

The Alabama

# MUNICIPAL

# Journal

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

## CONVENTION REVIEW 2025



The League Celebrates 90 Years  
of Leadership and Legacy at Convention in Huntsville

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Johnny Ford - *Councilmember, Tuskegee (1989-90)*

# About ALM:

The Alabama League of Municipalities is a nonpartisan membership association of over 450 incorporated cities and towns. Since 1935, the League has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's member municipalities benefit from a variety of member programs, services and activities that are impossible to accomplish alone.



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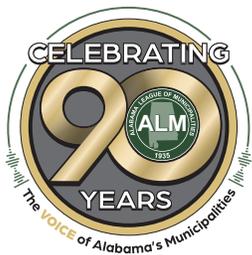


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# The Alabama MUNICIPAL Journal

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

2025 Convention Review Special Issue

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## On the Cover:

For 90 years, the Alabama League of Municipalities has supported Alabama's cities and towns. A legacy built on leadership, advocacy and service, proudly shaping the future of municipal government. This special edition of *The Alabama Municipal Journal* recaps our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at the annual convention. Scan the QR code to watch a historical timeline video of some of ALM's biggest milestones as well as reflections from executive directors.



# Add Peace of Mind

The Municipal Workers Compensation Fund has been serving Alabama's Municipalities since 1976 and is the second oldest league insurance pool in the nation!



- Directed by Veteran Municipal Officials from Alabama
- Over 600 Participating Municipal Entities
- Free Safety Video Library & Online Training
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# Outgoing President's Farewell Address: CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF 90 YEARS!

2025 OPENING SESSION | MAY 13 | HUNTSVILLE

Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan | ALM President 2024 - 2025

**We** are not only here to celebrate 90 years of the ALM, but to celebrate the individual! You, each member, that by coming together as a group with common goals, challenges and opportunities, realizes the strength of unity in this community!

Through 90 years, you have given the authority and provided the direction to allow our executive directors, and their teams, to provide the valuable resources and services that we need to more effectively and efficiently serve our citizens. So, I want to thank those who have led as our executive directors at the League: Ed Reid, John Watkins, Perry Roquemore Jr., Ken Smith and now Greg Cochran!

Let us celebrate the legacy of 80 past presidents that had the opportunity and honor to serve our League and their towns and cities throughout this great state of Alabama. Thank you for your past leadership!

Thanks to all of you who have served on the board of directors or who've volunteered on one of our standing committees throughout the years. The time and work you put into these committees has helped to shape the direction of our League.

It takes all of us working together to accomplish all the success that this League has had in the past 90 years!

Thank you, the individual, for your involvement this year in attending all the ALM events, whether those events were in Alabama, Tampa, Washington, D.C. or here in Huntsville this week; you showed up in record numbers!

Thank you to Greg Cochran, Kayla Bass and the entire team. You are the ones that deal with the countless details that make these events happen, but more importantly thanks for your work in helping us as elected officials in our endeavors to serve our municipalities with all the resources and services you provide. Great job!

Mayor Sherry Sullivan, what a great partner you have been to work with and serve alongside this year. I have a great deal of respect for you, your knowledge of municipal government, your wise counsel, and I especially appreciate our friendship. Besides, it is your city and metro area that was the fastest growing, percentage wise, in the state of Alabama this past year. So, I know that the League will only continue to grow in strength with your leadership.



*Scan the QR code to see the full speech on the League's YouTube channel.*





Before I wrap up on the theme of celebration, I do want to share with you what I believe has been our most important collective focus this year and that is the erosion of our ability to be the final authority in our towns and cities on the many matters that are essential to meeting the needs of our citizens.

We all know that there has been an increasing infringement around our revenue that has and will continue to threaten our capacity to fund much-needed infrastructure such as our roads; sewer systems; storm water drainage; our emergency response efforts by our police and fire departments; our parks and recreation departments; and a whole host of other quality of life concerns and needs.

Even when the ability to opt in or opt out of the legislation is made available, it then only puts unnecessary pressure on the councils to make that decision. When in reality, the municipality and the state desperately need those revenues. It is time to quit making philosophically popular, spotty legislation instead of holistically looking at our state's entire taxing structure.

It is not only the revenues that have my concern, but the authority and administration of certain municipal services such as in our police and fire departments, schools, reporting requirements and much more.

Where does it stop?

Now, please don't misread what I intend to convey. I love my Wiregrass legislative delegation, as I am sure you love yours, but the point is that we also need to continue to communicate the costs and expenses that are required to support the functions and maintenance of our municipalities.

No one knows your city better than you, and I don't know of any city that has taken in more revenue than is required to cover their expenses!

This is the main reason for our Live Locally Alabama campaign this year. I encourage you to find ways to communicate, educate and inform your legislative representatives. Please reach out to Lori Johns and our staff as well as other elected officials in the state on how to accomplish this, especially if you have limited resources.

I'd now like to thank my city commission and city staff at home for their support this year. I also want to say thanks to my company who put up with me being away while serving as mayor and this year's League president!

In closing, I especially want to celebrate those that are closest to us as elected officials: our spouses, significant others, friends and families; the ones that walk alongside each of you in your public service because inevitably it is their journey too! So, this is for them, and I have two that I want to honor.

First, I have spoken of my father before and how I watched him serve two terms as mayor. His significant other was my

mother who just recently passed. She set the bar high as a spouse to an elected official — attending tons of events; hosting gatherings; traveling to events; working on the construction business; and keeping the family running smoothly. A team effort that meant the world to her!

As a matter of fact, on her grave marker all she wanted on it was Genesis 2:18, “God said, I will make him a helper.” That was the ultimate compliment to her — how could she be the best partner in life with my father!

When we eulogized her, I was suddenly hit by the reality that I had somehow married someone a lot like my mother.

How did that happen?

Angie, on those challenging days at the city when I come home exhausted and emotionally drained from a trying day, I want to thank you for being patient when I was not. I want to thank you for being understanding and loving me when I was hard to love!

Forgive me when I place way too much importance on my day and not enough on yours.

Thank you for being kind and patient when I am short with you. Thank you for telling me things that I need to hear and not what I want to hear.

I am sorry that because of my desire to serve the public that you sometimes must bear the scrutiny and hypercriticism that I must endure. I know that it hurts you as well, but I thank you for also being the mama bear when needed, for being the best cheerleader, listener, supporter, best friend and soulmate that I could ever have.

There is no doubt that I could not do this job without you and your love and commitment!

To everyone here, I want to leave you with this challenge.

What is your legacy as an elected leader? What is it that you individually, and as a member of this league, want to leave as your contribution that makes this league stronger?

I believe our legacy should be one that doesn't point to us individually, but to the contributions to our communities. What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others remains as our legacy.

Thank you again for allowing me the honor of serving as your president. It has been such a rewarding experience. Please reach out anytime if I can be helpful to you or your municipality. May the Lord bless each of you and your communities. ■



# Executive Director's Report

2025 BUSINESS SESSION | MAY 15 | HUNTSVILLE

Greg Cochran | ALM Executive Director

Good afternoon, or as the saying goes in local government, “Welcome to another day of solving problems you didn’t cause, with money you don’t have, for people who think you’re doing it wrong!”

I am thrilled to celebrate with each of you, the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alabama League of Municipalities’ business session!

Thank you, Mayor Tommy Battle and your wonderful team, for providing this venue for our convention. The city of Huntsville is a shining example of how intentional planning and innovative leadership prepares a community for vibrant growth, and I predict, we’re witnessing just the beginning of this transformative success for north Alabama!

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize our president, Mayor Mark Saliba, Vice President Sherry Sullivan, our executive committee and our board of directors for their leadership and commitment to ALM and our members.

Leadership isn’t about having all the answers. It’s about creating spaces where people can find answers together. It’s about choosing optimism when cynicism is easier. It’s about remembering that every ordinance, every resolution and every decision you make—all adds up to something bigger. It adds up to trust, and it adds up to community!

Your work matters. Your leadership matters. Not because it’s glamorous, but because it’s grounded. Not because it’s easy, but because it’s essential. You are the caretakers of our cities, our towns and our neighborhoods.

You are the quiet heroes in a loud world, and, YES, sometimes leadership means being yelled at in a grocery store over potholes. However, it also means being the person who helps a town come together after a tragedy. It’s being the one who makes sure the lights come back on after a storm, and it’s being the one who makes people believe things can get better. That’s real leadership.

We are blessed to have a dedicated board of directors, executive committee and officers that serve you. They constantly encourage and challenge us, your ALM staff, to be



our best. The League staff comes to work each day ready to provide the intentional tools and resources our members need to meet the demands of managing vibrant communities. Let's give the ALM team a round of applause for this spectacular convention and for the work they produce throughout the year!

