



# The Trussville Tribune

March 25 — 31, 2015

Your news source for Trussville, Clay and Pinson

50¢

## 2 charged in Trussville Chevron robbery; accomplice shot

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Chevron gas station on Chalkville Mountain Road in Trussville was robbed early last Thursday morning.

At about 4 a.m. last Thursday, the Chevron was robbed at gunpoint,

according to Trussville Police Department Capt. Jeff Bridges.

Arrested were 19-year-old Roderick Williams, of Center Point, along with 22-year-old Paulet Williams, also from Center Point. The two are not related. Both are charged with first-degree robbery.

During the robbery,



photo courtesy of the Trussville Police Department

Roderick Williams



photo courtesy of the Trussville Police Department

Paulet Williams

Roderick Williams possessed a .380-caliber pistol, which was discharged, striking his accomplice, Kattera Howard, a 21-year-old black female also from Center Point, in her chest, Bridges said. The suspects dropped Howard off at St. Vincent's East, Bridges said.

No one else was injured. Trussville police officers apprehended the Williams suspects attempting to flee the hospital a short time after the robbery.

Warrants will be sought on Howard at a later date.

Bridges said three guns and the stolen money -- approximately \$125 -- were recovered.

## Clay P&Z talks city's future: 'We've made a lot of headway'

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

About 15 people attended last Thursday's Clay Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, in which the group received input about the city's comprehensive plan.

Commission member Steve Ostaseski made a presentation about the city's last 10 years and asked members of the audience what they'd like to see in Clay moving forward.

The comprehensive plan hasn't been updated since 2005. Ostaseski said the city is "still moving forward" despite some hard economic years.

"We're doing very well for a city of 9,000 folks," Ostaseski said.

Mayor Charles Webster said the city has worked on the plan the last couple years.

"We've made a lot of headway the last couple years in implementing the plan and getting it up to date," he said. "Now we're looking at moving forward with the next 10 years on what we can do to improve the city and the plans for the community."

Key talking points at the meeting centered on the impact of the Northern Beltline and planning around its construction; connecting areas of the city with trails; plans for the Alabama Department of Youth Services campus if the city can acquire it from the state; economic development; and land use.

see PLANNING page 5

## Innovative Indians PVHS students show talents at first special effects reveal night



photo by Gary Lloyd

From left are Pinson Valley High School students Kyle Reaney, Ivy Williams and Shelby Justice, who won the top award at Friday's special effects reveal night.

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Before the lights were dimmed and the models strolled out, Chris Screws summed up the night.

"This will not be your typical show," the Pinson Valley High School art teacher said.

Indeed.

Eleven teams made up of 30 students showed off their artistic talents Friday night in the school's auditorium.

There was a bounty hunter, thief, two magicians, an explorer, bandit, doctor, pirate, bride, scientist and adventurer.

The show imitated the last portion of the Syfy reality show "Face Off," in which a group of prosthetic makeup artists compete against each other to create prostheses such as those found in science fiction and horror movies.

Each team's model walked the stage in front of three judges -- Rudd

Middle School visual arts teacher Casey Williamson, cosmetologist Lori Bryan and haunted house industry coordinator Tyler West -- while emcee Justin Harris read each character's story.

After all had taken the stage, the models were allowed to go into the audience to solicit \$1 donations. The character with the most was awarded the People's Choice Award. The money also helped

see PINSON page 5

## 'I just want to give them more' Alabama QB, NFL RB help local family with 3 special needs children

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Blake Sims and Darrin Reaves could have been anywhere.

Sims, the former University of Alabama quarterback, could have been slinging footballs in preparation for the upcoming NFL Draft. Reaves, the former Clay-Chalkville High School and



photo courtesy of the Prayers for Team McCown Facebook page

Former Clay-Chalkville and UAB running back Darrin Reaves with the McCown family

UAB running back now with the Carolina Panthers, could have been lifting weights, prepping for another NFL season.

On Saturday evening, however, both

see McCOWN page 6

## TRIBUNE AREA WEATHER

Here is The Trussville weather conditions in page by scanning the QR Trussville, Clay, and code below with your forecast for the next Pinson, see The Trussville smartphone. Tribune weather web



## Pinson cedes property to JefCoEd for practice field

by Lee Weyhrich

Staff Writer

The Pinson City Council last Thursday voted to cede property to the Jefferson County Board of Education for the purpose of a future practice field.

