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Journal



2023 Advocacy Issue

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On the Cover:

The 2023 Legislative Session begins on March 7, 2023. The League will continue to be proactive and vigilant as we have been throughout our history. Join us for Advocacy Day on March 8, 2023 and meet with your state representatives to make or strengthen relationships. Because, as we all know, **Relationships Matter!**

Looking Ahead to 2023

Gregory D. Cochran • Executive Director

We are beginning a new year with great expectations of assisting our members with opportunities ahead for local governments. Our team at the League works diligently to deliver intentional training, resources and networking opportunities for our members in the areas of water and wastewater infrastructure expansion, broadband deployment, workforce development, education enhancement, economic investment, recruitment and retention of first responders, maintaining parks and recreations, and many other investments it takes to build vibrant communities.

One of the many ways we accomplish this is through our advocacy efforts. Since 1935, our organization has served as the primary legislative advocate for Alabama's municipalities, representing our members at the Alabama Legislature, in Congress and with numerous administrative agencies.

It goes without saying that we are blessed to have the absolute best advocacy team in the state of Alabama and certainly amongst state leagues. They have earned the respect of the Alabama Legislature, constitutional officers, and special interest stakeholders for their integrity and talent. Kayla Bass, Bryan Parker, Baker Allen and Lori Lein each bring together a wealth of knowledge, passion and skills to represent our members to their fullest; however, as we approach the 2023 Legislative Session, which begins on March 7, I must remind our members, this is only one-half of the equation to successfully defend your administrative authorities.

In advocating for local governments, our members must also engage in the process and share with their state and federal policy makers the impact that certain pieces of legislation could have on their communities and their ability as local officials to provide the needed resources allowing their communities to be at their best. One of the most vital resources our team produces during the legislative session that will assist you in these conversations is our weekly e-newsletter, the *State House Advocate*. This newsletter provides timely updates on what takes place each week during the

legislative session and what issues our team expects to be discussed the next week. This newsletter not only keeps you informed on the most critical pieces of legislation affecting local governments, but also provides talking points which you can use during your conversations with lawmakers. If you are not signed up to receive our weekly newsletter, please reach out to a member of our advocacy team to sign up today.

As stated earlier, municipal officials know best how to balance the tasks of regulatory oversight and taxation while also attracting economic and community development. Our members are the most effective advocates on local issues, and it is imperative that legislators hear from YOU – their constituents – during policy making decisions.

In closing, you will notice throughout this *Journal* several events that we would appreciate our members' engagement in. These events are designed to strengthen relationships amongst local, state and federal leaders.

A few of these events include the League's Annual Advocacy Day and the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference, which includes several Alabama events such as breakfast with U.S. Senator Katie Britt, district dinners and the Alabama Caucus Reception. Information on these events and more can be found on our website, www.almonline.org.

As always, we appreciate your commitment to building better business environments, better lives and better communities across Alabama.

Peace be with you. ■



The League's Advocacy Team. Standing: ALM Executive Director Greg Cochran, Director of Governmental Affairs Bryan Parker and Director of Policy and Research Baker Allen. Seated: Deputy Director Kayla Bass and General Counsel Lori Lein.

Leadership Perspective

Mayor Lawrence "Tony" Haygood Jr. • Tuskegee • ALM President



In a few weeks, municipal officials will gather in the state's capital to participate in the League's 2023 Annual Advocacy Day event. The League's Advocacy Day provides an opportunity for municipal officials to connect with state leaders to share ideas and perspectives on state policies for the 2023 legislative session, which begins on March 7. I want to encourage as many of our ALM members as possible to join us on that day, as your engagement is vital to our success as local leaders.

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports, defends or pleads on behalf of others. In our case "others" refers to our constituents (citizens we represent in our communities). Advocacy therefore seeks to ensure that the voices of our constituents are heard at the state and federal levels. We want our state legislators in Montgomery and our congressional delegation in Washington to hear the issues and concerns that are of importance to us at the local levels before the decisions are made and the votes on legislation are taken. We want them to not only hear us but also understand how the legislation impacts us locally and the citizens in our communities. The best way to make sure we are heard and understood is through engaging our representatives face-to-face whenever possible and by telephone as well. Developing relationships with our representatives is a critical part of being heard.

We recognize that advocacy is strongest and most effective when we collectively advocate on issues that affect our cities and towns. Our efforts become even stronger when we partner with other groups that share our interests such as businesses, chambers of commerce, colleges and universities, community organizations, law enforcement and in some cases parental groups.

I look forward to seeing you in Montgomery and you joining us in the League's advocacy efforts on behalf of our cities and towns. I encourage you to stay connected to the League's Advocacy Team, (Greg Cochran, Kayla Bass, Lori Lein,

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Councilmember Adam Bourne • Chickasaw • ALM Vice President

The 2023 legislative session is approaching. Alabama's legislators face increasing pressure from interests throughout our state. Many of those individuals and organizations lobbying our legislature have an incorrect belief that municipalities tax too much and regulate too often. As municipal officials, we know the truth, that our cities and towns serve only to improve the lives of the citizens that they serve, by ensuring strong public safety and providing basic necessities, such as sanitary sewer service. And that we do it with great understanding of our business community.

That basic truth can be seen in the articles in our own Municipal Journal. Look at the city of Hartselle, under the leadership of Mayor Randy Garrison, which remodeled a bank building into a modern municipal building that citizens will be able to enjoy for years to come. Or the city of Fairhope, which, under the guidance of Mayor Sherry Sullivan, is using grant funds to update the Fairhope Municipal Pier and Park. In Saraland, with the support of Mayor Howard Rubenstein, unprecedented efforts are underway to provide opportunities in athletics at a state-of-the-art municipal sports complex.

Those are just some examples of the stories we have to tell as an organization. It is up to us to share those stories with legislators, agency staff members, business leaders and other associations. However, the stories are just the beginning. Our effectiveness is also due to the quality of relationships that we have with policymakers.

In all likelihood, you are quite good at building friendships, relationships and even coalitions. The key is to take those skills that we routinely use in our cities with us to the State House. Be sure to invite your fellow elected officials to community events. That way they can see firsthand the important work you are doing in your city. It's also an opportunity for them to meet your shared constituents.

Additionally, don't underestimate the power of an encouraging word. It comes as no surprise to us as municipal

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The Alabama Legislative Process

Lori Lein • General Counsel • ALM

One of the prime functions of the Alabama League of Municipalities is to represent the interests of municipal government at the legislative level by informing members of legislation introduced that might affect municipal government and by presenting bills to the Legislature on behalf of Alabama's municipalities. It is extremely important for municipal officials and officers to have a good, basic understanding of the legislative process in Alabama. This article briefly explains the workings of the Alabama Legislature and how legislation is passed by that body.

Constitutional Provisions

Article IV of the Alabama Constitution of 1901 (Sections 44 through 111) establishes the legislative department of state government. Section 44 states that the legislative power of the state shall be vested in a legislature composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives. Section 44 has been construed by the Alabama Supreme Court to give plenary power to the state legislature. *State v. Lane*, 181 Ala. 646, 62 So. 31 (1913).

According to the Court, the Alabama Legislature possesses all of the legislative power residing in the state under the United States Constitution, except as that power is expressly or impliedly limited by the Alabama Constitution. This differs from the powers granted to the United States Congress in that Congress can exercise only those powers enumerated in the Constitution of the United States or implied therefrom.

Article IV prescribes the manner of drafting bills, the organization and qualifications of members of both houses, authorizes each house to determine the rules of its proceedings and establishes procedures for the enactment of laws. Due to space limitations, only the provisions most applicable to the interests of municipalities will be discussed in this article.

Composition of the House and the Senate

The state legislature consists of 35 senators and 105 members of the House of Representatives. This number was established by order of a three-judge federal district court for the Middle District of Alabama, Northern Division, in the case of *Sims v. Amos*, 336 F. Supp. 924, aff'd, 409 U.S. 942 (1972). In the decree, the court divided the state into 105 house districts and 35 senatorial districts. Each house district is entitled to one representative and each senate district is entitled to one senator. Each district has approximately the same number of people as any other district.

Qualifications of Legislators

Section 47 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901, states that senators must be at least 25 years of age at the time of their election and representatives must be at least 21 years of age at the time of their election. Both senators and representatives must also have been citizens and residents of Alabama for three years and must have lived in their respective districts for at least one year immediately preceding their election.

Section 60 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901 states that no person convicted of embezzlement of public money, bribery, perjury or other infamous crimes is eligible for membership in the state legislature.

Each house has the authority, given by the Alabama Constitution, to punish its members. With the concurrence of two-thirds of either house, a member may be expelled. A member who has been expelled for corruption is not thereafter eligible for membership in either house. Sections 53 and 54, Alabama Constitution of 1901.

Election and Terms of Members

Members of the House and the Senate are elected, for four-year terms, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the even years which are not leap years. Their terms begin on the day following their election. Their terms expire on the day after the election of their successors four years later. Section 46, Alabama Constitution of 1901. Amendment 57 to the Alabama Constitution of 1901, provides that each house shall judge the qualifications of its members.

Organizational Session

The state legislature meets in Organizational Session on the second Tuesday in January following the election of



members. The only business that may be transacted at such a session is the organization of the legislature for the ensuing four years, the election of House and Senate officers, the appointment of standing and interim committees, the canvassing of election returns and the determination of contested elections.

During the Organizational Session, the House membership elects a speaker who has the duty of presiding over the House of Representatives. The House membership also elects a speaker pro tem to preside over the House in the absence of the speaker.

The Senate is presided over by the lieutenant governor. During the Organizational Session, the Senate chooses a president pro tempore to preside in the absence of the lieutenant governor.

Pursuant to Section 53 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901, the House and the Senate adopt rules of procedure for the next four years.

Legislative Committees

The standing committees of each house are established by the rules of each house. These committees, which are required by the Alabama Constitution, operate throughout the session for the consideration of legislation assigned to them.

