has now been amended for the first time since enacted in 2005. See, Act 2015-340. The amendments, which take effect Aug. 1, 2015, make mostly minor changes to clarify the law's original intent after recent appellate decisions clouded proper application of some provisions. It remains to be seen whether the changes made will clarify the issues of concern to the Alabama Press Association. But clearly, they apply to county governing bodies, meaning county officials, administrators and attorneys need to familiarize themselves with these provisions and adjust policies and procedures to comply with the law.

Many of the amendments are positive for local government, providing more latitude in the area of economic development discussions and interviewing for department head positions. And technical changes hopefully remove any doubt that all aspects of the law – **including notice and public meeting** – apply not only to meetings (or deliberations) of the full governing body, but to “all standing, special, or advisory committees or subcommittees of, or appointed by, the body.”

The most significant change is specific language to define – and prohibit – “serial meetings.” While the Press Association (and ACCA staff) had consistently maintained that these gatherings were prohibited under the law, a 2012 Alabama Supreme Court opinion called into question whether all such gatherings violated the law. To address these concerns, Act 2015-340 specifically provides that serial meetings “shall not be utilized to circumvent any of the provisions of [the law].” Under the act, a serial meeting is a series of

gatherings of two or more members of a governmental body where each of the following applies:

- There is less than a quorum of the full governing body present at each gathering;
- At least one member of the full body attends one or more gatherings in the series;
- The total number of members attending two or more gatherings collectively constitutes a quorum;
- There is no notice or opportunity for the public to attend;
- The participating members deliberate specific matters they expect to come before the full body;
- The gatherings are held for the purpose of circumventing the law;
- At least one of the gatherings occurs within seven calendar days of a vote on any of the matters deliberated.

The Act provides that “gatherings” are not considered serial meetings if there is no deliberation or if they are only to exchange background or educational information. Also, the term “serial meetings” does not include gatherings related to a search to fill department head positions (those positions required to file a Statement of Economic Interests) until the search has been narrowed to three or fewer persons. This provision should prove beneficial for county governing bodies, which have struggled with how to conduct such interviews without violating the law.

It is significant to note that these provisions specifically require that the series of gatherings be held “for the purpose of circumventing the [law].” While it is advisable that



county commissions and other bodies not conduct “serial meetings” as defined in the act, the law sets a fairly high standard of proof for someone alleging a violation.

Another provision helpful to counties is a change in the definition of “meeting” that allows greater latitude to work on economic developments projects during the early negotiations. Existing law provides that social gatherings, conventions and meetings with state or federal officials do not constitute a meeting.

**Ala. Code § 36-25A-2(6)(b).** That section is amended to also provide that “on-site inspections or meetings with applicants for economic incentives or assistance” are not considered meetings, nor are

gatherings to discuss prospects or incentives as long as the discussion “does not include a conclusion as to recommendations, policy, decision, or final action.”

The new act also changes who can bring an action for violation of the Open Meetings Law. The original law provided that *any* Alabama citizen could bring action against a governmental body for an alleged violation. Under Act 2015-340, only citizens impacted by the alleged violation

to an extent greater than the general public can bring action, and the petition must state specifically how the impact is greater. See, **Ala. Code § 36-25A-9.** This section also makes

clear that any civil penalties ordered are payable to the petitioner and there shall be a minimum penalty of \$1.

The enforcement provisions of the Open Meetings Law have been amended to provide that a public official can only be sued once for the same alleged violations. This provision allows parties to join in a lawsuit, but there cannot be separate filings for a single act. Clearly this is another plus for local government, ensuring that officials will only have to defend their actions once in court.

The original law passed in 2005 has generally worked well, and proudly, county commissions have generally not been the target of challenges related to compliance. Counties must now become familiar with these changes to ensure they continue to operate in compliance with the law – and should always look to the staff at the Association for help in working through the requirements of the law. ■

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What » Changes to the  
Open Meetings Act

Who » Mary Pons, ACCA  
Association Counsel

Where » Joint Session  
for Commissioners,  
Administrators & CROAA

When » Morning Breakout  
Session, Thurs., Aug. 20



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## 2015 Regular Session | Alabama Legislature ACCA Bills That Have Become Law



**Chambliss     Lindsey**

### **County Modernization**

**Bill No.**  
SB 96

**Act No.**  
2015-53

**Sponsors**  
Sen. Clyde  
Chambliss & Rep.  
Richard Lindsey

**Impact**  
Modernizes county administration in the areas of contracting with municipalities; commissioner conflicts of interest; self-funded property insurance; bonding for 9-1-1 board and staff; and protecting county-maintained roads that are emergency evacuation routes from annexation.

**Effective**  
July 1, 2015



**Davis     Marsh**

### **County Decision-Making**

**Bill No.**  
HB 193

**Act No.**  
2015-220

**Sponsors**  
Rep. Randy Davis &  
Sen. Del Marsh

**Impact**  
This proposed constitutional amendment would give county government limited decision-making authority to carry out management and administrative activities in certain areas (such as personnel policies) without the need for future local legislation.

**Next Step**  
Statewide vote in  
2016



**Coleman     Scott**

### **Local Constitutional Amendments**

**Bill No.**  
SB 30

**Act No.**  
2015-44

**Sponsors**  
Sen. Linda Coleman  
& Rep. Rod Scott

**Impact**  
This act creates a two-step process for passing local constitutional amendments that would make it more likely that proposed local constitutional amendments would not face a statewide referendum.