In 1935, municipal and state leaders recognized the need for communities to engage with state policymakers to better coordinate resources. ALM has been blessed with elected municipal leaders and staff committed to ensuring our association provides valued resources and tools for Alabama's communities. During this time, we have also worked on developing innovative programs and services to meet the needs of our members. We recently came upon a contract signed in 1941 with the Municipal Revenue Services to provide collections of delinquent insurance premiums for our members.

Throughout our 90 years of existence, we have created the MRS program, the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund, the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation, the Certified Municipal Official training program, the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation, Municipal Intercept Services and the Economic Development Academy.

We have also adopted the Alabama Communities of Excellence program and launched the Live Locally Alabama campaign all while continuing to focus on our original goal of being the unified voice for municipalities!

Speaking of the legislative process, ALM continues to invest resources in our advocacy efforts on behalf of our members. In conjunction with utilizing the talents and wisdom of Hal Bloom and his firm, we have built a dynamic team of young professionals that spend days and nights engaging with state and federal policymakers to ensure your local authorities are maintained while providing state and federal resources to your communities.

These efforts have become harder each election cycle, as we see more and more demands from the public and the business community's special interests to limit municipal planning and zoning authority, preempt business license authority and exempt taxation authority.

We have met each of these challenges head on by investing in our advocacy team led by Baker Allen. Baker, along with Kaleb Beck and Adam Kilpatrick, as well as our legal team, Rob Johnston, Mary Elizabeth Dial and Mikal Webb, review approximately 2,000 bills during a legislative session to determine their impact on municipal governance and look for opportunities to interject favorable amendments on behalf of our members.

We also coordinate their work with our communications team, Lori Johns and Karl Franklin, to build narratives and campaigns to enlighten the business community and citizens about the work of municipal officials and their staffs.

This past year, you have seen us actively promoting the



Live Locally Alabama campaign. Its core mission is to share all the good work being done by municipal officials across Alabama. From small towns, like Glen Allen and Hobson City, to metropolitan areas, like Dothan and Huntsville, we want to share the stories of building vibrant communities that attract economic investment and exemplify places where people want to live, raise families, work, shop and play.

Additionally, this year, we implemented the mandatory training guidelines for the CMO program. Our goal is to have all of our officials up-to-date on current municipal governance laws, while providing these trainings in person across our state and in partnership with the Alabama Community College System's online platform. This gives our members 24/7 access to the training materials at their fingertips.

Furthermore, I am excited to share we are working with ACCS on the development of transferring these training materials into an interdisciplinary degree program to be offered by their campuses! If this comes together, it will be the first in the nation. This mandatory training program is a product of ensuring that our new officials enter the office of mayor or councilmember with the tools and knowledge needed to be their best for their community.

Over 90% of municipalities will hold elections in August. We project a 35% to 40% turnover in elected seats. Some current officials have already announced they are not seeking re-election. For those of you that are entering into your re-election, we wish you success, and we applaud you for your commitment and heart to represent your constituents.

During my tenure as your executive director, we have faced an uncertainty or two. In fact, during each of our previous conventions or our fall Municipal Leadership Institutes, we faced complications and challenges.

First, during the 2019 convention in Mobile, we had a tornado on the ground that came up the river behind the convention complex – talk about sweating bullets! Then, it was COVID-19 – remember the 2020 convention in Montgomery? We had a one-day conference to accommodate our business session with chairs placed six feet apart from one another. Lastly, during MLI 2022, we withstood a hurricane off the coast of Alabama.

Yet, we pressed through each challenge, and we had great participation from our members and partners at each event.

So, I encourage each of you, keep showing up, keep laughing and keep leading—right where it matters most.

It is a great honor to represent the League and its members. I have called 535 Adams Avenue my home since Perry Roquemore recruited me from the Business Council of Alabama in 1996. Perry and I met when I was spearheading BCA's efforts to simplify the local sales tax laws across Alabama. Remember, Alabama is one of three states that allows local governments to set and administer local sales taxes and business licenses. So, I reached out to Perry to begin, which turned out to be a six-year project with me coming to work with ALM.

Perry was an expert negotiator; the best I've ever worked around. He would always listen intently to those recommending changes to current laws while always protecting the core values of our municipal government. Following the Sales Tax Simplification Act, we began working on the Local Government Business License Unification Act. This took several years to massage and enact, but we did it together.

I share this history with you, because many of you weren't in elected office during this time. It is our core belief that municipal governance is best left to municipal officials.

The current environment of state policymakers deciding how you manage your resources and meddling in your taxing authority and business license authority needs to be addressed, and I promise we are doing our best to convey that message.

However, we need your continued engagement in this space, sharing your stories, your perspectives and your work to overcome these challenges. I encourage you to utilize the Live Locally Alabama campaign, our programs and our staff as resources to accomplish this goal.

Before we go, I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize someone today for two very special honors she recently received. Kayla, come on up!

Kayla was recently named one of Central Alabama Inc's 40 Under 40 professionals!

She was also one of 11 individuals that were selected by Yellowhammer News for their Who's Next list of up-and-coming leaders that will move our state forward.

She has certainly helped make our organization better and is truly making a difference in Alabama.

As I close my remarks remembering the history of Gov. Bibb Graves, state policymakers and local officials coming together to create ALM in 1935, it's fitting that we celebrate 90 years with a proclamation from Gov. Kay Ivey declaring this week as Municipal Government Week in the state of Alabama!

Thank you each for this opportunity to represent you and your community.

Peace be with you. ■



# Huntsville Does It Again!

ALM ANNUAL CONVENTION | VON BRAUN CENTER | MAY 13 - 16 | HUNTSVILLE

The Rocket City rolled out the red carpet for over 950 convention and expo attendees from providing five-star venues to additional greenery throughout our exhibits to enhance our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities! We thank Mayor Battle, his staff, the Huntsville City Council, the Von Braun Center staff, the Huntsville-Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the entire city for graciously hosting our convention for the second consecutive year! So much thought and work went into planning this spectacular event and our team could not have done it without their help. We also appreciate our opening ceremony participants: Rev. Dr. Susan Brown, with Interfaith Mission Service, for the invocation; Columbia High School's JROTC for the presentation of colors, Councilmember John Meredith, president of the Huntsville City Council, for leading the Pledge of Allegiance; and Jemison High School's choir for singing the National Anthem! Additionally, we want to thank Yog! & Company, the talented band that performed at the welcome reception in the beautiful Propst Arena. ■



# Thank You, Presenters!

ALM ANNUAL CONVENTION | VON BRAUN CENTER | MAY 13 - 16 | HUNTSVILLE

The Alabama League of Municipalities had the privilege of hosting several dignitaries and guest speakers at the 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention including: Gov. Kay Ivey, who gave a legislative and state priorities update; Clarence Anthony, NLC's CEO and executive director, who encouraged members to be engaged with NLC and federal legislation; Greg Canfield, managing director of economic development at Burr and Forman LLP, who shared insight on navigating change in leadership and economic development; and Matt Lehrman, co-founder and managing director of Social Prosperity Partners, who used an interactive survey platform to share his message on building communities of possibilities.

Members also had an opportunity to hear presentations on Navigating PFAS Litigation: Securing Municipal Remediation Funds; Cybersecurity Services Funding Opportunities; Community Safety - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design; Veterans Affairs in Local Communities; The Importance of Trails and Amenities to Increase Tourism; and the Alabama USA Semiquincentennial Commission's Plans for America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Thank you to each of the speakers and panelists for making sure our sessions highlighted a range of notable issues, tools and connections that can support Alabama communities. ■





# Minutes of the 2025 Business Session

MAY 15 | HUNTSVILLE

Shawn Cole | ALM General Counsel

The annual business session of the convention of the Alabama League of Municipalities was called to order at 4:00 p.m. on May 15, 2025, by President Mark Saliba, mayor of Dothan, at the Von Braun Center, Huntsville, Alabama. President Saliba welcomed the attendees.

President Saliba called on Greg Cochran, executive director of the Alabama League of Municipalities, for his annual remarks. He reviewed the past year and all the successes and challenges that the League and its staff successfully navigated. *A full copy of his report begins on page 8.*

Greg Cochran then presented to the membership the video annual reports for the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund, Inc. (MWCF), the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC), the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation (AMFund) and Municipal Intercept Services (MIS). *Transcripts of these reports begin on page 20.*

After the various board reports, Greg Cochran presented Mayor Saliba with an award for his year of service as president. He then called upon Kayla Bass, deputy director, to read the list of current and former officials who have died since the 2024 ALM Convention. *See the complete list on page 40.* She also shared a tribute video for the League's fourth executive director, Ken Smith, which was played for attendees before she asked for a moment of silence for each of our friends who have been laid to rest in the last year. She then called upon Shawn Cole, ALM general counsel, to read the rules for voting during the League's Business Session.