Committee members are named at the Organizational Session and hold membership throughout their terms. The members of House standing committees are appointed by the speaker of the House. Members of Senate standing committees are appointed by the senate president pro tem.

Length of Sessions

Amendment 339 to the Alabama Constitution of 1901, requires the state legislature to meet in annual regular sessions. Each regular session is limited to 30 legislative days within 105 calendar days. Each special session called by the governor is limited to 12 legislative days within 30 calendar days.

A legislative day is a day on which either house of the legislature is actually in session. Normally, the legislature will meet in session two days per week and schedule committee work on the other days.

Types of Bills

Amendment 397 to the Alabama Constitution of 1901, states that a general law is a law which in its terms and effect applies either to the whole state or to one or more municipalities of the state less than the whole in a class.

A special or private law is one which applies to an individual, association or corporation. A local law is a law which is not a general law or a special or private law.

Section 11-40-12, Code of Alabama 1975, establishes eight classes of municipalities based on population. The legislature has the authority to pass measures which affect only those municipalities within a specified class or classes. Such classification legislation is defined as general law by Amendment 397 to the Alabama Constitution. Any legislation which has application to only one municipality must be advertised prior to introduction according to the provisions of Section 106 of Alabama Constitution of 1901.

Section 106, as amended by Amendment 341, states that notice of all local bills must be published, prior to introduction, at least once a week for four consecutive weeks in some newspaper published in the county. If no newspaper is published in the county, then the notice must be posted, prior to introduction, for two consecutive weeks at five different places in the county.

Steps in Passing Legislation

If a member of the legislature decides that a proposal has merit and that legislation should be enacted, the legislator prepares a bill or has a bill prepared for introduction into the house of which he or she is a member. That legislator then becomes the sponsor of the bill. All bills introduced must be prepared by the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) as directed by a member of the Legislature.

LSA is the principal bill drafting and legal research office serving the Legislature of the state of Alabama. LSA is a great source of information to the citizens of Alabama on all things relating to current legislation and historical legislative information.

Once bills are prepared by LSA, they are often introduced in both houses of the legislature on or about the same date. This practice is not prohibited except Section 70 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901, requires that all bills raising revenues shall originate in the House of Representatives. There is no limitation upon the number of sponsors that may sign a particular bill.

After introduction, the bill is assigned a consecutive number, for convenience and reference, and is read by title only. This action is known as the first reading of the bill. The speaker of the House of Representatives or the president pro tempore

of the Senate, depending on the body where the bill was introduced, refers the bill to a standing committee of the House or the Senate.

Section 62 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901, states that no bill shall become a law until it has been referred to a standing committee of each house, acted upon by that committee in session, and returned from that committee to the chamber for passage.

Standing committees are charged with the important responsibility of examining bills and recommending action to the full House or Senate. At some time when the House or Senate is not in session, the committees of each house will meet and consider the bills which have been referred to them and decide whether or not particular bills should be reported to the full membership. It is during these committee sessions that members of the general public are given an opportunity to speak for or against the measures being considered by the standing committees.

Bills which are favorably acted upon by the standing committees are reported to the entire house for consideration and are placed on the regular calendar. Bills reported unfavorably are placed on the adverse calendar. If a committee fails to act, the membership of each house, by a vote, may require the committee to act and report its action to the body at its next meeting.

The committee reports a bill to the full house when the reports of the committees are called. The bill is given its second reading at that time and is placed on the calendar. The second reading is by title only.

Section 63 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901, requires that every bill be read on three different days in each house and that each bill be read at length on final passage.

Bills are listed on the calendar by number, sponsor and title in the order in which they are reported from committee. Bills are considered for a third reading (passage) in the order of the calendar unless action is taken to consider a bill out of regular order.

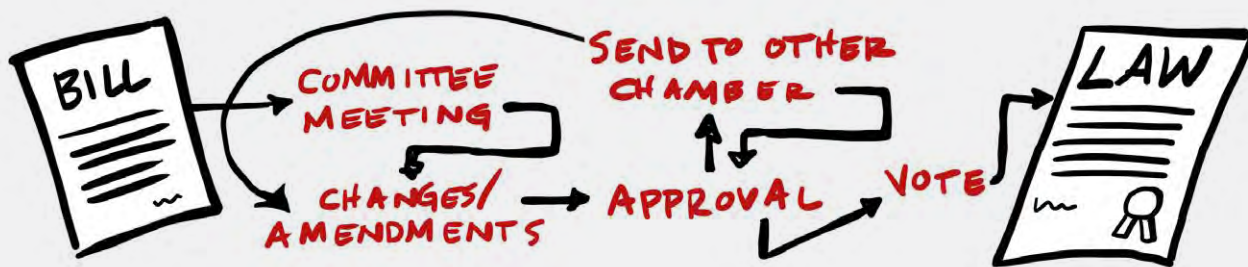
Important bills can be brought to the top of the order by special order or by a suspension of the rules. Special orders are recommended by the Rules Committee and must be adopted by a majority vote. In the final days of a session, both houses usually operate daily on special order calendars. When a bill comes up for consideration, the entire membership of the house considers its passage. The bill is read at length, studied and debated. In general, regular parliamentary rules of procedure apply when a bill is being debated on final passage. Each house has special rules which limit debate. A majority vote in each house is necessary for passage of legislation except in cases where the Constitution requires more than a simple majority. For example, a proposed Constitutional Amendment must receive the vote of three-fifths of all members elected. Section 284, Alabama Constitution of 1901. In a special session, any legislation not covered in the governor's call, or proclamation, must receive a two-thirds vote in each house. Section 76, Alabama Constitution of 1901.

Bills passed in one house are sent to the other house by a formal message and the bills then receive their first reading in the second house. Proposals go through the same procedure in the second house: committee study and report, second and third readings and floor debate and votes.

If the second house passes the bill without amendment, it goes back to the originating house for enrollment. If a bill is amended in the second house, it must be returned to the first house for consideration of the amendment. The first house may vote to concur or not to concur, in which case the bill dies. The first house may vote not to concur and request a conference committee to work out the differences between the two bills. If the other house agrees to a conference, the presiding officers of each house appoint members to the conference committee.

The conference committee meets and tries to reconcile the differences in the two versions of the bill. If agreement is reached and both houses adopt the conference committee report, the bill is finally passed.

Sometimes a house may refuse to adopt the report of the conference committee and ask for a further conference. If the committee is still unable to reach an agreement, it may ask to be discharged and request the appointment of another conference committee to begin the process again. If the conferees never agree, the bill is lost.



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When a bill is passed in both houses in identical form, it is enrolled or copied in its final form and sent to the house of origin for signature by the presiding officer in the presence of the members. The measure is then sent to the second house where it is also signed by the presiding officer in the presence of the members. Then the bill is sent to the governor. The governor is not required to sign proposed Constitutional amendments, they are sent directly to the secretary of state for submission to voters for ratification at the time prescribed in the legislation.

Action by the Governor

When a bill reaches the governor, they may sign it and thus complete the enactment of a bill into law. However, if the governor objects to the bill, they may veto it or suggest amendments to the bill and return it to the house of origin. The bill is then reconsidered, first by the originating house and, if passed, by the second house. If a majority of the members elected to each house agree to the proposed amendments, the bill is returned to the governor for their signature. If both houses cannot agree to the governor's amendments or if the governor proposes no amendments but returns the measure, the bill has, in effect, been vetoed. The houses then may try to override the governor's veto. An affirmative vote of 18 senators and 53 representatives is required to override the governor's veto.

If the governor fails to return a bill to the house of origin within six days after it is presented to them, Sundays excepted, the bill becomes law without the governor's signature, unless the return was prevented by recess or adjournment. In such a case, the bill must be returned within two days after the legislature reassembles or the bill becomes law without the governor's signature. Bills which reach the governor less than five days before the end of the session may be approved by them within 10 days after adjournment. Bills not approved within that time do not become law. This is known as the pocket veto. The governor has the authority to approve or disapprove any item or items of an appropriation bill without vetoing the entire bill.

Budget Isolation Resolutions

Amendment 448 to the Alabama Constitution of 1901, states that the governor must submit a proposed budget to the legislature by the second day of each regular session. The legislature must make the basic appropriations necessary for the current budgetary period before passing any other legislation. However, if three-fifths of a quorum adopt a resolution declaring that this restriction does not apply to a certain bill, that bill may proceed to final passage. This is known as the budget isolation resolution and permits the legislature to enact legislation prior to adopting a budget.

Unfunded Mandates

The Alabama Constitution provides that any general law whose purpose or effect is to require a new or increased expenditure of funds held or disbursed by the governing body of a municipality or county, or instrumentality thereof, shall not take effect unless (1) it is approved by the affected governing bodies or (2) the legislature provides funding to pay for the mandate or (3) the legislature passes the legislation by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those voting in each house. Amendment 621 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901.

The amendment does not apply to: (1) local laws; (2) acts requiring expenditures of school bonds; (3) acts defining new crimes or amending definitions of crimes; (4) acts adopted prior to the ratification of the amendment; (5) acts adopted to comply with federal mandates, only to the extent of the federal mandate; (6) an act adopted or enacted by two-thirds of those voting in each house of the Legislature and any rule or regulation adopted to implement that act; (7) acts determined by the Legislative Fiscal Office to have an aggregate insignificant fiscal impact on affected governments; or (8) acts of general application prescribing the minimum compensation for public officials. The term "aggregate insignificant fiscal impact" shall mean any impact less than \$50,000 annually on all affected governments statewide.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to give the reader a basic understanding of the Alabama Legislature as well as the process for introducing and passing legislation. It is important for municipalities to have a good basic understanding of Alabama's legislative process. For further questions relating to Alabama's Legislature and the legislative process, contact the Legislative Services Agency (LSA). For questions relating to legislation affecting municipalities, please contact ALM's Advocacy or Legal Departments. ■

Building on Our Roots

Governor Kay Ivey



As I reflect on the last few years, I cannot help but be proud of where we are as a state and most importantly, where we are headed. Simply put, Alabama has grown in ways many of us could have never imagined. By investing in our workforce and critical infrastructure, we have built the most successful, robust economy in state history that has paved the way for 73,000 new, high-wage jobs and more than \$40 billion in new investments. We've made great strides in addressing our prison infrastructure and have enacted legislation like the Nick Risner Act and Aniah's Law to bolster public safety. With the support of the Alabama Legislature, I am proud we have made the largest investment in education in our state's history, and together, we have also set forth the most transformative education agenda in 50 years. There is no doubt we have much to be proud of, and none of this would have been possible without the support of Alabama's municipal governments. I am incredibly thankful for the partnerships my administration has built with our city and town leaders. The role these local governments play in moving Alabama forward cannot be understated, and I'm looking forward to engaging our local leaders to deliver even more progress to the people of Alabama.

