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COUNTY COMMISSION

Volume 64, Number 1
January 2020



Legislative Preview 2020



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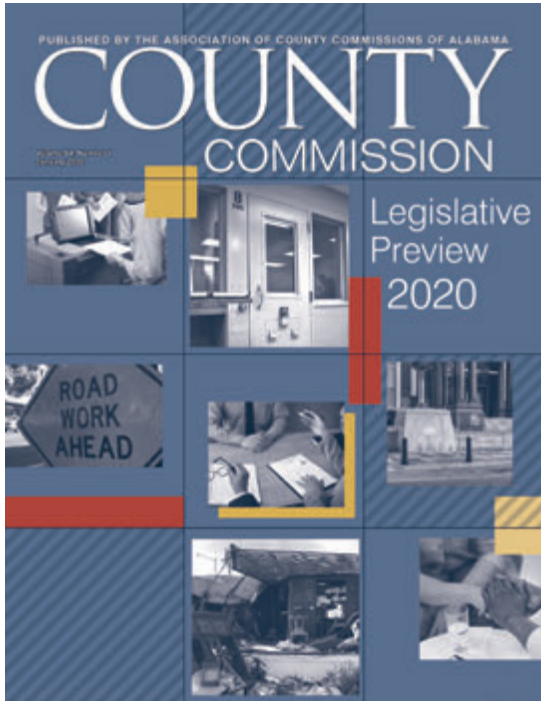
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in this issue

VOLUME 64, NUMBER 1



County advocates are approaching the 2020 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature with a laser focus on priority issues related to the inmate and mental health crises, the Retirement Systems of Alabama governance, and many other county-related matters.

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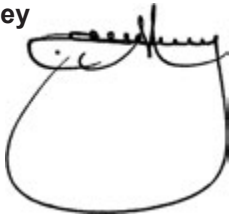
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President's PERSPECTIVE



Hon. David Money
President



Making our greatest impact during the Regular Session

**On every
legislative issue,
unity maximizes
our influence**

As your President, I am in awe every single day of the good things being accomplished by the hardworking men and women of the County Family. Simultaneously, I am continually in awe at the many overwhelming challenges facing counties on a daily basis.

One major issue that has been on my mind and the minds of County Family members for months now has been our state's growing inmate crisis. Since 2014, the combined cost to operate the jails and sheriff's departments in all 67 counties has increased by more than \$63 million.

Put into perspective, on average, each county has seen jail and sheriff's department expenditures increase by nearly \$1 million.

These figures weren't pulled out of thin air. These figures were pulled from our most reliable sources, the county leaders who work everyday to balance our limited budgets across the 67 counties — and these figures were compiled to create the Association's latest research publication, "Alabama's Unresolved Inmate Crisis."

Those of us charged with balancing budgets at the local level know that anything approaching a million dollars is a huge problem and that our current inmate "crisis" is fittingly titled. But legislators, who create and approve multi-billion-dollar budgets, have a different frame of reference and might not share our viewpoint.

With that said, can you imagine the insurmountable task facing a single county visiting the Statehouse to advocate for help with their inmate costs?

Thank goodness for this Association speaking with One

Voice! ACCA collected data from all 67 counties for purposes of the research publication, which makes it possible for us to tell legislators this is not just a million-dollar problem in one county but a \$63-million crisis burdening counties in every corner of the state. Since lawmakers passed the 2015 Prison Reform Act, these costs have increased at more than twice the rate of inflation — or as I like to say, at the speed of a race car.

Of course, resolving the inmate crisis isn't the only county priority for the 2020 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature, and it's not the only issue where we will need to maximize our impact by speaking with One Voice. There will be bills to protect and advance county government on several fronts — legislative priorities to expand the voice of local government on the Employees' Retirement System Board of Control, clarify Rebuild Alabama bid advertisement requirements, amend the Ethics Law revolving door provision and several others. (For a full list of the 2020 ACCA Legislative Priorities, see page 13.)

When I began my term as president, I made a couple points that are particularly relevant today. First, we are all called to service in this Association. The One Voice of County Government cannot be effective without commission members and affiliate group members from all 67 counties being active. And second, I once again ask you to give the best of yourself during the session. Unity matters more than ever during those 15 weeks, when we are given the opportunity to make our greatest and most long-lasting impact. ■



Presidential Twitter

ACCA President David Money is a Twitter all-star — having tweeted more than 9,000 times since 2012! He uses it to advocate for counties and quickly inform Henry County citizens of road closures, but it's not all business. The Alabama Crimson Tide is another favorite topic!

"As I watched the Rebuild Alabama pre-vote chatter on the floor of the House last year, I remember seeing a majority of the House members consulting their phones every five minutes. I'm sure the same thing was happening in the Senate. Compared to phone calls, tweets and texts are not nearly as invasive but almost as effective."



"I hardly qualify as a pro but my advice would be:

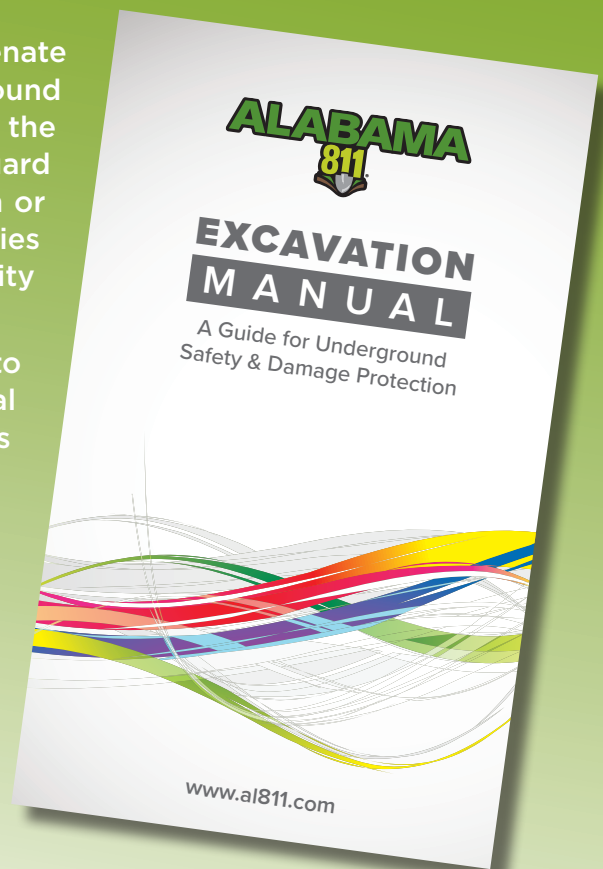
- 1. Think before you type, especially if you are reacting to something emotional or controversial. If in doubt — don't.*
- 2. Be positive. No one wants to follow a 'Debbie Downer' or a 'Charlie Critic.'*
- 3. Refrain from off-color language or commentary.*
- 4. Read more than you post; you can learn much more by listening.*
- 5. Proof your tweet before you post it. Accuracy is more important than speed."*

On June 6, 2019, Governor Kay Ivey signed the Senate Bill 315, which updated the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Law. The purpose of the Underground Damage Prevention Law is to safeguard against injury and loss of life due to excavation or demolition and to protect underground facilities from costly damage and the interruption of utility or other services to the general public.

Please visit our website at www.al811.com to download the law or the Excavation Manual which also includes the new legislative changes that will become effective on January 1, 2020.



**Know what's below.
811 before you dig.**





Sonny Brasfield
Executive Director

Sonny Brasfield

**Our recent
accomplishments
should just be
the beginning**

**Let's carry
this momentum
forward in 2020**

In my more than 30 years of writing for this magazine, I don't think we've ever published a list of accomplishments from the previous year. But as we turn the calendar to 2020, it would be a mistake not to take stock of the remarkable events of the past 12 months.

The previous December, the day after our 2018 Legislative Conference in Montgomery, the Association moved its headquarters about 60 yards from its home since 1977 to its new facility at 2 North Jackson Street. The "new" building has already been an outstanding resource for the Association — putting us in more direct contact with the policymakers in our state, as well as providing the membership with new resources.

As we begin 2020, construction is nearly complete on a new meeting facility on the building's second floor. When you come to Montgomery during this year's legislative session, we'll have a wonderful place to gather and lay out our plans for ensuring success for county government. We can't wait to hold training events and other activities inside the headquarters.

The shifting of our insurance programs to self-administration — after a 35-year relationship with a company that provided third-party services — was one of the most significant accomplishments for this Association in many, many years. And to the credit of so many people, the transition has moved forward without any negative responses from the membership.

More than 20 employees now occupy the former headquarters building at 100 North Jackson Street, and they sport the "County

Risk Services" logo on their chests with pride. Starting a company from scratch was an adventure (to say the least), but it was also an opportunity for the Association's staff and leadership to build stronger relationships and alter the course of the insurance programs for decades to come.

As we begin 2020, we are about ready to unveil a new safety emphasis that will challenge both the new company, as well as the county governments. A more hands-on approach to claims prevention, based on claims data and national resources, will be fully operational by late spring. This is the next step in the long-term plan to help protect counties and those who come in contact with us.

The public policy accomplishments of 2019 are many — and so many people deserve the credit. But over the past 12 months, we've changed the course of retirement benefits for county employees, provided our 9-1-1 professionals with the most state-of-the-art technology to respond to those in need, removed the jail feeding crisis from the national news, put our nation-leading internet sales tax program in compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court and cleared the way for more efficient use of county rights-of-way.

As we begin 2020, we now face hurdles with mounting overcrowding in county jails, a lack of mental health services statewide and a healthcare crisis in rural Alabama. If these issues are to be resolved in 2020, this Association must pick up the mantle of leadership. And I believe we are ready.

The counties' role in the

successful design and passage of Rebuild Alabama cannot be overemphasized. In the aftermath of the passage of this remarkable legislation, all of our state's leaders have given credit to the grassroots work of county governments. The staff was most gratified at the way officials and employees embraced the challenge of doing something about our infrastructure.

I remain grateful to the dozen or so county engineers who are working to help ensure that we implement both the spirit and letter of this exciting opportunity. When we posted on our website all 67 plans for expending the new revenue during 2020, I could not have been prouder of this Association and the people we have the honor of working with every day.

***Are you satisfied with looking at 2019 and pointing to our accomplishments?
Or do you see 2019 as a seed of change in what this Association can — and should — be doing every year?***

As we begin 2020, the challenge is to be diligent with this new revenue, uphold the responsibilities that have been placed upon us and, most importantly, ensure this money makes a real difference in our communities. I hope everyone takes that responsibility seriously.

And for each of you, the real question for 2020 is whether you are willing to continue the momentum that has been set in motion over the past 12 months. Are you satisfied

with looking at 2019 and pointing to our accomplishments? Or do you see 2019 as a seed of change in what this Association can — and should — be doing every year?

A few years ago, a football coach who was fresh off a championship victory stood behind a microphone and proclaimed that the victories of one single year should not be the ultimate goal. He laid out a challenge that one year's accomplishments must be seen only as the "beginning," not as the conclusion of the journey.

That kind of thinking is rare and, honestly, it comes with massive responsibilities. Yes, counties experienced many big victories in 2019, and we should be proud of those accomplishments.

Now, since 2019 is behind us, it's our challenge to ensure that those achievements represent the beginning, not the end, of the journey. ■



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Alabama's Inmate Crisis

Two months in advance of the 2020 session, the Association of County Commissions of Alabama released “Alabama’s Unresolved Inmate Crisis: A Report on the Unintended Impact of the 2015 Prison Reform Act.”

This latest research publication documents how Alabama’s 2015 prison reforms — and the subsequent influx of State inmates in county jails — have left their mark on county commission budgets in every corner of the state.

