

Alabama CURRENTS



Vol. X No. 6 • A Publication of the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority • November/December 2011

**Riviera
Utilities
partners
with 61st
Annual
Baldwin
County Fair**
See Page 14



Electricity...one of life's great conveniences

Across America, nearly every facet of our lives depends on electricity. Electricity doesn't just power homes, schools and businesses here — it energizes entire communities and drives the economy.

Take a quick look around. Everything in your home or workplace is either powered by electricity or produced with the help of electrical power. Of course, this includes your computer, phone and kitchen appliances. But electricity is also the power behind the clothes you wear, the food you eat and the heated or cooled air you breathe.

And of course during this holiday season, we use electricity to power our Christmas tree lights and cook our special Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

Since Thomas Edison's first power plant lit up 800 light bulbs in New York City on the evening of September 4, 1882, electricity has become our most prevalent energy form. It drives our nation's economy and powers smart technologies that enhance our quality of life.

The electric power industry is a robust industry that contributes to the progress of our nation. America's electric companies pay billions of dollars in tax revenue, employ nearly 400,000 workers, provide a variety of public service programs to benefit the local communities they serve, and produce one of our most valuable commodities — electricity.

American homes use more electricity today than ever. Yet the portion of our household budgets that we devote to our electricity bills has actually declined.

It's important to understand that electricity remains an undeniable bargain, and one of life's great conveniences. That's because electricity prices — unlike the prices for most other goods — did not keep pace with the rate of inflation for many years.

Electricity continues to be a good value, especially when compared to other consumer goods. Consider the cost of a gallon of gas 30 years ago compared to today's price. How about a pound of coffee or a loaf of bread? While this doesn't take the sting out of rising costs, it does show that the cost of electricity has remained relatively flat, despite its increased use and value to our daily lives.

Today electric companies are facing steadily increasing costs to generate and deliver electricity. While electric companies make continuous efficiency improvements and are working with state regulators to contain costs and to keep electricity prices as low as possible, the fact is that rising electricity costs are becoming inevitable throughout the United States. And yet, electricity remains one of the true bargains among crucial U.S. commodities.

As it was in the beginning and still remains today, AMEA will stay true to its mission of providing for our Member communities a reliable and economical source of electric power.

We wish you a very joyous and safe holiday season.



Lisa Miller

AMEA Manager of Communications and Marketing

AMEA and its Members offer scholarships



Will you be graduating from high school in the spring of 2012? Do you receive your electricity from a municipal electric system in Alabama? Then if your answer to these questions is "yes," you could be eligible to receive a scholarship from the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) and your public power system.

For the past 19 years, AMEA and its 11 Member cities (Alexander City, Dothan, Fairhope, Foley, LaFayette, Lanett, Luverne, Opelika, Piedmont, Sylacauga and Tuskegee) have provided scholarships to area high school seniors through the AMEA Scholarship Program. Scholarships, totaling approximately \$82,500, were awarded in the 2011 program.

Each year, AMEA and its Members make available 33, \$2,500 scholarships, which include regular and technical school scholarships. To be eligible for either of AMEA's scholarships, a student's family must receive electric service from a Member's electric utility and the student must attend an Alabama college or university.

Applications are currently available from school counselors in these Member cities, or you can go online to the AMEA web site, www.amea.com, Scholarship Program.

Applications are reviewed and winners are selected by an independent panel of Montgomery area college guidance personnel. Application deadline is **Monday, Feb. 6, 2012.**

For more information on the program, contact your school counselor or Pamela Poole, AMEA's Scholarship Program Coordinator, (800) 239-2632, Ext. 110, (334) 387-3504, or pam@amea.com.

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Lisa Miller

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MISSION STATEMENT

AMEA's mission is to provide for our Member communities a reliable and economical source of electric power, enabling them to preserve and enhance the benefits of municipal utility ownership for their citizens and the electric customers they serve. We strive to offer services that our Members need and can adapt to provide the best value for their communities and customers.

Alabama CURRENTS

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On the Cover

Riviera Utilities played a major role in the 61st Annual Baldwin County Fair, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, by providing an exhibit which showcased the fair's theme "Spirit of America – Energizing Baldwin County." The annual event was held at the Baldwin County Fair Park Arena in Robertsdale.

Baldwin County citizens saw displays of distribution lines built in the 1920s, old kilowatt meters, modern-day LED lights, distribution and transmission equipment, and a mannequin dressed as a lineman in early day-style clothing. Everything was displayed as a hands-on exhibit.

Fair goers were delighted and linemen of old had a lot of tales to share as they reminisced about the good old days when electricity came to Baldwin County.

See Page 14 for more about the Riviera Utilities' display at the Baldwin County Fair.

Holiday wishes for a brighter 2012

As 2011 comes to a close, I'd like to personally offer you my best wishes for the holiday season and the coming New Year.



2011 has been a challenging year for everyone. With economic uncertainty, caution has been the business model of necessity. It is in these trying times that friendships and time-forged relationships gain added meaning.

The economic recession, which we have experienced the past two years, has only underlined the importance of job creation and helping Alabamians once again reach full employment.

No community in Alabama has been immune to job losses, including the Member cities of the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA). Job losses affect every aspect of a community, including your public power utility. After all, your utility is only as strong as the community it serves.

AMEA has placed a renewed emphasis on job creation in support of our local economic developers. We have also placed an even higher emphasis on working with state leaders to enhance Alabama's job recruitment efforts. Through these initiatives and the partnerships AMEA has with leading economic development entities, we are seeing increased industry announcements and improved economic conditions in the communities we serve.

We are committed to partnerships which continue to improve the quality of life and promote vibrant, economically stable communities. AMEA will continue to support initiatives which make Alabama the most competitive it can be from an economic development perspective.

May your holiday season be filled with joy and those things that matter most... family, friends and meaningful relationships with others. Our heartfelt wish is that 2012 will be a better year for all Alabamians.

Fred D. Clark, Jr.
AMEA President & CEO

Now is the perfect time

As the *Oklahoma* song says, "Oh what a beautiful morning, oh what a beautiful day." And I say, oh what a beautiful season it has been since my last column in *Alabama Currents*. I just love the fall and early winter. It is not too hot and not too cold. Many of the leaves are absolutely beautiful. The mums, pumpkins, hay bales, and scare crows are in perfect arrangement. The football season is in full swing. And, can you believe that it is already the beginning of the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season? It's almost 2012. Wow, it just doesn't get any better than this.



If it would just stay like this all year, we could all just go around singing the rest of the song, "Everything's going my way." But the fact is, I would not be writing this article if the weather was always comfortable. It will soon be winter and colder. Therefore, now is the perfect time to make those energy improvements to your house. The sooner that you make the improvements, the sooner you will reap the benefits. Remember, that every energy-efficient improvement that you implement does have a payback.



Now, while the attic temperature is not hot, it's a good time to install the Enerflex™ Radiant Barrier between the roof rafters. This would be extremely beneficial if the ductwork is in the attic or if you have upstairs rooms that back up to the attic. When the 2012 summer arrives, the temperature of the attic, the ductwork, and the insulation will be much cooler if you have installed Enerflex™. And of course, the utility bills will also be less. I know that this is true because some of you have installed Enerflex™ and have told me about the results.

