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COUNTY COMMISSION

Volume 64, Number 3
August 2020

Counties:
**AHEAD OF
THE CURVE**

ACCA 92ND Convention

AUGUST 18-20, 2020





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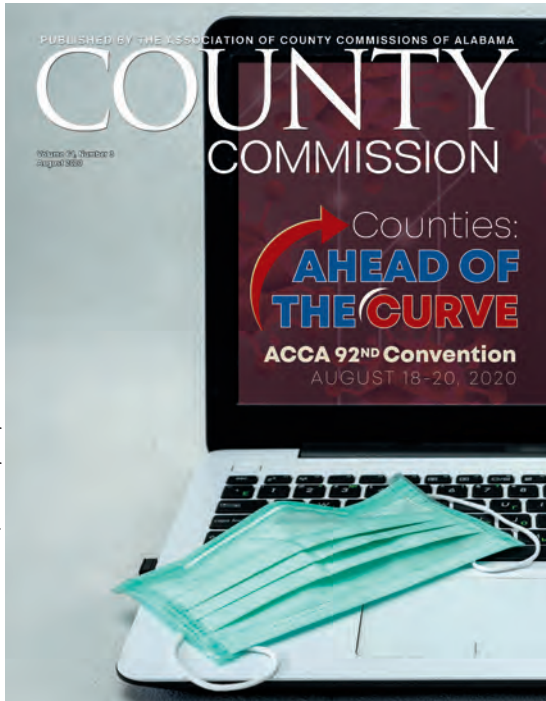
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in this issue

VOLUME 64, NUMBER 3



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This year's ACCA 92nd Convention will be one-of-a-kind, as the County Family gathers virtually and in person August 18-20. As always, the agenda is packed with timely and critical information to help county government stay ahead of the curve on the latest challenges.



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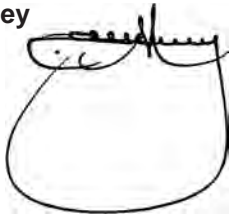
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Hon. David Money
President



Hitting the COVID-19 Curveball Together

**We will not
merely survive —
we will thrive**

Not a one of us has ever seen, much less hit, a curveball like the one thrown at us this year.

You might be surprised to know that baseball was once a big part of my life. During what now seems like the game's prehistoric era, I played baseball for a bit while in junior college, mostly playing third base but occasionally pitching. Without a doubt, had I managed to master a curveball as unforeseeable and unpredictable as COVID-19, I would have joined the pros.

Instead, my journey led me to county government and this remarkable Association. At our Convention last year in August, Sonny told me about what a great year we were going to have. We made plans to get a lot of good things done, and I promised to do my best and work as hard as I could. In my inaugural address, I talked about how we have all been called to service, and I challenged everyone to give the best of themselves during the coming year.

However, none of us expected what lay ahead — a global pandemic of biblical proportions, several major weather events, and a spring and summer almost entirely void of sports. Talk about curveballs!

The phrase “walk humbly with your God” is in a scripture I refer to often, and humility has taken on a deeper meaning this year for me personally and for anyone with leadership responsibilities. An invisible, infectious virus has taken precious lives, caused jobs to vanish from our communities seemingly overnight, and forced us to answer questions we never saw coming.

Even so, our recent accomplishments demonstrate our collective strength and resilience. All 67 counties have continued to

provide vital public services while simultaneously implementing wide-ranging safety practices to protect county employees and the public. That is no small feat.

But we didn't stop there. The Alabama Legislature authorized creation of a new statewide emergency notification system, directed federal virus relief funds to local governments, and budgeted nearly \$20 million to targeted mental health programs supported by counties — all in a session truncated by the virus. And we cannot overlook the ongoing work in every single county to responsibly and successfully implement the Rebuild Alabama Act.

The County Family — commission members, county employees, our executive director and hardworking Association staff — is the finest group I've ever seen, and I am grateful for the honor of having served as ACCA president. Your leadership team never wavers in its commitment to unifying all 67 Counties with ONE Voice, and I have every confidence in Randy Vest, our incoming president, to keep us ahead of the curve.

Without a doubt, we will not only survive this season of life but we will grow and progress from this year's curveball circumstances. And embracing and participating in our innovative ACCA 92nd Convention will only allow us to thrive! This year's Convention is no replacement for all of us gathering together in person as a County Family, but it will strengthen our unity and still deliver the practical, timely information that helps us all become better public servants. Working together to adapt, innovate and push forward in the face of obstacles is how we have gotten — and will stay — ahead of the curve. ■

Counties: **AHEAD OF THE CURVE**

PRO TIPS:
MAXIMIZE OUR
HISTORY-MAKING
CONVENTION

**Keep August
18-20 reserved
on your
calendar.**

*We are still having
the ACCA 92nd
Convention!*

**Conduct a
safe county
watch party.**

*In Henry County, we have
found it beneficial to watch
ACCA's COVID-19 webinars
together on a big screen
and discuss afterward.*

**Invite more
county officials
& staff members.**

*Your county's Convention
participation isn't limited by
travel costs this year —
and the time commitment
is streamlined, too!*



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Sonny Brasfield
Executive Director

Sonny Brasfield

Return to Normal?

Refocusing on What's Needed to Succeed Tomorrow

Everyone is asking the same question, from the leaders in your local church to the owners of local businesses to the leaders of government at every level. And yes, we're asking the same question at the Association.

"What will things look like when COVID-19 is behind us?"

Change is, of course, unavoidable. But for most of our lives, change has come at a manageable – if not predictable – pace. Not anymore. The landscape of county government is changing, almost by the hour.

County government's interaction with the public will likely never be the same. The delivery of services will likely never be the same. The role of more strategic and effective planning will likely never be more important than in the time that lies ahead. And the need to expand our vision beyond "how we've always done things" will never be more essential than moving forward.

It is, in all ways, a new day.

Earlier this month, I told our leadership group, Passion Leadership Accountability Networking (PLAN), counties were better prepared for the waves of challenges from COVID-19 than they would have been in 2010, 2000 or even in 1990. But that's not to say that we were actually "ready" — clearly no one was ready, not for this.

We responded with a true sense of responsibility to lead our communities, as well as with our portion of government that would not have been present had this virus

stormed across the globe a couple of decades ago. County government has expanded its vision, and the public has benefited from that expansion in the past six months.

That said, the challenges hiding just over the horizon may be even more ominous than those we have faced since way, way back in February when things seemed so normal. Our success in the short term will depend on our willingness to work collectively toward unified solutions and responses. And a successful long-term vision will take a bit more focus and investment.

For the Association, I believe our virtual 92nd Convention will signal the first step toward our revised role for the days ahead. Our staff and leadership have shifted focus over the past six months — providing governance and leadership for our organization through remote meetings and webinars.