Residents in Innsbrooke have been upset to learn that the new football practice field will abut

to the neighborhood's entrance. The council purchased the land in the last year.

The council is requiring a 35-foot buffer zone between the field and the neighborhood with fencing and vegetation to be put in place to keep the character of the Innsbrooke neighborhood intact while still allowing the high school to build the practice

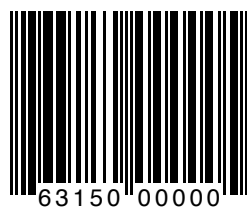
field. "That property was actually zoned commercial when we purchased it, so it could have been a Walgreens or a Chevron or something," Mayor Hoyt Sanders said. "In addition, all the trees are pretty close to the right-of-way."

The current right-of-way is roughly seven

see PROPERTY page 4

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# NEWS

## Trussville spring carnival begins Friday

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Trussville spring carnival is scheduled for Friday, March 27 through Saturday, April 4 at Magnolia Park in downtown Trussville.

Carnival hours are 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday; 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday; and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Dates and times are

subject to change due to weather conditions. The carnival will feature rides and activities for all ages, as well as festival foods.

Wristbands for all the rides are \$15 each. Individual tickets will also be available for \$1 each, though multiple tickets may be required for some rides.

Wednesday, April 1 will feature a group promotion, in which youth groups of 10 or more can purchase wristbands for \$10 each. Contemporary Christian

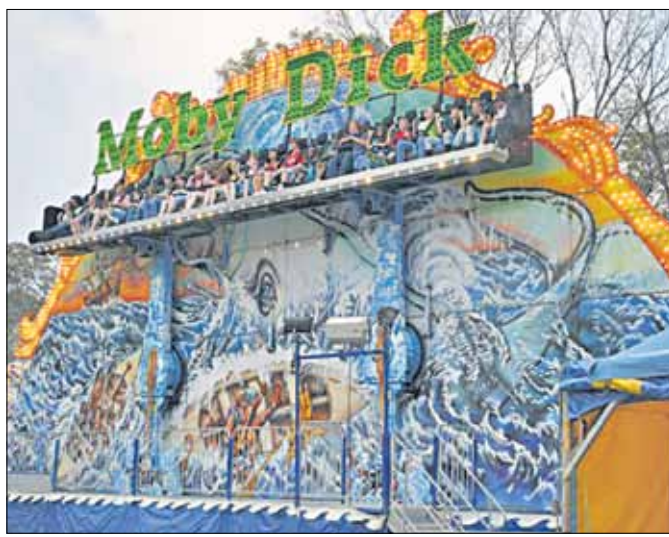


photo courtesy of Diane Poole

The Moby Dick ride is typically a crowd favorite.

music will be played. No discount coupons are accepted on this date.

To print a coupon to receive \$1 off the price of admission, visit [www.trussvillechamber.com](http://www.trussvillechamber.com). The coupon must be presented at the ticket counter to receive the discount. The coupon must be printed; no electronic versions will be accepted.

For more information, call 205-655-7535 or visit [www.trussvillechamber.com](http://www.trussvillechamber.com).

Contact Gary Lloyd at [news@trussvilletribune.com](mailto:news@trussvilletribune.com) and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to find the coupon for \$1 off the price of admission.



## Trussville to acquire former Sticks 'N' Stuff building

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Trussville City Council on Tuesday approved of purchasing the former Sticks 'N' Stuff building on Main Street.

The property appraised for \$720,000 and the city purchased it for \$625,000. The city will likely close on the property in mid-April.

The city council in February authorized Mayor Gene Melton to sign a purchase agreement for the property located at 156 and 158 Main St.

Sticks 'N' Stuff closed in 2014.

Melton said the city acquiring the property will



file photo by Gary Lloyd

The former Sticks 'N' Stuff building on Main Street in Trussville

be good for public safety and part of an overall plan for Vann Circle, which sits beside the building.

The plan will be to demolish the building. The city could bid out that work or hire a company to do so at one of its next city council meetings.

"It'll happen pretty quick," Melton said in February.

has always been a tough thing to do.

"I'm surprised we haven't had somebody killed there," he said.

Melton said that he and the city council felt it was best for the city to purchase the property to "prevent somebody else from coming in there and trying to make do with a dilapidated building."

"That's one part of trying to get our downtown area in a cleanup mode and also to promote redevelopment downtown," Melton said in February.

"It's also a tremendous eyesore," Melton said of the building.