“As the legislative session nears, counties must seek relief from these growing costs,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield, “because the solution to the State’s prison crisis cannot again be to push more inmates down to the local level.”

Scope of the Crisis

From 2014 to 2018, the number of State inmates in county jails shot up 300 percent, from 2,000 to 8,000.

These 2014 and 2018 figures give before-and-after snapshots of the Prison Reform Act’s impact. The act was intended to address an overcrowding crisis in state facilities, and, over the period studied, the number of State inmates in state facilities declined by 5,000.

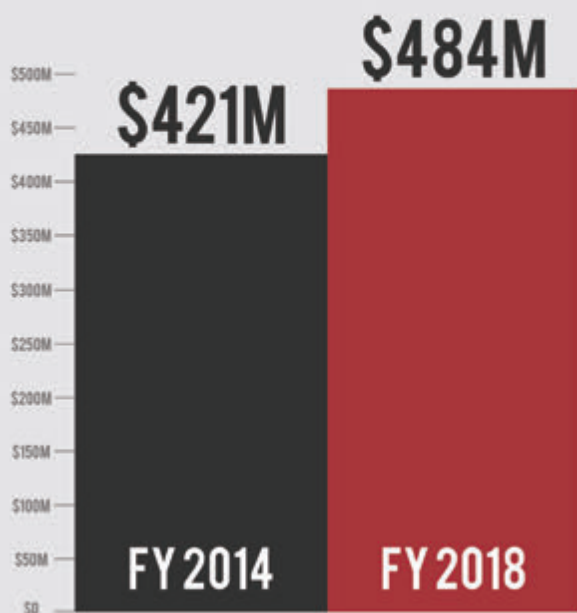
The influx of 6,000 State inmates has put incredible budget pressure on counties. It is not merely the cost of housing the inmates; expenditures have soared for medical care of prisoners. Additionally, the number of jail-related lawsuits against county

“Alabama’s County Governments oppose any additional Sentencing Reform Legislation before the Alabama Legislature that would result in additional diversion of inmates, probationers or parolees into Alabama’s county jails without full reimbursement of all costs resulting from such diversion...[and] call on the Alabama Legislature to fully fund the reforms of 2015 by providing counties with the necessary revenue to address the unfunded mandates resulting from the 2015 Alabama Prison Reform Act.”

— Association of County Commissions of Alabama Resolution
August 22, 2019

COMBINED COST TO COUNTIES FOR STATE INMATE INFUX

*Covers jail operation costs and sheriff’s department costs

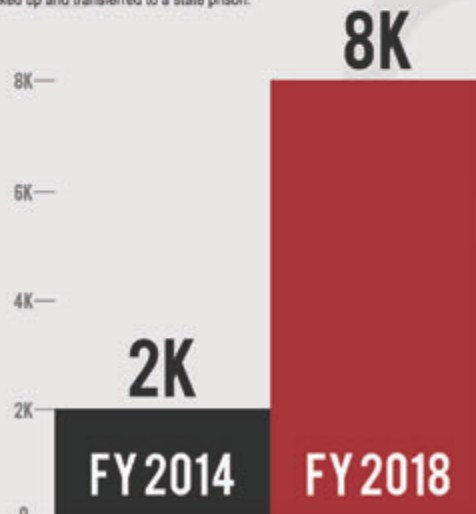


County costs increased by **\$63M** from 2014 to 2018, more than **twice the rate of inflation**.

STATE INMATE POPULATION IN COUNTY JAILS

*Based on public data provided by the Alabama Department of Corrections and Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles

These conservative figures account for state inmates in county jails, as well as the “dips and dunks” state inmate population created by the 2015 Alabama Prison Reform Act. Probation and parole violators can receive six “dips” — up to a three-day stay in a county jail — before being “dunked” for up to 45 days in a state prison. “Dunked” inmates often remain in a county jail for weeks before being picked up and transferred to a state prison.



The number of state inmates in county jails increased by **6K** from 2014 to 2018.

governments has increased, bringing even more rising costs.

Data from all 67 counties shows that annual combined costs to operate county jails and sheriff's departments increased \$63 million from 2014 to 2018, more than double the rate of inflation.

How Did We Get Here?

The 2015 act originated with a task force formed the prior year amid significant federal pressure to improve the state prison system. Counties had two representatives on the task force: former Marshall County Commissioner Bill Strickland and Baldwin County Sheriff Hoss Mack.

As recommendations took shape, counties expressed concerns about unintended consequences for county jails and county budgets, specifically:

- New punishments for parole violators, called “dips” and

“County government recognizes the unavoidable link between county jails and the Alabama Department of Corrections. All involved in this effort must recognize that reform at either level has a direct — and dramatic — impact on the financial well-being of the other level of government. Effective solutions to this long-standing problem must include revisions to the 2015 reforms, which have proven so costly to counties that the county jails now face a crisis not unlike that which confronted the State in 2014.”

— ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield in “Alabama’s Unresolved Inmate Crisis: A Report on the Unintended Impact of the 2015 Prison Reform Act”

“dunks,” would put pressure on jail beds, increase medical costs and lead to more costly lawsuits against counties.

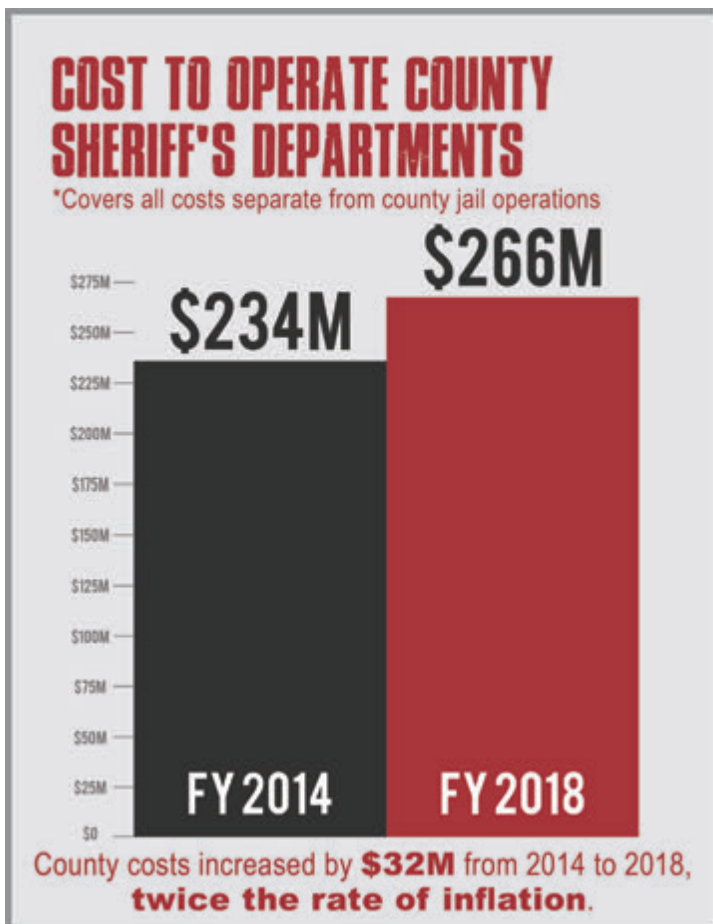
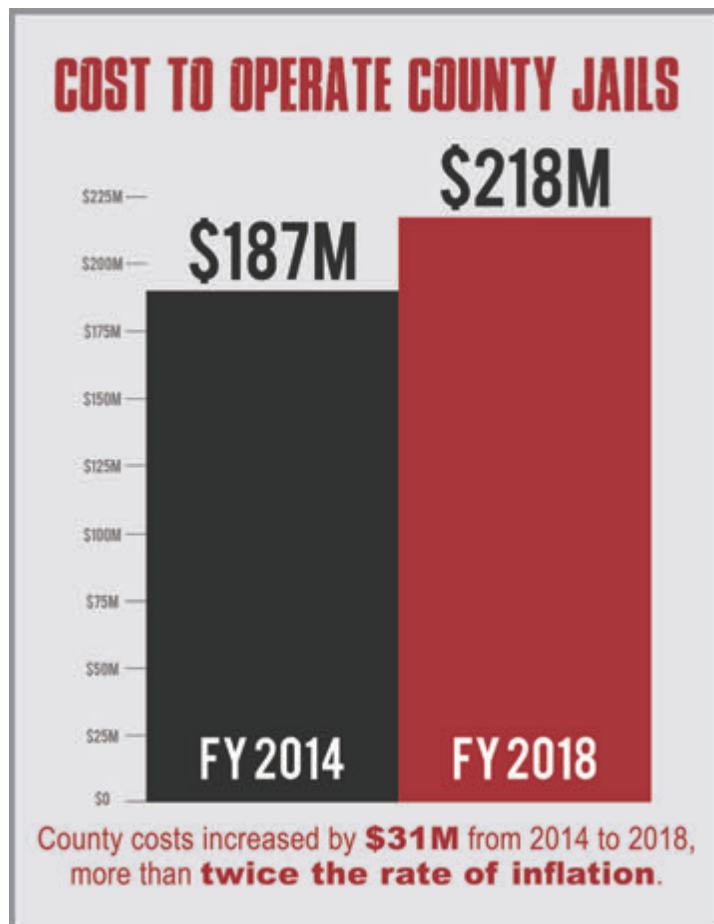
- Individuals convicted of the new Class D felony would serve all their time in county jails rather than State prisons.

Counties encouraged more study, but legislation passed in 2015 despite these objections.

Today, the concerns voiced

by counties in 2014 have been confirmed by data collected from state agencies and a survey of all 67 counties, and there are exacerbating factors, such as the law’s unmet requirement to establish State-operated regional facilities for “dunks” to relieve some pressure on county jails.

Many prisoners sleeping under county roofs are awaiting transfer to a state facility, but the rate of the