**Next Step**  
Statewide vote in  
2016



# News You Can Use

**Gov. Robert Bentley  
signed every ACCA bill that went to  
his desk this session**

*(Signature not needed for proposed  
constitutional amendments)*



**County Modernization  
Local Bidder Preference  
Illegal Drag-Racing Penalties  
Simplified Sellers Use Tax Remittance**

*Photo: Governor's Office*



**Singleton McCampbell**

**Illegal Drag-Racing  
Penalties**

***Bill No.***

**SB 321**

***Act No.***

**2015-318**

***Sponsors***

**Sen. Bobby  
Singleton & Rep.  
A.J. McCampbell**

***Impact***

Intended to reduce  
illegal drag-racing with  
increased penalties for  
drivers, race organizers  
and spectators.

Also provides for  
impounding a vehicle  
that has been involved  
in illegal drag-racing  
activities.

***Effective***

**June 3, 2015**



**Pittman Scott**

**Simplified Sellers  
Use Tax Remittance**

***Bill No.***

**SB 437**

***Act No.***

**2015-448**

***Sponsors***

**Sen. Trip Pittman &  
Rep. Rod Scott**

***Impact***

Incentivizes out-of-state  
retailers (typically web-  
based) to voluntarily  
collect a substitute 8  
percent sales tax on  
items delivered into  
Alabama. The state  
will get 50 percent of  
collections, with cities  
and counties getting  
25 percent apiece,  
distributed according to  
population.

***Effective***

**October 1, 2015**



**McMillan**

**Local Bidder  
Preference**

***Bill No.***

**HB 264**

***Act No.***

**2015-293**

***Sponsor***

**Rep. Steve McMillan**

***Impact***

Gives counties  
additional flexibility  
to do business with  
in-county vendors  
when their price comes  
within 5 percent of the  
lowest responsible bid  
for personal property  
and services. Also  
gives counties up to  
10 percent flexibility to  
favor disadvantaged,  
in-state businesses  
over an out-of-state  
competitor.

***Effective***

**August 1, 2015**



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## Special Session 101

*The Alabama Legislature is expected to return to Montgomery for a special session on budget issues at some point later this year.*

**When does a special session occur?** In Alabama, the governor has sole authority to declare or “call” a special session of the Legislature.

**How long does a special session last?** Special sessions are limited to 12 legislative days (or meeting days) within 30 calendar days. It takes a minimum of 5 legislative days for a bill to pass both houses of the Legislature.

**Can local bills be considered?** The governor’s “call” will identify the subjects that he wants to be considered. If he does not include local bills, it is harder for them to pass.

Leaders in the House and Senate are likely to advise legislators in advance about the likelihood that local bills will be considered. If a local bill is advertised and introduced but never voted on, the county must absorb the lost advertising costs – and re-advertise the proposal for consideration in later sessions.

**How do you advertise a local bill for a special session?** Local bills must be advertised for four consecutive weeks in the local newspaper before introduction.

It is recommended to include a statement that the bill will be introduced “in the next special or general session in which local bills are considered.”

**What if local bills are not in the call?** It takes a 2/3 supermajority

of those voting to pass a bill that is outside the call. If 27 of the 35 senators are voting, the bill would need 18 votes to pass the Senate. And it works the same way in the House. If 99 of the 105 House members are voting, the bill would need 66 representatives to vote in favor.

**What about local constitutional amendments?** Constitutional amendments need a 3/5 supermajority of those elected to pass in special or regular session. In the 35-member Senate, these measures need 21 affirmative votes. In the 105-member House, 63 votes would be needed. ■

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**HUGE 2-Day Contractors' Equipment & Truck Auction**

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Here's your guide to the **2015 Annual Convention**, so your county can ...*

# FUEL UP FOR A NEW DAY

## County impact from state prison changes

When even the tiniest administrative tweak at the state level can have enormous consequences at the local level, it's no surprise that the 2015 ACCA Convention kicks off with a focus on prisons. The new day for jails and prisons could be significantly different from all the days before.

One factor is that legislators passed sweeping prison reforms in 2015, though those changes are on hold until funding is identified. Another factor is the change in leadership at the Alabama Department of Corrections.

As the convention's general sessions begin on Aug. 19, first up is Andy Barbee, a research specialist with the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Barbee, who headed the team of experts brought in to advise Alabama leaders, met with county leaders

### @ the ACCA CONVENTION

When » Morning General  
Session, Wed., Aug. 19

Who » Andy Barbee, The  
Council of State Governments  
Justice Center

Commissioner Jeff Dunn,  
Alabama Department of  
Corrections

at ACCA headquarters early on. Through negotiations that dominated much of the recent legislative session, he was right in the middle – hearing detailed concerns from counties and others interested in the bill.

“Andy Barbee has built a thorough understanding of the

Alabama corrections system,” said Sonny Brasfield, ACCA executive director. “He can do a terrific job of explaining the impact to counties, and he also has the full context of how the bill was changed to address county concerns.”

He will be followed by Jeff Dunn, Alabama's commissioner of corrections.

Appointed by the governor, Dunn began work April 1. An Alabama native, he retired after a 28-year career in the U.S. Air Force where the pilot held numerous leadership positions. At the Pentagon, he was a deputy director.