Melton said turning out between Sticks 'N' Stuff and Borella's Auto Repair

## Mayor to meet with ALDOT to discuss projects

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Trussville Mayor Gene Melton and Streets and Sanitation Superintendent Wayne Sullivan will meet with Alabama Department of Transportation officials Friday to discuss ongoing and upcoming projects.

The meeting is at 9 a.m.

Melton said projects to be discussed include all Alabama Transportation and Rehabilitative Improvement Program projects, the greenway project and the future widening of U.S. Highway

11 near Trussville City Hall.

A stretch of U.S. Highway 11 could be widened to five lanes, making a left turn lane to Parkway Drive. That project could happen in 2016 or 2017.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to watch Trussville Mayor Gene Melton talk about Friday's meeting with ALDOT officials.



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# Governor's wife announces domestic violence prevention legislation

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

With a goal of preventing further abuse for domestic violence victims and their families, First Lady Dianne Bentley last Wednesday announced her legislative agenda aimed at strengthening domestic violence victim services and protection in Alabama.

"Domestic violence is a pressing issue in our state, and I will continue to use my platform as an advocate for victims and their children," Bentley said. "Though there is help available in Alabama, Alabama laws need to be strengthened and funding for victim services needs to be increased. This has led me to the State House with a comprehensive approach to protect Alabamians from

domestic violence."

Since 2011, domestic violence prevention has been a priority for Bentley. During her time as First Lady, Bentley has visited all domestic violence centers across the state, spoke with victims and worked with the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence to help address the need for victims and their children. Thanks to a partnership with the Alabama Department of Corrections, since 2012, Bentley has collected more than 15,000 cell phones for HopeLine from Verizon to assist domestic violence shelters and victims of abuse.

The First Lady Dianne Bentley Domestic Violence Prevention Legislation aims to modernize domestic violence laws, increase state funds toward

lifescaping services for victims and their children, and strengthen victim protection through law enforcement and judicial provisions.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office would support the legislation.

"Domestic violence continues to be a serious cancer in our society that far too many times ends with a homicide," said Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Randy Christian. "Any legislation that strengthens our ability to combat it and/or assist victims we support 100 percent."

This legislation establishes a structure of accountability and standards in service provision for ACADV through the Alabama Department of Economic Development and

Community Affairs. Gov. Robert Bentley has recommended \$2 million in his general fund budget for ACADV's certified domestic violence shelters. State funding appropriated would be managed and disbursed by ADECA with the establishment of a Domestic Violence Trust Fund.

A Domestic Violence Capital Improvement Program would also be implemented through the legislation. This is a needs-based, competitive grant process used for shelter facility improvements and expansions. Shelters would be evaluated by ADECA, which would then distribute grants to facilities in the most need of repair. Gov. Bentley has recommended \$3 million in his general fund budget to launch this initiative.

The final part of the legislation would strengthen the provisions relating to domestic violence crime scenes, protection orders and court proceedings. Victims would be informed of their local domestic violence center's contact information, its services and their legal rights in pursuing criminal or civil charges against the abuser. Police reports would be filed regardless of arrest and shared with local domestic violence centers. Judicial officers would have strengthened measures in court proceedings to better protect domestic violence victims and greater punishment alternatives

for those who violate any protective order, conditional release or bail.

"Domestic violence is an issue that cannot be overlooked or excused," Gov. Bentley said. "I hope Alabama legislators will join me and members of my administration to support Dianne in her effort to protect Alabama families from domestic violence."

The legislation is sponsored by Sen. Clay Scofield, R-Guntersville, and Rep. Mike Jones, R-Andalusia.

Contact Gary Lloyd at [news@trussvilletribune.com](mailto:news@trussvilletribune.com) and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

# New contracts for Trussville principals

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Trussville City Board of Education last Monday approved contracts for three of its school principals.

All three contracts approved were for three years.

Hewitt-Trussville High School Principal Tim Salem, Alternative Learning Center Principal Phyllis Faust and Paine Intermediate School Principal Autumm Jeter had contracts approved.

Salem's contract is for



Phyllis Faust

\$121,540 per year. His original contract, when he became the high school's principal in 2012, paid him \$118,000 per year. Prior to Salem, the high school had four principals in seven years.

Faust has been the principal at the Alternative



Autumm Jeter

Learning Center since 2013. Her new three-year contract will pay her \$107,020 per year.