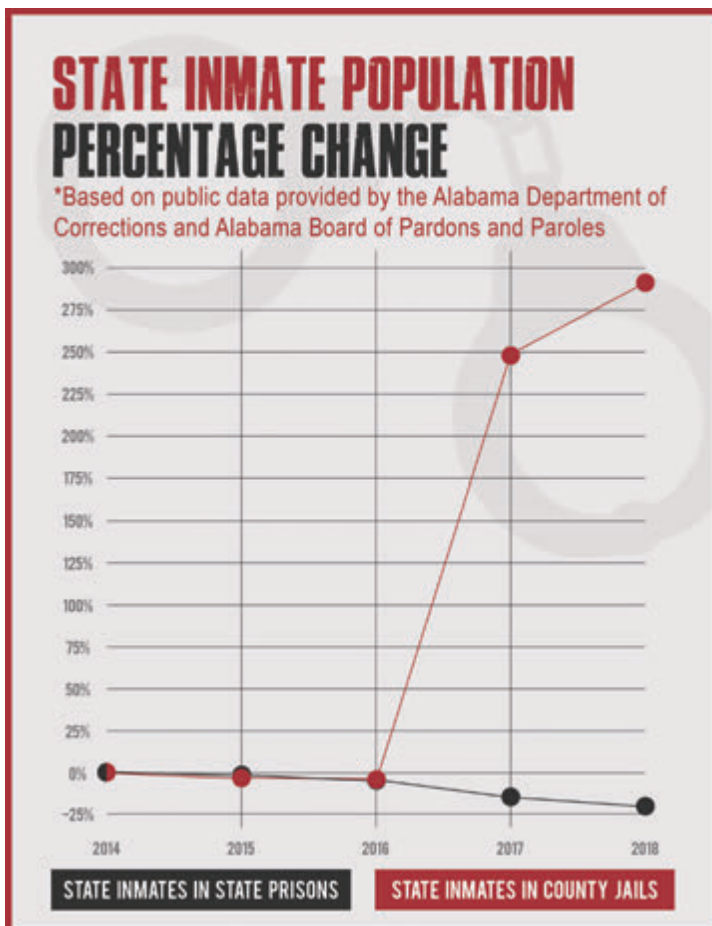
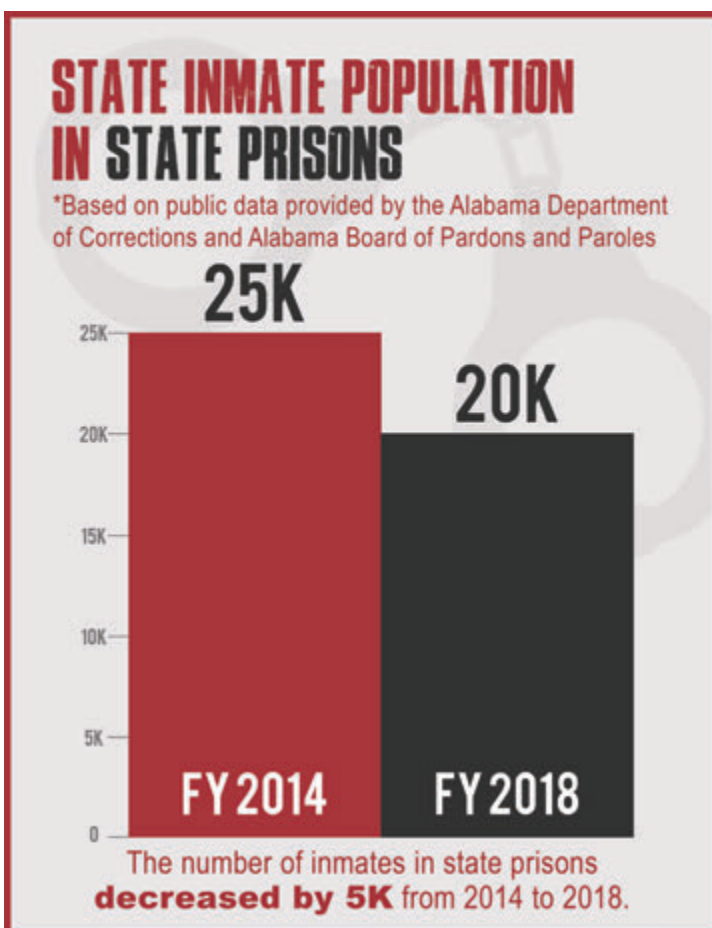
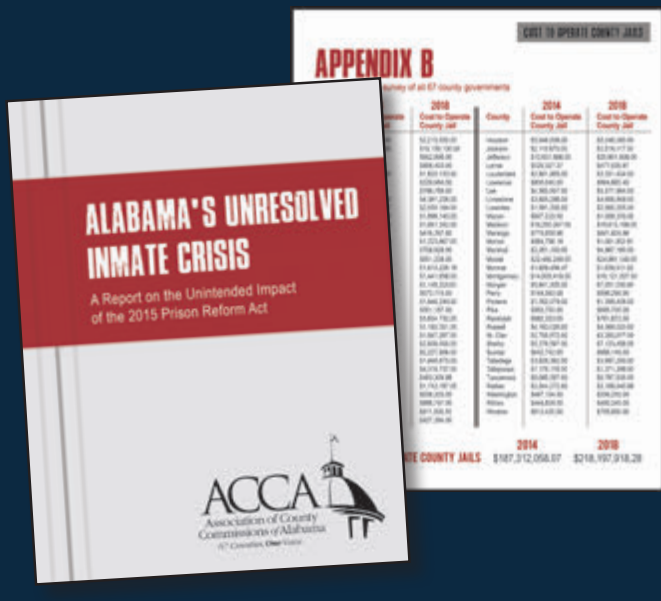


In 2020, the Alabama Department of Corrections is again under heightened federal scrutiny, even though the population in state facilities has dropped substantially. At the same time, a new task force is looking at further reforms, with legislation expected in the 2020 Regular Session.

“As Alabama prepares to again take steps to address prison overcrowding, we must make everyone aware of the price counties are already paying to help the Alabama Department of Corrections,” Brasfield said. “It would be a serious mistake to push for State solutions without addressing the crisis that now exists at the local level.” ■

***Download the complete research publication,
"Alabama's Unresolved Inmate Crisis,"
at AlabamaCounties.org.***

- Includes county-by-county cost comparisons, 2014 vs. 2018
- Shows trend data on State inmates in Alabama Department of Corrections custody and county facilities since 2014





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2020 Legislative Priorities

The 2020 Legislative Priorities were approved by the ACCA Board of Directors, which directed the ACCA Staff to actively pursue passage of legislation to address these priority issues.

The 2020 Legislative Priorities are rooted in the Quadrennial Goals of the Alabama County Platform.

Retirement Systems of Alabama Governance

The current appointment of members to the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) Board of Control does not adequately reflect the local employing agencies of participating members in the system. The Association proposes to amend the statute governing the appointment of members to more closely reflect the employing agencies of the participating members by adding one county-elected board position and one additional at-large local position to the RSA Board of Control.

Inmate Reform

The 2015 Alabama Prison Reform Act made sweeping changes to the Alabama Criminal Justice System, including the creation of the Class D felony, and created new sanctions for parole and probation violations. These changes resulted in a 250-percent increase in State inmates being diverted to county jails and more than \$60 million dollars in increased spending on jail operations and law enforcement. The Association proposes to repeal the 2015 Prison Reform Act sanction provisions that



Lawmakers will convene at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 4, for the 2020 Regular Session, and the Statehouse is just a block away from the ACCA headquarters at 2 N. Jackson St.

require counties to hold inmates who are awaiting transfer to State custody for the 45-day period of incarceration for probation or parole violations.

Rebuild Alabama Advertising Bidding Requirements

The Rebuild Alabama Act requires that all project bid announcements using Rebuild Alabama revenue be posted on a single website hosted by the

Association for availability to potential bidders. Counties are required to post electronic bid announcements and use traditional advertising if projects use any additional funding source to complete Rebuild Alabama projects. The Association proposes to amend current law to allow for all local road and bridge projects to utilize the bid advertisement procedures adopted in the Rebuild Alabama Act.

Ethics Law Revolving Door Provision

The Association proposes to amend the revolving door provision of the Ethics Law to repeal the two-year prohibition on the rehiring of public employees and officials by former employers or other public employers and to repeal the prohibition on representing an employer before any board, agency, commission, department, or legislative body in his or her official capacity by those public employees. If enacted into law, this vital piece of legislation would allow counties to attract qualified and experienced employees.

Election Expense Reimbursement

In 2017, legislation was enacted to allow for the use of electronic poll books in federal, state and local elections. Further, an administrative rule promulgated certain conditions for which counties could seek reimbursement for the purchasing of electronic poll books. The Association proposes to amend the current election reimbursement statute to codify that electronic poll books and related software are eligible items for election expense reimbursement by the State of Alabama.

Mental Health Crisis

Alabama is experiencing an escalating mental health crisis. State and local governments lack the resources to adequately assist individuals suffering from mental illnesses. These individuals are admitted to emergency rooms, county jails and, in many cases, the Department of Corrections. The Association proposes to take an active role in addressing the mental health crisis and to support statewide efforts and legislative measures for funding and providing



access to effective mental health services at the local level.

Public Shelters and Safer Places

Alabama has experienced a high volume of natural disasters over the past decade. It is imperative that state and local leaders take an active role to ensure the safety of the citizens of Alabama. It is vital that citizens have access to buildings and shelters in times of impending disasters and that public and private entities willing to provide access to these facilities be able to do so. The Association proposes to amend current law to provide specific liability protection for those entities opening buildings or shelters to



the public in times of impending disaster events.

County Boards of Equalization

For several years, local entities have struggled to make recommendations to the Alabama Department of Revenue for the appointment of individuals to serve on the County Boards of Equalization. The Association supports legislation to update the process for appointing and compensating members of the County Boards of Equalization to ensure the efficient operation of the tax appeal process by attracting qualified persons to serve in this important role. ■



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Alabama County Joint Bid Program



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Montgomery
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334-277-7260

Northport
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205-339-0300

Pelham
2149 Highway 31 South
205-988-4474





ACAA'S 2020 TWITTER COMPETITION

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE
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2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION?



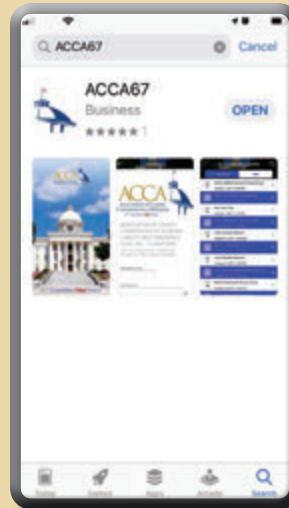
Make sure every tweet
(or post) includes:



- The #alpolitics hashtag
- Your county's hashtag (e.g., #Autauga)
- Your affiliate group's hashtag (e.g., #ACAA)

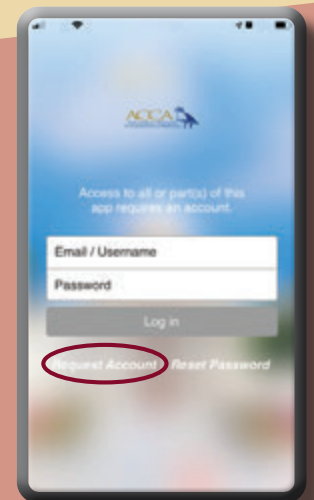
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ACCA Pre-Session Timeline

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALABAMA COUNTY PLATFORM

This timeline maps out the Association's key milestones in developing the 2020 Alabama County Platform and preparing for the 2020 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature.

September 2019

Selection of ACCA 2019-2020 Legislative Committee completed

October 11, 2019

Legislative Meeting of ACCA Minority Issues Steering Committee to offer recommendations to Alabama County Platform

November 20, 2019

2020 Alabama County Platform approved by ACCA Board of Directors

January 7-23, 2020

ACCA District Meetings to engage county leaders on major legislative issues and strategies

September 17 - October 4, 2019

Affiliate Group Legislative Committee Meetings to offer recommendations to Alabama County Platform (ACAA, ACEA, AAEM, AAND and CROAA)

October 23-24, 2019

ACCA Legislative Committee Pre-Session Workshop to review and revise Alabama County Platform

December 4-5, 2019

ACCA Legislative Conference

- 2020 Legislative Priorities approved by ACCA Board of Directors
- Final 2020 Alabama County Platform adopted by full ACCA membership

February 4, 2020

Opening Day of 2020 Regular Session; Final adjournment ("sine die") must be no later than May 18.

Hon. Tony Cherry,
Immediate Past President, Chair

Autauga | Hon. John Thrailkill

Baldwin | Hon. Joe Davis III

Barbour | Hon. Frances Person-Crews

Bibb | Hon. Rodney Stabler

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Walker | Hon. Keith Davis

Washington | Hon. Allen Bailey

Wilcox | Hon. Bill Albritton

Winston | Hon. Roger Hayes



ACCA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

2019-2020

Legislative Committee Leading the Way for Counties

The ACCA Legislative Committee bears great responsibility for 67 counties functioning as One Voice, and members carried out this duty faithfully during their Pre-Session Workshop, an annual two-day meeting in the Capital City.

Months before gavels will bang in the Alabama Statehouse to usher in the 2020 Regular Session, commission members from all over the state gathered at the Embassy Suites in downtown Montgomery to delve into a multitude of thorny, county-related challenges.