After the reading of the rules, President Saliba informed the membership that the League's Executive Committee had met on May 13, 2025, to prepare a slate of nominees to be presented for consideration. He noted that it was not an easy task to choose officers for the next year from the very qualified candidates. He then called on Shawn Cole to read the report on nominations:

## LEADERSHIP

President: Mayor Sherry Sullivan, Fairhope  
Vice President: Mayor Rusty Jessup, Riverside

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Mayor Ralph Hellmich, Foley  
Councilmember Katherine Breeden, Loxley

Mayor Mike McMillan, Spanish Fort  
Councilmember Newton Cromer, Saraland  
Councilmember Ruthie Campbell, Robertsdale

### From the Second Congressional District:

Councilmember Marché Johnson, Montgomery  
Mayor Gordon Stone, Pike Road  
Mayor Dexter McLendon, Greenville  
Mayor Jason Reeves, Troy  
Mayor Stanley Stallworth, Evergreen

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Mayor Ron Anders, Auburn  
Councilmember Michael Ellis, LaFayette  
Mayor Scott Reeves, Hokes Bluff

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Mayor Chuck Ables, Geraldine  
Mayor Andrew Betterton, Florence  
Mayor Mike Lockhart, Muscle Shoals

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Councilmember Tommy Perry, Priceville  
Councilmember Connie Spears, Madison

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Mayor Mike Oakley, Centreville  
Mayor Ashley Curry, Vestavia Hills  
Mayor Bobbie White, Brent  
Councilmember Michael Gay, Millbrook  
Mayor Theoangelo Perkins, Harpersville

### From the Seventh Congressional District:

Mayor Bobby Scott, Center Point  
Mayor James Perkins Jr., Selma  
Mayor Gwendolyn Rogers, Linden  
Mayor Brian Puckett, Helena  
Mayor Sheldon Day, Thomasville

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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Ex Officio voting members of the Board of Directors  
(Active Past Presidents)  
Councilmember Johnny Ford, Tuskegee (1989-1990)  
Mayor Lew Watson, Lincoln (2006-2007)  
Mayor Charles Murphy, Robertsdale (2010-2011)  
Mayor Walt Maddox, Tuscaloosa (2013-2014)  
Councilmember Sadie Britt, Lincoln (2015-2016)  
Mayor Phil Segraves, Guin (2016)  
Mayor Howard Rubenstein, Saraland (2016-2018)  
Mayor Ronnie Marks, Athens (2019-2020)  
Mayor Leigh Dollar, Guntersville (2020-2021)  
Mayor Gary Fuller, Opelika (2021-2022)  
Mayor Lawrence “Tony” Haygood Jr.,  
Tuskegee (2022-2023)  
Mayor Randy Garrison, Hartselle (2023-2024)  
Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan (2024-2025)

## **STANDING COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP**

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### **Committee on State and Federal Legislation:**

Chair: Councilmember Charles Black, Priceville  
Vice Chair: Mayor Donna McKay, Wadley

### **Committee on Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR)**

Chair: Councilmember Crystal Smitherman, Birmingham  
Vice Chair: Mayor Stanley Allred, Millport

### **Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources (EENR)**

Chair: Councilmember Willis Thompson, Muscle Shoals  
Vice Chair: Councilmember Melvin Duran, Priceville

### **Committee on Human Development (HD)**

Chair: Mayor Gayle Robbins, Florala  
Vice Chair: Councilmember Kim M. Cain, Ashland

### **Committee on Community and Economic Development (CED)**

Chair: Councilmember Newton Cromer, Saraland  
Vice Chair: Councilmember Kathy Smyth, Luverne

### **Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communication (TIC)**

Chair: Councilmember Don Mack, Centreville  
Vice Chair: Councilmember Eddie Smith, Opelika

### **Committee on Public Safety (PS)**

Chair: Councilmember Wardine Alexander, Birmingham  
Vice Chair: Councilmember Clark Hopper, Rainbow City

After the reading of the nominations committee report, President Saliba asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Seeing none, he stated that unless there was an objection, he declared the nominations closed. There were no objections.

Councilmember Michael Gay, Millbrook, moved for the adoption of the nominating committee’s report as presented. Councilmember Vickey Green, Phenix City, seconded the motion. There being no objection to the motion from the floor, the motion passed unanimously. The president declared all officers elected.

President Saliba congratulated Mayor Sullivan and Mayor Jessup as well as the other officials elected to serve the League.

A video message, previously recorded by League president, Mayor Sherry Sullivan, was played due to her absence for the birth of her first grandchild.

The new vice president of the League, Mayor Jessup, made remarks to the membership. Mayor Jessup thanked the membership for allowing him the honor of serving as the League’s vice president.

Mayor Jessup announced the League’s 2026 Convention and Expo will take place in Montgomery on April 28 – May 1, 2026. He then reminded the membership about the President’s Dinner scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in the Saturn Ballroom in the Von Braun Center with the closing reception to follow at 8:00 p.m. He further advised the attendees that CMO credit forms will be emailed to each attendee following the session and reminded them to follow the instructions in the email to receive credit for attendance at this year’s convention.

There being no further business, the meeting was officially adjourned. ■



# President's Acceptance Speech

2025 BUSINESS SESSION | MAY 15 | HUNTSVILLE

Mayor Sherry Sullivan, Fairhope | ALM President, 2025 – 2026

**G**ood evening! You're welcome for that walk-out song (*Sherry*) — you'll be singing it the rest of the night! I used it during my campaign, so, it brings back all the feels.

Let me first say how honored and humbled I am to be elected as the next president of the Alabama League of Municipalities. I'm so sorry I had to miss this special occasion, but I'm back home with my daughter, celebrating the birth of my new grandbaby!

Five years ago, I could've never imagined being given this honor to lead ALM.

In 2020, I took an absolute leap of faith and ran for mayor of the city of Fairhope. Some of you know my story, and because we're among friends, I'll share it openly.

Most of you know the challenges of working in government, being an elected official, or loving someone who is.

I started working for the city of Fairhope in 2000 and stayed until I was terminated in February 2017. A new mayor was elected in August 2016, and let's just say, she didn't like me. In this business, sometimes that's all it takes.

Living and serving in a small town can be incredibly hard when that happens. No one knows the full story, and social media fills in the blanks. To say I was devastated is an understatement. Fairhope was my life, and it still is.

I had worked hard. I had sacrificed. I had served the city well. I'd always thought about running for mayor one day, but I doubted whether I could truly lead where the buck stopped with me.

Then in May 2020, after counsel from mentors, the support of my employer, and — yes — therapy, I made the decision to run. I remember crying through my first therapy session. I told her, "I must be crazy to want to jump back into something that caused me so much pain."

She looked at me and said something that stuck: "Every decision has a consequence. You can sit back and do nothing and watch your home stay in turmoil, or you can do something about it."

So I put my faith in God and His plan for me. I ran, and I won!

Now, I can look back and say with confidence: the person who let me go actually gave me the push I needed, and I wouldn't change a thing.

I know a lot of people talk about faith in politics, but for me, it's not just talk. Prayer and God are how I survive each day. I'm sure many of you feel the same. It can be lonely at the top, and I'm so grateful to have Him to lean on.

I also want to take a moment to thank Mayor Mark Saliba — a true servant leader. We joke that when he leads prayer, he sounds like he missed his calling to be a preacher.



Scan the QR code to see the full speech on the League's YouTube channel.



His heart, his faith, and his leadership have made us all better people and have made the Alabama League of Municipalities a better organization.

Mayor Saliba, thank you for your service this past year. I'm a better servant and this organization is better because of you. Thank you also to his wife, Angie, for always being so gracious and willing to share him with all of us.

My first ALM meeting was in 2000, when I attended with former Mayor Jim Nix. He introduced me to the League, to Perry Roquemore Jr., and to the resources this incredible organization offers.

Later, Mayor Tim Kant allowed me to travel to more meetings, and that's when I truly saw the League's value — from training to advocacy to support for municipal officials of every kind.

Under Greg's leadership, the League continues to grow and innovate. The Live Locally Alabama campaign is just one example of how ALM helps us serve our communities better.

Greg, Kayla, Lori, Barry, Richard, Rob and Baker — thank you for your dedication to serving local government. You help us make a difference in our communities every single day.

Furthermore, let's not forget the team behind the scenes; the ones who make the magic happen every day. We all have these types of folks at home too, and the League is no different. To everyone who serves this League with heart, professionalism and tireless support — THANK YOU.

A huge thank you to the city staff, spouses and families who stand behind us and beside us. It's not easy being the support system for public servants, but we couldn't do it without you. You deserve so much appreciation and more.

Looking ahead to the 2026 Legislative Session, I don't know if it can get more challenging than 2025, but it will be election season. We'll elect a new governor and many new legislators, and I expect gambling will be front and center during the campaigns.

Nevertheless, what remains the same is the constant challenge we face: the erosion of municipal power and revenue. We're asked to provide more services — from trails to pickleball courts to water wells — with fewer resources.

We must *vet our state candidates* the same way the public does during elections. We must ensure the people we send to Montgomery respect local government — the government closest to the people. We have to present a *united front* — all 465 of us — from the biggest city to the smallest town.