Also, now is the perfect time to add attic insulation. If your attic has less than 10 inches of insulation, I suggest that you add cellulose insulation over the existing insulation. Generally speaking, you should add insulation until you have about 13 inches of total insulation. If you do this, it is my opinion that you will never need to add additional insulation again. Do it now and start receiving a return on your investment as soon as it gets cold.

While you are in the attic, make a visual inspection of the ductwork. About 30 percent will find major leakage that can be easily repaired using a few sheet metal screws and shiny high quality tape. If your utility bills have been consistently high, don't be surprised if you find some ductwork totally disconnected. We find it on a regular basis.

Now here are two simple things to do when it gets cold. When the north wind is blowing, dampen your hand and feel for places where cold air is coming into each room. Simply caulk those leaks using clear caulking. If you feel cold air coming in at the electrical switches and outlets, install the foam gaskets that can be purchased at the home center.

Do you know why these things sound so simple? Because it usually is simple and you don't have to do all of them at once. If you do this, it is my opinion that you will never need to add additional insulation again.

But now is the perfect time because it is almost time to decorate the Christmas tree. Ya'll have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas and I will see you in the New Year.

Doug Rye, an Arkansas architect, is known as the "King of Caulk and Talk" and the "Doctor of Energy Efficiency." Doug has helped thousands of homeowners save money on their utility bills. He hosts the popular "Home Remedies" radio talk program, which has been on the air for 21 years in about 19 states. He conducts over 100 energy-saving seminars per year all across the U.S. Have a question for Doug? Contact him at (501) 653-7931, or visit www.dougyre.com.



Be a
Wise-
Energy User

Make the most of your energy dollars during the holidays

Tight economic times don't have to put a damper on the holiday festivities if you're "energy aware" and can keep your energy budget under control. Three of the biggest expenses for the home are lighting, heating, and cooking.

The Alabama Municipal Electric Authority and its 11 Members encourage you to consider these tips this holiday season:

Lighten your budget with LEDs

If you're decorating your house or tree, consider changing out those old, hot-burning bulbs with a new generation of LED (light-emitting diode) lighting. They may be a bit more expensive to begin with, but they will last a lot longer than traditional lights and will save you hundreds of dollars over the years.

Turn down the thermostat, turn up the savings

Turn down your thermostat to 68 degrees. For every degree you lower your heat in the 60-degree to 70-degree range, you'll save up to five percent on heating costs. Set the thermostat back to 55 degrees or turn it off all together at night or when leaving home for an extended time. This can save 5-20 percent of your heating costs (heat pumps should only be set back two degrees to prevent unneeded use of backup strip heating).

Start the holiday season with a new filter for your heating/cooling unit and clean or replace it monthly to keep your unit running efficiently.

Setting your water heater to 120 degrees can cut your water heating costs by 10 percent.

Oven tips

Cook as many dishes as possible in your microwave oven during the holidays. Because microwaves cook food so quickly, the typical model uses as much as 75 percent less energy than a conventional oven.

Use your slow cooker. For about 20 cents worth of electricity, you can cook an entire meal.

When using your oven, check cooking progress by looking through the window. Opening the oven door for even a few seconds lowers the temperature inside by as much as 25 degrees, which increases cooking time and wastes energy.

Turn off your oven several minutes before your food is fully cooked. As long as the door is closed, enough heat will be stored inside to finish cooking your meal. The same principle applies to your electric range-top - the metal heating elements stay hot even after the electricity is turned off.



Glass and ceramic pans hold heat better and longer and you can turn the oven temperature down 25 degrees.

Stovetop tips

When cooking on top of your range, match the size of the pan to the heating element. More heat will get to the pan and less will be lost to the surrounding air. Believe it or not, a six-inch pan on an eight-inch burner will waste over 40 percent of the energy.

Clean burners and reflectors provide better heating, while saving energy. If you need new reflectors, buy quality ones. The best on the market can save as much as one-third of the energy used when cooking on top of the stove.

Refrigerator tips

In addition to your stove, your refrigerator and freezer also get a real workout over the holidays. While newer refrigerators are much more energy efficient than older ones, they remain one of the largest energy consumers in your house, often accounting for as much as 15 percent of your home's total energy usage.

Help your refrigerator and freezer operate efficiently and economically by keeping the doors closed as much as possible so the cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you take out the items you need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

It's easy to keep your refrigerator and freezer full during the holidays. It's also energy efficient, because the mass of cold items inside will help your refrigerator recover each time the door is opened. Don't cram it too full, because cool air must be able to circulate properly around your food.

Dishwasher tips

One simple, fun, and cost-effective way to save energy at holiday time is to gather everyone together in the kitchen and wash and dry your dishes by hand. But don't keep a steady stream of hot water flowing, or you'll waste more energy than you save.

According to research, a load of dishes cleaned in a dishwasher requires 37 percent less water than washing dishes by hand. However, if you fill the wash and rinse basins instead of letting the water run, you'll use half as much water as a dishwasher. If you opt to use the dishwasher, wash full loads only. If you must rinse your dishes before loading them, use only cold water so you're not running up your energy bill by heating water unnecessarily. Don't forget to use the energy-saving cycles whenever possible. Dishwashers that feature air power or overnight dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.

When it comes time to purchase new appliances, keep energy consumption in mind and buy the more efficient ENERGY STAR® models.

Saving energy is a habit you should practice all year long - but the holidays can be the perfect time to start. Throughout the holiday season and into the new year, you'll watch your energy bills drop even as you use less of our precious energy resources - just one more thing to be thankful for this holiday season.

WATTS NEW AT Utilities Board of Tuskegee

Utilities Board of Tuskegee launches program to educate public

By Karin Hopkins

The Utilities Board of Tuskegee (UBT) is converting critics to believers through a bold program based on a simple principle — truth works.

Truth is at the core of the UBT Academy, a school without walls, whereby UBT employees become teachers and local citizens become students. The curriculum is derived from UBT administrative issues and technical operations. The free classes are held for eight consecutive weeks with each session lasting three hours.

The first session, which is on “Governance,” dissects the UBT board and analyzes the inner workings of management including the differences between the board and the general manager. UBT General Manager Mark Ennis is aptly qualified to discuss this distinction.

In 2002, UBT was placed in receivership after failing to pay its bills. A judge stripped the local board of its authority and put Ennis in charge of resolving the financial crisis. After Ennis succeeded at restoring UBT to financial and operational soundness, the judge ended the takeover. In 2006 when the local board was reinstated, board members chose to hire Ennis as general manager.

This painful chapter of UBT’s history is reviewed during session one. Ennis says, “We answer every question about the receivership and we are also honest about today’s issues. The class is set up to give citizens a firsthand look at the equipment, facilities, leadership, personnel, finances, rates...just about everything that concerns UBT.”