This is Jeter's first Trussville City Schools contract. She was hired in July 2014. Her three-year contract will pay her \$94,080 per year.



Tim Salem

"I'm looking forward to the next three years," said Trussville City Schools Superintendent Pattie Neill.

Contact Gary Lloyd at [news@trussvilletribune.com](mailto:news@trussvilletribune.com) and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

# Pinson resident selected to judicial commission

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Jefferson County House delegation recently voted unanimously to appoint Cynthia Bonner to the Jefferson County Judicial Commission.

According to Rep. Danny Garrett, Bonner is a Leeds native and resides in Pinson. She retired after a 30-year career with Jefferson County Schools and now works part time as the membership and benefits coordinator for the American Federation of Teachers.

Bonner graduated from Alabama State University and serves as chairwoman of the Scholarship Committee and coordinator of recruitment for the Birmingham ASU alumni chapter.

Garrett said she was nominated to the commission by the Central Alabama Labor Federation.

"We are proud to have a resident of District 44 as a member of this Commission," Garrett wrote on Facebook.

Alabama House of Representatives District 44 covers Trussville, Clay and portions of Pinson.

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3. A Qualified Tuition Program, also known as a 529 plan, provides a tax-efficient way to save for higher education expenses for your child or grandchild. Such a plan allows contributions well in excess of \$100,000 to an established account and there is no income limitation on who can contribute.
4. Need to save for education? Although there's no federal tax deduction for contributing to a section 529 qualified tuition plan, your state may offer a deduction or credit for contributions to one of its 529 savings or pre-paid tuition plans. Even better, distributions from a 529 plan used for qualified education expenses are tax-free to the plan beneficiary.
5. Student loans are a convenient way to pay for college expenses. If your income is too high to deduct the interest paid on a student loan, consider having your child take the college loans out in his or her name. Your child's income may be low enough to deduct the interest, even if you give them the money to repay the loan.

-Curly McDaniel, Office Manager, H&R Block-Pinson

PROPERTY continued from page 1

feet from the curb, so the council has made every effort to allow room for buffer. Sanders' position is that, as it stands, the council will be better able to keep the character of the neighborhood unchanged with this project than if they had never purchased the land to begin with.

Councilman Robbie Roberts, an Innsbrooke resident, did have a few issues with the plan. He said he has no doubt that the current school board would honor any commitments, but he wanted a covenant added to the contract that would protect the look of the neighborhood permanently by requiring the school board to not only build a

fence to block the view, but maintain that fence in perpetuity.

"I have no doubt that the current group will work with us on that," Roberts said. "It's the group 20 years from now I'm worried about."

Councilman Joe Cochran suggested the fence issue be added into the ordinance as a request rather than a binding covenant, and Sanders suggested planting crape myrtle, cedar and cyprus as a buffer that would create a natural buffer, and fence to block the view of the field.

Roberts said he understood there is a dire need for a practice field, but he felt like the whole process could have

been handled differently. Roberts had hoped the council would sell the property to the board, rather than ceding it. The money from the sale could then be funneled directly back into academics.

Roberts repeated this refrain, and one other when the subject of the girls' softball field was broached. Like the high school football field, the Rudd Middle School softball field has fallen into a state of disrepair. Coach Shell-lee Dawkins requested \$8,170 to replace fences at the field. The field needs several major repairs, but the fence is the most pressing issue.

The coach, the players and the community have

put thousands of dollars into the maintenance of this field, and toward the support of this program, Cochran said.

"Once you have your field, it is up to you as an organization," Cochran said. "You are responsible (to take care of it) by whatever means you can, fundraising or whatever."

Roberts worries the new football practice field could be another drain on resources as the field ages, especially since the practice field will be used as player parking on game nights, causing additional wear and tear.

Pinson Valley High School scored poorly in academics this year, and the ACT scores were also

low, Roberts said.

"I just don't know what message we're sending that we support these athletic groups and all without getting in here and saying we want these kids to be successful in English, math, reading and these other things," he said.

Cochran pointed out that extracurricular activities were often needed to keep people in school. He said without those programs he probably would have lost attention in education altogether and fallen by the wayside. He also added that the athletic program helps build community.

Roberts voted against ceding the property to the school board and against funding the fence project.

The Jefferson County Board of Education in August 2014 voted to purchase seven acres of property near Willie Adams Stadium on the Pinson Valley High School campus for \$150,000. The purpose of the purchase from seller Jane Engesser was to provide land for the expansion of athletic facilities.