As a former teacher, I truly believe Alabama's future is our children, and we must ensure everything possible is being done to set them up for success. We still have areas of opportunity to better prepare our students to be the leaders of tomorrow. There are plenty of areas where we have shown encouraging improvement, but the fact remains that we still have more work to do. We laid the groundwork in my first term to address many of these issues, and now, it is time to execute. As governor, I firmly believe parents must be involved, engaged and empowered if our students are to achieve high academic success. It's imperative that we have meaningful discussions about school choice in Alabama, and that begins with us making needed reforms to our existing choice – charter schools. Our students' education is the single most important issue facing Alabama, and you can be sure that I will utilize every possible resource and partnership available to produce better outcomes for our K-12 learners.

We hit the ground running in my first term and secured the passage of the Rebuild Alabama Act, which has truly been transformational for Alabama's cities and towns and our state as a whole. Now, it is my intention to do the same with our state's deployment of broadband infrastructure. The electric divide of the last century presented consequences for those without electricity. Today, we are facing much of the same with broadband. If there's one thing that's abundantly clear, access to high-speed internet is imperative to living a healthy life in this digital age – it's how we work, play and communicate. So far, state grants have extended high-speed access to more than 61,000 Alabama households and businesses. We have made great progress in developing our broadband infrastructure via the Middle-Mile Network project, which will lead our state to be the model for the nation when it comes to providing broadband capabilities. Our work is far from over, and we will continue to diligently target areas with the greatest need until Alabama is fully connected.

After spending most of my adult life in public service, I've come to understand there are always places we can improve and better serve our citizens, and I can promise you that my administration will continue to strive for perfection. In 2017, I committed myself to heading up a state government that would be open, honest and transparent. That will not change moving forward – we will make much-needed reforms to ensure your state government works with even greater efficiency, accountability and transparency. During my first term, I signed well over half a billion dollars in tax cuts into law, and in my second term, I will do much of the same with unneeded, burdensome government regulations that hamper the progress of our small businesses, local governments and citizens. My first substantial act in doing so, the Red Tape Reduction EO, is well underway and will reduce regulatory restrictions by 25% over the next two years.

The success of Alabama truly begins with the success of our municipalities. Without strong leadership at the local level, our efforts in Montgomery simply wouldn't have the desired impact. The next four years represent more great opportunities to move Alabama forward, and our cities, towns and the Alabama League of Municipalities will be vital to our future successes. ■

State and City Officials Working Together is Key to Alabama's Future Success

Lt. Governor Will Ainsworth

As the new legislative quadrennium begins, I look forward to continuing to work closely with the mayors, council members, and members of the Alabama League of Municipalities who visit my office on a seemingly weekly basis as we seek solutions to the challenges that confront our state.

G.K. Chesterton, a social observer who was among the most prolific writers of the 20th century, once noted, “The only purely popular government is local, and founded on local knowledge. The citizens can rule the city because they know the city,” and as a state official, I find much truth in his statement.

If Alabama is going to continue its successes in economic development, job creation, and other areas on the state level, it will require the full participation, commitment and cooperation of the men and women who hold office on the local level, so I appreciate the opportunity to share some of my highest legislative priorities in this column.

Since taking office, workforce development has been one of my passion projects as I believe it holds the key to continuing to recruit, retain and expand high-paying, long-lasting, 21st century jobs.

A few years ago, a car dealer in Scottsboro told me that he was unable to locate additional technicians who could work on today’s highly-advanced automobiles, and officials at Pinnacle Manufacturing in Boaz said welders and painters who could meet their needs were in short supply. It stood to reason that if these small employers were struggling to find qualified workers, the numerous automobile manufacturers and other large industries across the state were experiencing similar issues.

For the past decade, Alabama has lead not only the southeast, but the entire nation, in economic development categories, and the state’s Department of Commerce could fill a room with all of the “Silver Shovel” awards and other industrial recruitment honors it has captured in recent decades.

But my conversations with business owners convinced me that if we are going to continue our forward progress and provide even more jobs, hope and security to Alabama’s families, our attention must begin to focus upon ensuring our workforce is prepared to fill the needs of employers.

The Lieutenant Governor’s Commission on a 21st Century Workforce that I formed and other initiatives I have led are making a difference in both industrial recruitment and the lives of everyday Alabamians, so I will once again ask the legislature to increase funding for workforce development across the state. I appreciate the fact that during my first term as lieutenant governor, lawmakers devoted additional dollars to workforce development each year, .

As lieutenant governor, I also chair the Joint Legislative Study Commission on Renewing Economic Development Incentives, a panel that is delivering solid recommendations for the renewal of the Growing Alabama Act and the Alabama Jobs Act, and in order to remain competitive with our sister southeastern states, the legislature must quickly ratify the committee’s findings into law.

And as the leader of the Military Stability Commission, we must protect the military bases and other assets located here by continuing to make Alabama the nation’s friendliest state for active service members, dependents and veterans. The commission has accomplished much through legislation it has promoted over the past years, but there is still work yet to be done and bills yet to be passed.

I believe all Alabama children should have access to a world-class public education and none should have the quality of their instruction determined by the zip code in which they live. With the authorization and continuing expansion of charter schools and school choice across the state, we have given parents a measure of decision-making power over how their children are taught, but lagging standardized test scores and other measures indicate we can do more to reform and improve the educational opportunities that Alabama provides.



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2023 Preview and Update

Senate Pro Tem Greg Reed

The 2022 legislative session was critical and impactful for the continued economic growth across Alabama. We are proud of the successful passage of numerous, significant pieces of legislation to benefit our state's municipalities. The Alabama legislature adjourned on April 7, with the primary and general elections on the horizon for many legislators. As we reflect on the past session and look ahead to the next, I commend my colleagues in the Senate for their unwavering commitment to delivering streamlined government to their constituents.

In January, Governor Kay Ivey called a special session to spend the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Funds, and we responsibly appropriated over \$700 million across the state. Of that, over \$240 million was directed to the Alabama Digital Expansion Authority to build modern and state-of-the-art broadband infrastructure, connecting unserved/underserved Alabamians. Additionally, the Senate appropriated a large portion of the ARPA funds to improve water and sewer infrastructure in rural areas.

The 2022 session provided much-needed relief to small businesses and working families. To this end, the Senate passed the Business Privilege Tax Bill for Small Businesses which slashes taxes and saves the state's businesses money. The new law is projected to provide \$23 million in tax relief to over 230,000 small businesses across Alabama. Additionally, Senate Bill 152 was vital in saving taxpayers money by ensuring they weren't penalized on their state income taxes for the increased child tax credits they received through the federal ARPA legislation. This win could save families across Alabama an estimated \$87 million in this year alone.

Following last year's productive session and our many wins for Alabama's economy, we look forward to building on this success and delivering significant legislation in the 2023 session that will have a positive impact for all Alabamians.

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Speaker of the House Offers Open Door and Friendly Ear to Needs of Cities and Towns Across Alabama

House Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter

Over the course of the past few years, Alabama has progressed as never before in our history, and in many areas, we have become the envy not only of our sister southeastern states, but the rest of the nation, as well.

We have made great improvements in public education over the past several years. Classroom spending is at record levels, proration has become a dusty relic, and we have placed a renewed emphasis on literacy and STEM instruction.

We have helped create more than 65,000 new jobs, attracted \$45 billion in investments and supercharged Alabama's economy as never before in our history.

We have brought the miracle of high-speed broadband internet to rural areas that struggled with the frustration of dial-up service and other antiquated technology for far too long.

We have toughened our fight against crime and begun to battle the pain that fentanyl and other illicit drugs inflict on too many of our family, friends and neighbors.

We have opened the doors to mental health treatment for those Alabamians who struggle daily and desperately seek a measure of hope.

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2023 Legislative Session Outlook

Senate Majority Leader Clay Scofield

Following a very productive 2022 legislative session Senate Republicans are approaching the 2023 session with a spirit of determination, ready to help move our state forward. The work that Senate Republicans chose to prioritize this past session will have a tremendous impact on the future of our state. The Senate passed various bills that will bring substantial relief to businesses and individuals, expand broadband connectivity, protect our Second Amendment rights, safeguard the integrity of our elections and enhance the quality of life for Alabamians in a variety of different ways.

As we identify our goals for the 2023 legislative session, our focus will rest on a pro-business, pro-growth agenda, positioning Alabama to remain competitive on a national stage. We will propose additional legislation to create solutions that address the lack of high-speed internet access in rural and unserved communities and we will allocate federal funds appropriately, concentrating on projects that contain a return on investment if possible. These issues have been and will continue to be some of our Caucus' top priorities. Senate Republicans will remain steadfast in our efforts to develop an environment where business thrives, jobs are generated and a modern, robust infrastructure supports our economy.