Ennis says this approach clears the air about the costs of utility services. “We show the class the upgrades at a water filtration plant. We explain that those improvements cost us \$2 million. And this is just one of the projects that we’ve had to pay for recently. When you combine the cost of modernizing with the cost of providing utility services to our customer



UBT water treatment instructor, Fred Smith, Jr., explains what has to happen for water from the Tallapoosa River to meet safe drinking water standards.



Citizens enrolled in the fall 2011 UBT Academy class take a tour of the Tuskegee water filtration plant.

base, it adds up to a substantial amount of money. Unfortunately, as more and more people leave this community; these costs must be shouldered by a shrinking number of homes and businesses. Bottom line is that we have only two ways to financially sustain this operation. We either raise rates or grow the population.” This candid assessment is how the class learns about the community’s options regarding utility bills.

Session two takes the citizen students out of the borrowed space used for lectures and into the field where linemen demonstrate how workers climb poles, break down the tools they use to restore power when customers lose service and explain that safety is incorporated into everything they do. Citizens also get an up close look at the biodiesel facility and learn how this project will collect used cooking oil from homes and businesses for conversion to fuel for compatible UBT vehicles.

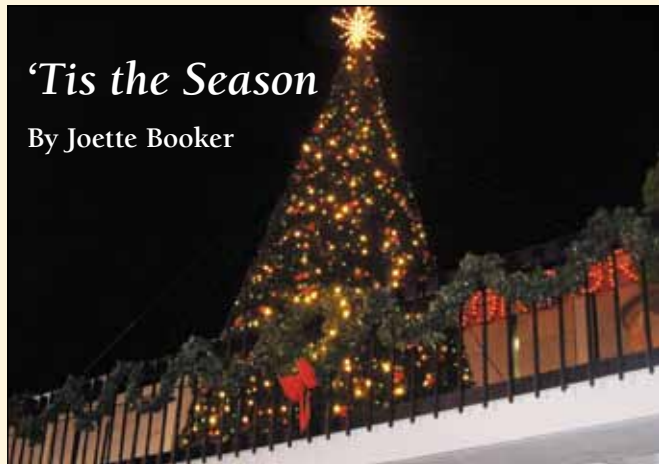
Sessions three and four involve water and wastewater personnel, facilities and operations. Billing, collections, budgeting, finance and utility rates are the focus of sessions five, six and seven. The last week is a review of the UBT strategic plan, closing remarks and graduation ceremony.

The first UBT Academy class was held in the spring of 2011. Though the original plan was to hold one class per year, interest within the community motivated UBT to offer a second class in the fall of 2011.

James Harper, a retired corporate executive who moved back to Tuskegee in 2009, attended the second round of classes and was impressed. “I wanted to learn more about what goes into my bill and the condition of the equipment. I also wanted to learn more about the board since they are so progressive in terms of utility service and economic development. The experience has been eye-opening. I’ve gotten much more than I expected.”

The familiar adage, “knowledge is power” is applicable to UBT Academy alumni. Many of the citizens say they have a greater appreciation for UBT and will share what they learned with friends and family. These individuals are tantamount to a self-appointed truth squad willing to correct false information with facts.

WATTS NEW IN **Dothan**



'Tis the Season

By Joette Booker

The lighting of a Christmas tree is a time-honored tradition in America, and not just in private homes, but cities and towns throughout the world.

Every year in Dothan, the Christmas season begins with the lighting of a tree at the Dothan Civic Center. This tradition began in 1978 with the first Christmas tree ever erected on site at Poplar Head Park. The annual Christmas tree lighting attracts a major crowd every winter, getting everyone in the Christmas spirit.

This year, downtown Dothan will be filled with Christmas joy and children of all ages' laughter and excitement Tuesday, Nov. 29 as the City of Dothan hosts its 33rd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Dothan Civic Center parking lot. At 6 p.m., Mayor Mike Schmitz and members of the Dothan City Commission, along with other special guests, will welcome the beginning of this joyous season. Santa Claus will be on-hand for photos and to spread holiday cheer. The public is invited to celebrate Dothan's special tree lighting to brighten the holidays. If you would like more information, contact Dothan Leisure Services at (334) 615-3700.

Tips for lowering your Christmas light costs

- Put your lights on a timer. Few holiday sightseers are out and about after 9 p.m. Be sure to use a durable timer that will withstand the elements and adjust it as the days get even shorter.
- Consider going LED (light-emitting diode). Though they are a little pricier than traditional Christmas lights, LEDs use 80-90 percent less energy than incandescents.
- Re-evaluate when you put your lights up. Traditionally they are put up toward the end of November and left up until January. Review your budget and see if this needs to be adjusted.

WATTS NEW IN **Alexander City**

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit makes stop in Alexander City

By Judy Tidwell

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit came to Alexander City amid much fanfare and excitement. The exhibit focused on *Journey Stories* and featured memorabilia and historical items from our area. The exhibit was showcased at the United Way building with other exhibits housed at City Hall in downtown Alexander City.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the Adelia M. Russell Library partnered with MainStreet Alexander City to host a lecture series featuring local citizens and their *Journey Stories*.

In August, local author Bob Whetstone conducted a book signing for his newest release, *Cotton Mary*. Peggy Walls spoke about the history of gold mining in our area. We heard about Hillwood, a Coosa County sawmill town, from June Pody Mann, Ann Dickinson Hardman and Harry Wyckoff. The Hillabee Archaeological Society, with David McDaniel, Wayne Hunter and Wayne Martin, presented Indian stories and artifacts from our region, and Winston and Linda Baker presented a slide show on Indian beads. The series concluded with Ben Russell sharing memories of his grandfather, Mr. Ben, and Roy Mathis sharing facts and history on the post office in our area.

The lecture series was a success, as over 600 citizens attended these events.



Several exhibits showcasing the different communities throughout Tallapoosa County were displayed at City Hall in Alexander City. Mrs. Laura Bell Oliver, who grew up in the Avondale community, is shown with her community's exhibit.

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE IN ALEXANDER CITY:

Day Time (256) 409-2080,

After Hours/Holidays – Call Police Dept. (256) 234-3421

DO NOT CALL 911

*Celebrate the holidays
 in Fairhope*

By D. Fran Morley



Fairhope's Second Annual Movie in the Street will be held Saturday, Nov. 19.

There are so many good times and reasons to visit Fairhope – spring is beautiful, fall is delightful, but the holidays are a downright magical time to visit.

The holiday season kicks off with my favorite event, the Downtown Tree Lighting Ceremony on Nov. 17. Festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. with music, and of course Mrs. Claus will be on hand to visit with children. But the evening highlight is at 6 p.m., when the city clock chimes the hour and Mayor Tim Kant throws a switch turning on millions of twinkling white lights.

Once years ago, I heard someone in the crowd exclaim that the tree lighting was “just like Disney.” Wrong. It’s just like Fairhope.

Tree Lighting is followed closely by two events: one a long-standing tradition and one on its way to becoming one. The Second Annual Movie in the Street is Saturday, Nov. 19, a free, outdoor showing of the children’s classic, *The Polar Express*. The movie begins at 6:30 p.m. Families are encouraged to bring lawn chairs (and children in holiday PJs) for this event that takes place at the intersection of Fairhope and Section streets downtown.