Those tools, such as they are, can be effective for a short time — but only for a short time.

That's why we have worked to allow the return of onsite classes — classes with such stringent guidelines that some have even called to complain. I'm not sure we can ever "return" to normal. We can, however, refocus ourselves on the things that have made us successful while accepting that we must change if we are to be successful tomorrow.

That formula, of course, includes the development and cultivation of relationships. Commissioners need relationships with Commissioners. County Administrators need relationships

with other Administrators; EMA Directors with other EMA Directors; Revenue Officers with other Revenue Officers; and so on throughout all of county government.

This Association has succeeded over the years for one reason — we've attacked our problems, developed a forward-looking vision and become an effective public policy voice because of our collective and unified insights, not through the individual voice of any single person or county.

So, we begin this new journey toward the future of county government remotely – not because we wish to be separated but because we know we must somehow be together today and for all the days ahead.

Join us on August 18 as we start this new journey. It'll take us all, together, if we are to succeed. ■

This Association has succeeded over the years for one reason — we've attacked our problems, developed a forward-looking vision and become an effective public policy voice because of our collective and unified insights, not through the individual voice of any single person or county.

The ACCA 92nd Convention is custom-tailored for today's environment.

- "Ahead of the Curve" Sessions specific to the current challenges and the unique responsibilities of Commission Members, Administrators, Engineers, Emergency Managers, 9-1-1 Professionals, Revenue Officers and License Inspectors, and Sheriffs
- Top-notch speakers to help us respond strategically in the days and months ahead
- Togetherness as the ONE Voice of County Government despite the pandemic



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205-988-4472

Montgomery
3540 Wetumpka Highway
334-277-7260

Northport
6801 McFarland Blvd. West
205-339-0300

Pelham
2149 Highway 31 South
205-988-4474





INSIDER'S *Guide*

Tuesday, August 18
Conducted Virtually

Wednesday, August 19
Conducted Virtually

Thursday, August 20
Conducted In Person
& Virtually



Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2020

→ Conducted Virtually ←

How to Participate

Watch your email inbox for a link to **your specific** pre-recorded session!

Tuesday Schedule

8:30 a.m.

Sessions specific to Commission and Affiliate Members and Sheriffs

1 p.m.

Virtual Vendor Hall



COMMISSION MEMBERS “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA

Hon. David Money, President, ACCA

Hon. Randy Vest, President-Elect, ACCA

Hon. Dean Calvert, Vice President, ACCA

Hon. Tony Cherry, Immediate Past President, ACCA

ADMINISTRATORS “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA

Matt Sharp, President, ACAA

LeAnn Horne, 1st Vice President, ACAA

Rod Morgan, 2nd Vice President, ACAA

David Smyth, Immediate Past President, ACAA

ENGINEERS “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA

Justin Barfield, President, ACEA

Greg Bodley, Vice President, ACEA

John Mark Davis, Treasurer, ACEA

DeAndrae Kimbrough, Immediate Past President, ACEA

EMERGENCY MANAGERS “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA

Jim Coker, President, AAEM

Bill Sizemore, 1st Vice President, AAEM

Ernie Baggett, 2nd Vice President, AAEM

Bob Franklin, Immediate Past President, AAEM

Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2020

→ Conducted Virtually ←

REVENUE “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

*Moderator: Sonny Brasfield,
Executive Director, ACCA*

Terisa Lang, President, CROAA

Vicky Fisher, Vice President, CROAA

Willie Buraage, Secretary/Treasurer,
CROAA

Jayne Pearce, Immediate Past
President, CROAA

9-1-1 “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

*Moderator: Sonny Brasfield,
Executive Director, ACCA*

Charlie McNichol, President, AAND

Shawn Rogers, Vice President,
AAND

Jessica Yeager, Secretary/Treasurer,
AAND

Gordon Sandlin, Immediate Past
President, AAND

SHERIFFS “AHEAD OF THE CURVE” SESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

*Moderator: Sonny Brasfield,
Executive Director, ACCA*

Hon. Derrick Cunningham,
President, ASA

Hon. Ray Norris, 1st Vice President,
ASA

Hon. Jay Jones, 2nd Vice President,
ASA

Hon. Heath Taylor, Immediate Past
President, ASA

Virtual Vendor Hall

This year, there's a virtual way to stay in touch with providers of all sorts of goods and services. These companies are actively seeking to do more business with counties, so this will help you comparison shop for the best values.

Keep an eye out Tuesday afternoon for an email featuring the Virtual Vendor Hall.

Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020

→ Conducted Virtually ←

How to Participate

Watch your email inbox for links to pre-recorded content!

Wednesday Schedule

11:00 a.m. – Noon

Opening General Session for the Entire County Family

Noon

Lunch Among County Leaders & Employees (Recommended)

Afternoon General Session for the Entire County Family

Counties:
**AHEAD OF
THE CURVE**

OPENING GENERAL SESSION

for the Entire County Family
11:00 a.m. – Noon

WELCOME

Hon. David Money, President, ACCA



THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Dr. Kevin Elko, Consultant, Motivational Speaker & Author



THINKING & PLANNING STRATEGICALLY FOR THE OBSTACLES AHEAD

Sharleen Smith, Professional Trainer & Director of Professional Development, Troy University Global



NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Hon. Tony Cherry, Committee Chair and Immediate Past President, ACCA

→ **LUNCH BREAK**

Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020

→ Conducted Virtually ←

AFTERNOON GENERAL SESSION

for the Entire County
Family

UNDERSTANDING & UNIFYING A COUNTY'S WORKFORCE

*Dr. Chris Kilmartin, Psychologist,
Consultant & Emeritus College Professor*



ADAPTING TO COVID-19 & PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT

*Moderator: Don Dailey, Host, Alabama
Public Television's Capitol Journal*

*Hon. Merceria Ludgood, Commissioner,
Mobile County*

*Hon. David Money, Probate Judge &
Commission Chair, Henry County*



REMARKS FROM THE GOVERNOR

*Hon. Kay Ivey, Governor,
State of Alabama*



✓ New ACCA Leadership for 2020-2021

There's a brief item on the Wednesday agenda that has far-reaching consequences for ACCA. Just before lunch, Nominating Committee Chair Tony Cherry will present the recommended slate of officers for the upcoming year. It is expected that President-Elect Randy Vest of Morgan County will move up to president and Vice President Dean Calvert will advance to president-elect. The slate will include the committee's recommendations for two other posts — vice president and minority director.

Counties will vote on the officer slate during the ONE Voice Session in Prattville on Thursday, at which time they will also select commission members to serve on the Association's Board of Directors representing 12 geographic districts in the state. Each county has one vote.

The Association's district map and a regularly updated list of candidates are available online at [AlabamaCounties.org/candidates](https://alabamacounties.org/candidates).