I am confident that we will enter the 2023 legislative session with the same eagerness we held last year, ready to hit the ground running and yield quality results for the people of Alabama. I would like to thank our Pro Tem Greg Reed for his efficient leadership and for the meaningful work that took place under his direction. I would also like to thank the Alabama League of Municipalities for bringing our attention and awareness to critical needs across our state. I look forward to working with the League as we continue to make our state a better place for all, and I am confident that Alabama's future is bright. ■



It's Time to Work Together to Help Alabamians

Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton

As we enter the new 2023-2024 Legislative Quadrennium, I am excited about the progress we have achieved during the previous legislative sessions; and I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance Alabama in areas such as affordable housing, broadband expansion, women's health care, Medicaid expansion and increasing minority contract opportunities within the state.

Although unemployment is down and wages are up across the state, the need for safe and affordable housing for working families is still a problem. By working with state and federal agencies, I would like to see more funding set aside so that hardworking families can achieve home ownership in Alabama.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the digital divide within our state, especially in rural areas and the Black Belt. However, by working with Gov. Kay Ivey and her Alabama Connectivity Plan, each month we are connecting more and more previously disconnected homes to high-speed internet. Since 2018, Alabama has invested \$63.9 million of state dollars through grant awards supporting 100 projects through the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund, and we will continue to do so.

Alabama banned abortions throughout the state during the previous legislative session. Yet, there was no expansion of women's prenatal care, postnatal care or general wellness health care for mothers. We must do better as a state. Therefore, I plan to work on legislation to rectify this glaring deficiency in services. Additionally, I will fight to expand Medicaid so that we can offer more medical and mental health services to those in need throughout our state.

As Alabama grows and we work to build our infrastructure, it is important that minority businesses are allowed to participate in these great opportunities. We have been negligent in the past at making sure that minority businesses

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Legislature Should Remain Focused on Keeping Alabama a Place Where the American Dream is Not Only Possible, But Probable

House Majority Leader Scott Stadthagen



As we embark on the next legislative quadrennium, we will be joined by more than two dozen new colleagues in the Alabama House of Representatives. With each new member comes new ideas, creative solutions to their district's issues and a fresh set of eyes on our state's legislative process.

One thing that all members, newly elected and veteran legislators, have in common is the desire to see Alabama grow and to see every community in our state reach its full potential. That means seeing meaningful, effective economic development occur around the state which requires us to maintain a low-tax, low red tape environment so that businesses can thrive. Removing unnecessary obstacles to the creation and expansion of businesses is key to fostering a healthy economy. Large cities and small towns share a desire to grow and that is why an effective economic development plan is so important. Every legislator wants to be a resource to assist every community in their district in this area.

As we focus on economic development, however, it is important to remember that all economic development success does not come in the form of a newly recruited company. The growth and expansion of existing businesses is as important as the recruitment of new industries and both types of economic development should be held in equal regard. We must always remember that every Alabama business, large and small, is an example of the reality of the American Dream.

As we move forward into this legislative session, we should remain focused on keeping Alabama a great place to do business and a place where the American Dream is not only possible, but probable. ■

Together, We Can Make 2023 Transformational

House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels



While preparing for the upcoming 2023 Alabama Legislative Session, it is vital that we recognize the new and emerging challenges facing Alabama in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and that we pledge to renew our commitment to finding common-sense and innovative solutions to improve the lives of every Alabamian.

Although we have worked hard to pass legislation to ensure a long-term strong economic recovery and spur new investments, we must continue to do more to help small Alabama businesses thrive. It's time to consider innovative ideas such as eliminating the Overtime Payroll Tax, which would be a tremendous help to hard-working Alabamians. By implementing these types of pro-worker and pro-business ideas, along with providing greater access to capital and training, Alabama will continue to grow and attract the jobs of tomorrow. Ideas like increasing access to childcare for those reentering the workforce is a win for employers and workers. This is how we can create a transformational economic engine fueled by entrepreneurship and wise investments.

Similarly, we must build on our successes when it comes to Alabama's public school system. Of course, as in-person classroom instruction resumed after the pandemic, we were pleased to learn that Alabama students were able to hold their scores steady, while many other states fell far behind. This is a demonstrable testament to the dedication and resourcefulness of our public school educators and administrators. Furthermore, this last year we were able to pass the largest Education Trust Fund budget in Alabama history which allowed for increases in teacher pay, funding for auxiliary teachers, classroom supplies and incentives to bolster teacher recruitment and retention. In addition, we increased funding for pre-K programs because we know that investing early in a child's education pays big dividends for them later in life. By continuing and expanding on these significant efforts, we can make public education in 2023 truly transformational.

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Q&A with U.S. Senator Katie Britt

Who was your greatest inspiration and why?

My parents, who taught me the value and dignity of hard work. They worked 6-7 days a week to make ends meet for our family. They not only modeled the work ethic that Wesley and I now try to instill in our two children, but my parents – as two small business owners in the Wiregrass – also sparked my passion for small business from an early age. They taught me that good employers cut their check last and their experiences dealing with red tape and the especially heavy tax burden placed on the backs of small businesses inform some of my foundational beliefs to this day.



What is your vision for Alabama, and how will you strengthen and support statewide quality-of-life initiatives – particularly in rural Alabama?

I want to be a partner to local and state leaders in building strong, safe communities in every corner of Alabama. Every child across our state should have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream, regardless of their zip code. I believe that a quality education is the key to unlocking this pathway for children. Whether it is on this issue or any of the challenges and opportunities facing Alabama, from workforce development and highspeed broadband internet access to the opioid crisis and mental health care access, I want to help identify and implement tangible solutions that will make a lasting, positive impact on the everyday lives of hardworking Alabamians and the ability of future generations to thrive. Ultimately, I want Alabama to be a place where my children want to raise their children.

What are some of the issues facing our state and nation that are of greatest concern to you?

In addition to items especially important to our state such as education, workforce development, the labor participation rate, highspeed broadband internet access and mental health care access, our nation is faced with a plethora of serious issues right now. This includes securing America's southwestern border, curbing inflation, achieving energy independence and dominance, onshoring domestic manufacturing and critical industries, combatting rising violent crime and securing peace through strength abroad. One of the top national issues I am focused on from day one in the Senate is ending the flood of fentanyl that is destroying families and stealing lives while pouring into our communities. My team and I will ensure that we are listening to local leaders and constituents on the ground who are experiencing firsthand the ramifications of these issues daily.





What inspired you to become a public servant and pursue a leadership role not only for our state, but our nation?

I firmly believe that you need to be the change you want to see in the world. It's time for the next generation to get off the sidelines and fight to preserve the American Dream for our children and our children's children. Alabama is my home – the home that I love and in which I believe. We have great people, with a great story to tell. I want to be a leader that makes our state proud and ensures we always have the best possible seat at the table.

As a U.S. Senator, how do you plan to work with Alabama's municipalities?

I know local leaders know best, and I want to be your proactive partner in securing a bright future for generations of Alabamians to come. My door will always be open to Alabama's local leaders, and I look forward to working collaboratively alongside you for the betterment of your communities and our entire state.

As Alabama's first elected female to the U.S. Senate, as well as one of the youngest people elected to this critical position, what advice or words of encouragement do you offer young people, especially young women, who are considering running for office?

The world certainly places limitations on each of us, but I've found that the limitations we place on ourselves do the most damage. I believe that my journey to the Senate is proof that the American Dream is alive and well – if you work hard and seize opportunity in this country, anything is possible. So dream big while sweating the small details, reach for the stars and work meticulously to reach them and control what you can control – especially how you treat people.

Tell us something about Katie Britt that we wouldn't read in your bio.

An important part of my routine that I really enjoy is my morning walking group. Each weekday I am at home, I wake up at 5:00 a.m., and we walk while seemingly solving all the world's problems. We discuss our families, our lives and the issues we're seeing impact them. This helps me as a mom know more about what's happening at school and in our community, and it also helps me get more perspective on challenges facing Alabamians every day. ■





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Understanding ALISON: Alabama Legislative Information System Online

Kayla Bass • Deputy Director • ALM

Understanding ALISON

For those of you who are new to municipal office, legislative advocacy is a primary function of your Alabama League of Municipalities. In fact, it's so important that the League staff relies heavily on our members to be an active part of the process. That being said, we make sure you have all the necessary information to be an effective advocate throughout the legislative session. You will receive weekly reports from our office during each legislative session via our legislative e-newsletter, the *State House Advocate*, a critical part of our advocacy

process that reviews the actions taken by the Alabama Legislature the previous week and outlines what we expect to take place during the upcoming week. Often times we will ask you to personally advocate on behalf of your municipality during the session to enhance our lobbying efforts. The *State House Advocate* and occasional Monday morning coffee and conversation conference calls will provide you with key information as well as important contact information and online resources to help you with those efforts. Online resources that will assist you with those efforts, such as how to schedule a meeting with your lawmaker and tips on meeting with your lawmaker, can be found on the League's website under the Legislative Advocacy section. Of particular importance is ALISON (Alabama Legislative Information System Online), the website for the Legislature.

ALISON – A Valuable Advocacy Resource

Please familiarize yourself with ALISON, the Alabama Legislature's website and legislative tracking system: www.legislature.state.al.us. Built in-house by the Legislature's tech staff, not only is ALISON the resource we will direct you to most often for information the League is tracking, you may also find that you want to independently research a legislative action, read a bill or know how your local representatives voted on certain legislative actions. ALISON provides a wealth of information, including an overview of the

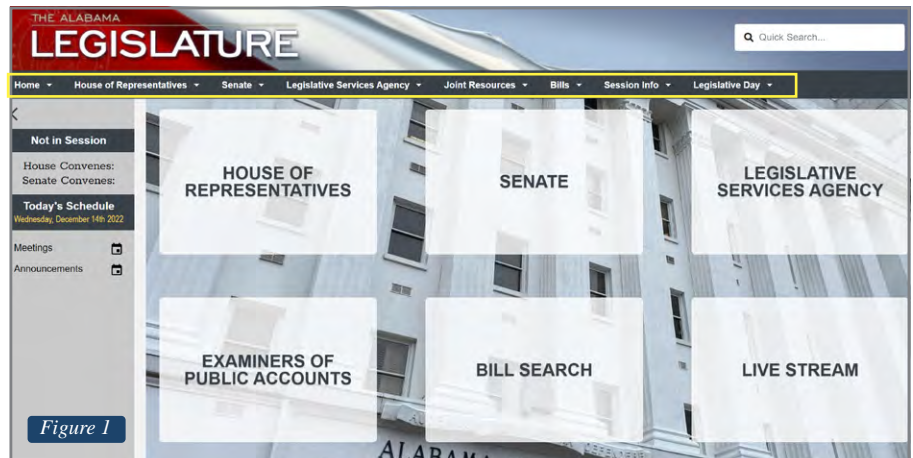


Figure 1

legislative process, House and Senate Rules, contact information for the House and Senate, session information (House and Senate Special Order Calendars, prefiled bills, bills, resolutions, confirmation, committees, etc.), meetings and announcements as well as links to other resources. ALISON's web address, www.legislature.state.al.us, will take you to their opening page. There you will see the following tabs: Home, House of Representatives, Senate, Legislative Services Agency, Joint Resources, Bills, Session Info and Legislative Day. (See Figure 1)

Who are my legislators, and what committees do they serve on?