We have big issues to tackle, like SSUT, and we need each other to do it. I am committed to working with every one of you to ensure the Alabama League of Municipalities continues to be one of the most powerful voices in Montgomery, if not the most powerful.



Before I close, I want to thank my Fairhope and Baldwin County family as well as my family-family for always being my biggest cheerleaders. I couldn't do any of this without you.

I also look forward to working closely with our new vice president, and I can't wait to see the great things we'll do together and with the rest of the elected officials in this organization.

As vice president, I've had some unforgettable moments. I've eaten really well; traveled; taken a bus ride to the Flora-Bama with a bunch of mayors; trick-or-treated in costume; met the most incredible people; and I know there's more fun and purpose ahead.

So in the words of Dr. Cathy Randall, who spoke at our Women in Government Leadership Luncheon, I will:

- **BE READY** for whatever comes our way.
- **BE EXCELLENT** because that is what is expected.
- **BE LOVED** because we all deserve grace and kindness.
- **BE GRATEFUL** for this incredible opportunity.

Thank you again — Greg, Mayor Saliba, my colleagues and all of you — for this great honor.

Let's get to work — together! ■

# Vice President's Acceptance Speech

2025 BUSINESS SESSION | MAY 15 | HUNTSVILLE

Mayor Rusty Jessup, Riverside | ALM Vice President 2025 - 2026

**T**hank you, ALM! The folks back home will be so proud. This is such an honor, not just for me, but for the small little city of Riverside and St. Clair County. In fact, I am the first one ever elected to this role from St. Clair County, so this is a really big deal for us.

I love this organization because it makes me so much better. Not just because of the training, but because of all you members. You guys are **GOLD**. You are the best Alabama has to offer. Just being around you makes me better! We all make each other better. This organization is so much more than training. Yes, I know, the training is important, and I have this emeritus pin that says I have like a "Ph.D." in municipal government; however, over the years, I have grown to realize that the ALM is also about relationships, and those relationships can and will make you a better person and a better elected official. I know it has for me.

I don't think You or We realize how valuable, how powerful and how good we really are! You are the one in your city that everyone listens to. You know who your people are; you know what makes them tick. You understand them, and they trust you. They listen to you. They might not know or keep up with current politics, especially on the state or national level, but **they do know you**. They will strongly consider voting for whoever you say!

Why? Because you are the one who sat in their living room and asked them to vote for you. You are the one that sits next to them in church. You are the one that stood in their front yard or on their front porch and told them you would be their keeper, spend their tax money wisely and do the right things for the right reasons. You are their Leader. You are a person they Trust. You are the person they look to and admire.

**You are Gold.** You make me better. You make everyone better, and now, you have chosen me. For me to say "thank you" is just not enough. Just like you, I will earn your vote! I will not let this organization down. I will give you my all! ■





# MWCF Board Report • 2025 Business Session • Huntsville

The Alabama League of Municipalities founded the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund in 1976.

MWCF is the second oldest League insurance pool in the nation and was created at a time when national insurance carriers were *abandoning* Alabama and her communities.

MWCF understands your needs because we are *your* Alabama neighbor.

MWCF is led by a board of five veteran elected officials made up of mayors and councilmembers from municipalities large and small. Under the board's leadership, MWCF strives to not only provide workers comp insurance but to promote *safe* workplaces that ensure employees return home healthy and well after serving their communities.

MWCF members receive access to invaluable resources including a dedicated Loss Control team that provides risk management and safety services such as specialty training and seminars, free access to online training through LocalGovU, a Firearms Training System simulator and real-time, behind-the-wheel training through a state-of-the-art SKIDCAR system.

Today, we are pleased to bring you the annual report on the activities of YOUR Municipal Workers Compensation Fund.



- MWCF currently has more than 716 members.
- Membership renewals have remained steady year over year.
- Net premiums for the 2024 fund year were approximately \$29 million.
- During the October 2024 Board Meeting, the Board of Directors approved a distribution of \$4.5 million to be given as a renewal dividend to eligible members toward their 2025 premiums.
- Total dividends for all fund years are now in excess of \$89.5 million.
- Unaudited financial statements show total assets of approximately \$220 million as of January 31, 2025.
- MWCF remains financially very strong.

Because MWCF is an Alabama company representing Alabama communities with Alabama professionals, we remain connected to your *unique* needs.

The MWCF Board of Directors thanks you for your membership and continued support.

MWCF prides itself in achieving common goals through uncommon service.

MWCF is **YOUR** local workers comp provider.

[www.almwcf.org](http://www.almwcf.org)

# AMIC Board Report • 2025 Business Session • Huntsville

The Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation is a not-for-profit mutual insurance company that is wholly owned and controlled by its member cities and towns. Five mayors from throughout the state of Alabama sit on the board of directors and take an active role in keeping AMIC focused on its original goals.



AMIC was formed in 1989 and received \$6 million in capital contributions from 233 municipalities, in the years that followed, to get off the ground. As we sit here today, **thirty-five years later**, AMIC is the premier provider of property and casualty insurance for public entities in Alabama and its capitalized members have now received more than \$18 million in dividends!

As of year-end 2024:

- AMIC has paid more than 61,000 claims totaling more than \$621,000,000 since its formation in 1989
- AMIC insures approximately 95% of all public entities in Alabama and has 589 members
- AMIC retains over 99% of its business annually
- Assets exceed \$169 million
- Current premiums exceed \$71 million
- And total surplus is over \$61 million
- AMIC also insures more than \$12.6 billion in property values, 23,000 vehicles and nearly 5,100 police officers

AMIC has 44 dedicated in-house staff members providing services to member insureds that include:

- A claims staff of 19 team members providing 24/7 claims handling
- A team of 12 sales and underwriting staff that make sure your policies are correct and delivered on time
- 11 dedicated loss control team members that provide a range of services and programs from general and police loss control audits to services such as the SKIDCAR system, the Firearms Training System, a LocalGovU library, as well as onsite training and seminars

The Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation realizes that its member cities and towns provide essential public services with the most exposure to risk and the least amount of money. AMIC works diligently every day to protect you and your ability to continue to deliver those essential services without fear of financial ruin.

From the board of directors and everyone at AMIC, thank you for what you do and for your continued support.

We are here to insure the future of **YOUR** local government!

[www.amicentral.org](http://www.amicentral.org)

The Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation was formed in 2006 by the Alabama League of Municipalities to assist Alabama's cities and towns in funding local projects, equipment purchases and refinancing existing debt.

The purpose of AMFund is to provide timely, low-cost, direct bank debt financing to fund almost any size municipal project.

AMFund is managed by a board of directors composed of five municipal elected officials and works with financial advisor Louis Cardinal with Thornton Farish and Leo Lawrenson as pool administrator to take advantage of economies of scale allowing municipalities to:



- Receive competitive, fixed rate debt financing.
- Significantly reduce borrowers' transaction costs.
- Minimize staff time by using straightforward, direct bank debt loan documentation.

AMFund partners with national banking institutions to provide our members competitive fixed rate financing on general obligation and revenue borrowing needs for

- Infrastructure
- Capital improvement projects
- Equipment purchases
- Refinancing of existing loans

AMFund received several funding requests during the past calendar year and has assisted several applicants in obtaining fixed rate financing for the purchase of equipment and capital improvement projects.

**Since its inception in January 2006, AMFund has commissioned 80 loans in excess of \$153 million with no borrower defaults.**

We encourage you to consider AMFund as an option for your refinancing, general obligation, revenue and equipment leasing needs.

We look forward to serving you in the future!

[www.amfund.com](http://www.amfund.com)

Does your town or city have debts you just can't seem to collect regardless of your efforts? Well, Municipal Intercept Services may be able to help at no charge to your municipality!

In 2014, the Alabama Legislature enacted an amendment allowing municipalities and counties to attempt to recover delinquent debts owed to them by collecting this debt from the individual's state tax refund.

In 2015, the Alabama League of Municipalities formed Municipal Intercept Services as its clearinghouse entity to act as a conduit between participating Alabama municipalities and the Alabama Department of Revenue.



**FREE** to eligible participating members, MIS is **NOT** a debt collection agency or service. Instead, MIS is a **UNIQUE** way to attempt to recover money owed to your municipality by “intercepting” an individual’s Alabama state tax refund. Debt collection agencies **CANNOT** offer you this service.

Any municipal debt that is considered final; is still within its statute of limitations; and is more than 60 days old can be submitted to MIS.

Examples include:

- Municipal Court Fees and Fines
- Judgments
- Library Fees
- Medical, EMS and Hospital Bills
- Ordinance Violations
- Traffic Light Violations
- Parking Fees
- Rental or Lease Agreements
- Returned Checks
- Sanitation and Garbage Fees
- Utility Bills

**MIS is Alabama’s ONLY state tax refund municipal debt recovery program!**

As of December 31, 2024, MIS had:

- More than 269 active participants
- Over 327,000 debts in the system valued at more than \$486 million
- More than 232,000 intercepts with over \$32.2 million disbursed since inception

We are proud to provide this service to Alabama’s cities and towns!