“The issues facing counties right now could make you dizzy — inmate reform, mental health services, right-of-way access, governance of the Retirement Systems of Alabama and the Simplified Sellers Use Tax, to name a few,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. “After seeing committee representatives roll up their sleeves and really get their hands dirty during our two days together, I believe they are armed and ready to be our ‘grassroots’ leaders on policy matters.”

In advance of the workshop, committee representatives reviewed the 2019 Alabama County Platform, as well as legislative recommendations from the Association’s Minority Issues Steering Committee and five affiliate groups (county administrators, county engineers, emergency managers, 9-1-1 district staff and revenue officers).

That information, combined with discussion and debate during the workshop, informed the committee’s



More than 50 members of the ACCA Legislative Committee worked together October 23-24, 2019, in Montgomery to prepare for the 2020 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature.

vote to revise the platform for 2020. The committee’s recommended platform was then forwarded to the ACCA Board of Directors for further consideration before the full Association membership made the final decision in December.

“The Pre-Session Workshop was incredibly successful,” said Choctaw County Commissioner Tony Cherry who, as the Association’s Immediate Past President, chairs the Legislative Committee.

“The turnout, the engagement and the thoughtful discussions were impressive,” Cherry continued. “I’d like to personally commend committee representatives for their wholehearted commitment to serve not only their county but all 67.”

In many ways, the October workshop was only the beginning of responsibilities for committee representatives, who were recognized at the ACCA Legislative

Conference in December. They rallied enthusiasm for the ACCA District Meetings in January and have taken on promotion of the upcoming County Days to fellow commissioners and affiliate members in their home counties.

County officials and employees are encouraged to contact their committee representatives with questions or concerns on legislative matters. During the session, committee representatives will receive text alerts from ACCA staff on urgent legislative needs.

The 2019-2020 Legislative Committee is composed of one commission member from each county. This marks the third year since the committee was expanded to include representation from every county. Committee representatives were selected either by majority vote of the county’s governing body or appointment by the ACCA officers. ■

Alabama County Platform 2020

Alabama County Foundation Principles

The 11 Foundation Principles of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (“Association”) were established by the Association’s membership to promote the core values and positions of Alabama’s 67 county governments. These foundation principles form the cornerstone from which all county policy positions, legislative priorities and general legislative advocacy are derived in order to promote the improvement of the State of Alabama and its instrumentalities.

Alabama Governmental Structure

Foundation Principle: The relationship between Alabama counties and the Alabama Legislature is established in constitutional and statutory law. The preservation of a constitutional relationship between the State of Alabama and its counties, as well as a workable and productive statutory allocation of responsibilities between the state and the counties, is essential to the delivery of services. Therefore, Alabama counties encourage the Alabama Legislature to fully fund state agencies and oppose the shifting of costs and administrative responsibility of state functions to the local level through the state budget process.

Mandated and Unfunded Legislation

Foundation Principle: Without the authority to levy taxes or even collect fees for services, Alabama counties constantly struggle to provide an adequate level of services to ensure health, safety and prosperity of local citizens. Alabama’s constitution provides protection from the enactment of mandated and unfunded responsibilities onto county government to ensure the financial integrity of the commission. The Association strongly supports the intent of Alabama’s constitutional language prohibiting the enactment of unfunded mandates and opposes the establishment of such mandates through federal or state administrative actions.

Revenue Protection

Foundation Principle: Counties are partners with the State of Alabama in the collection of revenue and the delivery of services funded by the collection of such revenue. Many taxes collected by the counties as well as the state are earmarked for distribution between the two levels of government to ensure the provision of services. Likewise, the Legislature considers the abatement or exemption of many taxes levied by or on behalf of the county commission. County services cannot be funded during either the short- or long-term if the necessary revenue is interrupted. The Association opposes mandated abatement or exemption of the

About the Alabama County Platform

For 67 counties to speak with “One Voice,” there must be agreement on what will be said. Every move the Association makes on policy is grounded in the Alabama County Platform, a single document with many authors. The legislative positions and goals staked out here reflect the input of every county commission as well as leaders from affiliate and minority groups.

The ACCA Legislative Committee, comprised of representatives from all 67 counties, prepared the 2020 Platform for review and approval by the ACCA Board of Directors. The board’s recommendation was then approved by a vote of the full Association membership at the Legislative Conference in early December.

COMPONENTS OF THE PLATFORM

The Platform is organized in four parts:

1. FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES: In just a few sentences, each of the 11 Foundation Principles states the county position in timeless, “big picture” fashion. If the only thing someone knew about Alabama counties were the Foundation Principles, he or she would have a solid framework for understanding core issues and responsibilities.

Sample: Foundation Principle — Alabama’s Prisons and County Jails

Alabama’s prison system faces a crisis not unlike the crisis duplicated on a daily basis in each of the 67 county jails. The watchful eye of the federal courts, the never-ending expense of providing jail services, the growing costs of healthcare, and the training and compensation for officers presents a challenge well beyond the reach of a county commission devoid of revenue-generating powers. On the other hand, an efficient local law enforcement agency and jail is necessary to maintain order and to ensure the safety of all Alabamians. The Association is gravely concerned that all reform efforts, statutory changes or administrative rules be considered only in light of direct, indirect and unintended consequences generated at the county level.

local proceeds of any taxes as well as the alteration of the allocation formula used to distribute tax proceeds between the state and its counties.

County Operations and Budget Authority

Foundation Principle: The county governing body serves as both the legislative and administrative branch of government at the local level – carrying out budgetary duties as well as providing administrative leadership for many functions. The budgetary, personnel and administrative functions carried out by the county commission are essential to the financial and operational health of county government in Alabama. The Association opposes any efforts that will obstruct the county commission’s ability to effectively govern and to maintain the administrative and financial well-being of the services delivered by the county commission.

County Expenditures for Compensation and Benefits

Foundation Principle: The county commission is charged with making budgeting decisions within the revenue available to provide the most effective and

efficient services to the citizens in each of the 67 counties. Legislatively-mandated adjustments in salaries and benefits pose a threat to the delivery of such services. For this reason, the Association opposes any legislation that mandates any expenditure of county revenues for the payment of compensation, salary supplements, expense allowances, or benefits for current or former government officials or employees.

Economic Development and the Alabama Trust Fund

Foundation Principle: Alabama counties play an ever-growing and vital role in the state’s economic development efforts — providing services, financial support and community leadership necessary to attract and retain important employers. Counties must be able to access the revenue necessary to carry out this function and must be included in any reforms and initiatives that alter Alabama’s law regarding economic incentives and requirements. Revenue from the Alabama Trust Fund is essential to meeting these goals and must be protected from unnecessary raids and expenditures. The Association will actively oppose any removal of revenue from the Alabama

Trust Fund and seeks to be a partner in those economic development efforts that emphasize a partnership between the state and its counties.

Election Administration

Foundation Principle: Alabama’s election laws must maintain an unquestioned level of integrity and objectivity while avoiding the wasteful spending of limited local and state resources. Likewise, the reporting and disclosure requirements placed on candidates serve only to bolster such efforts to garner public confidence in the election process. The Association supports efforts to eliminate many of the unenforceable and overbroad provisions of Alabama’s election laws while not generating additional unnecessary costs or burdens at the local level.

Alabama’s Prisons and County Jails

Foundation Principle: Alabama’s prison system faces a crisis not unlike the crisis duplicated on a daily basis in each of the 67 county jails. The watchful eye of the federal courts, the never-ending expense of providing jail services, the growing costs of healthcare, and the training and compensation for officers presents a challenge well beyond

2. QUADRENNIAL GOALS: Flowing out of the Foundation Principles are Quadrennial Goals, with each one representing a legislative change needed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of county government.

Sample: Quadrennial Goal related to Alabama’s Prisons and County Jails

To repeal the intermediate sanction provisions of the 2015 Alabama Prison Reform Act requiring counties to hold prisoners awaiting transfer to State custody for the 45-day periods of incarceration for probation or parole violations.

3. LEGISLATIVE POLICIES: Also flowing out of each Foundation Principle, these Legislative Policies are specific statements about how counties view detailed aspects of the issues. These are generally phrased as statements of support, opposition or belief.

Sample: Legislative Policy related to Alabama’s Prisons and County Jails

Opposition to pleading down individuals charged with a Class D Felony to a misdemeanor status for the purpose of those convicted persons serving time in county jails rather than a state prison.

4. QUADRENNIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS: This list of new laws shows the progress to date on Quadrennial Goals.

Sample: Quadrennial Accomplishment related to Alabama’s Prisons and County Jails

Act 2019-133

Changes to Sheriffs’ Feeding Accounts

This law established a statewide process to ensure all feeding monies are treated as public funds and clarified the sheriff is not personally responsible for any shortfall in the feeding account. The law created a Prisoner Feeding Fund in each sheriff’s office and required feeding monies to be received and disbursed separately from the other office funds. Among other changes, the law also increased the state’s portion of the county inmate feeding allowance from \$1.75 to \$2.25 per prisoner per day.

the reach of a county commission devoid of revenue-generating powers. On the other hand, an efficient local law enforcement agency and jail is necessary to maintain order and to ensure the safety of all Alabamians. The Association is gravely concerned that all reform efforts, statutory changes or administrative rules be considered only in light of direct, indirect and unintended consequences generated at the county level.

Justice and Public Safety

Foundation Principle: The State of Alabama is responsible for administration of state courts and public safety agencies and for providing public health and mental health services for the citizens of this state. The Association believes the Alabama Legislature should adequately fund each state agency responsible for delivery of these critical government services and opposes any legislative or administrative efforts that mandate counties to assume any responsibility for these state functions or that force county government to assume state functions due to the state's failure to

adequately meet its financial or administrative responsibilities. Additionally, since local government plays an important role in providing emergency services at the local level, the Association urges the Legislature to ensure there is adequate funding for local programs and that state and local agencies work in partnership for the safety and well-being of all citizens of this state.

Environment, Land Use and Public Works

Foundation Principle: County government's role in the effective administration and enforcement of Alabama's law affecting environmental issues, land use and public works administration is often confusing. Counties lack land-use authority but are required to grant initial approval for landfills. Counties seek to enhance the delivery of services by improving their public facilities and programs but often are impeded by federal and state regulations, inspections and prohibitions that do not serve the public's best interests. The exercise of extra-jurisdictional powers by municipalities

further clouds the role of county government. The Association seeks legislative and administrative solutions to these conflicts and encourages all related agencies to interact with counties to ensure the proper delivery of services and the enforcement of requirements and regulations.

Rural Transportation

Foundation Principle: The county commission is responsible for proper construction, maintenance, and repair of all roads and bridges in the county road system. The Association believes it is essential that the county commission have adequate federal, state and/or local funding to meet the many needs of its rural transportation system. Additionally, the Association believes that, in order to keep roads and bridges properly maintained for the safety and well-being of the traveling public, the county commission must have broad regulatory authority related to the use of county-maintained roads and bridges, including the ability to collect reimbursement from persons or entities causing damage to those roads and bridges.

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Alabama County Quadrennial Goals

With the start of each quadrennium, the Association membership and its affiliate organizations come together to analyze the global state of county governments in Alabama. The results of this collaborative effort are compiled into the Quadrennial Goals set out below. Throughout the four years of the quadrennium, the membership will prioritize and advocate for legislation to achieve each of these goals. As the quadrennium progresses, the membership may elect to add, amend or update these goals to ensure they adequately reflect the needs and condition of Alabama's 67 county governments.

Alabama Governmental Structure

- To shift the statutorily-required publication of legal notices from a “newspaper” to publication on a website maintained by the state or by each individual county.
- To provide a constitutional amendment to authorize open debate of local legislation.

Mandated and Unfunded Legislation

- To amend the unfunded mandate constitutional amendment to provide that the exemption for defining crimes applies only to provisions of the law defining or amending a crime.