To quickly reach your legislators, click on the "House of Representatives" or "Senate" tab at the top of the opening page. From there, click "House Leaders and Members" and then click "House Members." Once you have clicked "House Members,"



Figure 2

you will notice each member of the House listed with tabs to view their contact information, bio, committees they serve on and bills they have sponsored. The same goes for Senate members. These links will be particularly important when you are asked by the League to reach out to your lawmaker(s) or committee(s) to advocate for or against a bill being debated. (See Figures 2 and 3)

Session Info

Another important resource via ALISON, is the “Session Info” tab on the homepage, which will link you to a variety of options regarding the legislative session.

This will take you to a page allowing you to quickly access several important categories such as the Special Order Calendars, Bills, Resolutions, etc. (See Figure 4)

Finding the Status of a Bill

During legislative session, you may want to locate bills in an effort to research what impact it could have on your community. If so, click “Bills” at the top of the homepage. This will link you to several options that will be helpful in your search for legislation. You have the option to search all bills, bills by a House or Senate sponsor or prefiled bills. (See Figure 5)

Legislative Day

The “Legislative Day” tab along the top of the ALISON website will provide you with House and Senate Special Reports, Special Order Calendars (as they are adopted), Current Matter before the bodies and Legislative Audio/Video. (See Figure 6)

Conclusion

While ALISON can be somewhat counter intuitive, it is the best resource for staying current during the legislative session. The League will absolutely need your participation throughout the 2023 Regular Session to promote our legislative priorities and to stop any bills that threaten local government. As mentioned above, your weekly *State House Advocate* and Monday coffee and conversation conference calls will review the session week by week and will ask for specific engagement. A link to ALISON is always prominently displayed at the end of the e-newsletter and you will most likely find yourself visiting ALISON often during the legislative session so please take some time to become comfortable navigating the site. As always, we appreciate your engagement and thank you for your support! ■

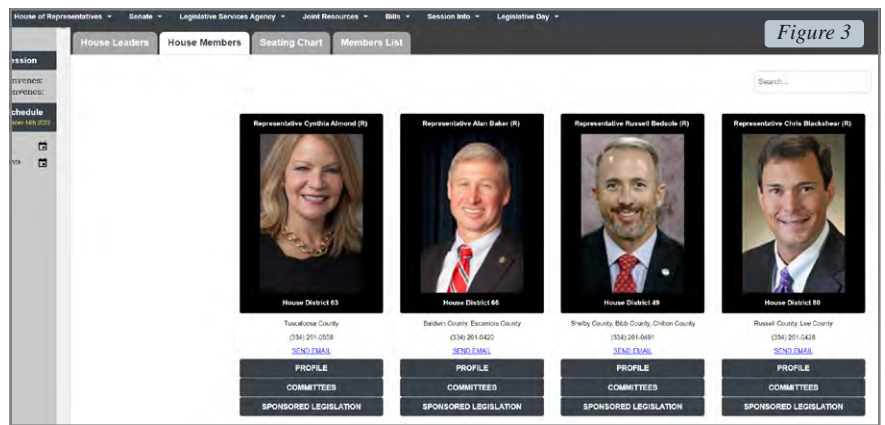


Figure 3

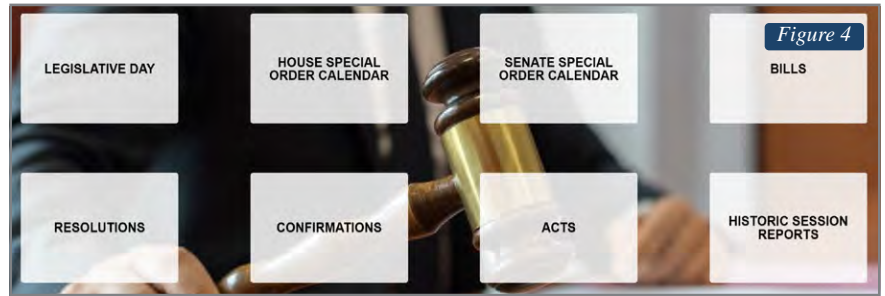


Figure 4

MY BILLS | BILLS - SEARCH CURRENT SESSION | BILL TEXT SEARCH | BILLS - SEARCH ALL SESSIONS | BILLS BY HOUSE SPONSOR | BILLS BY SENATE SPONSOR | PREFILED BILLS

Search bills

YEAR	BILL	SPONSOR	SESSION	BODY	SUBJECT	TITLE	COMMITTEE	PREFILED
2022	SB1	Alan	Regular Session 2022	Senate	Firearms	Firearms, possession and carrying of, certain requirements for, repeated or denied	Judiciary	06/16/2021
2022	SB2	Alan	Regular Session 2022	Senate	Firearms	Firearms, prohibitions on state endorsement of certain federal firearm laws, provided	Judiciary	06/16/2021
2022	SB3	Shelutt	Regular Session 2022	Senate	Crimes and Offenses	Crimes and offenses, sexual assault as first responder, created, not and existing to not, further provided, aggravated not, sexual traffic interference, created, holding period after arrest, provided, penalties for, defining police	Judiciary	05/02/2021
2022	SB4	Neelley	Regular Session 2022	Senate	Prostitutions and Offenses, State Board of	Prostitutions and Offenses, State Board, further defined to include custom-fitted uniforms, off-the-shelf articles (items for hair dresser)	Judiciary	06/09/2021
2022	SB5	Shelutt	Regular Session 2022	Senate	Public Health Department	Public health, prohibits medical procedures on minor children intended to alter appearance of gender with exceptions, provides for certain disclosures by school officials, establishes criminal penalties	Healthcare	06/10/2021
2022	HB1	Murphy	Regular Session 2022	House	Employment	Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, to provide workplace protections against pregnancy discrimination and related medical conditions	Judiciary	06/29/2021
2022	HB2	Tracyway	Regular Session 2022	House	Crimes and Offenses	Crimes and offenses, sexual assault as first responder, created, not and existing to not, further provided, aggravated not, and sexual traffic interference, created, holding period after arrest, provided, penalties for, defining police	Judiciary	06/10/2021
2022	HB3	Tracyway	Regular Session 2022	House	Emergency Management	Emergency management, clarifies that emergency management personnel provide public safety services	Governmental Affairs	06/28/2021
2022	HB4	Harris	Regular Session 2022	House	Education	Education, prohibits public institutions of higher education from providing support for organizations affiliated with China government	Education Policy	06/29/2021
2022	HB5	Crain	Regular Session 2022	House	Law Enforcement	Law enforcement, use of physical force under certain conditions, prohibs use of deadly force in certain circumstances, recordings, provided, to determine to submit and what portion of a recording to disclose or release established	Public Safety and Homeland Security	06/29/2021
2022	HB6	Shroyer	Regular Session 2022	House	Firearms	Firearms, penalties carry process for second justice arrested	Public Safety and Homeland Security	06/29/2021

Figure 5



Figure 6



By Lori Lein, ALM General Counsel

FAQs: The Alabama Data Breach Notification Act

Passed in 2018, the Data Breach Notification Act is codified in Chapter 38 of Title 8 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. The Act only protects Alabama residents and requires covered entities to notify any Alabama resident whose sensitive personally identifiable information was acquired (or the covered entity “reasonably believed” was acquired) by an unauthorized person as a result of a data breach.

WHO IS SUBJECT TO THE ACT?

Any entity maintaining sensitive personally identifying information (SPII) including individuals, nonprofits, corporations and governmental entities. Third party agents, e.g. IT providers or IT security companies, who are hired to maintain SPII are also covered by the Act. Federal entities operating under federal law are not subject to the Act.

WHAT DOES THE ACT REQUIRE?

The Act has three primary requirements. A covered entity must: (1) Secure sensitive personally identifying information (SPII); (2) If a breach occurs, investigate the breach; and (3) If a breach occurs, notify those impacted by the breach.

If an entity fails to provide proper notice, it can be subject to civil penalties imposed by the Alabama Attorney General.

WHAT DATA IS PROTECTED?

SPII is defined as a person’s name (full name or first initial and last name) if it’s combined with one of the following:

- Social Security Number (SSN) or tax ID number;
- Driver’s license number or other identifying number issued by the government;
- Bank account, credit card or debit card number if combined with a PIN, security code, password or expiration date;
- Medical information;
- Health insurance policy number or identification number; or
- User name/email address if combined with a password or security questions and answers.

WHAT DOES THE ACT REQUIRE OF AN ENTITY BEFORE A BREACH OCCURS?

Covered entities and third-party agents are required to maintain reasonable security measures to protect SPII from a breach. Entities must consider ALL of the following:

- Designating an employee to coordinate security;
- Identifying internal and external risks;
- Adopting safeguards to address those risks and assess the effectiveness of those safeguards;
- Retention of service providers, if any, that are contractually required to maintain appropriate safeguards for SPII;
- Evaluating and adjusting security measures to account for changes in circumstances; and
- Keeping management, including its board of directors (the city council) informed of the entity’s security status. Governmental entities may receive this information in a properly convened executive session under the Open Meetings Act.