[www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org)

# Ask Your Attorney General Session

MAY 15 | HUNTSVILLE

ALM Legal Team

The “Ask Your Attorney” session is always popular at convention and gives everyone in attendance a sampling of the types of questions we answer day in and day out in the League’s legal department. Below are some of the questions answered during the “Ask Your Attorney” session at the 2025 convention. The League’s legal department is available during regular business hours to answer your questions and provide you with legal guidance.

## **Is my town entitled to opioid settlement funds, and what can we spend that money on?**

In recent years, the state of Alabama settled lawsuits with several pharmaceutical companies over the part they played in the nationwide opioid epidemic, and 50% of the money received by Alabama in those settlements was allocated to local governments that participated in the lawsuits.

Only municipalities that participated in the lawsuits received funding from the settlements, but that does not mean that municipalities that did not participate are out of luck. Attorney General Steve Marshall has encouraged municipalities and counties with excess funding to work with others who did not receive funding to ensure that the money is put to good use.

Opioid settlement funding can *only* be spent on abating the opioid crisis, and approved uses will fall into one of three categories: education, prevention and treatment. Reimbursing past costs or addressing other needs is not permitted. Even spending the money on a project related to non-opioid drugs is prohibited.

## **Can requests for records be denied if the requester is not a resident of Alabama?**

Yes. Section 36-12-40(a), Code of Alabama 1975, states that “[e]very resident has a right to inspect and



take a copy of any public record” and Section 36-12-44(f) allows the custodian of public records to request evidence to establish that the requester is a resident of Alabama. This rule applies on a state-wide basis and does *not* mean that the requester has to be a resident of a municipality to request that municipality’s records.

The custodian of records is not *prohibited* from providing records in response to a request from a non-resident. Furthermore, providing records to one non-resident does not mean that the custodian has to do the same for any non-resident who requests a record. However, if the requester is not a resident of Alabama, then the custodian of records may deny the request on that basis alone.

Although it is not required, developing a public records request policy and making it available publicly (for example, on the municipality’s website) can be beneficial for public officials and citizens alike. Having a written policy lets people know how to make a public records request, and what to expect from the process.

**Can our municipality provide an incentive for a physician to come and practice in our municipality?**

Section 94 of the Alabama Constitution prohibits the use of public funds (including the proceeds of public debt) for private business use. However, in 2004, Amendment 772 (Section 94.01 Ala. Const.) was passed to provide a constitutional source of authority for the promotion of economic and industrial development in a municipality.

Under Amendment 772, municipalities are given a limited exception to Section 94, as Amendment 772 allows municipalities to “lend its credit to, or grant public funds . . . in aid of, or to, any individual, firm, corporation, or business entity, public or private, *for the purpose of promoting the economic and industrial development of the municipality.*”

What constitutes economic development? Unfortunately, it is not very well defined, but Amendment 772 does require that an expenditure made under its authority complies with its procedure: (1) passing a resolution after a public meeting and (2) providing notice of that meeting. The resolution must reasonably articulate a determination that this expenditure will serve a valid and sufficient *public purpose*, notwithstanding any incidental benefit a private entity might receive.



The attorney general’s office has found that to constitute such a public purpose, the expenditure must serve as consideration for the recipient’s performance which promotes the economic development of the public-at-large. Furthermore, it noted that a broad range of undertakings can lead to an improvement in the economic climate of a municipality which can persuade new businesses to launch and existing businesses to locate within the city or town limits or to increase economic activity. Finally, it recognized that much deference should be given to a governing body’s good faith determination that a given expenditure will lead to economic development. AGO 2023-0030.

Keep in mind that with great deference comes great responsibility. If a court finds that a municipality did not act in good faith while making an expenditure under Amendment 772, the municipality can face heavy penalties.

**Can our municipality use our share from the Municipal Capital Improvement Trust Fund to pay for new lights in our park?**

Section 219.04 of the Alabama Constitution establishes the Municipal Capital Improvement Trust Fund. A municipality may only use its portion of any distribution from that fund for capital improvements and the renovation of capital improvements. Section 11-66-6, Code of Alabama 1975. Capital improvements are the restoration and improvement

of municipal government buildings, roads, streets and other facilities. Section 11-66-2, Code of Alabama 1975. It is important to note that these funds *must be kept in a special account separate from other revenues of the municipality.*

The attorney general's office has found that these funds can be used to:

- Restore a right of way to a safe and usable condition,
- Replace the sewer line connected to the town hall,
- Repay the debt incurred to renovate a city hall, or
- Improve or restore ball fields owned by the town.

According to the attorney general's office, these funds *cannot* be used to purchase:

- A dump truck or bulldozer;
- Police car video systems; or
- Telephone systems, computer systems or computer equipment.

In light of these examples, it is reasonable to conclude that a park owned by a municipality is a facility of the municipality and that the purchase of new lights for the park would be an improvement of that facility. Therefore, the purchase of new lights for a municipal park can likely be considered a capital improvement.

### **Can a city vehicle be used to campaign for the upcoming municipal election?**

No. Alabama law prohibits the use of municipal funds, property or time for any political activities. Section 17-17-5, Code of Alabama 1975. It is also prohibited for any person to use his or her official authority or position for the purpose of influencing the vote or political action of any person. Section 17-17-4, Code of Alabama 1975. A municipal employee cannot participate in political activities while on duty, while at work or while in uniform. A municipal employee may participate in political activities if they are on personal time before or after work or on holidays.

### **We have identified a building in our downtown that is unoccupied and appears to be on the verge of collapse. Can we tear it down?**

Destruction of a building could be handled as an abatement of public nuisance. While there are several building abatement statutes that apply only to particular classes of municipalities, section 11-53B-1, et seq., Code of Alabama 1975, provides a method for demolition or repair of unsafe structures for *all* municipalities. Once a municipality finds, after giving notice, that it is necessary to repair or demolish a building or structure or parts of buildings or structures, party walls and foundations which are found to be unsafe to the extent of being a nuisance, the municipality make take necessary action to demolish or repair the building or structure, and

the cost shall be assessed against the property owner as provided in Section 11-53B-6. See, Section 11-52B-2, Code of Alabama 1975. Municipal officials should work closely with their municipal attorney in making sure the municipality has sufficient evidence to show the building is unsafe and the statutory process is completely followed.

### **Are councilmembers allowed to give employees directives?**

No. The mayor is charged with the general supervision and control of all other officers and affairs of the municipality. Section 11-43-81, Code of Alabama 1975. The attorney general has ruled that individual councilmembers cannot direct the activities of a municipal fire department, even pursuant to a properly enacted ordinance. AGO 1988-0262.

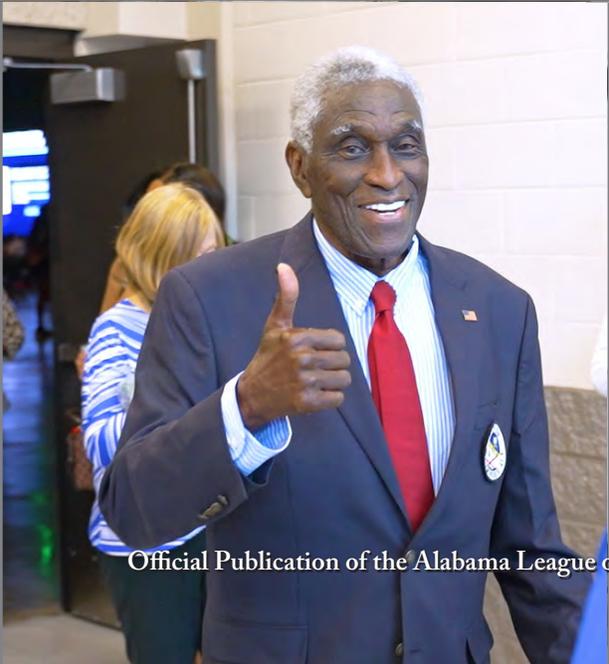
State law gives the council legislative powers. The council has authority over the finances and property of the municipality. The council establishes policies, passes ordinances, sets tax levels, determines what sorts of services the municipality will offer and has authority over all other legislative aspects of municipal government. Sections 11-43-43, 11-43-56, Code of Alabama 1975. Perhaps the best way to sum it up is that the mayor is the chief executive officer of the city and is charged with the duty of supervision of the affairs of the city under policies fixed by the council.

Citizens and councilmembers must understand that individual councilmembers, acting alone, have no greater power or authority than any other citizen of the municipality. The council can only act as a body at a legally convened meeting. No official action may be taken by any individual councilmember. All official action must be taken by the council acting as the governing body.