“The Downtown Fairhope Business Association (DFBA) is excited to be sponsoring the outdoor movie again this year as a way to say thank you to the local community for shopping local and supporting the community where they live,” said DFBA President Pete Blohme, owner of Panini Pete’s Café and Bakeshoppe. “Having a movie right in the middle of Fairhope Avenue is a great way for the community to come together and kick off the holiday season.”

You might be tempted to sleep in after the evening movie, but you will want to get up and around for Fairhope’s annual Christmas Open House, Sunday, Nov. 20 from 1-5 p.m. For more than 50 years, the merchants of Fairhope have provided

a Christmas shopping experience that is second to none. With live entertainment and refreshments throughout town, this Fairhope tradition grows every year. If you’ve never taken part, this is a perfect reason to visit. Frequently, I can complete my Christmas shopping list in this one afternoon.

December arrives in a big way with another evening event, Fairhope’s Magical Christmas Parade, Friday, Dec. 2. The lighted floats, bands, and marching units make their way along Section Street, from Morphy to Oak. Santa himself arrives in town that night, closing out the parade and riding into town on a shiny red Fairhope Volunteer Fire Department truck.

The jolly old elf sticks around, too. On Saturday, Dec. 3 and 10, he’ll be in front of the Welcome Center in downtown from 10 a.m. until 12 noon, talking with children and posing for photos.

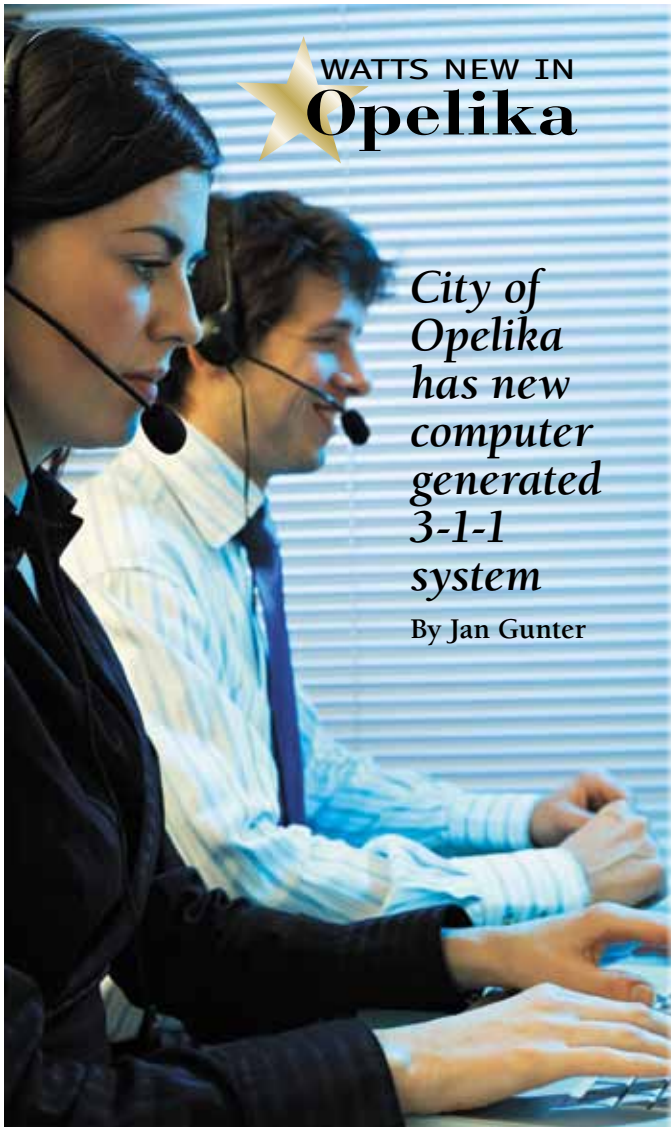
Fairhope’s holiday fun continues through the month, and once again the City will host the annual New Year’s Eve celebration. Residents and visitors are invited to ring in the New Year with this family-friendly event on the streets of downtown. Entertainment includes a DJ, face painting, live music for dancing beginning at 8:30 pm, free party favors, fireworks at midnight, and a lighted ball drop. It may not be Times Square, but it is so very Fairhope.

So how about it? Come join us in Fairhope for the holidays. You won’t want to go home. For more information on events in Fairhope, call (251) 929-1466. You can also visit www.cofairhope.com or follow us on Facebook.

**Fairhope Electric Department participates
 in Coastal Clean-up**



The Fairhope Electric Department participated in Fairhope’s Coastal Clean-up this year as a way to educate participants about energy efficiency and the dangers of electricity. More than 700 people participated in Coastal Clean-up. Electric Department employees Sean Power and Ben Patterson participated in the event.



WATTS NEW IN
Opelika

*City of
Opelika
has new
computer
generated
3-1-1
system*

By Jan Gunter

Several large communities in Alabama, and across the country, have adopted a new concept, 3-1-1 Call Centers, which manage all non-emergency requests for services and/or complaints within their municipalities. These specialized departments, in the communities fortunate enough to have the funding available, provide staff whose only jobs are to field these incoming calls through both the phone system and the computer system, and get them to the right departments / agencies that can resolve the issue in a timely manner. In some communities (most often, large cities), these centers are staffed 24/7. In other communities, the center is only open during regular business hours for the municipality.

This centralized system is a wonderful concept. Unfortunately, for smaller communities across the country, especially during these hard economic times, the 3-1-1 Call Center model, which requires a new department staffed by additional personnel, is simply a system/resource their budgets cannot afford to implement.

Opelika is one of those communities. But returning citizens' phone calls and answering e-mails from the website from citizens with requests or concerns, and then working to

resolve those issues as quickly and efficiently as possible, has always been a top priority of Mayor Gary Fuller. So he issued this simple request: Find a way for Opelika to have a 3-1-1 type program without the inherent costs of adding a department and more personnel (which the city cannot afford to do).

Thanks to the innovative partnership between the City of Opelika and Ingenuity, Inc., the Pelham, Alabama-based company, which works to solve complex business and technology issues with state and local governments and private companies, and builds comprehensive websites for municipalities, a solution was found. Ingenuity developed comprehensive software which gives the city its own version of the 3-1-1 system through the city's web site.

This new system, based in the city's web site, www.opelika.org, not only costs less than adding a complete new department to the city, it allows various city departments to receive requests for services / reports of problems directly from the web site, and then provides a measuring system to help the city evaluate response times to these requests for services and / or reports of problems. It also gives citizens a means of following the progress of their request or report through to its resolution, through e-mails, because all communications regarding the progress are recorded back into the system and the system notifies the consumer (if they opt to receive the updates).