The “reasonableness” of an entity’s security measures can be based upon the entity’s size, the amount of SPII that is acquired, stored or utilized and the costs of implementing security measures.

WHAT DOES THE ACT REQUIRE OF AN ENTITY AFTER A BREACH OCCURS?

If a breach is discovered, the entity must investigate the breach and notify those impacted. The investigation must include the following:

- An assessment of the nature and scope of the breach;
- Identification of any SPII that may have been involved in the breach and who has been impacted;
- A determination of whether a wrongdoer has actually acquired SPII or is reasonably likely to acquire SPII which would likely cause substantial harm to the people impacted; and
- Implementation of measures to restore security and confidentiality of the systems compromised in the breach.

Entities must provide written notice to individuals impacted by the breach as expeditiously as possible and without reasonable delay, taking into account the time needed for

investigation, but in no case later than 45 days of the discovery of the breach.

WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR THE NOTICE TO INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY A BREACH?

Notice can be provided by mail and/or email and shall include, at a minimum, all of the following:

- The date, estimated date, or estimated date range of the breach;
- A description of the SPII acquired;
- A general description of the actions taken by the entity to restore the security and confidentiality of the information involved in the breach;
- A general description of steps an affected individual can take to protect themselves from identity theft; and
- Contact information for the person they can reach out to for inquiries about the breach.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS?

Yes. There are two exceptions to the direct notice requirements.

First, if the notice is not feasible due to any or all of the following:

- Excessive cost given the resources of the entity or if the notice cost would exceed \$500,000;
- Lack of contact information for the impacted individuals; or
- If more than 100,000 people are impacted, in which case, substitute notice can be provided by posting on the entity's website for 30 days, in print or in broadcast media where the impacted people live, or in an alternative way authorized by the attorney general.

Second, if notice would harm a law enforcement investigation the notice can be delayed.

If it is determined that the notice should not be provided, an entity must document that determination and keep supporting records for five years.

ARE THERE OTHER NOTICE REQUIREMENTS BEYOND NOTIFYING INDIVIDUALS?

Yes. If more than 1,000 people are impacted by the breach, the entity must notify the attorney general in writing within 45 days. The notice should provide the following:

- A synopsis of the events surrounding the breach;
 - The approximate number of Alabama citizens impacted;
 - Any free services being offered to impacted individuals, and instructions on how to use those services; and
 - Contact information for who can answer questions about the breach.
- Additionally, if more than 1,000 people are impacted by the breach, the entity must notify all consumer reporting agencies.

WHAT IF THE BREACH HAPPENS WITH A THIRD PARTY AGENT CONTRACTING WITH THE ENTITY FOR SERVICES?

If a third party agent is breached, it must notify the covered entity of the breach within 10 days of its discovery. The entity must then comply with all notice requirements. The entity may contract with the third party to provide required notice.

WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR FAILING TO COMPLY WITH THE ACT?

Governmental entities are required to provide notice of a breach but are exempt from civil penalties. The attorney general can, however, sue the entity to compel performance under the Act.

If a non-governmental entity fails to comply with the Act, the attorney general is the only entity that can pursue civil penalties of up to \$500,000 per breach under the Alabama Deceptive Trade Practices Act. Failure to comply is not a criminal offense and individuals cannot sue a covered entity for violating the Act. ■

Lori joined the League's legal department in 2001, bringing with her a solid background in local government issues after practicing law in Montgomery, Alabama, where her primary clients were county officials. In addition, she gained in-depth experience working with the state legislature while serving as a legislative analyst for the Alabama Legislative Reference Service for two years. Lori presently serves as the League's General Counsel and is responsible for advising municipal officials and employees from over 400 member cities and towns. She also works closely with the League's state and federal legislative agenda and is a frequent speaker on issues relating to municipal law in Alabama. Originally from Las Cruces, New Mexico, Lori received a bachelor of science degree from Auburn University's College of Engineering in Textile Management and Technology in 1992 and then returned to New Mexico and earned her law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 1996. She is licensed to practice law in Alabama, New Mexico and Colorado. Additionally, she is a member of the International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA), the Alabama Association of Municipal Attorneys (AAMA) and the American Bar Association.



CYBERSECURITY: What's Bugging You?

Chuck Stephenson • Director of Information Technology • ALM

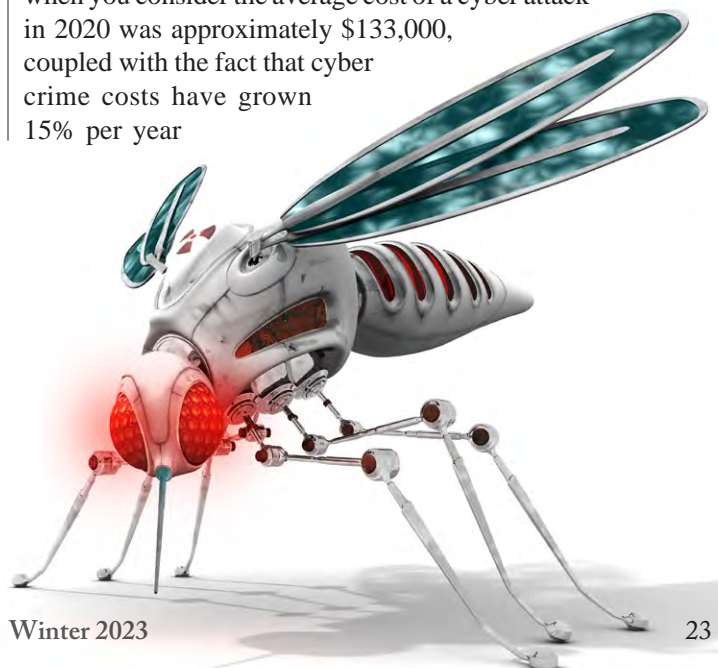
Cybersecurity... it's one of those words that buzz around a lot, like a carpenter bee during summer. It is loud. We know it can cause damage. It may or may not be able to sting us, but we hope that if we ignore it, it will just leave us alone. Unfortunately, if cybersecurity is like a carpenter bee, cybercriminals are like termites. They want to be hidden and ignored. That allows them to do their best/worst work. Most of us own or will own a home at some point in our lifetime. Those that already do know that having your home inspected and treated regularly for termites is essential. Additionally, most of us have some type of pest control treatment in place to prevent other bugs from entering our homes. The company I use for pest control treats the outside of my house to create a barrier that works to deter bugs from getting in.

Now, I know this is supposed to be a cybersecurity article directed to municipal officials, and most of you reading this are wondering if I've gone off the rails. So let me try and bring this full circle. Just as discussed above, none of us want bugs in our homes. We don't want them in our workplaces either. So, in order to try and prevent said bugs from getting in, we have plans in place to treat them. Cybersecurity works very similarly. We have to have the external barriers in place to deter, and hopefully prevent, the bad guys from gaining access to the inside of our networks. These cyber barriers are things like firewalls, anti-virus software and anti-malware software. These are put in place at the perimeter of the network to protect against intrusions. They work together as a layered system that will work together to deter intrusion events. Unfortunately, they, like pest control treatments, aren't 100 percent effective. There is always a chance that a bug (or cybercriminal) could get past them.

What do you do if that happens? I'm glad you asked.... Just like at home or in the office, we do things inside to make it less hospitable for pests that our barriers don't stop. We don't leave open food containers, spills, dirty dishes, etc. out for the bugs to get at. In cybersecurity terms there are things that need to be tended to on a regular basis internally as well. Software patches need to be applied in a timely manner. Passwords should be complex and not used for more than one application/website. Desks should be cleared of any sensitive data/documents (yes,

that means you shouldn't keep your password list under your keyboard!!! Or written down at all...). There should be backups of all data that are performed on a regular basis, kept offsite or in the cloud and tested on a regular basis. A training program should be developed to help employees be better aware of cybersecurity threats and how to eliminate or at least mitigate those threats.

Unfortunately, there is no "magic pill" that can set all of these items in place and configure them to run for you. You may be thinking "We're a small municipality, those bad guys are looking for the big buck hacks, not us." Wrong! According to the local government site governing.com, "The amount of data that municipalities deal with has grown exponentially. Conversely, because they are often operating on a shoestring budget, local governments rarely have dedicated cybersecurity experts; they rely on their IT team to ensure security. However, that IT department often does not have the investment it requires, so holes in their security leave them vulnerable to attacks." Municipalities are unfortunately the "low hanging fruit" if you will. If you don't have an IT staff, you will most likely have to partner with a third-party provider to get much of this done. This, of course, always brings cost into the discussion. Many individuals and organizations then begin to delay or balk altogether at implementing a cybersecurity program. However, when you consider the average cost of a cyber attack in 2020 was approximately \$133,000, coupled with the fact that cyber crime costs have grown 15% per year



annually over the last five years, maybe that strategy isn't such a good idea after all. The cybersecurity firm Cyber Security Ventures, estimated the damage costs of cyber crime to have reached approximately \$8.4 trillion dollars globally in 2022. That is over double the \$3 trillion that it cost in 2015. According to the statistics company Statista, cyber crime global costs will balloon to \$23.82 trillion by 2027.

However, there is some hope on the horizon. Marty Redden, secretary of Information Technology for the state of Alabama, said, "On November 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law by President Joe Biden. One of the initiatives funded by this legislation is the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP); a multi-year program to provide funding opportunities for cybersecurity enhancement and expansion across all levels of state and local government. The state of Alabama is currently preparing its application to receive Alabama's allocation of federal funding tied to this grant program. One of the statutory requirements that must be fulfilled as a part of this process is for Alabama to establish a Cybersecurity Planning Committee with representation from several state and local entities."