“It is a top priority for counties to develop a good working relationship with Commissioner Dunn,” said Brasfield. “The ACCA Convention is the biggest single gathering of county officials all year, and we are glad to welcome him.” ■





# Guns: What's new? What's next?

There's no reason to think Alabama legislators are done revising gun laws.

With relatively moderate changes effective Sept. 1, there will definitely be further revisions introduced, said Rep. Chris England.



**England**

Having been at the center of recent gun law negotiations, England is well positioned to brief counties on what's new and what's next in this

area of the law during the Opening General Session of the ACCA Convention.

While sponsoring the 2015 act, England gave significant attention to county concerns. "We are grateful to Rep. England," said Sonny Brasfield, ACCA executive director.

The bill's original focus was to help people regain their gun rights, England said. "I'd like to see an easier process to get all your civil rights restored," he said. The new law will help with restoration of gun rights after an involuntary commitment or criminal conviction.

During negotiations, the legislation grew to specify occasions when minors can legally possess a handgun and to increase locations where handguns are legal for adults.

One of the main areas to watch in 2016 is what owners must do to prohibit firearms on their property. The tension between

business owners – who want strong authority regarding firearms on their premises – and those who want no limitations is unresolved, England said.

Another

big issue he expects to produce significant debate is the future of the so-called "pistol permit." Legislation eliminating the need for a permit in order to

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What » Fuel Up for a New Day: Changes to Alabama's Gun Laws

Who » State Rep. Chris England

When » Morning General Session, Wed., Aug. 19

# Don't delay planning for your next safe room

For people who don't live and breathe emergency management on a daily basis, it might seem surprising that part of preparedness is having plans ready to add a safe room or storm shelter – even if no immediate funding is available.

That's right – in the same way that you need batteries, bottled water, other emergency supplies and emergency plans – counties need to "be ready" to apply for mitigation funds.

"Following a disaster, you have a very short opportunity to apply," said Art Faulkner, Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. "You can't wait until then to start the process."

For both residential and community safe rooms, the application process begins with a letter of intent submitted to the state. At that point, the letter needs to demonstrate that the project is close to "shovel ready," he said. Proof of readiness can include things such as identifying a site or having commitments for the local match, whether cash or in-kind.

At the ACCA Convention, Faulkner will address county officials and employees during the afternoon general session on Wednesday, Aug. 19. He said his goals are to discuss, one, the requirements and regulations that need to be considered on the front end of a

safe room project and, two, the need to have application-ready projects prior to the next disaster.

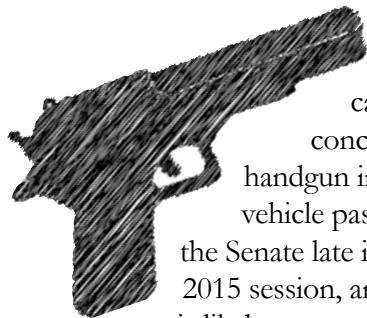
The number of available safe rooms increases all the time, Faulkner said, noting that the larger ones can accommodate as many as 300 people.

After the 2011 tornadoes, the \$59 million in federal funds for this purpose in Alabama helped provide more than 4,000 residential safe rooms and about 300 community safe rooms, according to the Alabama EMA.

There are currently no funds available from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency for "Safe Room" projects. Currently,



# FUEL UP



carry a concealed handgun in a vehicle passed the Senate late in the 2015 session, and it is likely to return.

The ACCA has joined the Alabama Sheriffs' Association in opposing the repeal of the pistol permit law because of law enforcement concerns.

And even though the Senate bill was not seriously considered by the House this session, England predicts that counties and sheriffs will be busy on this issue when the Legislature reconvenes in February. ■

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What » Fuel Up for a New Day: Storm Shelters in Alabama

Who » Art Faulkner, Director, Alabama EMA

When » Afternoon General Session, Wed., Aug. 19

grant funds from previous disasters are obligated to projects. Additional grants for mitigation projects will most likely not be available until after the next presidentially declared disaster. ■

**9** Counties are taking steps every day to improve safety, and nine of them will receive award checks tied to their **measurable results**.

**56** A new service that helps counties **collect** long **overdue debts** is opening the doors to help 56 additional counties.

**29** A total of 29 **continuing education** units are available for county commissioners and staff to earn.

**62** The membership meeting of the ACCA Self-Insurance Funds brings together joint owners representing 62 counties to work on **reducing** insurance **costs**.

**7** Look for sessions filled with practical info and legal advice about seven **new state laws** with significant impact on counties.

**83** Some 83 exhibitors – representing a dozen different kinds of goods and services – will be under one roof. That means county leaders can quickly comparison shop for anything from road materials to inmate medical care, to help provide the **best services** at the **best value** for taxpayers.

When you fuel up, you want good nutrition so **you can do your best**

These numbers begin to capture the convention's **value to counties**



**REASONS YOU don't want to miss your ACCA Convention**

**14** There are 14 different **state and federal agencies** with regular county government contact that will be on-site to provide info and answer questions.

# 2015 Convention Agenda

## ACCA 87th Annual Convention

August 18-20, 2015

Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, Ala.



### Monday, August 17

1 p.m.

Golf Tournament (*Lunch at Noon*)

Gulf Shores Golf Club

1 - 7 p.m.