It must also be remembered that council committees are not administrative bodies and have no authority to exercise any executive power over the administrative branch of the municipal government. This means that the council cannot direct and supervise the work of employees, even through the creation of a committee. AGO 1988-0262 and AGO 1991-0147. ■

As always, one of the League's most important functions is responding to legal inquiries from its member municipalities. In addition to the three full-time attorneys providing members with direct legal assistance, the League's legal team has written and compiled many resources over the years. Please visit the Legal Services section of the ALM website to assist you in your legal inquiries.

**[almonline.org/LegalServices](http://almonline.org/LegalServices)**



# 2025 Distinguished Service Awards

2025 OPENING SESSION | MAY 13 | HUNTSVILLE

For many years, the Alabama League of Municipalities has been pleased to present the Distinguished Service Awards to mayors and councilmembers. This year, we added five year increments after 20 years of service because we know municipal leaders work hard to achieve each milestone. The League was thrilled to continue that tradition and honor 17 mayors and councilmembers on their accomplishments during the opening session of convention on May 13, 2025. ■



## 20 YEAR HONOREES:

- **Councilmember Robert Aldridge** of the town of Glen Allen (*not pictured*)
- **Councilmember John Churchwell Jr.** of the city of Pinson
- **Mayor Allen Dunavant** of the town of Glen Allen
- **Mayor William “Bill” Gillespie Jr.** of the city of Prattville (*not pictured*)
- **Councilmember Ernest Montgomery** of the city of Calera
- **Councilmember Danny Wagnon** of the town of Glencoe



## 25 YEAR HONOREES:

- **Councilmember Carl Craig** of the town of Chatom
- **Councilmember Samuel Randolph** of the city of Selma (*not pictured*)
- **Mayor Jason Reeves** of the city of Troy
- **Mayor Howard Rubenstein** of the city of Saraland (ALM president 2016-2018)
- **Mayor Tony White** of the town of Oak Grove (*not pictured*)

## 30 YEAR HONOREE:

- **Councilmember Kenny Thompson**  
of the city of Hartselle



## 35 YEAR HONOREES:

- **Councilmember Paul Brown**  
of the town of Holly Pond (*not pictured*)
- **Mayor Tim Coe**  
of the town of Wedowee
- **Councilmember Joseph Kitchens**  
of the city of Robertsdale (*not pictured*)
- **Mayor Stevan Parsons**  
of the town of Sylvan Springs



## 40 YEAR HONOREE:

- **Councilmember Brent White**  
of the city of Moulton (*not pictured*)

The League recognizes and celebrates these members and their years of distinguished and dedicated service to their fellow citizens and their efforts to strengthen municipal government and promote the importance and understanding of progressive, responsible public leadership.

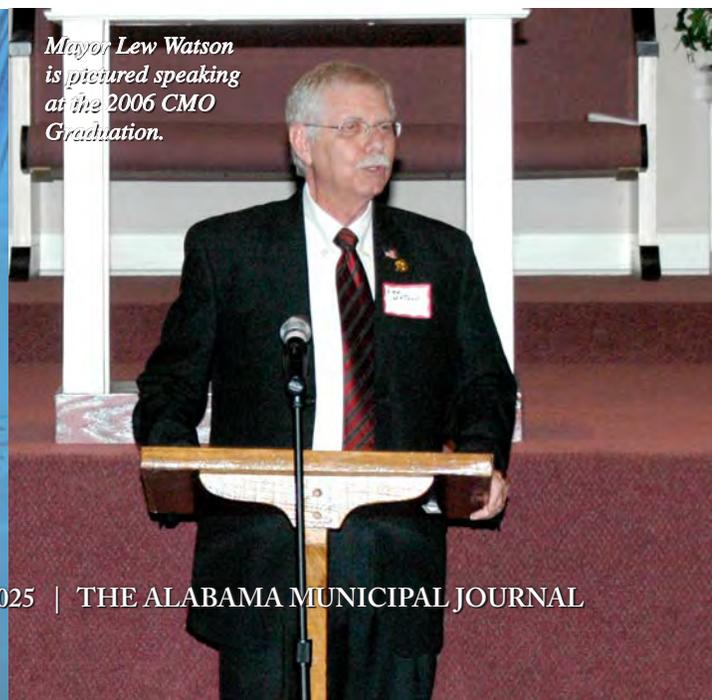
# The League Pays Tribute to Four Retiring Past Presidents

2025 OPENING SESSION | MAY 13 | HUNTSVILLE

**D**uring the convention, the League recognized four past presidents that are retiring in 2025. Each of them has displayed exemplary leadership in their communities and as members of the ALM Board of Directors and executive committee. Learn more about their municipal involvement below.

- **Mayor Lew Watson** of the city of Lincoln served as our president from 2006 to 2007. He has served as mayor of Lincoln from 1972 to 1991, 1996 to 2012, and 2016 to present. **This totals 44 years of service!**
- **Councilmember Sadie Britt** of the city of Lincoln served as our president from 2015 to 2016. She has served as a member of the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund Board since 2014 and has led it as chairwoman since 2020. She has served on the Lincoln City Council since 1993 **for a total of 32 years of service!**
- **Mayor Howard Rubenstein** of the city of Saraland served as our president from 2016 to 2018. He served as a member of the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation Board until 2020 when he joined the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation Board. He served as a Saraland councilmember from 1996 to 2011 and as president of the council from 2004 to 2011. He has served as mayor of Saraland since 2011 **for a total of 29 years of service!**
- **Mayor Gary Fuller** of the city of Opelika served as our president from 2021 to 2022. He has served as a member of the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation Board since 2020. He served as an Opelika councilmember from 2000 to 2004 before being elected as mayor in 2004. **This totals 25 years of service!**

Although these summaries focus on municipal service, many of their careers span outside of this scope and have led them to attaining a host of accomplishments and awards. We can honestly say our organization is better because of each of them. Our events will not be the same without their presence, but we are grateful for their service and wish them all a very happy retirement! ■



*Mayor Lew Watson is pictured speaking at the 2006 CMO Graduation.*



*Councilmember Sadie Britt (a former library liaison) is pictured in the Lincoln Public Library's early childhood learning materials section.*



*Mayor Howard Rubenstein receiving his certificate for 20 years of distinguished service, presented by Executive Director Ken Smith, at the 2017 ALM Convention in Birmingham.*



*Mayor Tommy Battle of Huntsville, Mayor Gary Fuller of Opelika and Mayor Leigh Dollar of Guntersville, with Executive Director Greg Cochran at the 2021 ALM Convention in Huntsville.*

## ALM HONORS 2024 MUNICIPAL CLERK OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Louise Couture for winning the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators' 2024 Municipal Clerk of the Year Award!

Louise serves as the town clerk for the town of Malvern and has been a municipal clerk for 11 years serving both Slocomb and Malvern. Louise is an invaluable member of her community, wearing many hats to serve the people of Malvern. As a clerk, she goes above and beyond in aiding public civic engagement and innovating the roles of her job.

Her responsibilities include managing official records; preparing agendas and minutes for meetings; facilitating payroll and payroll reporting; administering the budget; being the water clerk; overseeing various bookkeeping duties including receivables and payables; administering elections; ensuring compliance; and managing a vast database of town documents.

Louise continues to prove her steadfast commitment to upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability. She is adept at addressing public inquiries and coordinating the departments with the town's administration.

In addition to AAMCA, Louise is also a proud member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks where she was awarded Certified Municipal Clerk in 2022 and is actively working on her Master Municipal Clerk certification.

Louise has been an extraordinary role model for clerks throughout Alabama and deserves this honor greatly! ■



## ALM PRESENTS CINDY PRICE WITH HOMETOWN HERO AWARD

Cindy Price joined the League staff in 2007. She has held numerous roles over the years and eventually became the corporate relations manager for the member services department in 2015. Cindy is responsible for sponsorships, vendor advertising for League publications and managing the expo at our yearly convention and MLI. Additionally, most of you know Cindy because she also serves as the program administrator for our Certified Municipal Official program. Our CMO program would not be what it has evolved into today without her steadfast leadership and vision to expand our offerings. While we are sad to see her retire in December, we are very happy she has agreed to still assist us with running our annual expos. ■



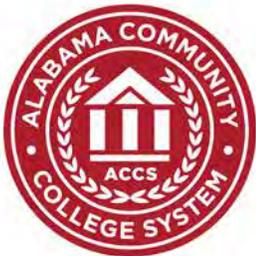


# The League Recognizes our **STRATEGIC and COMMUNI**

ADAMS AND REESE LLP



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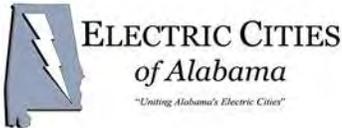
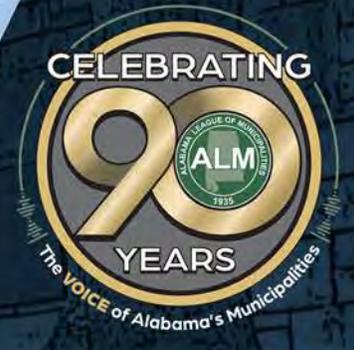