The property Pinson has ceded to the board is located between the football stadium and the south side of Innsbrooke Parkway. Part of this tract will contain the sidewalk that will begin soon as part of a Safe Routes To Schools sidewalk grant the city received, Sanders said.

# Trussville PD adding 2 more officer positions

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Trussville City Council on Tuesday voted to hire two new police officers for the Trussville Police Department.

Another will be hired to replace a retiring officer.

With the two newly created officer positions, the department now has 56 total officer spots, said Capt. Jeff Bridges.

The city council also approved air conditioning systems for the Trussville Athletic Center on Parkway Drive. Hastings Heating & Air Conditioning won



file photo by Gary Lloyd

A Trussville Police Department Chevrolet Tahoe

the low bid with a bid of \$153,699.

"That's a big deal," said Trussville City Councilman Buddy Choat.

In other news, the city council approved of going

out to bid on a new fire truck.

Contact Gary Lloyd at [news@trussvilletribune.com](mailto:news@trussvilletribune.com) and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.



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**PINSON** continued from page 1

recoup class costs. The Doctor team, made up of Jocelyn Mitchell and Journee Vancleaf, won that award.

The judges selected The Adventurer team -- made up of Jeremy Cobb, Jordan Walton, Lucas Breimhorst and Clayton Davis -- as the show's runner-up.

The winning team was The Scientist, made up of Shelby Justice, Kyle Reaney and Ivy Williams. Reaney was the model, and Reaney and Williams collaborated on the design.

"Scary but exciting at the same time," Justice, a sophomore, said of acting the part on stage.

Reaney, also a sophomore, said The Scientist character is based on an apocalyptic world in which everyone lives under water. The Scientist comes above the water to see if it's OK to live there again due to an overpopulation under



A look at all the characters

water. Williams, a senior, said the group worked on the costume for two months. It's made of bed sheets, ACE bandages and paper. The scroll Justice carried was made with a rolling pin and a stick.

"I love it and I love to do it," said Williams, who has studied under artist J. Anthony Kosar in Chicago and works at the Virginia Samford Theatre in Birmingham.

Reaney will be in Screws' class again next school year.

"I've learned a lot," Reaney said. "I've always wanted to do something like this, and it's awesome. It's really cool."

Other members of the class who participated in Friday's show included Anissa Lewis, Alexis Little, Zac Burns, Joselyn Sabino, Giselle Vasquez, Tressie Wesson, Leslee

Cunningham, Cassady Artimisi, Magen Mahon, Shieann Powers, Brooke Newton, Brianna Senn, Drew Henderson, Kelsey Price, Austin Hartline, Tyler Jackson, Billy Hubbard, Kris Legar, Holli Reid, Martasia Simmons and Alexis Johnson.

Screws said the class will be the same next school year, and the maximum capacity is 30 students. This year's class will lose

16 seniors and some juniors due to scheduling conflicts. To take the class, students must submit a portfolio to Screws. If he has had them in Art I: Drawing and Design or Art II: Sculpting and Painting, he knows what they can do.

Screws said the special effects class "isn't beginner level stuff at all."

Friday's show, in a way, was a culmination of what the students have done in class this year. Titled "Visual Arts Elective," the yearlong class meets for 50 minutes every day during third block. That amount of time is never enough most days.

"These kids come in firing on all cylinders, and they don't want to leave," Screws said.

The theme for next year's show is "Fractured Fairytales." Students will take traditional fairytale stories and twist them in

strange and interesting ways.

"What that may be, I don't know," Screws said. "Maybe they take a villain and turn it into good. Maybe they take a good guy and turn him bad. Or maybe they do a monstrous version of a character or some futuristic version of a character. It could be anything, really."

Contact Gary Lloyd at [news@trussvilletribune.com](mailto:news@trussvilletribune.com) and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to watch the winners be announced and receive their award.



**PLANNING** continued from page 1

The city would like to extend trails throughout the city and to Turkey Creek, specifically through the Alabama Department of Youth Services campus and Shadow Lake property. A trail could link the Georgebrook subdivision with Cosby Lake Park. There are 540 acres of land in the area that could also be developed into a mixed use district -- housing, commercial areas and walkable space.

Another goal is to develop a capital improvement plan for economic development and fill the

vacant commercial spaces. Former Clay City Councilwoman Jackie Hambrick suggested a tax incentive plan be developed as a tool to recruit new businesses.