Revenue Protection

- To modernize the business licensing process provided it does not result in a loss of state or local revenue or repeal existing local business licensing laws.
- To update the process for appointing and compensating the members of the County Boards of Equalization to ensure the efficient operation of the tax appeals process by attracting the appointment of qualified persons.

County Operations and Budget Authority

- To provide that the county commission sets the hours of operation of county offices.
- To clarify statutory language related to use of county warrants and bonds.
- To require municipalities to provide animal control services within its jurisdictional limits or contribute a pro rata share of services provided by the county.

County Expenditures for Compensation and Benefits

- To amend the statute regarding the

appointment of members to the Board of Control of the Retirement Systems of Alabama to more closely reflect the employing agencies of the participating members of the system.

- To repeal the so-called revolving door provision of the Alabama Ethics law for public employees who become employed by other public employers.

Economic Development and the Alabama Trust Fund

- To shift 20 percent of the corpus and future oil lease and royalty payments of the Alabama Trust Fund into the County and Municipal Government Trust Fund, which would thereafter operate as a separately-maintained Trust Fund for counties and municipalities.

Election Administration

- To eliminate the requirement that the county commission set and fund school tax elections for municipal school systems.
- To amend Alabama law reforming the current Board of Registrar system to provide more accountability, state and local oversight, and minimum qualifications for appointments.
- To allow the county commission, in its discretion, to assume responsibility for the absentee election function when there is a change in the office of circuit clerk.
- To remove the authority for the Secretary of State to decertify poll books being used by county election officials, if such equipment was approved at the time of purchase.

Alabama's Prisons and County Jails

- To clarify that persons on parole, probation or participants in diversion programs are legally and financially State inmates for all purposes even when held for temporary confinement

in the county jail or awaiting hearing or transfer to a state facility.

- To amend Alabama law to limit the medical service costs for an individual in county custody at an amount not exceeding Alabama's Medicaid rates and fees.
- To repeal the intermediate sanction provisions of the 2015 Alabama Prison Reform Act requiring counties to hold prisoners awaiting transfer to State custody for the 45-day periods of incarceration for probation or parole violations.

Justice and Public Safety

- To improve and expand spay-neuter services throughout the state, provided there is no requirement that counties fund such services.
- To establish a statewide uniform pistol permit fee provided that current local laws on distribution are not repealed and that all fees collected are distributed to local government.
- To amend current Alabama law to create a more equitable financial allocation between local and state governments for the housing, medical care and transportation of juveniles participating in the juvenile justice system.
- To clarify that juveniles held in regional detention facilities awaiting court ordered transfers to local or state diversion or treatment programs are the legal and financial responsibility of the state.
- To provide specific liability protection for those opening buildings or shelters to the public in times of impending disaster events.
- To authorize Emergency Management Agency vehicles to utilize emergency lights and sirens in accordance with emergency vehicle standards.

Rural Transportation

- To allow counties to also satisfy the publication requirements of the public works law through electronic publication for all state or locally funded road and bridge projects by utilizing the procedures used in the Rebuild Alabama Act.

Environment, Land Use and Public Works

- To properly fund the Alabama Disaster Recovery Program to provide direct financial assistance to counties and municipalities following certain disasters and assistance for certain pre-disaster

event protective measures.

- To repeal the provisions of Alabama law allowing police jurisdictions and municipal planning commission jurisdictions to extend beyond those established on or before January 1, 2020.

Alabama County Public Policy Positions

The Public Policy Positions of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, established by the membership, direct the Association's advocacy efforts in supporting or opposing any policy decisions affecting Alabama's county governments. These Policy Positions, derived from the 11 Foundation Principles, address numerous issues from the relationship between State and local governments to the day-to-day operations of the county commissions.

Alabama Governmental Structure

- ✗ Opposition to removing or impeding local control of the county department of human resources.
- ✓ Support for continued application of current constitutional and statutory provisions providing that elected officials can be removed from office only through the process of impeachment.
- ✓ Support for Alabama's current structure for enacting or amending state general or local laws and belief that no provision allowing for citizen referendum should be enacted.
- ✓ Belief that individual property rights must be balanced with adequate means to protect the health, safety and welfare of all citizens.
- ✓ Belief that any additional restrictions on the use of constitutional and statutory procedures for condemnation of private property for necessary governmental purposes will serve to harm the collective well-being of all citizens.
- ✓ Belief that counties should receive a portion of proceeds resulting from the enactment of legislation establishing a state lottery, gaming, or sports betting systems and including subsequent expansion of those systems.
- ✗ Opposition to restricting or limiting a county commission's authority to make independent decisions related to county

property and rights-of-way.

- ✗ Opposition to shifting the control of county property to the oversight of a legislatively-established committee or state agency.

Mandated and Unfunded Legislation

- ✗ Opposition to federal and state efforts to require county government to assume any financial or programmatic responsibilities that are currently financed and/or administered at the federal or state level.
- ✗ Opposition to any mandated and unfunded requirement that counties assume new programs established by the federal or state government.
- ✗ Opposition to any federal or state legislative, administrative or regulatory directives requiring county government to assume inspection, public safety, permitting responsibilities or other duties currently performed by the state or federal agency.
- ✗ Opposition to any legislative or regulatory directives requiring counties to provide housing, supplies, equipment or other expenses for a county coroner or other county officers.
- ✗ Opposition to state agencies administratively eliminating state services within a county for budgetary or other reasons without legislative approval.

Revenue Protection

- ✗ Opposition to altering the current interest rate on tax sale proceeds unless such change will not result in a decrease in purchaser participation in tax sales or reduction in tax sale proceeds paid to counties.
- ✓ Support for apportioning the full ad valorem tax collection costs among all entities entitled to a portion of the proceeds of the tax.
- ✗ Opposition to authorizing a local legislative delegation or legislatively-created committees to direct how local revenues should be distributed.
- ✓ Support for the principles of the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement provided there is no future effort to repeal or restrict counties' authority to collect, audit and/or enforce local taxes.
- ✓ Support for removing any defects in state tax laws resulting in a discriminatory tax structure provided that the removal eliminates discrimination without creating new or expanding exemptions or tax credits.
- ✓ Support for creating a fair and equitable ad valorem tax system provided it does not eliminate annual reappraisal, reduce tax revenues or increase current exemptions.
- ✓ Support for amending the Taxpayer Bill of Rights to provide that following an audit

that uncovers that taxes were wrongly paid to another entity, the auditing entity may take action against the other entity if the wrongly-paid tax is not refunded within six months.

- ✓ Support for revisions of the definition of tangible personal property to ensure that goods delivered digitally are subject to sales or use tax collections.
- ✓ Support for updating the process for appointing and compensating members of the County Boards of Equalization.
- ✗ Opposition to legislation that would allow income producing properties to be treated as residential housing for the purpose of ad valorem taxation.
- ✓ Belief that local governments should incur no costs for use of the ONE SPOT sales tax remittance system.
- ✗ Opposition to any proposed amendments that would substantially reduce the county share of revenue distributed under the Simplified Sellers Use Tax statute.

County Operations and Budget Authority

- ✓ Belief that the existing Open Records Law adequately protects a citizen's right to access of public documents, and any reforms should come only after comprehensive input from county government.
- ✓ Support for the protection of counties, officials, employees or agents against liability for official actions provided there is no change in the statutory damage cap for awards against counties.
- ✗ Opposition to any efforts to require counties to pay the attorney fees of those filing actions against county governments, its officials or employees.
- ✓ Support for the county commission role in adopting and enforcing the county budget and opposition to any efforts to weaken or direct the county commission's exercise of this legislative authority.
- ✗ Opposition to any legislation requiring the county commission to vote or take action on a particular measure or issue.
- ✓ Support for limiting use of out-of-state cooperative programs for purchases

available on the county joint bid list.

- ✓ Support for legislation allowing individuals to petition the court for clear and merchantable title of tax sale properties provided it does not increase counties' administrative burden.

County Expenditures for Compensation and Benefits

- ✓ Support for the Omnibus Pay Act in its current form and opposition to any requirement to provide or increase compensation, benefits, or county-paid salary supplements for state or local officials.
- ✗ Opposition to mandated and unfunded requirements to provide or increase compensation or benefits for any county-paid personnel or volunteers.
- ✗ Opposition to shifting responsibility for the payment of the employee share of retirement contributions for probate judges to the counties.
- ✓ Support for the elimination of all supernumerary programs and opposition to any mandated and unfunded increases in payments made under existing programs.
- ✓ Support for authorizing cost of living increases for state and local retirees provided such legislation only applies to retirees in a particular county if approved by the county commission.
- ✓ Belief that any retirement program changes should not apply to local participants without approval of the county commission.
- ✓ Support for authorizing counties to establish civil service systems provided that the creation of such systems do not provide for collective bargaining.
- ✓ Belief that workers' compensation benefits should be uniform for all workers, and special benefits should not be established for segments of the county workforce.
- ✓ Support the consideration of modifications to the current Employees' Retirement System to provide public employers to enhance recruitment of a qualified workforce and retain experienced employees.

Economic Development and the Alabama Trust Fund

- ✓ Support for legislation to establish an application process for granting tax credits and tax abatements for the expansion of high speed internet broadband services to the underserved, unincorporated areas of counties with county commission consent for any local tax abatements.
- ✗ Opposition to the withdrawal or diversion of money currently earmarked for the Alabama Trust Fund.
- ✗ Opposition to any economic development legislation or programs that mandate the expenditure of county revenues or abatement of county taxes without the consent of the county commission.
- ✓ Support efforts of the Alabama Legislature to evaluate existing incentive programs to ensure they are cost effective and beneficial to local economies.
- ✓ Support for incentives and reforms that will enhance the delivery of healthcare services to underserved communities.

Election Administration

- ✓ Encourage the Alabama Legislature to reject changes to any election laws without the Legislature closely reviewing, considering and debating the financial and administrative impact on county government.
- ✗ Opposition to eliminating a runoff election except in the most extreme circumstances where the outcome of the primary is inevitable.
- ✓ Support for any legislative or administrative efforts aimed at eliminating waste and reducing state and county election expenses provided such efforts maintain the integrity of the election process.
- ✓ Support for authorizing counties to satisfy election-related publication requirements by posting information on a public website and making copies available at the courthouse.
- ✗ Opposition to any legislation requiring county governments or county personnel to provide services or assume responsibility for any portion of municipal

elections.

- ✓ Support for legislative changes that will increase voter participation while ensuring fair and honest elections.
- ✓ Support legislation including all expenditures for electronic poll books and training for absentee election managers in the items eligible for reimbursement by the State of Alabama.
- ✓ Belief that if the State of Alabama establishes an early voting process, all costs should be paid by the State of Alabama.

Alabama's Prisons and County Jails

- ✗ Opposition to requiring mandatory training for sheriffs, sheriffs' deputies or other county employees without county commission approval.
- ✗ Opposition to any prison reform implementation activities that significantly increase costs of or create unsafe conditions in the county jail, including the housing of State inmates in county jails.
- ✓ Support for any legislation necessary to correct any consequences of the

2015 prison reform implementation that negatively impacts the operation of the county jail and opposition to any further sentencing reform efforts until such corrections are enacted.

- ✗ Opposition to pleading down individuals charged with a Class D Felony to a misdemeanor status for the purpose of those convicted persons serving time in county jails rather than a State prison.
- ✓ Support for providing that non-indigents serving sentences in the county jail be required to pay a portion of the cost of incarceration, including medical expenses.
- ✗ Opposition to any requirement that county government pay for the use of State inmate labor.
- ✗ Opposition to imposing mandated and unfunded jail standards or other procedures.
- ✗ Opposition to legislative or administrative efforts to put reserve deputies in regular law enforcement positions.
- ✗ Opposition to amending Alabama's work release law to allow wages paid to the

county to be expended for purposes other than the costs of the individual inmate's incarceration.