Fishing Expedition

Reel Surprise Charter Docks

### Tuesday, August 18

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Affiliate Meetings

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

11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Registration Desk Open

11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibit Showcase

11 a.m. - Noon

ACCA Board of Directors Meeting

12 - 1 p.m.

Strolling Lunch in the Exhibit Hall

1 - 5 p.m.

CROAA Education Meeting

- **Municipal Authority in Police Jurisdictions**, *ACCA Staff*
- **Marketplace Fairness Update**
- **Legislative Recap**, *ACCA Staff* (what

passed and what might be back;  
revisions to One Spot)

- **Business Session**

2 - 3 p.m.

ACCA Workers Compensation and Liability  
Insurance Funds Meeting

3 - 4 p.m.

Minority Issues Committee Meeting

5 - 6:30 p.m.

Opening Reception in the Exhibit Hall

### Wednesday, August 19

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Convention Breakfast

7:45 - 8:30 a.m.

Nominating Committee Meeting  
Resolutions Committee Meeting

8 - 11:30 a.m.

Registration Desk Open

8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Opening General Session

- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Prison Reform in Alabama**, *Andy Barbee, Research Specialist, The Council of State Governments Justice Center*
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Alabama's New Prison Commissioner**, *Jeff Dunn, Commissioner, Alabama Department of Corrections*
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Economic Development Incentives for Alabama**, *Greg Canfield, Director, Alabama Department of Commerce*
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: 2035 in Alabama**

- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Changes to Alabama's Gun Laws**, *Rep. Chris England*

- Report of the ACCA Nominating Committee

12 - 1:15 p.m.

County Agents Kitchen Lunch

1:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Afternoon General Session

- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Road Projects and Transportation**
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: The Future of the Local Government Health Insurance Plan**, *William Ashmore, CEO, Alabama State Employees Insurance Board*
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: The Supreme Court Ruling on Marriage Definition**, *Ken Webb, Attorney, Webb & Eley, P.C.*
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Storm Shelters in Alabama**, *Art Faulkner, Director, Alabama Emergency Management Agency*
- **Fuel Up for a New Day: Insuring County Property**, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director*

### Thursday, August 20

7:45 - 8:45 a.m.

County Agents Kitchen Breakfast

8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

**Commissioners Breakout Session**

- **Saving Money Through Reappraisal**, *Don Armstrong, Shelby County Property Tax Commissioner*



# 2015 Convention Agenda

## ACCA 87th Annual Convention

August 18-20, 2015

Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, Ala.



- Important Relationships with Utilities, *Mike Arms, Executive Director, Association of Tennessee Valley Governments*
- Report from North Jackson, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Dir.*
- A County's Cyber Security Scare, *Kellie Graff, St. Clair County Admin.*
- Simplified Sellers Use Tax (Amazon Bill), *ACCA Staff*
- Changes to the Open Meetings Act, *Mary Pons, ACCA Association Counsel*
- Income Tax Set Off Program, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director*

### Engineers Breakout Session

- The Risks of Distracted Driving, *Mike Miyaji, Director of Training, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office*
- Procedural Requirements for Force Account Work on Federal or State Projects, *Brian Aaron, ALDOT Mobile*
- Effective Signage and Stripping for Rural 2-lane Horizontal Curves, *Tim Barnett, ALDOT*
- Operation and Maintenance Agreements for Aging Dams, *Diane Guthrie, State Conservation Engineer, Alabama NRCS*
- Fatality Accident Investigations on County Roads, *Craig Dillard, Webb & Eley, PC*

### Administrators Breakout Session (Before the break)

- Drop in Revenue in Court Costs, *Rich Hopson, Administrative Office of the Courts*

- Examiners Report, *James Hall, Dept. of Examiners*
- Local Bid Preference, *ACCA Staff*

### Administrators Breakout Session

(Combined with Commissioners and CROAA after the break)

- A County's Cyber Security Scare, *Kellie Graff, St. Clair County Admin.*
- Simplified Sellers Use Tax (Amazon Bill), *ACCA Staff*
- Changes to the Open Meetings Act, *Mary Pons, Association Counsel*
- Income Tax Set Off Program, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director*

### AAEM Breakout Session

- Update from the Emergency Management Advisory Council, *Jonathan Gaddy, Calhoun County EMA Director and Anita McBurnett, Marshall County EMA Director*
- Public/Private Partnerships, *Ricky Adams, PIO, AEMA*
- AEMA Regional Mitigation Plans, *Jeff Smitherman, AEMA*
- AEMA Divisions Update, *Brett Howard, AEMA*
- Leadership Through Adversity, *Command Sergeant Major and Medal of Honor Recipient Bennie Adkins*

### AAND Breakout Session

- Refining our 911 Legislation
- Five Years Later: Release of 9-1-1 Tapes Legislation
- Bond Requirements for 9-1-1 Directors and Boards, *James Hall, Dept. of Examiners*

### CROAA Breakout Session (Before the break)

- ATLAS Alabama
- Alabama Taxpayer Identity Protection Program

### CROAA Breakout Session (Combined with Commissioners and Administrators after the break)

- A County's Cyber Security Scare, *Kellie Graff, St. Clair County Admin.*
- Simplified Sellers Use Tax (Amazon Bill), *ACCA Staff*
- Changes to the Open Meetings Act, *Mary Pons, Association Counsel*
- Income Tax Set Off Program, *Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director*

12 - 1:15 p.m.