"We have to think about why they'd want to come to Clay," Hambrick said.

Ostaseski asked those in attendance what they wanted Clay to look like in five years. Among the responses:

- Fill in city boundaries
- More green spaces and family areas
- Add shade trees to park areas
- More sidewalks and

landscaping in an effort to beautify the city

- Fill all empty commercial buildings and recruit more businesses

Ostaseski also asked what Clay's existing community assets are that the city can build on. Among the responses:

- Cosby Lake Park/trail system
  - Alabama Department of Youth Services campus property
  - Historical sites
  - Vacant properties that could become new businesses
- Residents suggested

finding ways to add businesses. Webster said the city has no daytime population due to people leaving Clay to go to work. The "biggest drawback" the city has is in the restaurant category, since people leave Clay during the day. The city will continue to work toward acquiring its own ZIP code, something that makes a city more appealing to businesses.

"That's a fight that still goes on today," said commission member Dean Kirkner.

City Manager Ronnie Dixon said the U.S. Postal

Service is "evaluating" Clay, and the hurdle to getting Clay's own ZIP code is filling in all the city's borders with unincorporated areas. Dixon wants the city to annex up Chalkville Mountain Road toward Trussville and toward Pinson.

"We're way ahead of where we were two years ago," Dixon said.

The commission wants Clay residents' input on the city's future moving forward.

"I wish this room were standing room only tonight," Kirkner said.

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Scan this QR code with your smartphone to watch Clay Mayor Charles Webster talk about the future of the city of Clay.



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McCOWN continued from page 1

sat at a long, white table with Sharpies in their hands at Collegiate Warehouse at the Outlet Shops of Grand River in Leeds. They signed autographs for \$30 each, with all proceeds benefitting the McCown family of Grayson Valley.

The family includes Julie and Charles McCown, and their five children: Chase (22), Drake (17), Christian (15), Kristofer (12) and Grace (10). Drake, Kristofer and Grace are special needs and attend the Burkett Center. Chase attends college online and is an "enormous" help to the family, Julie McCown said. Christian is a Clay-Chalkville High School student.

When Julie McCown was pregnant with Drake, she was involved in a hit-and-run with an 18-wheeler on Interstate 65. The vehicle spun, flipped on its side, careened across traffic and hit a retaining wall. Drake suffered uterine shaken syndrome, and it was discovered he had suffered strokes before birth due to the accident. He's a spastic-quadruplegic and has seizures. He is ventilator dependent. Julie McCown said the driver of the 18-wheeler was never caught.



photo courtesy of the Prayers for Team McCown Facebook page

Former University of Alabama quarterback Blake Sims with the McCown family

"He is so strong," she said of Drake. "He just amazes us."

Kristofer was born healthy but developed meningitis when he was 2 months old. Shortly afterward, he started having seizures. The day Grace was born, doctors discovered she suffered from a 1-in-100 congenital heart defect. She has a double-outlet right ventricle and has already been through two heart surgeries, one open heart.

It was discovered that Kristofer and Grace share a mitochondrial disease called Complex IV. Mitochondria is a cell's build-

ing block, where the cell creates energy. Damage to these cells can affect many systems in the body. The effect on Kristofer and Grace is neurological.

"They're blessings," Julie McCown said. "We just feel like we were chosen to be their parents. They're not a burden. They teach us things. God chose us. I don't know why, but we're very blessed. I just want to do more for them."

Drake, Kristofer and Grace are each in wheelchairs. The family's home off Brewster Road includes 17 stairs from the main floor to their bedrooms. Charles McCown is a se-

nior programmer and Julie McCown takes care of the kids. Affording necessary home renovations is nearly impossible on one income. The money raised at Saturday's autograph signing -- \$1,000 -- will go toward home renovations to make it more accessible for the children. There is also a donation page set up at www.gofundme.com/ody0fo for the family.

"It could not be more wheelchair inaccessible," Julie McCown said of their home.

Julie McCown said Grace is the only child of the three she can get into the bathtub. She can't get

Drake or Kristofer through the doorways.

"We need accessibility," she said.

Sims said he found out about the McCown family through his marketing company. He said it was a big deal to give back and show support for the family.

"I didn't hesitate to say yes," Sims said. "I'm just happy to be here and be in the state of Alabama."

Reaves said Collegiate Warehouse's owner asked him if he wanted to be a part of the event. He said yes.