- ✓ Support for comprehensive legislation to clarify and/or implement procedures for county inmates working outside of the jail through either work release or other programs.

Justice and Public Safety

- ✗ Opposition to any juvenile justice reform efforts that would result in increased cost or administrative responsibility on a county without the county commission's consent.
- ✓ Support for legislative or administrative procedures to reduce or eliminate county costs for transportation of individuals with mental health issues.
- ✗ Opposition to prohibiting state law enforcement officers from conducting investigations or providing other services on county roads.
- ✓ Support for providing adequate funding to ensure that ambulance services are available throughout the county.

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- ✓ Support for protecting the county commission against the payment of any costs or penalties issued as a result of any local elected official's defying a validly-issued court order.
- ✗ Opposition to any legislation authorizing a person to carry a firearm in a vehicle without a valid pistol permit.
- ✓ Support for shifting regulation of certain prefabricated storm shelters from the Department of Finance to the Alabama Manufactured Housing Commission.
- ✓ Belief that the statewide 911 Board should conduct only those activities delegated by the Legislature.
- ✓ Belief that 911 services are best provided through locally operated and administered boards without statewide coordination and encouraging the statewide 911 Board to seek meaningful input from existing 911 district boards and personnel in developing any proposed reforms or initiatives.
- ✓ Support for restoring state EMA revenues in the state general fund budget to ensure both state and county EMA programs receive proper funding.
- ✓ Support for adequate funding of state supplements paid to counties with a certified county EMA director.
- ✓ Support for ensuring the state has sufficient resources to assist county governments with the protection of the public's health and safety in the event of an environmental emergency.
- ✓ Support for legislative and administrative efforts to implement state-funded video conferencing for certain court appearances and to expand the use of video court proceedings in the state.
- ✓ Belief that debris placed on the right-of-way of a state road following a disaster event is the State of Alabama's responsibility and should be removed at the state's expense.
- ✓ Support for legislation to clarify that the county commission is not liable for the improper expenditures of funds authorized by law to be expended at the "sole discretion" of a particular elected official.
- ✓ Support for legislation amending Alabama law to remove the requirement that the sheriff must be appointed conservator or guardian of an incapacitated person if no other suitable person qualifies as general conservator.
- ✓ Support for legislation imposing an express duty to require service providers to collect and remit the monthly statewide 911 fee from all of their applicable customers and further authorize the statewide 911 Board to take audit and collection actions, as necessary, to enforce such collections.
- ✓ Support for the delivery of comprehensive voluntary statewide training for 911 dispatchers and similar personnel.
- ✓ Support for statewide efforts and legislative measures to provide access to effective mental health services at the local level.

Environment, Land Use and Public Works

- ✓ Support for limiting the exercise of municipal powers or taxation outside the jurisdiction's corporate limits.



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- ✗ Opposition to any statutory or administrative increase in fees charged by a state agency if such increases will be paid by county government or county-established agencies.
- ✓ Support for sufficient funding and administrative expertise for flood plain management and geospatial services at the state level to ensure more effective implementation by all counties.
- ✗ Opposition to municipalities using unconventional annexation procedures to avoid the legal responsibility to maintain public roads included in newly-annexed areas.
- ✓ Support for increasing the minimum cost of a construction project amount that requires the county to employ the services of a licensed general contractor or architect.
- ✗ Opposition to allowing a project manager to approve construction contract changes without approval of the governing body and/or compliance with the Public Works Law.

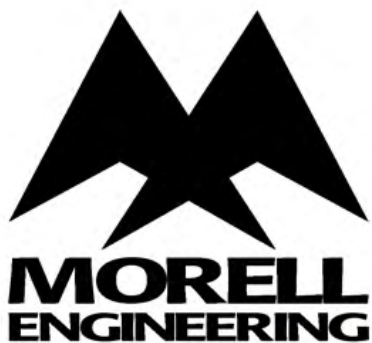
- ✓ Support for requiring the Forever Wild Board to make annual payments from its Stewardship Account in an amount equal to the ad valorem taxes lost by the purchase of lands previously held by private ownership.

Rural Transportation

- ✓ Support for allowing the county commission to call a local referendum to impose a renewable temporary local gasoline and motor fuel tax to fund specified local road and bridge projects.
- ✗ Opposition to any measures, including budget appropriations, that would divert taxes currently earmarked for roads and bridges to other state functions.
- ✗ Opposition to altering the allocation formula for any gasoline and diesel fuel tax levy proceeds, if such changes would disproportionately benefit funding for municipal projects at the expense of funding for county roads and bridges.
- ✗ Opposition to weakening Alabama's law related to weight or axle-spacing

restrictions on state and county roads or to add new exemptions to such laws.

- ✓ Support for providing that fines collected from persons convicted of driving overweight vehicles on county roads and bridges be distributed to the county's road and bridge fund.
- ✗ Opposition to establishing a commission to administer the Alabama Department of Transportation.
- ✗ Opposition to any changes to current law setting speed limits on unposted county roads.
- ✓ Support for amending Alabama's severance tax law to ensure that counties receive proceeds sufficient to ensure proper maintenance and repair of roads and bridges utilized for the transportation of materials severed within the county.
- ✓ Support for amending the Alabama Public Works Law to exempt the awarding of annual in-place contracts for the paving and resurfacing of county roads.



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Alabama County Quadrennial Accomplishments

2019 Legislative Session Accomplishments

Act 2019-382

Updating the Simplified Sellers Use Tax Program

The 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the South Dakota v. Wayfair case established a collection methodology for online sellers that works well with Alabama's Simplified Sellers Use Tax (SSUT) program; however, technical issues in the law required amending to guarantee compliance with the Court's ruling. This act amended the law to expand protection from class action lawsuits involving claims for SSUT refunds. It also provided tax amnesty for online sellers for tax periods prior to October 1, 2019, and prohibited the collection of the SSUT on vehicles for which state and local taxes are required to be collected at the time of the vehicle's registration.

Act 2019-184

Amending the County Debt Set-off Program

Over the past several years, the state's growing rural healthcare crisis has forced many small hospitals to contract their operations over to larger entities. However, the services provided by these "contractor" entities did not meet the technical definition provided in the statute governing the County Debt Set-Off Program, allowing many of the debts owed to rural healthcare providers to go uncollected. The enactment of this technical amendment to the authorizing statute ensured county healthcare authorities could continue to participate in the program, even if they contract with an outside entity to provide financial or administrative management assistance.

Act 2019-132

Offering Better Local Retirement Benefits

Local government entities participating in the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) now have the option to shift their existing Tier II employees to the more attractive benefits package afforded to local employees hired prior to 2013. The law granted local government employers until April 2021 to provide their Tier II members with the plan benefits offered to Tier I employees. The law will allow local entities to remain competitive in the job market and retain talented employees. It does not impact state revenue and is expected to reduce costs for many counties, cities and local entities.

Act 2019-70

Utilizing Next-Generation 9-1-1 Technology

The Alabama Next Generation Emergency Network (ANGEN) is a communication technology system designed to streamline the routing process for 9-1-1 calls, reduce costs for 9-1-1 districts, and improve accuracy and redundancy issues in the current system. While the State 9-1-1 Board had been administering the program since 2013, it was given clear statutory authority to administer ANGEN under this act. The law further made a number of technical amendments to the general powers of the Board, enabling it to more effectively provide critical services and support to the state's 9-1-1 districts.

Act 2019-133

Changing Sheriffs' Feeding Accounts

This law established a statewide process

to ensure all feeding monies are treated as public funds and clarified the sheriff is not personally responsible for any shortfall in the feeding account. The law created a Prisoner Feeding Fund in each sheriff's office and required feeding monies to be received and disbursed separately from the other office funds. Among other changes, the law also increased the state's portion of the county inmate feeding allowance from \$1.75 to \$2.25 per prisoner per day.

Act 2019-2

Improving County Infrastructure Through Increased Fuel Taxes

Passed during the first special session of 2019, this law increased Alabama's gasoline and diesel fuel taxes by 10 cents per gallon through 2021. The first increase of 6 cents became effective September 1, 2019 — bringing the state's total excise tax on gasoline to \$0.24 per gallon. An additional two cents will be added on October 1, 2020, and again on October 1, 2021. Under this law, counties became able to save time and stretch their dollars by swapping their federal funds for \$400,000 in state funds — and also participate in a \$10-million local government grant program and a \$30-million to \$50-million, pay-as-you-go ATRIP-II program.

Act 2019-234

Reinstating Right-of-Way Waiver Valuations

This amendment to the statutory provisions granted the use of waiver valuations if (1) the property owner is donating the property and releases the state or political subdivision from its appraisal obligations or (2) the state or political subdivision, with the written consent of the property owner, determines an appraisal is not necessary and the anticipated property value is equal to or less than the amount in the applicable federal regulation — which is currently \$10,000. Under this law, counties were given the authority to continue utilizing a process that has saved them much time and money over the years. ■



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No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

Smith joins ‘County Caucus’

In a special election late last year, central Alabama voters sent another member of the “County Family” to the Alabama Legislature.

Rep. Van Smith had served on the Autauga County Commission for five years when he won election to represent Autauga and Chilton counties in the Alabama House of Representatives. This puts him in a select group of legislators who have made the move from the courthouse to the Statehouse, a group unofficially and affectionately known as the “County Caucus.”

“Some legislators just have a head start when it comes to understanding

county issues, and it is a privilege to continue relationships with senators and representatives who have served at the county level,” said Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director.

A native of Chilton County, Smith is a retired educator who taught agriscience before moving into school administration. He has been a full-time farmer since 2013.

As the 2020 Regular Session begins, there are 14 legislators in the County Caucus — a pair of members in the Senate and an even dozen in the House of Representatives. ■



Rep. Van Smith

SENATE

Sen. Clyde Chambliss

- ★ *County Commission Service: Autauga*
- ★ *Counties in Senate District: Autauga, Chilton, Coosa, Elmore and Tallapoosa*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Chair, Senate Local Legislation Committee, and Majority Floor Leader*

Sen. Chris Elliott

- ★ *County Commission Service: Baldwin*
- ★ *County in Senate District: Baldwin*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Vice Chair, Senate Governmental Affairs Committee*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Rep. Jim Carns

- ★ *County Commission Service: Jefferson*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Jefferson and Shelby*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Chair, House Commerce and Small Business Committee*

Rep. Corley Ellis

- ★ *County Commission Service: Shelby*
- ★ *County in House District: Shelby*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Vice Chair, House Insurance Committee*

Rep. Joe Faust

- ★ *County Commission Service: Baldwin*
- ★ *County in House District: Baldwin*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Vice Chair, House Transportation, Utilities and Infrastructure Committee*

Rep. Berry Forte

- ★ *County Commission Service: Barbour*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Barbour, Bullock and Russell*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Ranking Minority Member, House Economic Development and Tourism Committee, and Ranking Minority Member, House Commerce and Small Business Committee*

Rep. Steve Hurst

- ★ *County Commission Service: Talladega*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Calhoun, Clay and Talladega*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Vice Chair, House Agriculture and Forestry Committee*

Rep. Sam Jones

- ★ *County Commission Service: Mobile*
- ★ *County in House District: Mobile*

Rep. Reed Ingram

- ★ *County Commission Service: Montgomery*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Elmore and Montgomery*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Chair, House County and Municipal Government Committee*

Rep. Randall Shedd

- ★ *County Commission Service: Cullman*
- ★ *County in House District: Blount, Cullman, Marshall and Morgan*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Chair, House Urban and Rural Development Committee, and Vice Chair, House Children and Senior Advocacy Committee*

Rep. Van Smith

- ★ *County Commission Service: Autauga*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Autauga and Chilton*

Rep. David Standridge

- ★ *County Commission Service: Blount*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Blount and Marshall*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Vice Chair, House Urban and Rural Development Committee*

Rep. Debbie Wood

- ★ *County Commission Service: Chambers*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Chambers and Lee*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Deputy Whip, House Republican Caucus*

Rep. Randy Wood

- ★ *County Commission Service: Calhoun*
- ★ *Counties in House District: Calhoun, St. Clair and Talladega*
- ★ *Legislative Leadership Duties: Chair, House Internal Affairs Committee*

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County Days Begin February 26

The One Voice of County Government will be especially prominent in the Statehouse on six special occasions during the upcoming session because ACCA is organizing the traditional

County Days, all of which fall on Wednesdays again this year.