Anyone with questions about election procedures is encouraged to contact Lisa Fiore, Policy and Member Services Assistant, at 334-263-7594 or lfiore@alabamacounties.org.

67 COUNTIES

Don't forget to participate in your county's watch party!

**Be sure to tweet out a photo with the
Convention hashtag #ALCountiesAhead**



67 WATCH PARTIES

Thursday, Aug. 20, 2020

→ Conducted Virtually & In Person ←

How to Participate 2 OPTIONS TODAY!

① In Person

Every county is sending one Commission Member to the Marriott Prattville Conference Center for the in-person ONE Voice Session.

② Virtual

The ONE Voice Session will be livestreamed. Watch your email for the link!

Thursday Schedule

ONE Voice Session

for the Entire County Family

Counties:
**AHEAD OF
THE CURVE**

MORNING GENERAL SESSION

10:30 a.m. – Noon

Presiding: Hon. David Money, President, ACCA

EXHIBITING LEADERSHIP OUTSIDE YOUR ROLE IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator/Panelist: Hon. Mike Vest, PLAN 2020 Member & Shelby County Commissioner

Hon. Bertha Kelly-McElrath, PLAN 2020 Member & Coosa County Commissioner

Hon. Joe Hackworth, PLAN 2020 Member & Lauderdale County Commissioner

REPORT FROM 2 NORTH JACKSON STREET

Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA



BROADBAND EXPANSION: THE BENEFIT OF COMMUNITY TEAM WORK

PANEL DISCUSSION

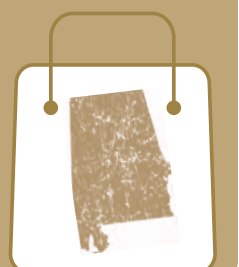
Moderator/Panelist: Hon. Bart Mercer, Commissioner, Elmore County

Hon. Richard Dennis, Superintendent, Elmore County Board of Education

Tom Stackhouse, CEO, Central Alabama Electric Co-Op/Central Access

COUNTY AGENTS KITCHEN CONTINUES

For 50 years, the Convention's tastiest tradition has been provided by the Alabama Association of County Agricultural Agents and Specialists in the form of feasts made from Alabama-grown and -produced foods. This year, as part of the ONE Voice Session, AACAA is providing each county with a gift bag containing peaches, pecan pies and other favorite treats.



Thursday, Aug. 20, 2020

➔ Conducted Virtually & In Person ➔

LUNCH & CLOSING GENERAL SESSION

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF HON. DAVID MONEY,
2019-2020 PRESIDENT, ACCA



● ACCA AWARDS CEREMONY

*Presiding: Hon. Lee Patterson,
ACCA Awards Committee Chair*

ACCA INSURANCE FUNDS REPORT
Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, ACCA

ACCA BUSINESS SESSION
Presiding: Hon. David Money, President, ACCA

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
Hon. Randy Vest, 2020-2021 President, ACCA



The Awards Ceremony is an annual highlight, recognizing outstanding individuals and programs throughout county government. This year, Commission Members present in Prattville will receive all plaques and certificates, and it is recommended that these be presented locally at the first commission meeting in September. Categories include:

- Efficiency and Innovation in County Government
- Outstanding Contribution to County Government
- Tenure in Office & Memorials
- Education Programs
- Safety

BEST MASK CONTEST

One lucky Commission Member will receive a prize for wearing the best mask at the in person ONE Voice Session!



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Looking to Counties for Leadership

Back in the previous century, citizens expected their commissioners to take care of the roads and little else. However, as COVID-19 has demonstrated repeatedly, communities need much more from their commission members today.

One segment of the ACCA 92nd Convention will zoom in on these broader roles and responsibilities from the perspective of three commission members. All three are

members of Passion Leadership Accountability Networking (PLAN) 2020, the third class of ACCA's 18-month leadership program for second-term commission members. One critical component early in the program is for each participant to select a Passion Project in their home county.

Coosa County Commission Vice Chair Bertha Kelly-McElrath serves an isolated

county in central Alabama that is among the state's smallest. It would be easy to focus on what Coosa County lacks, but she looked instead at the resources present. County schools were consolidated decades ago, and the former Goodwater High School is owned by the city. Some sections of the building and athletic facilities were already in use by the Boys and Girls Club



Vice Chair Bertha Kelly-McElrath (Coosa) selected a Passion Project called Improve and Help Opportunities for Physical Engagement (I.H.O.P.E.) to create a demonstration kitchen in an old school building



More than 3,000 people turned out for the 2020 End Heroin Birmingham Walk, and the Addiction Prevention Coalition raised \$100,000 to provide scholarships for substance-abuse treatment.

and others.

Kelly-McElrath assembled a diverse team of collaborators to strengthen community engagement and combat common health conditions such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease by turning the abandoned school cafeteria and kitchen into a demonstration kitchen and gathering space.

"This is going to boost the morale of the community," said Kelly-McElrath, owner of a small business. "They'll see somebody does care."

Programming will be provided by the extension service and the local health clinic. People in the community, a local nonprofit and area businesses have made financial and in-kind donations.

Similarly, it was a health issue that caught the attention of Shelby County Commissioner Mike Vest for his Passion Project. He chose to enhance the End Heroin Birmingham Walk to increase the event's impact. The annual walk is sponsored by the Addiction



Kelly-McElrath



Hackworth



Vest

Counties: Ahead of the Curve

During the ACCA 92nd Convention's ONE Voice Session on Aug. 20, three members of PLAN 2020 — Bertha Kelly-McElrath (Coosa), Joe Hackworth (Lauderdale) and Mike Vest (Shelby) — will discuss "Exhibiting Leadership Outside Your Role in County Government."

Prevention Coalition, where Vest serves as the full-time executive director.

Vest has a strong personal connection to the project. "My family has four different generations of substance abuse," he said, noting that he helped his brother and a nephew get off the streets and into recovery.

The walk had traditionally been held in downtown Birmingham, but Vest moved it to Veterans Park in Hoover and expanded the offerings for participants. Forty-four different organizations staffed resource tables, and 251 individuals received training in the use of Narcan, which is an antidote to opioid overdose.

For the 11 members of PLAN 2020, one finish line is in sight. They will be recognized at the ACCA Legislative Conference in December for completing the program, while PLAN 2022 recruitment will be wrapping up and new members preparing for the next 18-month journey.

"Leadership skills are the same no matter which county you serve," said ACCA President David Money, a PLAN 2020 participant. "It's been very meaningful for me personally to really get to know the other class members and get a closer look at county government in different places." ■

PLAN 2022 Wants You!



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This is an election year, which means some commission members are running their first re-election campaign.

If you are poised to begin your second commission term in November, you are eligible for the next class of ACCA's leadership program, Passion Leadership Accountability Networking (PLAN).