Convention Luncheon Honoring 2014-2015 President Merceria Ludgood

1:30 - 4:45 p.m.

Afternoon General Session

- Fuel Up for a New Day: ACCA's Future and Team 2021
- Fuel Up for a New Day: ACCA Affiliate Reports
- Awards Ceremony
- ACCA Business Session
- District Caucuses

6:30 p.m.

President's Banquet Honoring 2015-2016 President-Elect Ray Long

8 p.m.

President's Inaugural Celebration Dance, Featuring The Grand Band

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# Property insurance coming soon from ACCA

Thanks to the Alabama Legislature and Gov. Robert Bentley, the Association of County Commissions of Alabama is laying the groundwork to offer a sought-after new insurance service to county government throughout the state.

“The ACCA Self-Insurance Funds have an established track record of providing outstanding risk management services, custom-tailored to the needs of county government in Alabama and at a reasonable price,” said Association Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. “The addition of property insurance is another example of the Association responding to a specific need expressed by members.”

He encouraged county officials and employees who are interested in the new property insurance coverage to attend his presentation “Fuel Up for a New Day: Insuring County Property” at the ACCA Convention. He will speak at 4:15 p.m. on Aug. 19 during a general session.

At that time, he will outline the necessary steps to make this a reality and provide information about when coverage is

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What »  
Fuel Up for a New Day:  
Insuring County Property

Who »  
Sonny Brasfield, ACCA  
Executive Director

When » Afternoon General  
Session, Wednesday,  
August 19

projected to become available.

“In the insurance world, it’s all about evaluating a client’s ‘exposure’ to risk. Compared to private-sector policyholders, county governments have a unique set of exposures – from historic courthouses to road-building equipment to emergency vehicles,”

said ACCA Director of Insurance Services Henry van Arcken. “We will be in position to offer coverage

## THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS OF ALABAMA SALUTES THE 2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS



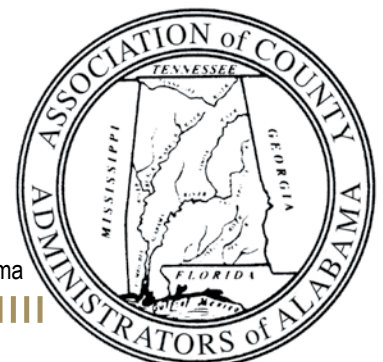
*Pam Ball, CCA, Limestone County  
County Administrator of the Year*



*Calhoun County  
Excellence in County Administration*

*Gwendolyn D. Richardson, CCA, Monroe County  
Matt Sharp, CCA, DeKalb County  
Tenure in Office | 15 Years*

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specific to the challenges of county government combined with outstanding customer service.”

All of this was made possible by a provision of Act 2015-53, known as the County Modernization Act. The legislation was sponsored this year by Sen. Clyde Chambliss and Rep.

### >>> **MORE... ACCA Bills That Have Become Law in 2015, page 10**

Richard Lindsey and then signed into law by the governor.

One significant portion of the act, which went into effect July 1, authorizes two or more counties to enter agreements to self-fund property insurance in the same way that counties already self-fund

insurance coverage for liability and workers’ compensation.

In both of those examples, counties came together decades ago to self-fund insurance, motivated by unsatisfactory options in the commercial insurance market. That has happened again with property insurance, as counties have found it increasingly difficult to get and keep coverage.

“We just know property insurance is something our counties need, and we feel like it is going to be a great benefit,” van Arcken said.

ACCA is a member of County Reinsurance Ltd. (CRL), a self-funded re-insurer for county insurance funds around the country. Experts from CRL have been a

tremendous resource on this project, van Arcken said, because of their expertise with this type of insurance in other states.

Brasfield said expanding insurance programs would not be a viable option if ACCA’s existing insurance funds were not on solid financial footing. “As we move forward with this new service, it is important to remember the significant leadership contributions of county officials and employees over the decades,” he said.

“I hope everyone appreciates that to a large degree this door is open to us because of the careful stewardship of the insurance funds that continues today with the men and women who serve on the boards of trustees,” he continued. ■

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## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What »  
Revenue from Income Tax  
Set Off Program

Who »  
Sonny Brasfield, ACCA  
Executive Director

Where » Breakout  
for Commissioners,  
Administrators and  
CROAA

When » Morning Breakout  
Sessions, Thursday,  
Aug. 20

# Debt Set Off Program to expand statewide

**\$5** here and \$100 there can really add up, especially when it is uncollected debts that are owed to county coffers.

The 11 counties that have piloted a new debt collection program this year have already benefitted from a smart way to work delinquent accounts, and the debt set off service will soon be available to counties statewide.

“It’s almost \$35,000 that we wouldn’t have received,” said Carole Heggeman, chief financial officer for the Mobile Community Corrections Center, which had tried everything to clear up overdue fees for supervision and drug tests.

A large county with a significant backlog makes for striking numbers from Mobile. Most pilot counties have used the service to recover unpaid garbage fees. The individual payments, which have ranged from \$2 to several hundred dollars, typically run about \$100.

“This has been a powerful tool to help counties collect on long-overdue debts, and we are excited that it will soon be available to all counties,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield.

Counties interested in this service are encouraged to attend “Revenue from Income Tax Set Off Program” at the ACCA Convention.