Each county has been assigned one day to come to Montgomery and “walk the halls” to help make sure all your legislators are aware of — and supporting — the interests of county government. All county commissioners, affiliate group members and other county government staff are encouraged to participate and join the County Family at the Statehouse on your day.

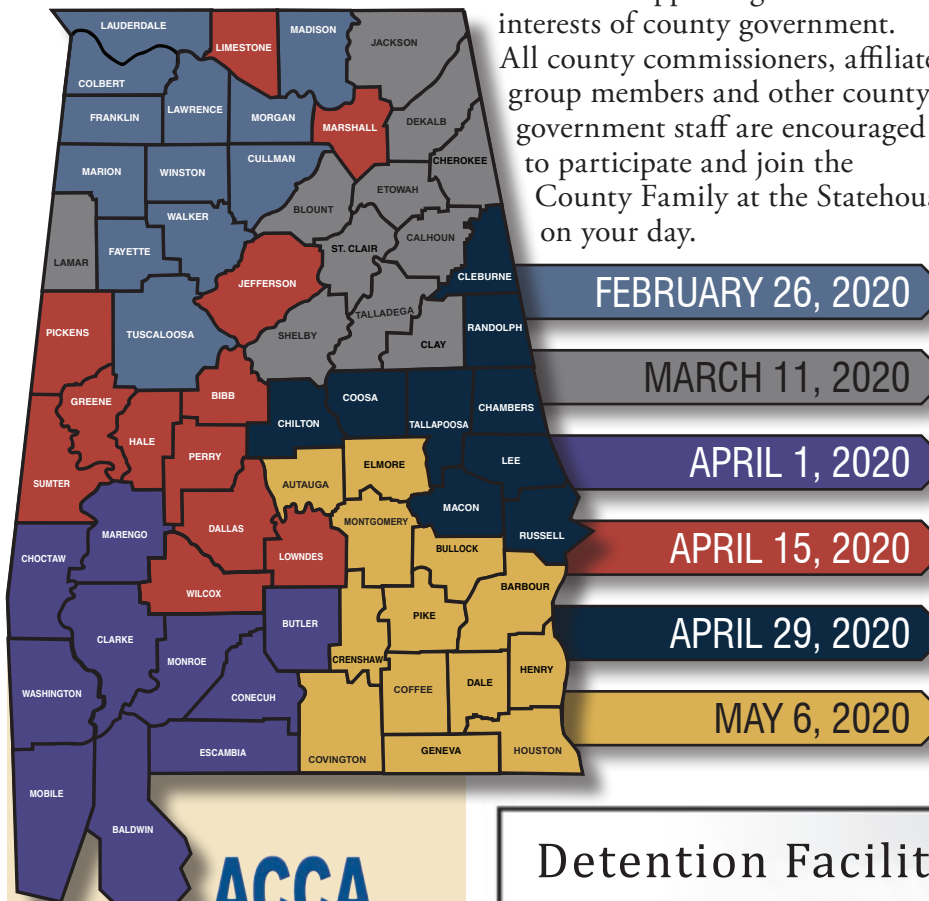
The basic agenda is the same for each County Day, beginning at noon with lunch and a briefing from ACCA staff in a new location for 2020. Everyone will still convene at ACCA headquarters on 2 North Jackson Street — just on the newly remodeled second floor. Participants will receive a packet with up-to-the-minute information on the status of ACCA and Danger Bills.

At 1 p.m., the group will walk down the hill to the Statehouse for lobbying and afternoon committee meetings.

Before and after lobbying, participants can take advantage of optional social media assistance from ACCA staff and/or video filming in Studio 67.

There is no registration fee for County Days, but ACCA will get a head count for the day to facilitate lunch. An overnight stay should not be necessary.

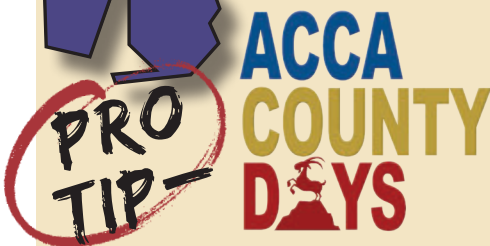
More details will be distributed as each County Day draws near, but please get this date on your calendar and make plans now to participate in this important event. ■



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Want to ensure you can meet with a particular legislator on your County Day?

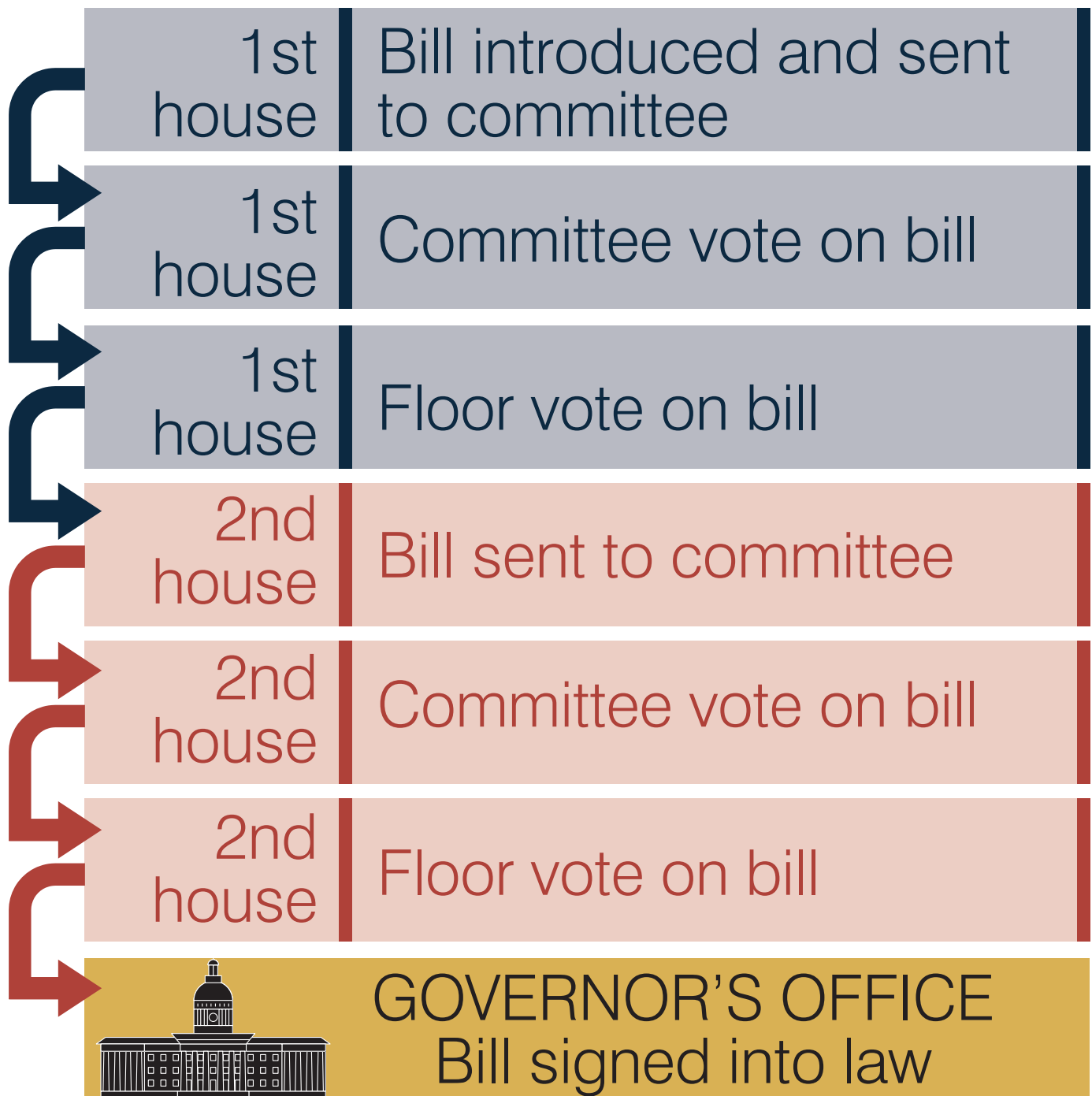
Contact your legislators at least a week in advance of your County Day to make sure they will have time to meet with you. (This is particularly important for legislators who chair committees or have other leadership responsibilities.)

Alabama Legislative Process 101

A Simplified Look at How a Bill Becomes a Law

A couple things to keep in mind:

- *To change statutory law in Alabama, both houses of the Legislature (House of Representatives and Senate) must approve a bill in identical form.*
- *The basic process works the same way regardless of where a bill starts. For our purposes, the two bodies will be referred to as “1st house” and “2nd house”*



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Legislative Lingo

AMENDMENT • An alteration made, or proposed to be made, to a bill or resolution by adding, changing, substituting or omitting language.

BIR • A BIR (abbreviation for Budget Isolation Resolution) must be adopted before each bill can be debated on the floor. Consideration of BIRs discontinues when both state budgets have passed the legislature and have been transmitted to the governor.

CALENDAR • A list of bills that have been reported out of committee and are ready for their third reading.

Regular Order Calendar A list of bills in the order that they were reported out of committees for third reading. This list reflects the order for considering bills.

Special Order Calendar A list of bills selected from the regular order calendar by the Rules Committee for priority treatment.

Consent Calendar A list of non-controversial bills that have been through the consent calendar process in the House Rules Committee and are to be considered before the regular order calendar on each legislative day.

COMMITTEES

Standing Committee A group of senators or representatives appointed by the presiding officers or Senate President Pro Tem to act on bills in a certain area of interest. The committees last for the entire length of a legislative term (4 years).

Conference Committee A panel composed of 3 members (conferees) from each house appointed by the presiding officer in the House and the Committee on Assignments in the Senate to resolve differences between the two houses on an amended instrument. Conference committees report amendments back to the legislature for further action.

Rules Committees A group in each house responsible for setting the daily calendars of the House and the Senate.

ENROLLMENT • The final processing of a bill or resolution, incorporating all amendments, after passing both houses. This is the document that is signed by both presiding officers and the governor. Constitutional amendments do not require the governor's signature.

READING • A milestone in the legislative process. The term is a holdover from an era when there was only one written copy of a bill.

1st Reading The reading of a bill by title upon introduction, after which the presiding officer refers it to an appropriate standing committee for study.

2nd Reading The reading of a bill when it is reported out of committee, along with announcement of committee action. The presiding officer then orders said bill placed on the calendar for the next legislative day.

3rd Reading The reading of a bill when it comes up for consideration on the floor. It is at this point that amendments are considered, and the bill is passed or defeated. If it is passed, it is then transmitted to the other house.

SUBSTITUTE • An amendment in the form of an entire bill. When adopted, a substitute becomes the bill.