Here is how the Online 311 System works: While Opelika does not have a phone line available where you can call "3-1-1," citizens can log on to the city's web site, www.opelika.org, and click on the "Online 311 System" found on the front page of the web site in the left-hand column. New users to the system have one of two options: 1) sign up and create a profile so that the progress of their request or problem can be sent to them, or 2) submit a service or report a problem "anonymously" – knowing that they will not receive updates. After the citizen has sent a request / report, they will receive an e-mail notifying them that their request has made it to the correct destination. When actions are taken towards resolving the issue, they are recorded into the system and the citizen (again) receives e-mail notification until the issue is resolved. Anonymous submissions are not notified, because the system honors your request for anonymity. NOTE: If you don't have a computer, or don't wish to communicate with us via a computer, you can continue to phone in your requests / reports to any of the city's departments, the mayor's office or Community Relations Department and still get responses to your issues and/or concerns.

The city is in the early stages of implementing this new system. We believe that as we become more proficient at using it, and learn all of the different capabilities built into this system (like a GIS-type tracking system which will allow the city to track cluster problems in any given ward over time), it is going to help us in our efforts to serve our community. It will help us as we work to identify problems more rapidly with increasing excellence and then resolve the issues more efficiently with allocated resources, so that our citizens continue to get great customer service.

Crenshaw County Chamber gears up for Annual Christmas Parade

By Carol Staller

The first Saturday in December is always the date for the Crenshaw County Chamber of Commerce Annual Christmas Parade in Luverne. This year's event will be held Saturday, Dec. 3, at 11 a.m. It is a time of great teamwork and camaraderie as companies, churches and groups work on floats for the parade.

The Grand Marshall of the parade is our Citizen of the Year honored in February. This year's Grand Marshall is Jimmy Johnson of Brantley. He and his wife will host the parade, which includes floats, Santa Claus, fire engines, marching bands, antique cars, convertibles carrying homecoming queens from the four Crenshaw County schools, cheerleaders, horse drawn carriages and horse riders, and at the end of the parade, hundreds of motorcycle bikers.

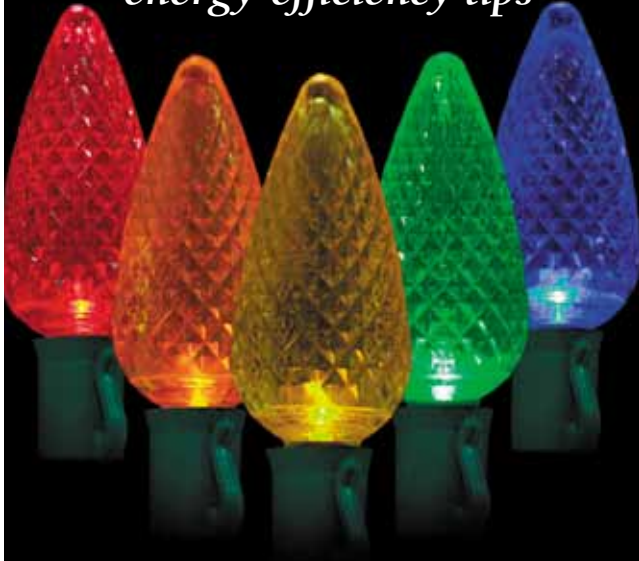
In addition to the entertainment factor, entrants in the parade, including the bikers, all donate a toy or toys to the Crenshaw County Department of Human Resources (DHR) to support Operation Santa Claus, which every year provides Christmas packages to 450-500 children. DHR has boxes at the end of the parade route in which the toys are deposited. In generous spirit, Crenshaw County provides for its children at this holiday time of year. Come join the Crenshaw County holiday.

*Scenes from the 2010 Crenshaw County Chamber of Commerce Annual Christmas Parade.
(Photos courtesy of Regina Grayson)*



WATTS NEW IN
LaFayette

*City of LaFayette offers
holiday lighting
energy-efficiency tips*



The City of LaFayette reminds customers that decorative light strings such as Christmas tree lights are among the most popular and most affordable LED (light-emitting diode) consumer products on the market. Not only are the LED bulbs far brighter and less yellow in color than incandescent ones, but they save 90 percent or more in utility costs, operate at cooler temperatures, and have an operational life span of roughly 20,000 hours (enough to last for 40 holiday seasons). In addition, LED lights do not suddenly “burn out,” which makes replacing dead bulbs in a string of lights unnecessary.

Advantages of LED holiday lights

LED holiday lights have many advantages over ordinary incandescent lights:

- Running LED holiday lights on one 6-foot tree for 12 hours per day for 40 days can save 90 percent or more energy when compared to traditional incandescent holiday lights.
- LED holiday lights are cooler than incandescent bulbs, reducing the risk of fire and personal injury.
- LED holiday lights are more durable than incandescent bulbs, with lamps typically made out of solid plastic rather than glass
- Because they use less power, it is safer to connect multiple strings of LED holiday light sets end-to-end without overloading the wall socket.

For more energy-efficiency tips, visit www.energysavers.gov.

WATTS NEW IN
Lanett

*City of Lanett plans
special holiday events*

By Jennie Gunnells

Each year, the City of Lanett hosts a Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony at the downtown square. This year's event is planned for Monday, Dec. 5 at 6 p.m. (EST). The City hosts the event the first Monday in December instead of holding a Lanett City Council meeting.

The First Christian Church in downtown Lanett provides free hot chocolate and cookies. Local businesses will sponsor door prizes.

Mayor Oscar Crawley will serve as Master of Ceremonies. The Rev. Howard Merchant of the First Christian Church will give the invocation. JROTC of Lanett High School will provide a program and the Lanett High School Band will play some Christmas music. One of our local church choirs will sing some Christmas carols.

The Christmas tree will be lighted in memory of a local citizen who died in the last year and who made a difference to the City of Lanett. A citizen turns the switch to light the Christmas tree in memory of this person. We will ask a close relative or relatives to light the tree in their memory.

Santa will arrive by fire truck and will be giving out free candy. Come join us for free hot chocolate, cookies and candy.

On Wednesday, Dec. 21, from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m., the City of Lanett will sponsor the Second Annual Meet Santa & Sparky Day at City Hall.

Meet Santa and Sparky Day gives children a chance to tell Santa what they want for Christmas. This event will also provide a photo opportunity for parents. Santa will be giving away free candy.

We hope you will be able to join us for these two special holiday events in the City of Lanett.



Sparky and Santa (Photo by Christy Stanfield)

Comer Library celebrates 75 years of progress

By Denise Sinclair

For almost three quarters of a century, the Comer Library has been at the heart of the quality of life in the Sylacauga area. The library has changed directors, staff members and buildings, but the desire to make a difference in the lives of the people has never diminished.

During the fall, the Comer Library celebrated the rise of the library from a volunteer organization which circulated a few books from the back room of a bank to recognition as one of the best libraries in the state and nation.

Called a ‘beacon of light’ by an eminent national organization, Comer Library’s light of learning shines brighter and brighter every year as it provides ‘big-city’ services to the small ‘Marble City.’

Several years ago, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded Comer Library its top award — the National Award for Library Service.

This public library in Sylacauga, a town of less than 13,000 people, was one of four in the nation to be singled out for providing ‘extraordinary service to the community.’ Since that time the Comer Library has been renovated and expanded, but the ambitious mission has remained the same — “to serve the people of the City of Sylacauga and the surrounding rural constituency with outstanding programs and services.”