*Nancy Green, Compassion Coalition  
Tuscaloosa County EMA  
Alfred T. Moore Memorial  
Volunteer Award*

*Cullman County EMA for  
SMART Coordination Statewide  
Large County  
Preparedness Program of the Year*

*Ronnie Adair, Mobile County EMA  
Pat Neuhauser Spirit of EMA Award*

*Myles Chamblee, Calhoun County EMA  
Rookie of the Year*

*Chance D. Corbett, Auburn University  
Department of Public Safety  
& Security/Emergency Management  
Career Achievement in Emergency Management  
Award*

*Donna Key & Jennifer Datcher, Association of  
County Commissions of Alabama  
President's Award*

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SALUTES THE  
2015 AWARD  
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The service simply compares state income tax refunds to unpaid debts to counties.

And if someone is due a refund from the state but owes money to the county the refund is “set off” to cover the debt.

The county gets paid, and any remaining refund goes on to the taxpayer.

But there’s a lot of work that goes into making that simple service run. Counties identify and verify debts linked to Social Security numbers and then submit them to ACCA electronically. ACCA compiles them and sends the debts submitted to the Alabama Department of Revenue.

The state sends ACCA a daily report of payable claims, and ACCA sends letters notifying counties and taxpayers about the potential set off. If the taxpayer does not contest the debt after 30 days, the money goes to the county. Each participating county must also create a hearing process for handling contests.

“It’s been a great and rewarding process,” Heggeman said of the impact in Mobile County.

For any county starting to use the set off service, Heggeman shared a few tips: make sure your data is accurate, consider starting with a small number of debts so you can ramp up gradually and think ahead about how to handle the phone calls from taxpayers you will receive.

“The best advice I have is to be as nice as possible and as sympathetic as possible,” she said. “I usually say things like ‘I’m sorry. We’re cleaning up some

old records, and you’re not the only one. We’re going to work with you.”

Mobile County submitted about 11,000 debts initially. “We got a LOT of phone calls,” she said. Often, just answering the taxpayer’s questions and explaining the process is enough to resolve issues, she said. She noted that she has seen a few cases where the taxpayer was not responsible for the debt because of identity theft. ■

## PILOT COUNTIES

Baldwin, Barbour, Coffee,  
Dallas, Dale, Geneva, Henry,  
Mobile, Pickens, Russell and  
Winston

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# Exhibit Showcase is packed

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The Exhibit Showcase will be open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 18. Prize drawings are conducted during the reception, 5-6:30 p.m. You must be present to win. Additional information tables will be staffed on Wednesday. ■

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## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What »  
Exhibit Showcase

Who »  
72 exhibitors providing  
goods, services &  
resources for counties

When » 11 a.m. -7 p.m.  
Tuesday, Aug. 18

- Lunch | noon -1 p.m.
- Reception | 5-6:30 p.m.

Safe-T-Shelter (Aqua Marine  
Enterprises Inc.)

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## ATRIP: Big start with miles to go

True or false? ATRIP is the biggest investment in local transportation in state history.

True, and counties have Gov. Robert Bentley to thank for the game-changing Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program. It is already responsible for safer and smoother travel along 1,789 miles of county roads. While work is still underway on many ATRIP projects, the program can also take credit for 71 new or rehabilitated bridge structures so far.

True or false? After ATRIP, Alabama will have the local transportation network it needs to properly serve the traveling public.

False. County commissioners probably wouldn't have any trouble

getting the right answers to both of those questions. But voters, and even many legislators, would be much less likely to ace the quiz.

That's why counties are working together – as 67 Counties, One Voice – to spread the word that ATRIP is a good example of how important it is to invest in local roads and bridges.

Because of ATRIP, counties have been afforded the resources to address many outstanding needs and priorities, said Terri Sharpley Reynolds, ACCA director of public affairs. “When school starts back, fewer buses will have to go miles out of their way because of a bridge that needs repair,” she said. “The improvements are helping Alabama’s economy pick up too, with better

### @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What » Fuel Up for a New Day:  
Road Projects & Transportation

Who » Chambers, Coosa,  
Franklin & Washington counties

When » Afternoon General  
Session, Wed., Aug. 19

travel for trucks of all sizes moving goods and materials.”

There are nearly 60,000 miles of county roads linking Alabamians to places where they live, work, hunt, fish, worship and more. “With ATRIP already making such a difference,” she said. “I can only imagine the possibilities if we could multiply that impact.” ■

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>>> **MORE... ACCA Bills That Became Law in 2015, page 10**

## Innovation to ease process for retailers

It won't be long before an innovative new law goes into effect that stands to send additional revenue to counties once it is fully implemented.

Alabama legislators passed the Simplified Sellers Use Tax Remittance legislation, sometimes called the "Amazon bill," during the 2015 regular session, and, upon Gov. Robert Bentley's signature, it became Act 2015-448. The act does not mandate a new tax or increase a rate, but it is intended to make it easier for businesses to remit some existing levies.

"One of the unusual things about this new law is that it sets up an option designed to entice businesses to take part," said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. "It is too early to say if any specific company will participate, but we are hopeful that many sellers will see the benefits and opt in."

The background story is that existing use taxes are due to be paid by the consumer when buying from out-of-state sellers with no



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connection to Alabama. However, enforcement has been difficult.