Good luck on the campaign trail! Recruiting for PLAN 2022 will be underway in the coming months. Watch your email inbox for details!

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Looking for COVID-19 MVPs

County Commission Magazine wants to recognize county employees who have gone above and beyond the call of duty during the pandemic.

Chairman J. Allen Bailey shared a perfect example of what it means to be a COVID-19 MVP. Furloughed Washington County employees were eligible for unemployment compensation, but many were missing out due to inadequate internet connectivity and the complexity of necessary filings. But **County**



Administrator Sonya Kirkwood and Accounts Payable Clerk Kelly

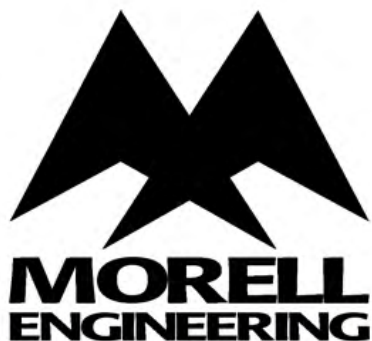
Jones volunteered to help, spending countless hours on the phone with unemployment officials. For more than two months, they gave their time on nights and weekends to ensure their coworkers received proper compensation. "It's not every day people step up and take responsibility like they

did to help the other employees," Bailey said.

In honor of their extraordinary contribution, Sonya Kirkwood and Kelly Jones are our first **County COVID-19 MVPs**, and other MVPs will be recognized in the next issue of this magazine.

In your own county, who stands out as a most valuable player since virus response began in Alabama?

Please send their names and a sentence or two about their extraordinary contribution to sgowan@alabamacounties.org before September 3. ■



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*Keep up the
great work!*



Competition extended!
Winners will be recognized at the
ACCA Legislative Conference in December!

TWEET2ADVOCATE

ACCA'S 2020 TWITTER COMPETITION

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE
ON TWITTER REGARDING
2020 POLICY PRIORITIES?

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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AT (334) 263-7594 FOR COMPLETE ASSISTANCE.**

County Success on Goat Hill

Despite the COVID-19 interruption, counties achieved the following legislative priorities during the Alabama Legislature's 2020 Regular Session. It was a remarkable team effort from county advocates who put "67 Counties, ONE Voice" into action.



Albritton



Chambliss



Clouse



Lovvorn



Singleton

Creating a Statewide Emergency Notification System

- **Act 2020-85**
- **Sponsored by Sen. Bobby Singleton & Rep. Joe Lovvorn**
- **Signed by Gov. Kay Ivey**

➡ This law allows for the creation of a Statewide Emergency Notification System, available for use by every Alabama county and municipality for warning and updating citizens on disasters. The Notification System will be funded by state dollars through the Alabama Disaster Recovery Fund, overseen by the Alabama Disaster Recovery Program Committee, and its requirements and specifications established by the collaborative efforts of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency and the Recovery Program Committee.

Effective March 31, 2020.

Securing Reimbursement of County COVID-19 Expenses

- **Act 2020-199**
- **Sponsored by Sen. Greg Albritton & Rep. Steve Clouse**
- **Signed by Gov. Kay Ivey**

➡ This act addresses the Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars provided by Congress to the State of Alabama to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The act appropriates relief funds to the Department of Finance to be used for reimbursement of expenditures to various state agencies, local governments, healthcare institutions, the Department of Corrections and additional public entities. Specifically, this act appropriates up to \$250,000,000 to be used to reimburse county and municipal governments for expenditures directly related to the coronavirus crisis.

Effective May 21, 2020.

Expanding Alabama's Stepping Up Initiative

- **Act 2020-168**
- **Sponsored by Sen. Greg Albritton & Rep. Steve Clouse**
- **Signed by Gov. Kay Ivey**

➡ This act appropriates \$1,829,250 of the 2020-2021 General Fund budget to the expansion of Alabama's Stepping Up Initiative, a national initiative promoted by the National Association of Counties to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in county jails and a program administered at



ACCA's 2020 Final Legislative Report outlining new laws impacting county government can be found at alabamacounties.org/legislation.

the state level by the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Counties and regional mental health centers are eligible for funds to implement this program at the local level in an effort to reduce recidivism in county jails for individuals with mental health conditions and to provide them with the resources for appropriate treatment. Counties participating in this program have experienced a reduction of individuals with mental illnesses in their county jail populations.

Effective October 1, 2020.

Funding Mental Health Regional Crisis Diversion Centers

- Act 2020-168
- Sponsored by Sen. Greg Albritton & Rep. Steve Clouse
- Signed by Gov. Kay Ivey

⇒ This act appropriates \$18,000,000 of the 2020-2021 General Fund budget to the Alabama Department of Mental Health for establishment of crisis diversion centers in various regions of the state. Due to the closing of state

mental health hospitals, county jails have become the default holding facilities for individuals with mental illnesses. The establishment of regional crisis diversion centers is intended to provide individuals with mental illness proper facilities to receive stabilization, evaluation, and psychiatric and mental health services.

Effective October 1, 2020.

Reauthorizing the Alabama 9-1-1 Board & Its Functions

- Act 2020-67
- Sponsored by Sen. Clyde Chambliss
- Signed by Gov. Kay Ivey

⇒ An Alabama sunset law, this act authorizes the Alabama 9-1-1 Board and its functions to continue until October 1, 2024. Under this law, the State 9-1-1 Board remains subject to evaluation and review by the Alabama Legislature. Continuation of the 9-1-1 Board is required to be considered by state legislators every four years.

Effective March 30, 2020.

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Getting Ready for Goat Hill

Staying ahead of the curve with the Alabama Legislature is a year-round priority, and county commissions took the important step this summer of selecting their representative on the 2020-2021 ACCA Legislative Committee.

Each county commission votes to designate a commission member to serve on the 67-member committee, an embodiment of “67 Counties, One Voice.”

“It would be hard to exaggerate the Legislative Committee’s importance. Members are responsible for voicing their county’s legislative needs and concerns, helping construct the 2021 County Platform and leading grassroots efforts to aid in the passage of pro-county legislation,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. “Their dedicated work is essential to

the policy success of all 67 counties.”

The 2020-2021 Legislative Committee will be chaired by Commission Chair and Probate Judge David Money of Henry County, who is rotating into the post of ACCA’s immediate past president.

During the committee’s two-day Pre-Session Workshop in October, members will consider legislative recommendations from the Association’s Minority Issues Steering Committee and all five affiliate groups (administrators, engineers, emergency managers, 9-1-1 professionals, and revenue officers and license inspectors).

Regardless of any special sessions that may or may not arise this year, state legislators will convene in Montgomery on March 2 to begin the 2021 Regular Session, which

could stretch into mid-May.