“Comer Library stands as an example of the importance of having committed city support supplemented by citizen involvement, grant monies, and sponsorships from business and industry,” said Dr. Shirley Spears, Library Director. “The priority that education and learning has with our city government has been evident from the beginning.”



Comer Library

Sylacauga’s public library rose out of the ashes of the Great Depression in 1936 when 23 organizations led by the Sylacauga Rotary Club met to discuss “the time being ripe for the creation of a library.”

After sanctioning the public library, the City immediately gave \$4,250 seed money, \$50 a month for operations, and appointed an energetic and dedicated board to run the library

The tiny library moved from place to place in those early years, but in 1938, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) set up the largest WPA library project in the state in Sylacauga. A \$28,000 WPA grant in 1939 helped build a new building to house the library, Avondale Mill’s Comer family gave \$5,000 for furnishings, and the name was changed from Sylacauga Public Library to the B. B. Comer Memorial Library to honor the memory of the late Governor B. B. Comer.

From the beginning, the library was a part of the big picture of the Sylacauga community, and as the years passed the WPA building became inadequate.

During the early 1970s, Sylacauga was ready with blueprints and land, and in March 1979, Comer Library moved into a beautiful new building. The fed-

eral grant provided \$592,000, and the city donated prime downtown property and \$218,314, while Avondale Mills gave \$75,000 for furnishings.

Comer Library outgrew its facilities in just over seven years and once again the library board and staff planned for an expansion.

In 1991, a library foundation was formed to raise funds for the betterment of the library’s service and to provide seed money for a 21st century library. The foundation raised \$1.5 million toward the building project that started in November 2002. The library moved to a temporary location in a store front while the facility was remodeled and expanded.

In December 2003, the staff and volunteers moved back into an expanded library and conference center with over 35,000 feet of space, new lighting and the infrastructure for state of the art technology.

Dr. Spears spoke with pride of the ‘cradle to the grave’ service that is the driving force behind the 75 years of progress.

“When times are hard, library use goes up all across the country. Since we lost so much of our industry in this area, we have experienced an increased demand for all aspects of library service

whether it's a comfortable place to visit, computers to use for job searches and family history, a cultural arts program to enjoy for free, or a sack full of books to take home to read with or to their children."

Dr. Spears commented that over 68 percent of Americans now have library cards with the statistic going even higher for families with children.

"We just closed our fiscal year, and the Comer Library's attendance this year was well over 75,000 and we have over 30,000 cardholders in this little town of under 13,000," she said. "We offer almost 100,000 books, over 30 public-access computers, and we are open seven days a week. A cause for celebration."

Long-time board member, Harry Brown, praised the City of Sylacauga's commitment to learning.

"Education is the answer to most of our problems today, and we are proud that the City views our library as an important part of our educational system."

"A few years ago, we did a study of our library and its service and some of the reasons for our progress were quite clear with the dedicated staff being the number one factor," said Dr. Spears. "Library service is labor intensive and usually one-on-one with many customers needing extra help with technology."

"In addition to taking care of daily business as usual service, the staff handles many value-added services that have evolved over the years — service to toddlers, the cognitively and developmentally challenged, seniors in care, home-school children, after-school groups, child care centers, public school students, and the business and industrial community. That takes talent and patience."

"Even though times are hard and funds for library service have been cut, we rejoice in what the Comer Library means to the people of the Sylacauga area," said Dr. Spears. "We can't measure the impact in concrete terms, but we know that it is huge with the ripple effect crossing generational lines."

She added, "The love and admiration that we feel from our customers encourages us to work harder to meet their needs — whether it's help with an online job application, creating a resume, finding a good book to read, offering a free program that's fun and educational, providing a word processor for typing a term paper, or just being the living room of the town with a clean and comfortable facility."

Comer Library invites everyone to help celebrate the 75th anniversary in November. Some special events will include a reception and tours of the library. The following programs will provide great entertainment:

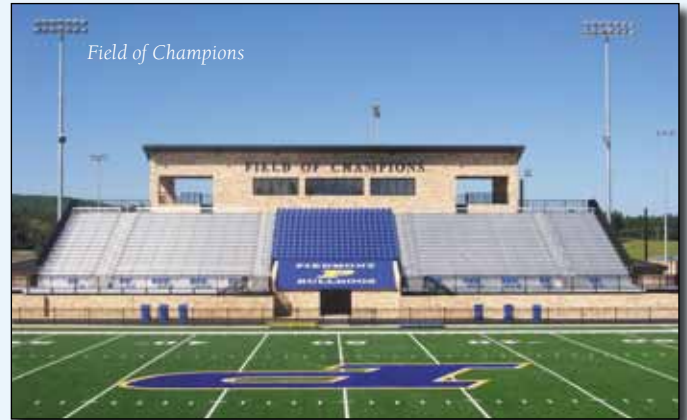
- Nov. 9, 12 noon, Buddy Simpkins and Friends with "Goldie Oldie Tunes."
- Nov. 16, 12 noon, Chris Phillips with "Alabama's Rich Musical Heritage."

These celebratory programs, which are free and open to the public, will be held in the Harry I. Brown Auditorium preceded by refreshments served at 11 a.m. in the Hightower Room.

WATTS NEW IN **Piedmont**

Piedmont Bulldogs have newly-renovated home

By Ben Singleton



The Piedmont High School football team has a newly-renovated home. The Field of Champions has undergone an extensive renovation since last year. The renovations include artificial turf, new scoreboard, upgraded seating, new concessions stand, and new locker rooms for baseball, softball and game night locker room for football. The stadium will now hold about 3,500 people.

Still under construction are new baseball and softball fields. Once these two fields are completed, this will be the first time in school history that these two fields have been on the school campus.

Piedmont Power and Light employee retires

By Ben Singleton

Dennis Peek, an employee with the Piedmont Power and Light Department (PP&L), recently retired after 28 years of service. He was awarded a plaque for his dedication and service.

Peek began his service in 1983 and has worked with PP&L as a meter reader throughout his service with the City. Peek said he is enjoying retirement and is working on the family farm.

The City of Piedmont appreciates his dedication and service and wishes him the best of luck in the future.



Mayor Brian Young (right) presents Dennis Peek with a retirement plaque for 28 years of dedication and service.

WATTS NEW AT Riviera Utilities

Riviera Utilities' display shines at Baldwin County Fair

By David Horton

The weather was perfect for a fair. With warm sunny days and cool clear nights, excitement was abundant as the local folks attended the Baldwin County Fair, Sept. 27 - Oct. 1.

The theme of the 61st Annual Baldwin County Fair was "Spirit of America: Energizing Baldwin County." There were many displays by area museums and organizations represented at this year's fair, but the one by Riviera Utilities was something to behold and I'm sure it will be remembered for years to come.