"I will continue to do stuff like this, give back to the community, give back to people who helped get me in the position that I'm at," Reaves said. "That's something I want to be big on. It's more than just foot-

ball to me. I just want to try to help people reach their goals and try to do whatever they're trying to do, just like my parents and others helped me get to where I'm at now."

Julie McCown said "there are just no words" to describe what the event meant to her and her family. She wants to be able to get Drake and Kristofer into the water so they can feel it.

"I just want to be able to take care of them the best I can," she said. "I just want to give them more. I want them to be able to have all the comforts they can have. That's all I care about."

Contact Gary Lloyd at news@trussvilletribune.com and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to watch former Clay-Chalkville and UAB running back Darrin Reaves, now with the Carolina Panthers, talk about the benefit for the McCown family.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to watch former Alabama quarterback Blake Sims talk about the benefit for the McCown family.



# Charter school bill signed into law

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Gov. Robert Bentley has signed the School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, SB45, into law.

The bill was introduced in the Alabama State Senate by Senate Pro Tem Del Marsh, and was sponsored in the State House by Rep. Terri Collins.

The bill will allow the creation of public charter schools and conversion charter schools in Alabama, open to any student who wishes to attend. Charter school administrators will have authority over the school's finances, staff, schedule and curriculum. The schools must meet strict performance and accountability standards.

Alabama Republican Party Chairwoman Terry Lathan applauded the "creative pathway" the

legislature is willing to travel in the quest to "raise the educational bar in Alabama."

"While there is no quick fix, the establishment of public charter schools in our state will allow our students, parents and teachers the opportunity to make a true difference in the education and future of Alabama," Lathan said.

Locally, Trussville City Schools Superintendent Pattie Neill believes the new law won't have an impact on Trussville City Schools.

"At first, there was language in the bill that would allow private schools to convert to public charter schools, which would mean that TCS would lose funding for any Trussville student who attends a private school that converted to a public charter," Neill said. "The private school conversion

language was removed, so I am comfortable with the bill as it is written."

Neill said the law is designed to allow conversion public charter schools to have "total flexibility" to remove poor teachers and design their own curriculum. It's also meant to give students in failing schools another option and a chance to transfer to a charter school outside their school system, she said.

"In Trussville, we are fortunate that we do not have problems that are inherent in other school systems, which created the impetus for the development, support and passage of this bill," Neill said.

Contact Gary Lloyd at news@trussvilletribune.com and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

# Clay Days set for April 1-4

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The 2015 Clay Days Festival is set for April 1-4 at the city's baseball fields at 7257 Old Springville Road.

The carnival is open 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. April 1-2, 6 p.m. to midnight April

3 and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. April 4.

The event features carnival rides, food, crafts and more.

Friday, April 3 is The City of Clay Night at the carnival. Saturday, April 4 is The Clay-Pinson Chamber of Commerce Night at the carnival. Coupons of \$3 off will be

distributed at the schools to students, and they're only valid Saturday, April 4.

For more information, visit www.claydaysfestival.com or find "The City of Clay" on Facebook.

Contact Gary Lloyd at news@trussvilletribune.com and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

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# Trussville in 'idea phase' to adjoin 2 Paine schools

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Trussville City Schools may adjoin Paine Primary and Paine Intermediate schools into one building once two new community elementary schools are constructed.

Superintendent Pattie Neill said last week that the two schools could be adjoined in the front or near the outdoor area in the back, depending on where a hardened area -- for weather emergencies -- will be located.

Adjoining the buildings near their fronts with a hardened area could open up more room for professional development. Adjoining them in the back with a hardened area is also an option.

"This is the idea phase," Neill said.

Neill said she and

Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations Jim Kirkland have had a meeting with Rick Lathan of Lathan Associates Architects about possible designs. Neill said the future layout of Paine Elementary depends on the hardened area's location.

"And it depends on the number of classrooms we need with bathrooms and whether or not they are included inside of the hardened area," Neill said. "At that time, we will have an outstanding layout for Paine Elementary because we need 46 classrooms and we have 70 or 80 that we'll be able to use. It will be an outstanding problem to have. But there is some anxiety about where teachers' specific classrooms will be. And I understand that anxiety, but each teacher will have a classroom inside and not in a portable."