The most recent legislative session was significantly disrupted by COVID-19, but lawmakers did approve a number of county priorities — authorizing a new statewide emergency notification system, directing federal virus relief funds to local government and budgeting nearly \$20 million to targeted mental health programs supported by counties. Important county issues that remain unresolved include updates to the Retirement Systems of Alabama governance, inmate reform and expansion of election expense reimbursements.

The current Alabama County Platform, with the Association’s Foundation Principles and position on a wide range of issues, is accessible at alabamacounties.org/legislation/county-platform/. ■



GOAT HILL

2021 LEGISLATIVE PREPARATIONS

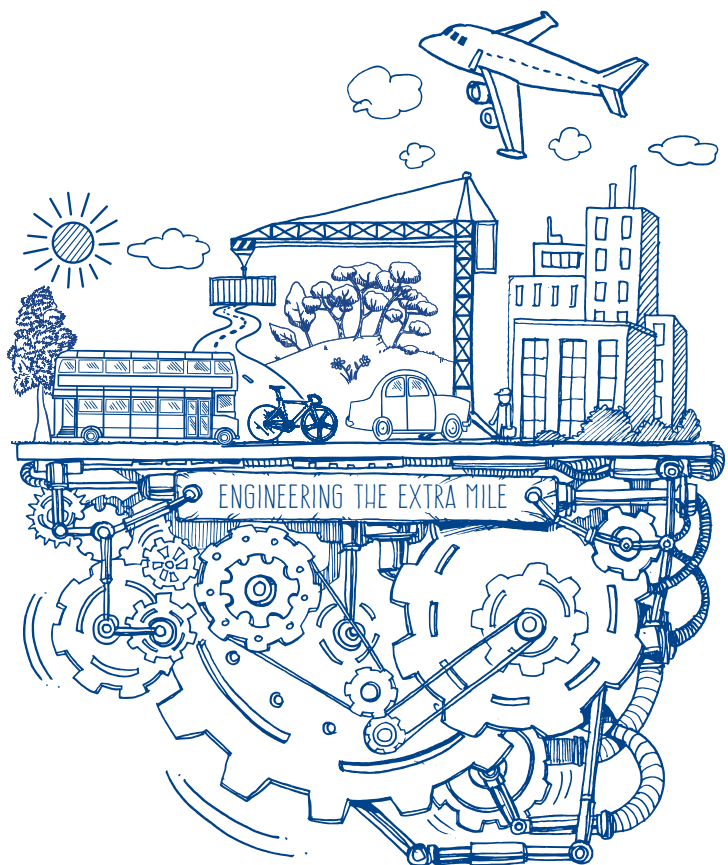
All meetings are tentatively planned to be held in Montgomery.

- *Alabama Association of 9-1-1 Districts (AAND) Legislative Committee Meeting | September 21*
- *County Revenue Officers Association of Alabama (CROAA) Legislative Committee Meeting | September 21*
- *Alabama Association of Emergency Managers (AAEM) Legislative Committee Meeting | September 22*
- *Alabama Association of County Engineers (ACEA) Legislative Committee Meeting | September 24*
- *Association of County Administrators of Alabama (ACAA) Legislative Committee Meeting | October 6*
- *ACCA Minority Issues Steering Committee Legislative Meeting | October 8*
- *ACCA Legislative Committee Pre-Session Workshop | October 14-15*

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Status Report: Rebuild Alabama

Counties press forward on roads & bridges, despite pandemic

Editor's Note: In recognition of the Rebuild Alabama Act's significance, *County Commission Magazine* will feature a status report on county progress in every issue.

Even as COVID-19 caused unprecedented disruption around the world, Alabama's 67 counties stayed the course on implementation of the Rebuild Alabama Act, a historic investment in roads and bridges enacted last year. Rebuild Alabama operates on an October 1 – September 30 fiscal year, so counties are currently preparing to close out the first year.

Revenue Projections

It appears that better-than-expected receipts before the virus-triggered economic slowdown have substantially cushioned the financial hit on Rebuild Alabama. Six cents of the fuels tax increase went into effect last year on October 1, and counties have been following their County Transportation Plans, which outline a year's worth of road and bridge improvements based on revenue estimates calculated in a healthy economy.

The state's economy had been booming prior to the virus, and the first five months of collections exceeded estimates by 5.6%, according to ACCA. But receipts dropped sharply after that, with June distributions coming in nearly a third below the month prior.

"I'm hoping we can all put the June numbers in perspective," ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield told county engineers. "If economic activity continues to bounce back at its current rate, there will not be a massive impact on the revenue for this year."

In late June, ACCA projected a worst-case scenario of Rebuild

Alabama revenues falling 7.5% short for the year, and the shortfall could be as modest as 2.2% with a partial economic rebound.

Grant Announcement

On June 4, Gov. Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation announced a second round of awards in the Rebuild Alabama Annual Grant Program. Six projects were awarded a total of \$1.7 million in round two. All projects are expected to be under contract by the end of the calendar year.

The grant program sets aside \$10 million of the state's share of new gas tax revenue for local roads and bridges, and 31 projects totaling \$7 million were announced in the first round. Another round of awards is expected later this year.

At a recent meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama, members

discussed the ATRIP-II and Annual Grant programs with state transportation officials, and since then, development of a training program has begun to help counties apply for these funds.

Accountability Reports

During the summer, counties prepared their 2020 Contractor Reports, which list all contractors and vendors awarded contracts funded with county Rebuild Alabama dollars. ACCA will provide a comprehensive contractor report to legislative leaders by October 1.

Another summer project includes preparation of the 2021 County Transportation Plans, which detail road and bridge projects to be completed with the coming year's estimated revenue from Rebuild Alabama. County commissions must approve these plans by August 31. ■



On the Web | AlabamaCounties.org/RebuildAL

- **County Transportation Plans from All 67 counties**
- **Bid Announcements**
- **Project Completion Announcements**
- **Reference Documents and Resources for Counties**



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INSURANCE UPDATE

Property Insurance Program is Growing, Strengthening

Even amid the substantial challenges of 2020, ACCA's property insurance program has notched gains, growing the membership and strengthening services.

The property program has begun accepting new members, and Lee County officially joined April 1.

Participation in the nearly 4-year-old property program had been frozen since early 2019, when the ACCA Self-Insurance Funds switched to a new third-party administrator, County Risk Services Inc.

Another operational milestone has been reached by CRS, allowing for enhanced underwriting and rating.

"When I have given quotes, people have consistently been amazed at how much coverage they are getting for the same cost or even a little bit less," said ACCA Director of Insurance Services Henry van Arcken.