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COVINGTON

Jamie Holloway

CRENSHAW

Daniel Blue

DALLAS

Vivian Hunter

DEKALB

Divell Bell
Jordan McGinnis
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HENRY

Wayne Adkinson
Jessica Johnson
Michael Neiswanger

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Tammie Kasler
Kelita Moore
James West

JACKSON

Zach Hatchett
Matthew Myers

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Kayla Coats
Sarah Creasy

LAWRENCE

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LEE

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Status Report: Rebuild Alabama

Counties demonstrate efficiency, transparency

Counties are keeping their word by both doing the work and fulfilling accountability requirements of the Rebuild Alabama Act, signed by Gov. Kay Ivey in March 2019.

“We have consistently said counties will be efficient and transparent with the new funds,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. “Throughout the implementation phase, county governments have worked collectively so they can be responsible and accountable with each and every dollar.”

The historic Rebuild Alabama Act is the first increase in recurring funding for roads and bridges in the state since 1992. Revenue comes primarily from a phased-in, 10-cents-per-gallon tax on gasoline and diesel fuel, with proceeds benefitting State, county and city infrastructure.

Implementation milestones achieved during the latter half of 2019 include:

ATRIP-II Grants

The Act established the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II) grant program to invest in projects of local interest on the state highway system. In October, Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation announced the first awards, totaling \$30.13 million. Eleven county projects, valued at \$11.5 million, were selected. Choctaw County Commissioner Tony Cherry, ACCA’s Immediate Past President, serves on the ATRIP-II Committee.

ARBA Fall Briefings

Leaders of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama, ACCA’s Rebuild Alabama Implementation Team and ACCA staff traveled the state in November to speak at five fall briefings



AlabamaCounties.org/RebuildAL

Engineers from Geneva, Morgan, Autauga, Chambers and Elmore counties traveled the state, at the invitation of the Alabama Road Builders Association, briefing contractors on Rebuild Alabama and its implementation procedures.

for members of the Alabama Road Builders Association.

County Transportation Plans

The Act requires each local governing body to adopt an annual transportation plan and make plans available to the public so citizens can easily see how the new revenue will be used. All 67 County Transportation Plans are available online at AlabamaCounties.org/rebuildal.

County Bid Announcements

In another innovation brought about by the act, all county bid announcements for Rebuild Alabama projects and materials can be found in a single centralized online location — AlabamaCounties.org/rebuildal.

Rebuild Alabama Signage

To further strengthen public awareness of how new dollars are used, custom Rebuild Alabama signs

were designed for each county so that projects funded by the Act can be clearly marked as such for the traveling public.

In addition, work is ongoing by the ACEA Technical Advisory Committee and the Implementation Team to:

- Collaborate with the Alabama Department of Transportation to improve local road specifications, coordinate resources and ensure counties maximize available funding opportunities.
- Refine the Rebuild Alabama bid procedures and streamline the bidding process for all road and bridge projects.
- Provide counties with expanded bid options in fiscal year 2021.
- Analyze County Transportation Plans to develop further messaging about Rebuild Alabama’s benefits. ■

Counties Clean Up Big in 2019

In yet another example of county governments enhancing quality of life in Alabama, counties made their mark in 2019 in a pair of statewide anti-litter initiatives.

Counties continued their longstanding partnership with Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State), and 64 of 67 counties participated in the “Don’t Drop it on Alabama Spring Cleanup” campaign. Honorees in the organization’s annual awards program included:

- Coca-Cola Award: Cullman and Jefferson counties
- County Award: Jefferson County Roads & Transportation Department and Marshall County Commission
- Law Enforcement Award: Sheriffs Matt Gentry (Cullman), Phil Sims



Russell County

(Marshall) and Heath Taylor (Russell)

- PALS Special Partnership Award: Association of County Commissions of Alabama

Counties teamed up again with the Alabama Community College System for the “Clean Home Alabama” campaign, to beautify the state in preparation for the bicentennial celebration. ■



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Photos from Alabama Counties

Partnering for economic development success

Members of the Morgan and Limestone County Commissions joined state and economic development leaders at the future home of Alabama's Mazda Toyota manufacturing plant in early December. The company tweeted, "Thanks to the government and economic development partners who took time to visit our future home today. What a testimony to all that can be achieved through collaboration and teamwork!"



@MORGANCOCOMM



@LIMESTONECOUNTY

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Keeping lines of communication open with state leaders

Madison County Commissioner Phil Vandiver gathered around the dinner table with two legislators — Sen. Tom Butler and Rep. Andy Whitt — back in November to discuss county roads and community safety.



@VFARMS2



@SENButler



@ANDY_WHITT1



Connecting with the community for preparedness

Tuscaloosa County EMA teamed up with a local TV station and the National Weather Service in November to prepare their community for future disasters by helping program weather radios and signing residents up for their local alert system.



@TUSCALOOSACoEMA



Preparing for the 2020 Regular Session

Nearly 400 Alabama county officials and employees gathered in Auburn for the 2019 ACCA Legislative Conference in early December. The event coincided with the release of “Alabama’s Unresolved Inmate Crisis,” an ACCA research publication that details the unintended impact of the 2015 Ala. Prison Reform Act.



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Representing Alabama counties at the national level

In October, Alabama County Commission Members gathered at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the National Association of Counties (NACo) in preparation for a special White House briefing with senior administrative officials.



@NACOTWEETS



Reaching out to constituents

Lawrence County Commissioner Kyle Pankey held a public meeting in his community in October and invited local and state leaders to participate and speak.



@LAWCOAL42



@PANKEY_KYLE

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 Abby Fitzpatrick, Director of Communication & Engagement, afitzpatrick@alabamacounties.org.

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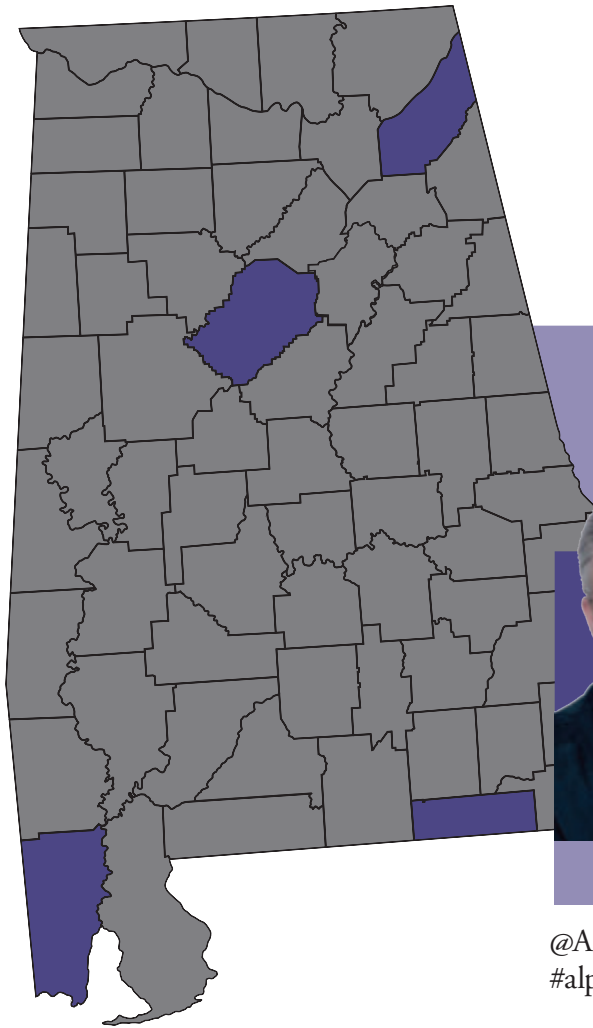
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Voices from the County Family



How do you intend to use social media to mobilize your affiliate group members to better communicate with legislators during the Legislative Session?



Matt Sharp

*DeKalb County
President,
Association of County
Administrators of
Alabama*



@mgsharp86

A Every year, there are bills that affect how counties operate on a daily basis, and Twitter makes it possible for administrators to be a part of those important conversations with legislators in real time. I am challenging ACAA members to step up this year by getting on Twitter, retweeting posts from

@AlabamaCounties and remembering to use your hashtags when tweeting — #alpolitics #acaacounties #yourcounty (e.g., #DeKalb).



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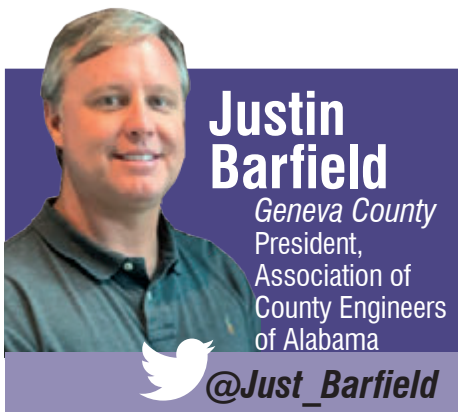
Never leave your devices unattended. If you need to leave your computer, phone or tablet for any length of time — no matter how short — lock it up so no one can use it while you're gone. If you keep sensitive information on a flash drive or external hard drive, make sure to lock it up as well.



Practice Safe Clicking

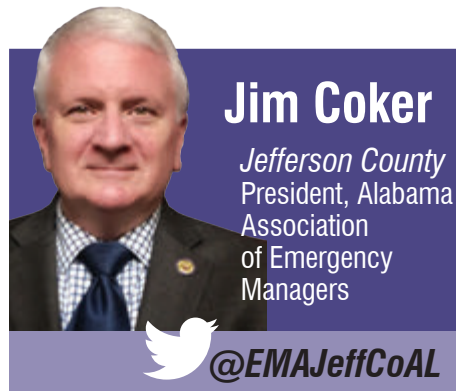
Always be careful when clicking on attachments or links in email. If it's unexpected or suspicious for any reason, don't click on it. Double check the URL of the website that the link takes you to: bad actors will often take advantage of spelling mistakes to direct you to a harmful domain.

Source: Cybint Cyber Solutions, February 2018



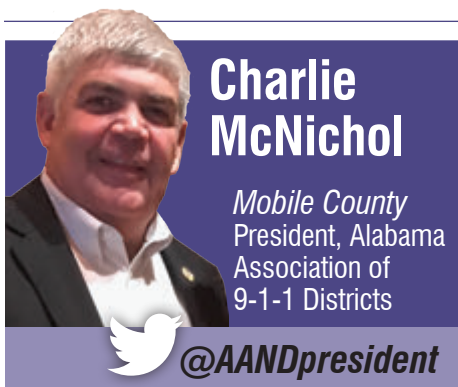
A The success of Rebuild Alabama made a Twitter believer out of me. One of the best things about ACEA is it creates a forum for us to learn from other county engineers,

and that has continued to hold true as I've gotten started on Twitter and followed the example set by my colleagues. Most legislators utilize Twitter, and we can use our expertise to offer feedback and guidance on pending legislation. I'd like to see 100% of county engineers active on Twitter this session.



A An increasing number of people get their news from social media, and we know it's an integral part of every EMA communications plan. For AAEM

members, our assignment this year is to apply what we know about this high-speed avenue of communication to legislative advocacy. Providing legislators with information about a bill's impact on their constituents can enhance deliberations with an added benefit — our tweets are also broadcast to our citizens and local news media.



A Among 9-1-1 professionals, no one has to sell us on the power and importance of immediate, widespread communication — which is the essence of social media. And while I'm no personal fan of social media, I understand the professional benefits to county government of being involved on Twitter. This year, AAND will make it our mission to become more vocal on and responsive to legislative matters through Twitter by using the #alpolitics hashtag. With the ability to reach more than 60 percent of the Legislature at once, #alpolitics is an incredibly simple and powerful communications tool — one that should be used not only to advocate for priority bills but also to defend county government from dangerous legislation.

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