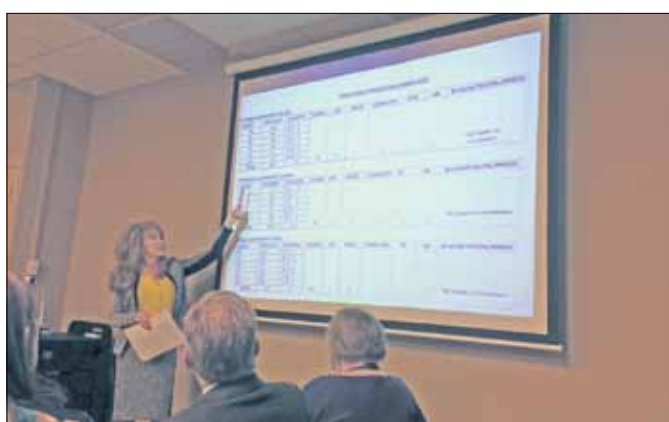


photo by Gary Lloyd

Trussville City Schools Superintendent Pattie Neill discusses enrollment projections at last week's Trussville City Board of Education work session.

Constructing two new community elementary schools in the Cahaba Project and near Magnolia Place, as well as adjoining the Paine schools, makes for three K-5 schools in Trussville.

Paine Primary School Principal Betsy Schmitt disagreed with the plan to adjoin the schools, saying she believed the seven-millage tax increase

Trussville residents voted for in February 2014 meant Paine would have a K-2 building and the other for grades 3-5. She said she didn't see the "wisdom" in turning two buildings into one. Neill and Trussville City Board of Education members said that the plan all along was to have three K-5 schools.

Neill presented to the board enrollment

projections for March 2016 based on today's numbers. It was a simulation for what the three elementary schools could look like. Based on today's numbers, the school to be constructed in the Cahaba Project would have 426 students and 23 teachers. There would be 30 rooms at that school.

The school to be built in the Magnolia Place area would have 476 students and 23 teachers. There would be 32 rooms at that school.

"There is room for growth in both of these schools," Neill said.

Paine Elementary would house 923 students and 46 teachers. There are 87 rooms there, which would be plenty of room to add professional development areas.

By these numbers, all three schools would meet AdvancED Standards

for Quality in terms of programs, services and class sizes.

Neill said both options to adjoin the two Paine schools frees up space for professional development and after-school care. The plan is to start the project as soon as possible. The project won't restage any classroom. There is a year to figure out and solidify the project, and Neill preached patience on what the eventual layout of Paine will be.

The projections don't take into account portables at the Paine campus, because they'll be gone in August 2016 when the two new schools open.

"They're off the board," Neill said.

Contact Gary Lloyd at [news@trussvilletribune.com](mailto:news@trussvilletribune.com) and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

# Spring break begins next week for area students

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Spring break for students in Trussville City Schools and Jefferson County Schools is March 30 through April 3.

"Parents, we need your help to make spring break season a safe one," Alabama Secretary of Law Enforcement Spencer Collier said. "Let's take a few minutes to go over traffic laws and boating with our teens, especially if they plan to travel with teen friends. Remind them to buckle up, to

focus on the road, to avoid such distractions as texting while driving and to obey speed limits and other traffic laws."

Collier also said parents should ensure everyone understands boating laws and uses life vests when on the water.

"The risk of water-related injuries increases as water traffic increases, so we all must be cautious when spending time at the lake or beach," he said.

Here are seven suggestions to keep in mind to stay safe during spring break:

- Make hotel/motel stay safe:

Choose establishments that are protected by smoke alarms and fire sprinkler systems. Once in rooms, guests should review escape plans with their entire party. If alarms sound, guests should leave the room right away, using the stairs and avoiding elevators.

- Be mindful of hot coals when camping or cooking outdoors: Do not dump them in or around dry grass, leaves or other flammable materials.

- Restrict access and closely monitor teens to prevent underage use of alcoholic

beverages.

- Avoid driving or boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Buckle up no matter how short the trip: Occupants of all ages should use seat belts or child restraints when traveling by motor vehicles. On waterways, all occupants of water vessels should use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets. It's important to focus on driving or boating, avoiding such distractions as texting and talking on cell phones.

- Don't barrel through

construction zones along the way: Drivers pose the greatest danger in work zone crashes by not paying attention, speeding and driving while impaired or distracted.

- Remember Alabama's Graduated Driver License law: Parents of teen drivers should review the state's three-stage licensing process that places certain restrictions on young drivers to ensure they acquire driving experience. Stage I is learner's permit, Stage II is restricted license and Stage III is unrestricted license.

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