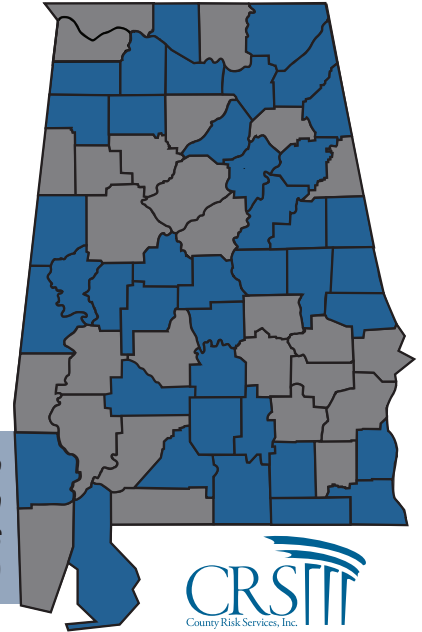
In a recent head-to-head matchup, the long-time commercial insurer could not offer the same scope of coverage at a competitive price. "They couldn't even come close to matching what we offer," van Arcken said. For example, both policies would have paid for replacement of a building destroyed by severe weather, but the ACCA policy would have also covered demolition to prepare the site for new construction.

For its part, CRS has made staff adjustments to better serve participants in the property program. Most notably, Karen Furlong, a senior claims analyst who has worked primarily on property claims, has moved into the role of Senior Risk Services Analyst.

The new position within the organization is part of a bigger effort to create a more consistent way of sharing information across the underwriting, risk management and claims operations within CRS. Furlong's 30-plus years of insurance experience and strong knowledge base in property claims are exactly the right fit for facilitating such changes.

"Our immediate goal in the property program is to increase synergy between the risk management and underwriting functions," said CRS Vice President Mary Kay Frazee. "Moving forward, the goal is to implement effective risk management practices to better manage property risk and, ultimately, reduce cost to our ACCA LSIF-Property Program members."

Counties and county-related entities interested in joining the property program should contact Henry van Arcken, 334-263-7594 or hvanarcken@alabamacounties.org. ■



**Property Insurance
Program Expands to
42 County Members
(indicated in blue)**

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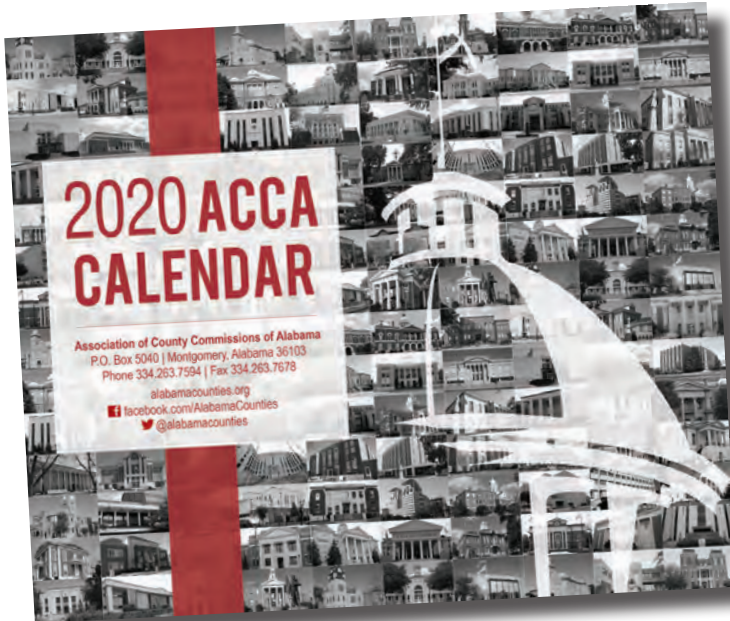
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ACCA Calendar | Remainder of 2020

COVID-19 has caused significant changes to the Association's 2020 calendar, so County Commission Magazine is providing a quick look at major events during the remainder of the year. Please check alabamacounties.org/events for details and further updates.



August 18-20

ACCA 92nd Annual Convention

September 2-3

Alabama Jail Training Academy: Inmate Management

September 9-10

Alabama Jail Training Academy:
Officer Responsibilities & Offender Supervision

September 15

ACCA Board Retreat

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September 16

29th Annual County Golf Bash

September 30 - October 1

County Government Education Institute:
Ethics for Public Officials

October 7-8

County Government Education Institute:
Personnel Administration

October 14-15

- ACCA Legislative Committee
Pre-Session Workshop
- Alabama Jail Training Academy: Mental Health

October 26-27

Association of County Administrators of Alabama
(ACAA) Annual Conference

November 10

Passion Leadership Accountability Networking
(PLAN) 2020 Drive-In Session

November 18-19

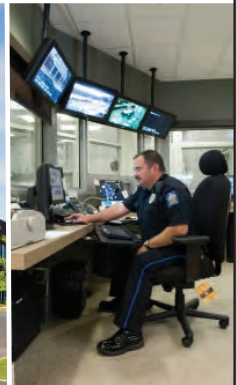
Alabama Jail Training Academy: Searches &
Use of Force

December 1-2

- Alabama Local Government Training Institute:
New Commissioner Orientation
- Alabama Association of Emergency Managers:
Winter Workshop

December 2-3

ACCA Annual Legislative Conference



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COUNTY FAMILY FEATURE



Lasting Impact: Henry Hawkins' 'Family Tree' of County Engineers



Excerpts from Henry Hawkins' 31 RULES AND TRUISMS FOR COUNTY ENGINEERS

1. Elected officials make all decisions based on VOTES!
 3. The "secret of life" is being able to think and feel like the other person.
 5. A county engineer does very little engineering.
 7. You must keep good records.
 16. Do not lie. (Know when to stop talking.)
 21. You are not elected.
 31. If you run out of money, you are a bad engineer.
-

At the 2011 conference of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama, Henry Hawkins (at left), received a special award from the Asphalt Recycling & Reclaiming Association. Throughout his career, Hawkins was very supportive of ACCA and its affiliate groups. An active past president of ACEA, his county colleagues named him Engineer of the Year in 2003. There are three past presidents of ACEA among his descendants, one of whom also served as president of the National Association of County Engineers.

Henry Hawkins retired in 2012, but his influence on county engineering remains active through a "family tree" of descendants spanning at least 10 of Alabama's 67 counties.

His progeny are so numerous in part because Hawkins established a program that still brings a steady stream of Auburn University students into the Chambers County Highway Department. What's more, many of his first-generation descendants have descendants of their own.

Hawkins liked to say county engineers did very little engineering, but his system for running one of the most efficient county highway departments in

the state made an impression.

"He kept several projects ready to go," said Joshua McDougald, a former intern who is now the assistant engineer in Butler County. "If the state rolled out a new funding program like the GARVEE bonds or ATRIP, he would be first in line."