"Two months before the fair, Sonny Hankins, the fair director for the Baldwin County Fair, called and asked us to attend a brainstorming session for this year's fair," said David Horton, Manager of Public Affairs, Riviera Utilities. "At the meeting, he asked us to build a display to represent the energizing of Baldwin County from the early days until the present time to fit in with the theme of the fair. And, that's what we did. The project became a labor of love for some. From that, we've had a lot of positive comments about our display. We have even gotten phone calls from people who've said they have seen it and liked it a lot."

"Our exhibit takes people on a trip through the years, shows them how linemen built power lines, and the skills that the old timers had to have to get the job done. It was a tough and dangerous job back then, but the benefits that people gained from their work changed lives tremendously. The public response to the exhibit has been good and we are proud of what we did," Horton continued.

The exhibit also allowed visitors to look at aspects of the future of electrical systems. Part of the display had electrical meters where visitors could compare power consumption of older incandescent light bulbs and modern compact fluorescent lamps.

Hankins said the energy display was very impressive. In *The Mobile Press Register*, Hankins said, "It's amazing what we've seen. I've been doing this job a long, long time and it takes a lot to impress me, but these folks from Riviera Utilities have gone the extra mile. It's going to be a unique display where people can have hands-on ability. This display is absolutely out of this world. You're talking about a display that is going back over 100 years when electricity first came into Baldwin County, things going back to the 1920s like electrical lines, pole construction and street lights. It is a spectacular display that will bring back a lot of memories for some folks. A lot of them will remember when they saw utility linemen climb poles, string up the wire and deliver electricity to their home. I remember it very well."

"The exhibit kind of took on a life of its own," Horton said. "After brainstorming with our management team, I began working on a few of the ideas we came up with. It was hard to come up with enough to display. After walking through the line crew quarters one day, I met with Kevin Switzer, a Riviera lineman with multiple talents. I saw some of his handy work in the crew quarters and asked him to help me pull a display together for the fair. That was the beginning of putting together a fine display. Kevin and Tom Williams, a warehouseman at Riviera, began building pole displays and layouts for the exhibit. Kevin devoted a lot of his

free time and weekends working on the exhibit. Jimmy Southern, Warehouse Supervisor, and I collected antique items, made a picture display and made stands for the display. When everything came together, it was quite impressive and just what Mr. Hankins asked us to do for the fair. Our employees were very supportive and everyone was proud of the exhibit. We were excited and wanted to show it to the public."

"We are excited that the electric exhibit was received well by the community at the fair," said Mike Dugger, General Manager, Riviera Utilities. "But the truth is, we provide many great services to our community and are proud of each one. Our Wastewater Department recently received an award for excellence, our Gas Department continues to grow and thrive, the Services Department does a great job and serves a lot of people in the area, and our Cable Department is second to none."

Dugger continued, "We have some of the best and most talented employees that you will find anywhere. Our employees were very supportive of the fair exhibit and it makes all of us proud to have served this community at the fair in a very unique way. Our mission is to continuously provide high quality, reliable service and value, while constantly striving to improve ourselves and the communities we serve. We believe in this mission and are very proud to be an integral part of this community."



(L to R) Jimmy Southern, David Horton, Kevin Switzer and Tom Williams are shown in front of the Riviera Utilities' display they put together for the 61st Annual Baldwin County Fair.

Places to Go & Things to Do

Alexander City

- Nov. 2, T.O.U.C.H. (Today Our Understanding of Cancer is Hope) Support Group.** Russell Medical Center Community Room. This group is for cancer survivors and their loved ones. Call (256) 329-7145 for more information.
- Nov. 6, Alexander City Veteran's Day Services.** 2-3 p.m. at the Veteran's Memorial Park at Charles E. Bailey Sportplex. Join the Mayor and city leaders at Veteran's Memorial Park for this special service. Visit the memorials to the Confederacy, World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. For more information, call (256) 329-6730.
- Nov. 13, Annual Holiday Open House.** 1-4 p.m. Presented by the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce. Local businesses open their doors to showcase the season's most festive decorations and merchandise. A decades-long tradition in Alexander City. For more information, call (256) 234-3461, or visit www.alexandercitychamber.com.
- Nov. 17, Millbrook Community Players "A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody."** 7:30-10 p.m. at the BRHS Auditorium. Presented by Alexander City Arts, Inc. Call Ron Morgan, (256) 234-9806, for more information.
- Nov. 19, MainStreet Alexander City Thanksgiving Market.** Located at the fountain on Broad Street. Call (256) 329-9227 for more information.
- Nov. 21, Dementia Support Group for Family and Caregivers.** 10-11:30 a.m. Russell Medical Center Community Room. Call (256) 329-7177 for more information.
- The Senior Activity Center in Alexander City** offers on-going programs including: Rook, Mexican Train Dominoes, Canasta Hand & Foot, Bridge, Quilting, Land Fitness, Art Class, Bowling, Square Dancing, and Cribbage. Call the Senior Activity Center at (256) 329-2910 to receive a copy of the monthly newsletter. The Activity Center is located at the Charles E. Bailey Sportplex.
- Dec. 3-17, Gift Givers From Around The World.** The Adelia M. Russell Library will celebrate this holiday season by hosting *Gift Givers from Around the World*, a display of Santa Clauses and other traditional gift bringers from many different cultures. Exhibit coordinated by Sheralyn Belyeu.
- Dec. 4, Santa and Mrs. Claus and Tree Lighting.** 1-4:30 p.m. Bud Porch Center, downtown Alexander City. The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce is bringing Santa and Mrs. Claus to downtown Alexander City. The Chamber and MainStreet invite Santa and Mrs. Claus to light the MainStreet Alexander City Christmas tree in front of the Bud Porch Center at 4:30 p.m. Call (256) 329-3461 for more information.
- Dec. 4, Birmingham Children's Theater, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."** 2-5 p.m. BRHS Auditorium. Just \$5 for adult tickets and \$3 for children. Presented by Alexander City Arts, Inc. Call Ron Morgan, (256) 234-9806 for more information.
- Dec. 5, Annual Hometown Christmas Parade.** 6-7 p.m. Presented by the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce. One of east Alabama's largest parades winds through downtown with elaborate floats, dancers, bands, Santa and more. For more information, call (256) 234-3461.
- Dec. 5-31, Adelia M. Russell Library.** Art display by Faith Christian Academy's art classes under the instruction of Mrs. Vickie Waters.
- Dec. 15, "Christmas Carols on the Keyboard."** 3:30-6:30 p.m. Adelia M. Russell Library. Presented by students of Sandra Stark's Piano Studio. There will also be some favorite holiday sing-alongs.

Dec. 19, Dementia Support Group for Family and Caregivers. 10-11:30 a.m. Russell Medical Center Community Room. Call (256) 329-7177 for more information.