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- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
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- Alabama First Responders Benefits Program (ALFRBP)
- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Alabama Manufactured Housing Association
- Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association
- Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC)
- Alabama Organics
- Alabama Plumbers & Gas Fitters Examining Board
- Alabama Power Company
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- Alabama Tourism Department (Sweet Home Alabama)

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# In Memory

**The League memorializes the following officials who have died in office since its last convention:**

- Joey Broom, Snead councilmember
- James Ervin Chumley, Dodge City councilmember
- Joe Cochran, Pinson mayor
- Dean Freeman, Valley Head councilmember
- Jimmy Keel, Alexander City councilmember
- Jimmy Madison, Berry mayor
- Inez McDonald, Dodge City councilmember
- Rick Nash, Altoona mayor
- David O'Mary, Jasper mayor
- Gregory Palmer, Autaugaville councilmember
- Albert Striplin, Prattville councilmember
- Callie Thomas, Mosses councilmember
- Annette Tyler, Westover councilmember
- Robert Wilder, Aliceville councilmember

**The League memorializes the following former officials who have died since its last convention:**

- Samuel Ashford, former Colony councilmember
- Larry Barton, former Talladega mayor
- Gail Bircheat, former Glen Allen councilmember
- Rufus Carson, former Franklin mayor
- Mildred Caudle, former Athens councilmember
- Asa O'Neal Cheatwood, former Oxford and Lincoln councilmember
- Elmer Cook Sr., former Robertsdale councilmember
- Sidney Fomby Jr., former Lincoln mayor and councilmember
- Lewis H. Fuller, former Gadsden councilmember
- James "Jimmy" Hoffman Gullett Sr., former Fayette councilmember
- Luther Havard, former Chickasaw councilmember
- Gary Allen Hopper, former Centre councilmember
- Kermit "Buzz" Ingle, former Westover councilmember
- Joe Jenkins, former Oak Hill councilmember
- Ross Naze, former Chickasaw councilmember
- Henry Peavy, former Franklin mayor
- John W. Purifoy Jr., former Colony mayor
- Ralph Sandlin, former Cordova councilmember
- Billy Smothers, former Geraldine mayor
- James Spann, former Alexander City councilmember
- Don Stanford, former Decatur mayor
- Leslie Whiting, former Columbiana councilmember





## John Kenneth "Ken" Smith

March 1, 1960 ~ February 13, 2025

**ALM Fourth Executive Director | 2011 – 2020**

The League family remembers, honors and celebrates the life of John Kenneth Smith – “Ken” to everyone who knew and loved him.

Ken began his work with the League in 1986 as a staff attorney. Over the next three decades, he served in multiple leadership roles, including being the League’s first in-house general counsel before being elected as the League’s fourth executive director in 2011. In every role, Ken was dedicated and diligent in supporting the League’s mission and serving the needs of Alabama’s cities and towns.

Ken co-authored many of the handbooks and guides that local government officials and employees across the state rely on daily. He wrote extensively on municipal law and was a frequent speaker for national, state and local audiences. During his time as general counsel, he created both the Alabama Municipal Attorneys Association and the Alabama Municipal Judges Association and established training for both organizations so that local attorneys and judges could better serve the legal needs of municipal government in Alabama. In addition, he was instrumental in drafting and advocating for legislation to strengthen municipal government throughout the state of Alabama.

During his nine years as executive director, the League’s membership reached an all-time high. He oversaw major technological and IT security updates, expanded member services, and helped grow the Certified Municipal Official education program. Under his leadership, the League also launched the Municipal Intercept Services program and League Law, an online local government legal resource.

Ken served not only Alabama’s municipalities but also the wider municipal community through national organizations. He held leadership roles with the National League of Cities and the International Municipal Lawyers Association, where he built lasting relationships with colleagues from across the country.

Beyond his service to the League, Ken was a devoted husband, brother, uncle and friend. He was a man who knew how to truly enjoy life. With Brenda by his side for over 34 years, he traveled the world; played golf in all 50 states; and made lifelong friendships wherever he went. Above all, Ken was a man of faith. He lived his life in the service of God and his community, extending grace to all who crossed his path.

Ken passed away peacefully in his home on February 13, 2025, with Brenda at his side. His legacy lives on in the work we do, the communities we serve and the countless lives he touched. We are better for having known him, and his work will continue to shape the future of Alabama’s cities and towns. We are eternally grateful for you, Ken. May you rest in peace. ■

*View Ken Smith's memorial video by scanning the QR code at right.*



Thank you, ALM staff, for making our 90th Annual League Convention special!



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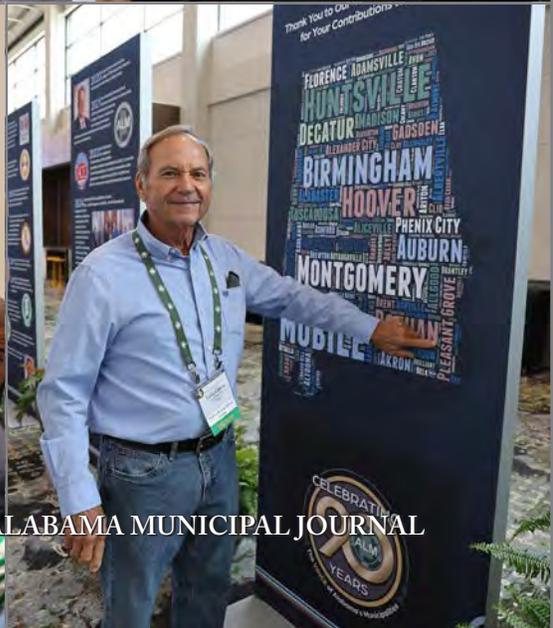


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# Honoring 90 Years of Leadership and Legacy

Since 1935, the Alabama League of Municipalities has proudly supported Alabama's cities and towns. Through decades of changes, the mission has stayed the same: strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership.



**1935** Upon the recommendation of Gov. Bibb Graves, the newly formed Alabama League of Municipalities retained the services of Edgar "Ed" Ernest Reid, a charismatic, energetic young man with a background in journalism and government, as its first salaried director.

Reid secured office space in the state capitol and funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to increase membership and advocacy efforts.



John G. Burton of Jasper was elected as the League's first president.

**1937** The first issue of the *Alabama Municipal News* was printed to educate and inform municipal officials. It is now recognized as *The Alabama Municipal Journal!*

**1942** The Municipal Revenue Service was established to provide necessary investigations to collect unpaid and escaped delinquent insurance license taxes from insurance companies doing business in Alabama's municipalities.

**1943** A law passed to authorize the attorney general to issue opinions to counties and municipalities.

**1945** A constitutional amendment passed to allow all municipalities to levy up to 12 1/2 mills of ad valorem taxes.

**1946** ALM leased its first office on Hull Street in Montgomery.



**1952** *Evers v. City of Dadeville*, 61 So.2d 78 This case upheld the gross receipts license tax in the nature of a sales tax.

**1953** A law passed to authorize county and municipal employees to participate in the State Retirement System.

**1961** The first comprehensive municipal election laws were enacted.



**1965** John Watkins became the second League executive director following the death of Ed Reid.

**1969** The authority for "true" sales tax was enacted.

**1970** The current League headquarters building was dedicated at 535 Adams Avenue. It was designed by Montgomery architecture firm Tom Kirkland and Associates.

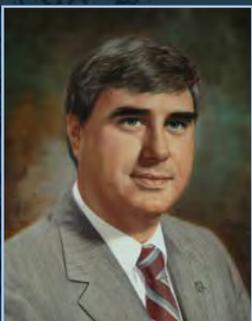
**1971** Municipal elections became nonpartisan.

**1976** The Municipal Workers Compensation Fund, Inc. (MWCF) was established to provide workers compensation insurance coverage to municipalities, housing authorities, utility boards and other city agencies. It was created during a "hard market" when private carriers were not interested in insuring many of Alabama's municipalities.



**1978** A constitutional amendment was adopted to authorize the establishment of eight classes of municipalities, based on population.

**1981** Council President Nina Miglionico of Birmingham became the first female League president.



**1986** Perry Roquemore Jr. became the League's third executive director following the retirement of John Watkins.

Legislation was enacted to authorize municipalities to receive a share of the oil and gas trust fund interest.

**1989** Mayor Johnny Ford of Tuskegee became the first African-American League president.



The Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC) was established as a mutual insurance company organized under the laws of the state of Alabama and owned by its member municipalities.

Established during a "hard" insurance market when many municipalities could not get insurance or were charged exorbitant prices, AMIC writes all lines of insurance.

**1990** The Legislature authorized the State Employees Insurance Board to establish a health insurance plan for municipalities.