The insight that a new funding source might be just around the corner is part of his legendary perceptiveness. Among engineers, Hawkins stands out for "his ability to quickly and completely understand and get to the heart of a complex topic," said former student worker Frank Lundy, operations manager in the Baldwin County

Highway Department.

Known for delivering tomatoes to the highway director, Hawkins valued the human side of the job. "Henry is very good at listening to and 'reading' individuals," said Dennis McCall, Butler County engineer.

Josh Harvill describes his former boss as a "brilliant mind" and "amazing mentor." Overall, "it is his approach to forming relationships (no matter how brief) with elected officials, engineers, agency representatives and the public that I remember most," said Harvill, the current Chambers County engineer. "He had a framed quote by Charles Swindoll titled

‘Attitude,’ it is still in the same place in our office,” Harvill said.

Hawkins was a surveyor for the first decade of his professional life. When he went back to enroll as a civil engineering student, Auburn put him on the faculty as a surveying instructor. He’d teach two classes and then go to school the rest of the day.

Those years could be the root of the characteristic mentioned most often. “Henry is a wealth of knowledge and enjoys teaching,” said Patrick Harvill, assistant engineer in Lee County. Both Harvill brothers began their county careers on the Chambers County maintenance crew.

Hawkins was the last engineer Richie Beyer reported to before becoming a county engineer himself. “Henry loved to share his knowledge,” said Beyer, who works in Elmore County. “He especially loved history and its influences on our profession, and he had a knack for tying all things back to a topic he was intrigued by — politics.”

In retirement, Hawkins and his wife, Sharon, moved to Valley, Alabama, to be near family. Altogether, he amassed 20 years as a county engineer.

“No matter what you may encounter, Henry had already been through that and was glad to share his experience with you,” said Charles King, the assistant engineer in Colbert County who interned for Hawkins.

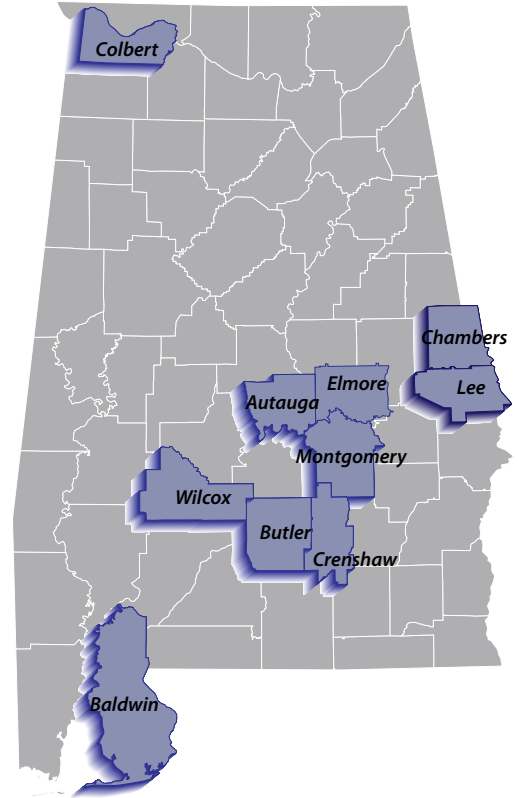
Jake Thomas is a second-generation descendant who interned under Josh Harvill. “Upon graduation, there was no doubt in my mind regarding what I wanted to do for a career, and I credit that directly to my time spent as an intern with Chambers County,” said Thomas, Autauga County’s assistant engineer.

Daniel Lundy followed in his brother Frank’s footsteps to intern in Chambers County. “From day to day, a student intern has the potential to learn a new skill set, whether that be surveying, CAD work, involvement

in developing a Local Road Safety Plan, inspecting construction projects or one of the many other necessary tasks,” said the younger Lundy. Now, as the assistant engineer in Chambers County, he supervises student workers in the same program he completed.

Over the years, Hawkins was known for being a stickler about recordkeeping and punctuality. He personally worked closely with county commissioners, keeping them apprised of projects in their districts and advising them. “You want to make sure they don’t tell somebody they’re going to do something they can’t do,” he said in a recent phone conversation. “You can’t promise a \$15 million job on a \$250,000 budget.”

That sounds like truism No. 31: “If you run out of money, you are a bad engineer.” Kevin Boone, Montgomery County’s assistant engineer, keeps the list pinned to his office bulletin board. He said, “Henry never turned down an opportunity to train a young engineer, and, in my mind, that is his greatest accomplishment.” ■



Henry Hawkins’ Descendants in County Engineering

In 2020, 10 counties have engineers and/or assistant engineers who worked directly for Henry Hawkins or have been trained by someone who did.

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Photos from Alabama Counties



Keeping the Gas Tax Transparency Promise

Elmore County Commission Members, in conjunction with state and local leaders, held a June press conference to provide a status update on the county's Rebuild Alabama and ATRIP-II projects.



Remembering a Fellow Public Servant

Madison County Commission Members joined state and local leaders in June to celebrate the grand opening of Hazel Green Volunteer Fire Department's new station, named in honor and memory of a state legislator, Rep. Jim Patterson.



Helping Citizens Stay Safe

In June, Sumter County Commission Members continued to emphasize the use of face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by purchasing and providing free cloth masks to residents across the county.



Detention Facilities

E-911 Call Centers

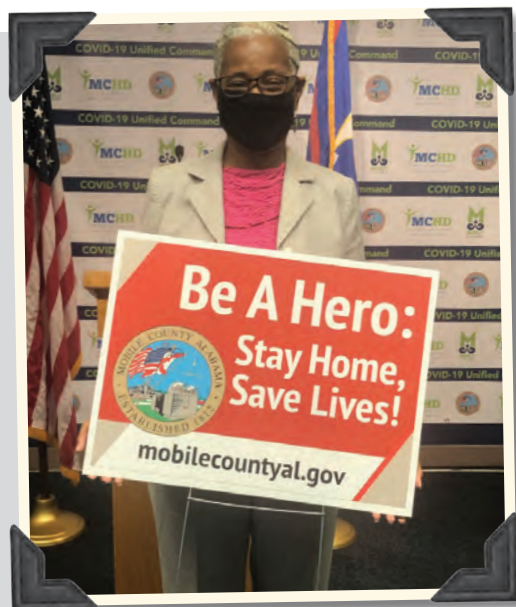
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Recruiting Hometown Heroes

During April, ACCA Past President and Mobile County Commissioner Merceria Ludgood promoted the use of COVID-19 yard signs to spread awareness of the gravity of staying home during the pandemic.



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Making Sure Cherokee County Counts

In April, Cherokee County Probate Judge and Commission Chair Tim Burgess smiled for a photo encouraging local residents to follow his lead in participating in the critical 2020 Census.



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Continuing to Serve the People of Tuscaloosa County

In June, Tuscaloosa County officials and employees utilized personal protective equipment to proceed with important local work and successfully conducted the county's annual tax sale.