Dothan

- Nov. 5 and Dec. 3, Wiregrass Woodturners Club.** 9:30 a.m. Alabama Agricultural Museum, Landmark Park. Open to the public, no experience necessary. Free with paid gate admission. Held first Saturday of each month.
- Nov. 5 and Dec. 3, Landmark Dulcimer Club Jam Session.** 1 p.m. Must have a mountain dulcimer, no experience necessary. Free with paid gate admission. Held first Saturday of each month.
- Nov. 13 and Dec. 11, Reptile Feeding.** 4 p.m. Interpretive Center Classroom, Landmark Park. Watch park staff feed the snakes and learn why these animals are important to the environment. Free with paid gate admission. Held second Sunday of each month.
- Nov. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, Living History Story Week Seasonal Session.** Landmark Park. School groups will experience living and working on a Wiregrass Farmstead in the early 1900s. Kids will have a chance to cook on a hearth, garden, sew, split wood, build fires and take care of the farm animals, all while costumed in period dress. The half-day program runs from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and concludes with a meal in the Waddell House, prepared by the students. This session is only open to pre-registered school groups.
- Dec. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, Christmas Past Seasonal Session.** Landmark Park. Students in preschool-6th grade will have a chance to experience an old-fashioned Christmas with storytelling, games, and cider. They will also have a chance to create an old-fashioned ornament. Students will attend either a morning session from 9:30 a.m.-11 a.m. or an afternoon session from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. This session is only open to pre-registered school groups.
- Dec. 4, Christmas Decorating Workshop.** 1 p.m. Bring a little holiday cheer to Landmark Park. A snack will be provided and volunteers will have a chance to create their own old-fashioned ornament to take home. The workshop is free with paid gate admission. Registration required.
- Dec. 11, Victorian Christmas.** 1 p.m. Landmark Park. Experience Christmas past with mulled cider, hot chocolate, a circuit riding preacher (Headland Presbyterian Church, 2 p.m.), old-fashioned decorations, turn-of-the-century desserts and music. Admission is free for everyone.
- Fairhope**
- Nov. 3 and 4, 10th Annual Angel Ride.** Sponsored by The Rileigh and Raylee Angel Ride Foundation. Oak Hollow Farm in Fairhope. Thursday's activities open at 6 p.m. with the Kick Start Party, featuring *The Cary Laine Band* at the new campground pavilion. On Friday, the ever popular Street Party, which boasts three stages of high-energy entertainment, will take visitors on a roaring road trip from Motown through Jake and Elwood's Joliet and end up in Funkytown with *The Tip Tops*, *The Alabama Blues Brothers* and *Dr. Zarr's Amazing Funk Monster*. On Saturday, the gates will open at 9 a.m. with more music, racing simulators, bike and tractor shows, auctions and product demos. The bike show will feature 12 separate classes and an overall "best of show" before the 2:30 p.m. ride through the scenic roads of Baldwin County and Mobile Bay. Upon their return, bikers will join concert goers at 4 p.m. to hear *The Modern Eldorados* perform on the expo stage before Gulf Coast favorite, *ISIS*, on the concert stage. This year's headline act will be the legendary country rock duo, *Montgomery Gentry*, at 8 p.m. For more information, visit the event website, www.angel-ride.com, or call (251) 243-0365.

Continued on page 15

Alabama Municipal Electric Authority

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Montgomery, Alabama 36104

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Montgomery, AL
Permit No. 275

Places to Go & Things to Do, *Continued from page 15*

Foley

Nov. 5 and 6, 11th Annual Heritage Harbor Days. Presented by the City of Foley in Heritage Park at the corner of Hwys. 98 and 59. This Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 event promotes the appreciation and preservation of our local heritage in a family-oriented festival atmosphere. Heritage Park comes alive with the sound of local and regional musicians, the wonderful aromas of great food, colorful arts and crafts, and a new "Heritage Village," where visitors will experience life as the founders of our community did. For more information, visit www.heritageharbordays.com, or call (251) 943-1300.

Luverne

Dec. 3, Annual Crenshaw County Chamber Christmas Parade. Downtown Luverne.

Opelika

Nov. 6, Holiday Open House. Downtown Opelika. All stores will be open from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. and will be debuting their holiday merchandise. Snacks and drinks will be served, along with chances for door prizes. Complimentary gift wrap will be available at most stores.

Nov. 30, Opelika Christmas Parade. 4 p.m. This year's theme is "Christmas Stories." Santa and Mrs. Claus will usher in the Christmas season with the annual Christmas parade. For more information, visit Opelika Chamber web site, www.opelika.com, or call (334) 745-4861.

Dec. 1 and 2, Rocky Brook Rocket Reindeer Express. 5-8 p.m. \$1 for train ride. A train ride will take visitors around Municipal Park to see the different Christmas scenes. There will be entertainment on the stage, family Christmas pictures in the gazebo, as well as other activities. For more information, contact Ben White (334) 705-5547.

Dec. 7, 8, 9 and 11, "Victorian Front Porch" Christmas Driving Tour. North Opelika Historic Neighborhood District. See the elegant Victorian homes turned into a magical Christmas wonderland of Victorian Christmas scenes that include life-sized Santas, carousel horses and other figures, designed by former Opelika resident, and renowned artist, Jan Jones. Dark until around 10 p.m.

Dec. 9, "Christmas in a Railroad Town." 6-9 p.m. Historic Downtown Opelika. Old world Christmas fun in downtown with activities for children as well as adults. Hay rides through Victorian Front Porch Tour, visits with Santa, wreath making, food and more.

Dec. 10, Victorian Front Porch Christmas Walking Tour. Begins at 6 p.m. and goes until around 10 p.m. The same beautiful tour as above, only the event becomes a walking tour when the streets will be closed to cars, and the neighborhood will come to life with folks in full Victorian dress, carolers, story tellers, and other entertainment stationed throughout the historic district. Area churches and businesses offer visitors hot chocolate and light refreshments on this night. Admission is free.

Piedmont

Dec. 3, Chief Ladiga Trail Half Marathon. 8 a.m. The event will start in Piedmont at the Eubanks Welcome Center and will end in Jacksonville at the Community Center. For more information, please call Piedmont Parks and Recreation Department at (256) 447-3367.

Dec. 8, Piedmont Christmas Parade. 6 p.m. There will be activities downtown each evening, Sunday through Wednesday starting at 6 p.m. leading up to the parade. The tree lighting will be Sunday, December 4th at 6 p.m. For more information on the activities or the parade, contact Ben Singleton at (256) 447-3582 or Carl Hinton at (256) 447-3596.

Sylacauga

In November, the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum will host the Local Artist Expo. The reception will be held on Nov. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Nov. 2, Final address in the B.B. Comer Library Fall Lecture Series. Frances Robb will speak. Her topic is "Kathryn Tucker Windham and the Power of Memory."

75th Anniversary of B.B. Comer Library. Programs will be presented on Nov. 9 at 12 noon by Buddy Simpkins and Friends, "Goldie Oldie Tunes," and on Nov. 16 at 12 noon by Chris Phillips, "Alabama's Rich Musical Heritage."

Nov. 6, Holiday Open House. 1-5 p.m. Come out and visit your local merchants.

Dec. 6, Annual Christmas Parade. 6:30 pm. This is the 33rd annual event sponsored by the Sylacauga Chamber of Commerce. This year's theme is "Christmas Future."

This December, the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum will host renowned landscape artist Donny Finley and artist Sarah Finley, his daughter. The reception will be held on Dec. 8 at 6:30 p.m.

Happy Holidays