**1992** The Alabama Association of Municipal Attorneys (AAMA) was created to serve and assist municipal attorneys and prosecutors throughout the state of Alabama by fostering communication and education of attorneys and the public as to the unique aspects of municipal law.



**1994** ALM became the second league in the nation to offer a Certified Municipal Official (CMO) program, which was established as a series of continuing education programs for mayors and councilmembers who voluntarily participate in municipal government training. Officials receiving 40 hours of credit receive their CMO designation.

**1995** The League expanded its headquarters building, creating a basement and additional office space.



**1998** ALM launched its first website: [www.alalm.org](http://www.alalm.org).



The League established the Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation for those elected officials who receive an additional 40 hours of training after completing their initial CMO.

**1999** A constitutional amendment was approved to limit state-enacted unfunded mandates.

A constitutional amendment was approved to protect municipalities' share of oil and gas trust fund revenues.

**2000** AMIC purchased the building at 110 North Ripley Street in downtown Montgomery, moving all services in-house.



**2001** AMIC and MWC developed an internal Loss Control Department to provide a variety of services, including regional and on-site training programs, proactive driver training, firearms training and loss control representatives assigned to various areas of the state.

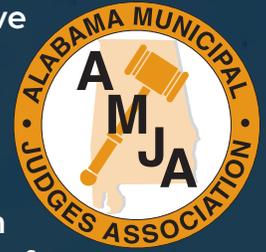


**2006** The Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation (AMFund) was established to assist Alabama municipalities with funding local projects and purchases through low-cost financing.



**2007** Councilwoman Cynthia McCollum of Madison became the first Alabama official elected as president of the National League of Cities (NLC).

The Alabama Municipal Judges Association (AMJA) was created to serve and benefit municipal judges throughout the state of Alabama by fostering communication and education for municipal judges in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Alabama’s municipal courts.



**2011** Ken Smith became the League’s fourth executive director following the retirement of Perry Roquemore Jr.

**2015** The CMO Emeritus designation was established for members who complete a minimum of 120 credit hours of training, plus 15 points.



The Municipal Intercept Services (MIS) program launched to assist municipalities with collecting unpaid debts by intercepting state tax refunds, increasing municipal revenue.



League Law, an online municipal legal research system, was created to make legal resources more accessible to Alabama’s city officials.



Councilwoman Sadie Britt of Lincoln was elected as the League’s first African-American female president.



**2020** Greg Cochran became the League’s fifth executive director following the retirement of Ken Smith.

**2021** The Economic Development Academy launched, in partnership with the Alabama Community College System, to educate and engage municipal officials on the essential elements and phases of economic development.



**2022** ALM adopted the Alabama Communities of Excellence program, originally established in 2002, to provide technical assistance to select communities with populations ranging from 2,000 to 18,000 in an effort to strengthen long-term economic success.

**2024** During the 2024 Legislative Session, Sen. Jabo Waggoner and Rep. Jim Hill introduced legislation to the Alabama Legislature to expand the CMO program from a voluntary program to mandated training. Gov. Kay Ivey signed the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act into law on May 3, 2024.



Photo credit: Hal Yeager, Governor’s Office

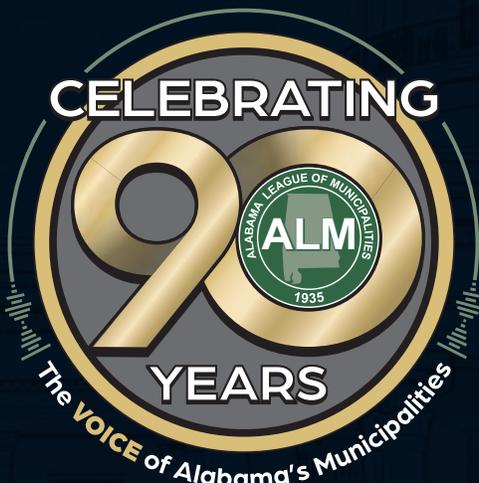
ALM launched the quality-of-life campaign, Live Locally Alabama, to encourage civic engagement, instill community pride and highlight the crucial role municipal government plays in the daily lives of Alabama's citizens. The campaign aims to provide strategic resources and one-on-one consultations for municipalities to help them improve how they showcase their uniqueness and remind citizens of the quality-of-life services they provide.



CMO Emeritus Tiers II-IV were created for members who receive over 200 credit hours of training, plus 20 points.



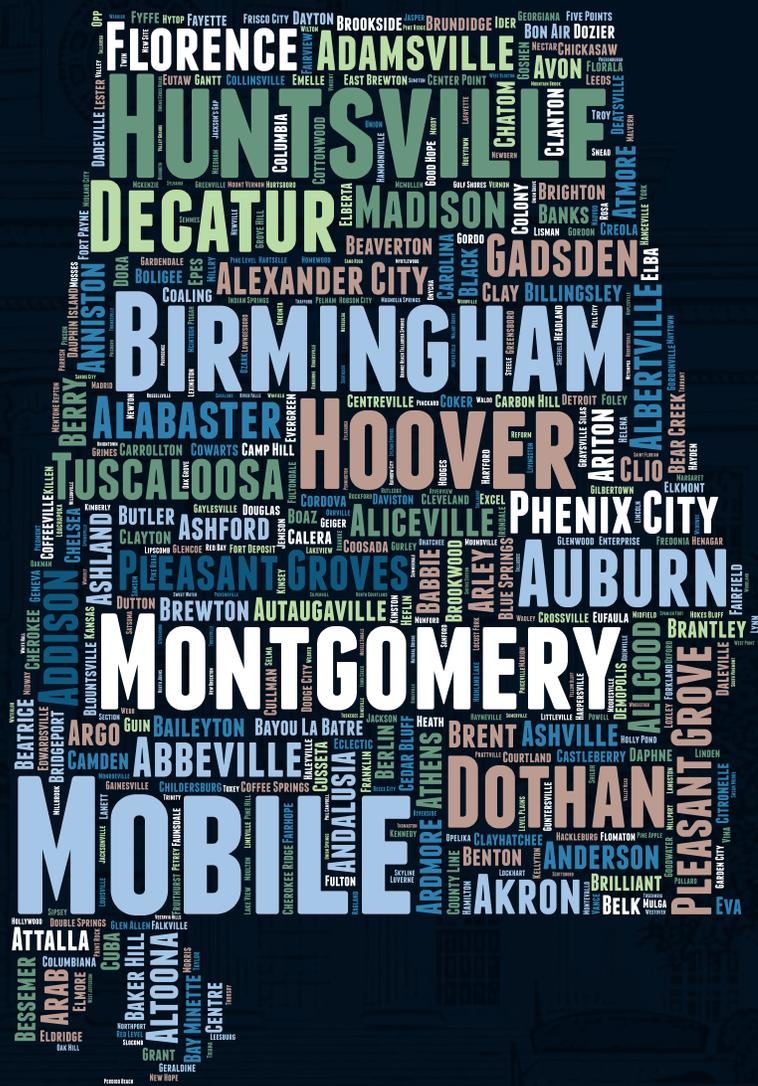
This expanded recognition of achievement celebrates the lifelong dedication to learning displayed by Alabama's municipal officials.



**2025** ALM celebrates its 90th anniversary on May 15, 2025! Thank You to Our 454 Member Municipalities for Your Contributions to Our Story!



Scan the QR code to download the WordCloud Map as an image



# Make plans to join the League for training in 2025!

- **October /November**

Regional Orientation Trainings, several locations around the state (October 1-2, Tuscaloosa; October 29-30, Montgomery (CMO Graduation Ceremony); November 5-6, Huntsville; November 12-13, Daphne)

- **November 19 - 22**

NLC City Summit, Salt Lake City, UT (Learn more: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org))



Visit [www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining](http://www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining) frequently for training and updated registration information.



## Alabama's only state tax refund municipal debt recovery program

(FREE to eligible participating members!)

[www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org)

### Why use Municipal Intercept Services (MIS) when you already have a debt collection service?

MIS is **NOT** a debt collection agency or service. MIS does not do what debt collection services do and debt collection services cannot offer what MIS does. MIS is a unique way to attempt to recover money owed to your municipality by “intercepting” an individual’s Alabama State tax refund. Debt collection agencies CANNOT offer you this service. MIS is a legislatively sanctioned conduit with the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR) that enables ADOR to recover delinquent debts owed by individuals to your municipality by collecting this debt from the individual’s Alabama state tax refund. This system was made possible by an Alabama legislative change enacted in 2014 through which ADOR agreed to process these debts through only two clearinghouse organizations: the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) for municipal entities and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA) for county entities. In 2015, ALM formed MIS to act as the clearinghouse on behalf of its municipal entities. **NOTE:** If the debtor is not eligible for an Alabama State tax refund, no money can be collected.

### Who is eligible to use the MIS system?

Only municipal entities within Alabama are eligible to use the MIS system. This includes cities, towns, certain utility boards, housing authorities and hospitals. **For more information, visit: [www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org).**

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