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Partnering to Combat COVID-19

Early in the pandemic response, the Choctaw County Emergency Management Agency began to partner with the Alabama Department of Public Health to distribute essential supplies to local healthcare and emergency medical service providers.



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Please send your photos to ACCA for the Family Album!

County Commission magazine wants to publish a selection of member photos in every issue to showcase the many ways county government touches the lives of Alabamians and to recognize the dedicated men and women who make counties work. Please send photos (large file sizes preferred) to Abby Fitzpatrick, Director of Communication & Engagement, at afitzpatrick@alabamacounties.org.

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Collaborating to Boost Broadband Availability

In early July, an array of partners announced expansion plans for broadband internet hotspots throughout Elmore County and a new interactive map to help citizens identify the most convenient hotspots. The Elmore County Commission is hosting the interactive map at ElmoreCo.org. County officials were joined by representatives of Central Alabama Electric Co-op/Central Access, the Elmore County Economic Development Authority, Sain Associates and Elmore County public schools.



Teaming up for School Safety

Calhoun County EMA Director Michael Barton welcomed the Jacksonville State University mascot to the county's EMA office in May to discuss and promote safety measures for schools returning to sports activity.



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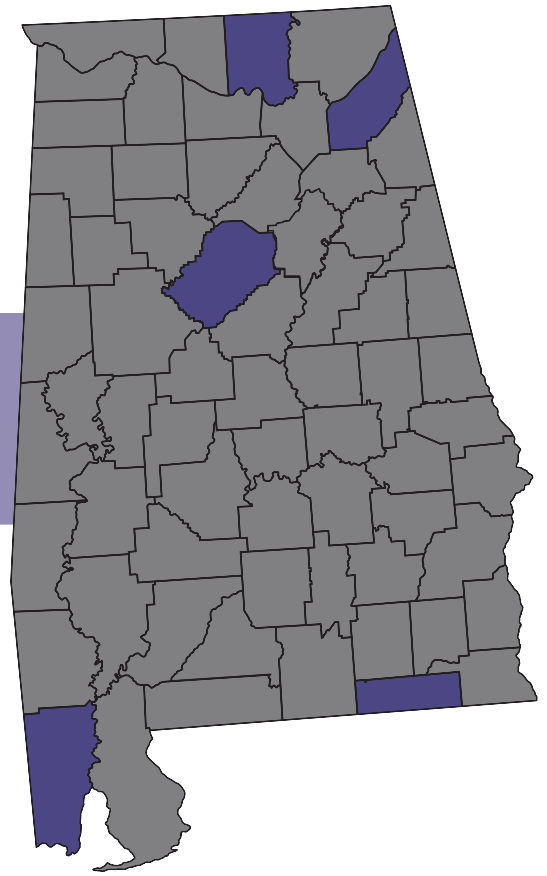
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Voices from the County Family



Q

Given the pandemic's disruption of affiliate group gatherings, how will participation in the virtual Convention help your members get "in the know" and stay connected with one another?



Matt Sharp

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



@mgsharp86

A Even in circumstances as grave as the COVID-19 pandemic, there's room for us to "make lemonade out of lemons." We can take this negative situation and make the best of it. Having the virtual Convention will allow ALL of our Commission staff members to participate without leaving

their offices, which will multiply the benefit many times over. I believe we should encourage everyone to participate in the Convention and take in the beneficial knowledge. Amid the current isolation, it is so important to remember that we can count on each other in ACAA and the larger ACCA. We are 67 Counties, ONE Voice.



Justin Barfield

*Geneva County
President, Association
of County Engineers
of Alabama*



@Just_Barfield

A I am so grateful for ACCA's commitment to hosting the 92nd Convention virtually. One thing is for certain — as a County Family, we can overcome any obstacle by coming together as a team, and that is true whether we are gathered in a single location or spread across all 67 counties. Sure, engineers will miss sharing ideas and problem-solving in person. But as we wrestle with the new challenges brought about by COVID-19, it has only become more important for us to stay "in the know," and technology is making that possible.



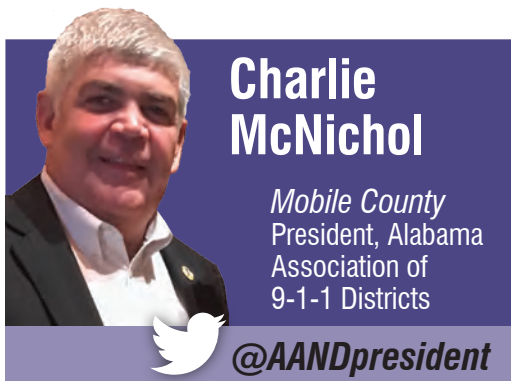
Jim Coker

*Jefferson County
President, Alabama
Association
of Emergency
Managers*



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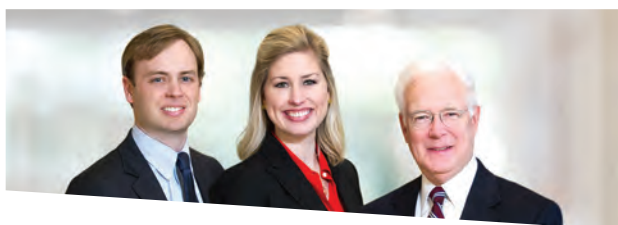
A COVID-19 has had a significant impact on how we all conduct the business of our counties, and the ACCA and affiliate groups face the same reality. Operating effectively in unfamiliar and unpredictable circumstances is what emergency managers do, and the past few months prove that we can continue to provide vital public services without having to be in the same room. We have learned how to conduct complex operations virtually; this knowledge will help us all during the next disaster. We are all adept at navigating through video conferencing and calls, and the ACCA has adapted the Convention as well to provide a continual flow of information when we need the expertise of our county colleagues more than ever.



A The Convention is always an important time for AAND members to connect with the County Family, and we can still accomplish that with this year's virtual format. The ACCA staff did a wonderful job with another outstanding AAND Annual Workshop last month, and we were able to gather safely in one location. As important as it is for AAND members to stay abreast of our issues and have relationships with our 9-1-1 colleagues, this is not enough to successfully do our jobs. We need to know the latest on major issues affecting county government as a whole.



A Since early March, our County Family has been compelled to adapt to an ever-changing environment. The old way of doing things has been supplemented with a new level of thinking. Just like everyone else in county government, revenue officers and license inspectors have learned about Zoom calls, telecommuting, plexiglass, N95 facemasks and more. Utilizing new tools that are quickly becoming commonplace, the virtual Convention will help CROAA members work through these challenging times while also providing the vital content we have come to expect from past conventions. In the weeks leading up to the virtual Convention, be sure to check your email for important updates.



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