These sellers, frequently based online, are under no obligation to collect and remit these dollars. When asked if they would do so voluntarily, sellers have traditionally objected that the taxes are too cumbersome. The companies maintain it is difficult to determine the proper rate for each transaction because there are separate sales and use taxes levied at the state, county and municipal levels. Congress has considered nationwide solutions, but has not reached consensus.

Until there is action at the federal level, Act No. 2015-448's innovative approach is to create an optional alternative using a level rate statewide. Companies will soon be able to choose to voluntarily collect and remit a simplified substitute use tax of 8 percent on all items delivered into Alabama.

To encourage businesses to use the simplified process, the act incentivizes them with a number of benefits.

First, participating companies will be granted advantages should a future federal law require the collection of

the exact amount due in every Alabama jurisdiction. Participation will also relieve both seller and purchaser of any other sales and use taxes on these transactions.

In addition, eligible sellers that opt in will have several protections that are not otherwise available. These include protection from audits by local governments as well as assurance that participation will not trigger any additional taxes or fees.

Moneys from the substitute use tax will be divided as follows: 50 percent to the state General Fund, 25 percent to counties and 25 percent to cities. The

local government dollars will be divided according to population. ■

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What »  
Simplified Sellers Use Tax  
Remittance  
("Amazon bill")

When »  
Morning Breakout Session  
for Commissioners,  
Thursday, Aug. 20

## THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ENGINEERS OF ALABAMA SALUTES THE 2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS



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Lowndes County*

*Jordan Ousley  
Son of Barry Ousley,  
Autauga County*

*Richard Spraggins Scholarships*

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## PROGRESS REPORT

# Local Government Health Insurance

Hard to believe, but the almost 60,000 people who rely on the Local Government Health Insurance Program probably haven't even felt a ripple from the changes of the last year. That was the plan all along.

"This has been more of a behind-the-scenes effort," said William Ashmore, the program's long-time CEO who also oversees state insurance programs. "The changes have put the decision-making process in the hands of local government representatives."

That is good news, especially with the decisions ahead. The program has consistently kept costs below the national average, but medical inflation is creating financial pressure.

"The board members now understand the budgets and issues at the local level," Ashmore said.

At the ACCA Convention, he will present an overview of the program's past, present and future.

The program, which began under the umbrella of the State Employees'

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What » Fuel Up for a New Day: Future of the Local Government Health Insurance Plan

Who » William Ashmore, Alabama State Employees' Insurance Board

When » Afternoon General Session, Wed., Aug. 19

Insurance Board, had always been administered and funded separately, but governed by the state's board. Local governments had no voting representation, only an advisory board.

All that changed with legislation enacted in 2014. The new governing board – made up of plan participants – is nearing its first birthday. In late

summer, the board plans to make its first decisions about rates and benefits for the upcoming year. ■

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# Local businesses to benefit from Act 2015-293

County commissions will soon have increased flexibility to contract with local vendors for goods and services, thanks to Act 2015-293.

Convention-goers will get to hear a detailed explanation of several small but significant changes to the competitive bid law which will already be in effect by that time.

As the Alabama County Platform reflects, counties have long sought modest changes that would help local companies be more competitive.

"It makes good sense for counties to want to 'shop at home' when possible and support their local economy,"

said Mary E. Pons, ACCA association counsel. "I would encourage anyone interested in using these new options to review the act carefully, and the Association is also available to provide guidance."

Existing law already allowed a 3 percent

local preference on purchases of personal property. Act 2015-293 bumped that up to 5 percent and broadened it so that it applies to services as well as property.

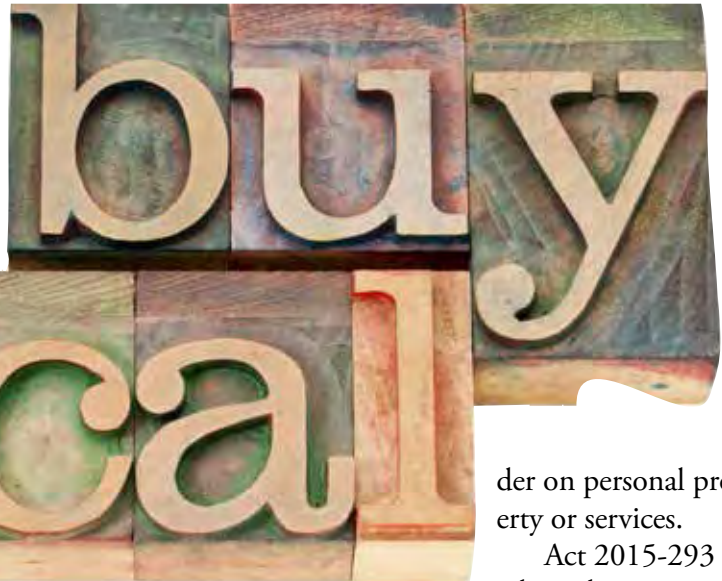
That means that beginning Aug. 1, county commissions will have the option, at their discretion, to select a local bidder whose price is within 5 percent of the lowest responsible bid-

## @ the ACCA CONVENTION

What »  
Local Bid Preference

Where »  
Administrators Breakout Session

When »  
Morning Breakouts, Thursday, Aug. 20



>>> **MORE... ACCA Bills That Have Become Law in 2015, page 10**

der on personal property or services.

Act 2015-293 made other adjustments that apply in cases where the lowest responsible bidder has no place of business within Alabama. These provisions

also apply to purchases of both goods and services. If the low bid comes from an out-of-state vendor or "foreign entity," counties may instead award the contract to a local company whose price is within 10 percent of the low bid.

This same 10 percent preference is also available to a number of other categories of in-state businesses. This gives an edge to small businesses as well as those owned by women, minorities, veterans or certain other disadvantaged owners. ■

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# New leadership steps up for Association

The One Voice of county government depends on individual county officials who give their time and energies to leading ACCA, and the convention is a special time to honor them and choose leaders for the upcoming year.



**Ray Long**

Morgan County Chairman Ray Long is scheduled to take the gavel as president on Aug. 20, and during the President's Banquet that evening he will present his priorities for ACCA in the coming year.

>>> **MORE...Candidate listings, forms & election procedures**

[www.alabamacounties.org/about-acca/candidates/](http://www.alabamacounties.org/about-acca/candidates/)

The ACCA membership revised the election process that are in effect this year. One important element of that is new deadlines for candidates.

To allow time for interviews with the Nomination and Election Committee in advance of the convention, candidates for vice president and minority director were required to notify the ACCA office no later than July 6.

For positions representing one of ACCA's 12 districts on the Board of Directors and Legislative Committee, the deadline is **Aug. 6**. Candidates

who notify ACCA by this date will have their names printed on the official ballots.

Counties will cast their votes for these positions during District Caucuses, which occur during the **ACCA Business Session at 3:30 p.m. on Aug. 20**. Each county has one vote.

Anyone having questions about the election procedure is encouraged to contact Donna Key, ACCA Director of Events and Education (334-236-7594 or [dkey@alabamacounties.org](mailto:dkey@alabamacounties.org)).



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## A voice from Alabama's 67 counties...

### Jayne Pearce

*Assistant Manager, Tuscaloosa County  
Special Tax Board,  
& President, County Revenue Officers  
Association of Alabama (CROAA)*



**Q** How long have you worked in county government?

**A** I have worked in county government for 10 years. I started at the Tuscaloosa County Special Tax Board in February 2005 as a Revenue Examiner.

In November 2009, I was promoted by the Tax Board to Assistant Manager. I have been an active member of CROAA during those 10 years.

I have had the opportunity to serve on many committees, as a Board Member, as Vice President and currently President. Since being at the Tax Board, I have seen our collections increase from \$79 million to \$93 million per year, witnessed

the destruction and rebuild of Tuscaloosa after the April 2011 tornado and seen the overwhelming growth of the University of Alabama.

**Q** How do you describe your job to people who may not be familiar with it?

**A** As a sales and use tax revenue officer, my job is very challenging. Tax revenue drives our local economy, therefore we do our best to make sure taxpayers are reporting and remitting the correct amount of tax. It is difficult to find that fine line between making sure our taxpayers are in compliance with State Laws and Rules, educating our taxpayers and showing compassion for taxpayers.

**Q** Any common misconceptions?

**A** Oh, there are many misconceptions of revenue officers. The main one would be that we are nothing more than greedy tax collectors. A lot of taxpayers fear us and feel that we are out to get them, when the opposite is true. We are here to help taxpayers.

**Q** What is your biggest challenge as a revenue officer?

**A** I think our biggest challenge is trying to overcome the stigma of being the "mean tax people". As a member of CROAA, county revenue officers will be educated on state laws and regulations, learn how to make sure taxpayers are in compliance with those laws and learn how to treat taxpayers with compassion.

**Q** How is the CROAA education program going since becoming part of the ACCA's County Government Education Institute?

**A** The CROAA Board of Directors voted to become



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a part of the ACCA's County Government Institute in October of 2014.

Since classes facilitated by ACCA began in February 2015, CROAA has experienced very favorable response from members who have attended classes.

It made perfect sense to have the ACCA facilitate our classes since CROAA is a part of the ACCA.

The ACCA is aware of new legislation effecting revenue officers, CROAA members have access to other county employees within the ACCA and with an attorney on staff you can ask brief questions.

The certification classes are located in Prattville, which is a central location. The cost is very reasonably priced at \$175 for a 12 hour class. The cost includes the class and two lunches.

Classes start at 10 am the first day and end at 3 p.m. the next day, giving members drive time.

**Q** Auburn or Alabama?

**A** ALABAMA, of course! I have lived in Tuscaloosa the majority of my life and I am a 2001 alumna of the University of Alabama. It is a no brainer!

**Q** What is the home screen/lock image on your cell phone?

**A** A dance recital picture of my beautiful 5 year old daughter Scarlett.

**Q** What are the biggest benefits of CROAA membership?

**A** There are so many wonderful benefits of being a member of CROAA.

The interaction you have with other members from different

counties is very useful. It is so beneficial to learn about other revenue officer's experiences.

Our office communicates with other counties all the time regarding issues being dealt with in sales and use tax.

Being a member also gives you access to the invaluable Sonny Brasfield, Mary Pons and ACCA staff.

**Q** What is the value for a county that doesn't self-collect?

**A** Having an employee become a member of CROAA is beneficial to learn about new legislation so they can talk to their local representatives.

If that county decides to self-collect in the future, the connections within CROAA will be invaluable. ■

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