So, let's continue our comparison of pest control and home ownership to cybersecurity and business continuity. Another vital piece of the puzzle in combatting termites is having a termite bond. A termite bond acts as an insurance policy against the costs of pest-related damage. Most home buyers and mortgage companies will not approve the purchase of a house without a termite bond. Did you know that there are cyber insurance policies available to organizations? What is cyber insurance? Cyber insurance generally covers your organization's liability for a data breach involving sensitive customer information, such as Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, account numbers, driver's license numbers and health records. Did you know that AMIC provides cyber insurance? If you would like to know more about the insurance that AMIC provides, reach out to Sean Duke, AMIC President. He is very knowledgeable and more than willing to talk to you about the coverages they provide.

Just like the protection of your home, where it doesn't make sense to not have a plan in place to combat pests, it also doesn't make sense to not have a cybersecurity plan in place, both individually for your family and for your municipality. ■

Chuck Stephenson, ALM's Director of Information Technology, appointed to Alabama's Cybersecurity Planning Committee

As mentioned in the previous article, the recently signed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) has a statutory requirement for Alabama to establish a Cybersecurity Planning Committee. The Alabama League of Municipalities is proud to have our very own, Chuck Stephenson, director of information technology, appointed to serve on this critical Committee.

The Committee's purpose shall be to assist in the development, implementation, and revisioning of a Cybersecurity Plan for the state of Alabama, to formally approve the Cybersecurity Plan, to assist with the determination of effective funding priorities for the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP), and to serve in perpetuity as a body tasked with strengthening Alabama's cybersecurity capabilities across the state.

The Committee shall be chaired by the chief information officer (CIO) of the state of Alabama (the "Chair") and its voting membership shall be comprised of representatives as determined by the agency head from the following state agencies and stakeholder entities, or their designated proxy: the State of Alabama Office of Information Technology (OIT); the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA); the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA); the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH); the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE); the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM); and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA).

Stephenson said, "I look forward to working with Secretary Redden and the other members of the committee to come up with a plan to help the communities of Alabama combat the ever-growing threat of cyber criminals. While the threat is a risk for all communities, our smaller cities and towns are particularly at risk." ■



Mayor Walt Maddox of Tuscaloosa Receives Nationwide Disaster Leadership Award

Longtime Tuscaloosa Mayor and former League President (2013-14) Walt Maddox was chosen as the first recipient of a new nationwide award to honor city and county officials who lead their communities well through a major disaster. The Tommy Longo Disaster Leadership Award was created by LeadersLink, a nonprofit that harnesses and shares elected officials' disaster lessons learned to help other communities better prevent, prepare for and recover from crises. Nominations for the award came from around the country, with nominees leading recoveries from wildfires, floods, tornadoes and hurricanes.

Nominated for the award by the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM), the three-judge panel said Mayor Maddox was chosen because of the extraordinary job he did leading Tuscaloosa in the aftermath of a monster EF4 tornado that devastated the Alabama city in April 2011, killing 41 and damaging or destroying more than 5,000 homes and 600 businesses.

"His previous training with FEMA was put into action as he led the response for his community and even more importantly formed the Rebuild Tuscaloosa Task Force which was instrumental in driving the recovery of Tuscaloosa," they wrote.

"While it took almost 10 years, as it often does in large disasters, the community is so much better for Mayor Maddox's leadership in the disaster and in the recovery of his community."

Walt Maddox has been elected five times as mayor of Tuscaloosa and serves as a Harvard Kennedy School crisis leadership fellow. *The Wall Street Journal* described the Tuscaloosa disaster recovery as an attempt to "courageously create a showpiece" of "unique neighborhoods that are healthy, safe, accessible, connected and sustainable."

The award is named after the late mayor of Waveland, Mississippi, John "Tommy" Longo. He led the city's successful recovery from Hurricane Katrina and volunteered to serve as one of LeadersLink's first mentors, sharing what he had learned with other mayors whose towns had been damaged by hurricanes.

LeadersLink Founder and Executive Director Kathleen Koch presented the award to Mayor Maddox this past November during ALM's annual Municipal Leadership Institute in Orange Beach. Family members of Mayor Longo were in attendance to join in the presentation.

"As disasters become more frequent and severe, leaders like Mayor Maddox are a brain trust for those who follow," said Koch. "Sharing what he and others learned who've led their cities through the worst can help speed the recoveries of communities struggling now after major disasters."

For more information about LeadersLink, visit leaderslink.org. ■



2023 CMO Regional Training

February 16 – Spanish Fort • **April 13** – Vestavia Hills • **June 22** – Dothan
July 13 – Athens • **July 27** – Montgomery

www.almonline.org



The League’s CMO Regional Training is specifically designed to allow municipal officials an opportunity for training in fundamental municipal government topics. These one-day meetings offer presentations by ALM staff as well as invited subject matter experts.

8:30 - 8:50 a.m.	Registration
8:50 - 9:00 a.m.	Welcome
9:00 - 9:45 a.m.	The Public Purpose Doctrine (Core Curriculum) <i>ALM Legal Team</i>
9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Break
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Municipal Finance Budgeting and Auditing (Core Curriculum) <i>Barry Crabb, ALM Finance Director</i>
11:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Public Records (Core Curriculum) <i>ALM Legal Team</i>
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch on your own
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Nuisance Abatement <i>Representative, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale</i>
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	CoachSafely <i>Steve Brown, CoachSafely</i>
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:45 - 3:15 p.m.	League Update <i>ALM Legal Team / ALM Advocacy Team</i>

This session has been approved for a total of four and one-half (4.5) Elective Core Curriculum, Basic, Advanced or Emeritus credit hours in the Certified Municipal Official Program. Any municipal employee may register, but only elected officials will be awarded credit hours in the CMO Program. Credit hours are not awarded for duplicate training in the Core Curriculum.

2022 Graduation Ceremonies

November 8, 2022 • 2:00 p.m. • Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, AL

During the League's MLI event in November, the 27th Graduating Class of Certified Municipal Officials totalling fifty-three municipal officials successfully completed the requirements to receive their CMO certification this year. Twenty officials comprising the 24th Graduating Class of the Advanced CMO designation received their certification. The 8th Graduating Class of the CMO Emeritus designation, coincidentally consisting of eight officials, received their CMO Emeritus certification. ***Congratulations, Graduates!***

The Certified Municipal Official Program consists of a series of continuing education programs and specialized webinars designed for elected municipal officials – mayors and councilmembers – who voluntarily wish to receive formal training in municipal government.

2022 CMO Emeriti

- Councilmember Jill Oakley, Albertville
- Councilmember Webb Nall, Atmore
- Councilmember Barry L. Hughes, Bridgeport
- Councilmember Josh Bryant, Fultondale
- Mayor Craig Patterson, Gordo
- Councilmember Michael Gay, Millbrook
- Mayor Mike Lockhart, Muscle Shoals
- Mayor Gary Fuller, Opelika

2022 Advanced CMOs

- Councilmember James Smith, Ashford
- Councilmember Kim Cain, Ashland
- Mayor Jim Staff, Atmore
- Councilmember Teresa Head-Mack, Boligee
- Mayor Hattie Samuels, Boligee
- Councilmember Earnestine Wade, Boligee
- Councilmember Cheryl P. Barton, Brewton
- Councilmember Byron Gaynor, Brundidge
- Councilmember Margaret Ross, Brundidge
- Councilmember D.M. Collins, Center Point
- Councilmember Victoria A. Norris, Elberta
- Councilmember Jerry Caylor, Evergreen
- Mayor Ralph G. Hellmich, Foley
- Councilmember Roy L. Murray, Midway
- Mayor Becky Bracke, Opp
- Councilmember Les Perault, Ozark
- Councilmember Clark Duane Hopper, Rainbow City
- Mayor Joseph R. Taylor, Rainbow City
- Councilmember Edward Pollard, Shorter
- Mayor Donna B. McKay, Wadley

2022 Certified Municipal Officials

- Councilmember Joe Nix, Andalusia
- Councilmember Dianne Ballard, Ashland
- Councilmember Kim Cain, Ashland
- Councilmember Latisher Hall, Brundidge
- Councilmember Marilyn Rodgers, Brundidge
- Councilmember Margaret Ross, Brundidge
- Councilmember Kenneth D. Cost, Calera
- Councilmember Calvin Morgan, Calera
- Councilmember Sharon Jones, Center Point
- Councilmember Tiffany Moore, Center Point
- Councilmember Glenn Williams, Sr., Center Point
- Councilmember Billy Singleton, Clanton
- Councilmember Stacy Carpenter, Clio
- Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan
- Mayor Tom Maddox, Elba
- Councilmember Wes Register, Eufaula
- Mayor Sherry Sullivan, Fairhope
- Mayor Rod Northam, Fayette
- Councilmember Lillian L. Dean, Flomaton
- Councilmember Richard Dayton, Foley
- Mayor Larry Holcomb, Fultondale
- Councilmember Kristi Jennings, Fultondale
- Councilmember Bryan C. Knox, Gardendale
- Councilmember Cody Rampey, Glencoe
- Councilmember Jae'Ques Brown, Greenville
- Mayor J. Brian Puckett, Helena
- Councilmember Walt Simmons, Hokes Bluff
- Councilmember Jeanette Tuck, Jackson's Gap
- Councilmember Jennie Jones, Lincoln
- Councilmember Ranae Bartlett, Madison
- Councilmember Connie Spears, Madison
- Mayor Eric L. Peoples, Mount Vernon
- Councilmember Willis Henry Thompson, Muscle Shoals

continued page 29



Economic Development Academy Graduates 129 Municipal Leaders in its Inaugural Class and Announces Class for 2023

Economic Development Academy - 2023 Class

Brewton, Evergreen, Fairfield, Gardendale, Greensboro, Luverne, Midfield,
Priceville, Semmes, Southside

Graduates of the inaugural Economic Development Academy, along with the municipalities they represent, are listed below:

Region 1

- Mike Ashburn, Scottsboro
- Richard Bailey, Scottsboro
- Nathan Lee, Scottsboro
- Roy Light, Scottsboro
- Jim McCamy, Scottsboro
- Matt LeDuke, Guin
- Mineo Lindsey, Guin
- Phil Segraves, Guin
- Virginia Alexander, Hartselle
- Ken Doss, Hartselle
- Randy Garrison, Hartselle
- Jeremy Griffith, Hartselle
- Jeff Johnson, Hartselle
- Anita Bedwell, Rainbow City
- Clark Hopper, Rainbow City
- Jeff Prince, Rainbow City
- Joe Taylor, Rainbow City
- Allie Allcorn, Oneonta
- Sherry Pierce, Oneonta
- Bekah Phillips, Oneonta
- Jerry Bartlett, Good Hope
- Christie Chamblee, Good Hope
- Susan Eller, Good Hope
- Corey Harbison, Good Hope
- Eric Phillips, Good Hope
- Terry Shabel, Good Hope
- Brad Williams, Cullman Co Ed/Good Hope

Region 2

- Tiffany Bittner, Chelsea
- Chris Grace, Chelsea
- Casey Morris, Chelsea
- Tony Picklesimer, Chelsea
- Scott Weygand, Chelsea
- Melody Whitten, Chelsea
- Jesse Matthews, Bessemer
- Donna Thigpen, Bessemer
- Lisa Baker, Tarrant
- Veronica Freeman, Tarrant
- Buddy Aydelette, Center Point
- D.M. Collins, Center Point
- Ebonee Copeland, Center Point
- Bobby Scott, Center Point
- Glenn Williams, Center Point
- Tonja Baldwin, Lipscomb
- Christine Burrell, Lipscomb
- Barbara Moore, Lipscomb
- Lakendria Poellnitz, Lipscomb
- Michelle Proctor, Lipscomb
- Vanessa Reed, Lipscomb
- Cindy Cuellar, Irondale
- James Saucier, Irondale
- Aaron Sims, Irondale
- James Stewart Jr., Irondale
- Lisa Bright, Trussville
- Buddy Choat, Trussville
- June Mathews, Trussville
- Alan Taylor, Trussville
- Kent Back, Gadsden
- David Hooks, Gadsden
- Kenneth Kirkland, Gadsden
- Kathy Murphy, Gadsden
- Deverick Williams, Gadsden

Region 3

- Kim King, Columbiana
- David Mitchell, Columbiana
- Ashley Phillips, Columbiana
- Charlene Tucker, Columbiana
- Danielle Wooten, Selma
- Clay Carmichael, Selma
- Lesia James, Selma
- Susan Youngblood, Selma
- Billy Young, Selma
- James Perkins, Jr., Selma
- Sheryl Smedley, Selma
- Johnny Ford, Tuskegee
- Tony Haygood, Tuskegee
- Derrick Swanson, Tuskegee
- Liz Craig, Pike Road
- Doug Fuhrman, Pike Road
- BoBo Giplin, Pike Road
- Rob Steindorff, Pike Road

- Gordon Stone, Pike Road
- Chris Myers, Pike Road
- Don Mack, Centerville
- Mike Nichols, Centerville
- Mike Oakley, Centerville
- Woody Baird, Alexander City
- Scott Hardy, Alexander City
- Al Jones, Alexander City
- Romy Stamps, Alexander City
- Audrey “Buffy” Colvin, Alexander City

Region 4

- Charles Andrews, Monroeville
- Tameika Hunt, Monroeville
- Kenneth Ruffin, Monroeville
- Al Brewton, Monroeville
- Stanley Enfinger, Ozark
- Mark Blankenship, Ozark
- Leah Harlow, Ozark
- Winston Jackson, Ozark
- Les Perault, Ozark
- Holle Smith, Ozark
- Sheldon Day, Thomasville
- Alexandria Huckabee, Thomasville
- Roy Madison, Thomasville
- Nathan Reid Smith, Thomasville
- Rosalyn Sales, Thomasville
- Daniel Coleman, Geneva
- Kim Gillespie, Geneva
- David Hayes, Geneva
- Lisa Johnson, Geneva
- Ryan Tidwell, Geneva
- Jeff Gray, Geneva
- Annie Latham, Coffeeville
- Jenny Pope, Coffeeville
- Bessie Thomas, Coffeeville
- Dwight Pugh, Coffeeville
- Becky Bracke, Opp
- Rick Clifton, Opp
- Lavaughn Hines, Opp
- Charlotte Hunt, Opp
- Gary Strickland, Opp
- Tom Maddox, Elba
- Amy Giles, Elba
- G. Wise, Elba
- Laurie Chapman, Elba
- Hannah Pendleton, Elba
- Jacob Pendleton, Elba
- William Cooper, Enterprise
- Scotty Johnson, Enterprise
- Greg Padgett, Enterprise
- Turner Townsend, Enterprise
- Jonathan Tullos, Enterprise

2022 Certified Municipal Officials *(continued)*

- Councilmember Todd Askins, New Brockton
- Councilmember Leah Harlow, Ozark
- Councilmember Tammy D. Ruffin, Pennington
- Councilmember Glenda R. Kirkland, Pinson
- Councilmember Jeff Prince, Rainbow City
- Councilmember Kesa Johnston, Roanoke
- Councilmember Randy Little, Satsuma
- Councilmember Lesia James, Selma
- Councilmember Christie Thomas, Selma
- Councilmember William Young, Selma
- Councilmember Tracie Threadford, Tarrant
- Councilmember Stephanie Baker, Troy
- Councilmember Agnes Geraldine B. Thompkins, Tuscumbia
- Councilmember Eugene Faulk, Union Springs
- Councilmember Belinda Faye Mason Thorpe, Union Springs
- Councilmember Louis Murry, Union Springs
- Councilmember Roberta Stamp, Westover
- Mayor Jessica Martin, Wilton
- Mayor Michael Gordon, Yellow Bluff
- Councilmember Jazmin Mitchell, York

Certified Municipal Achievement Award

The **Certified Municipal Achievement Award** recognizes and commends cities and towns where the mayor and all councilmembers have earned the professional designation of Certified Municipal Official. It represents the mayor and all councilmembers have completed a minimum of 40 credit hours of formal training based on Certified Municipal Official Program credit hour records during the previous calendar year.

2021 CMA Awards

- Boligee
- Brewton
- Clay
- Midfield
- Opp
- Priceville
- Robertsdale
- Southside

2022 CMA Awards

- Andalusia
- Boligee
- Brewton
- Center Point
- Foley
- Midfield
- Opp
- Priceville
- Robertsdale
- Southside

Learn more about the
CMO Program
 and how it strengthens
 municipalities by educating
 municipal leaders.



almonline.org/CMOProgram

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www.alintercept.org

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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.**

ACE Presents STAR Awards

By Mary Jackson • ACE Coordinator • ALM

The ACE Star Awards recognizes individuals considered as the “shining stars” of the ACE program who have performed beyond the call of duty. The Star Awards acknowledge the Advisory Board members, ACE Ambassadors, community participants and volunteers for their work assisting the organization and the communities it serves. Nominations from Advisory Board members, mayors and ACE Ambassadors were received during the fall of 2022 and below are quotes from the nominating forms for each recipient. The League was honored to present the ACE Star Awards to six well-deserving recipients during the 2022 ALM Municipal Leadership Institute in Orange Beach.

Outstanding ACE Mayor

This award recognizes a mayor who has performed above and beyond while participating in the ACE program. The 2022 Outstanding ACE Mayor is Mayor Mark Blankenship of Ozark. Ozark has been in the designation process of becoming an Alabama Community of Excellence since being chosen in 2021. “Mayor Blankenship is heavily involved with Ozark’s ACE program and initiatives. As a newly elected mayor, Mayor Blankenship went straight to work moving Ozark forward through economic and community development efforts.” Mayor Blankenship is the 15th recipient of the Outstanding Mayor award.



Mark Blankenship

Outstanding ACE Ambassador

Formerly known as the ACE Associates Council, the ACE Ambassadors are the boots-on-the-ground experts dispatched to communities during Phase I of the designation process. The 2022 Outstanding ACE Ambassador is Brian Rushing of the University of Alabama’s Center for Economic Development. “Brian has been a long-time ACE volunteer, including serving as chair of the former Associate’s Council. His background in conservation planning and management and his role with UA’s Center for Economic Development has made him an invaluable resource for ACE communities. He provides both project leadership and technical assistance to advance many initiatives, particularly in facilitating outdoor recreation planning and development initiatives with local governments, state and federal agencies and private partners. Through his efforts, Brian helps Alabama communities take better advantage of the growing recreation and nature-based tourism markets while improving quality of life for their citizens.” Mr. Rushing is the third recipient of the ACE Ambassador award.



Brian Rushing

Outstanding ACE Local Coordinator

This award recognizes a community participant appointed by the mayor as the ACE Local Coordinator. The 2022 Outstanding ACE Local Coordinator is Samantha McDaniel of the newly designated ACE community - Florala. “Samantha is extremely supportive and enthusiastic about the ACE Program and the resources it brings to her community. She has



Samantha McDaniel

been invaluable in maintaining Florala’s designation and has been immediately responsive to all requests from ALM as ACE has transitioned into a League program.” Ms. McDaniel is the 16th recipient of the Local Coordinator award.



Lisa Miller

Exceptional ACE Leadership

This award recognizes an individual who has provided exceptional leadership for the ACE program. The recipient of the 2022 Exceptional ACE Leadership award is Lisa Miller of Alabama Municipal Electrical Association (AMEA). “Lisa has not only served in multiple officer positions for ACE, but she has been a tireless supporter of the program. AMEA has promoted the ACE program in its service territory and encouraged its communities to apply for certification. Lisa has served on assessment teams and acted as a mentor to those communities who successfully gained the ACE Community of Excellence designation. Lisa has consistently been one of ACE’s most enthusiastic board members, who has actively served on various standing committees, as well as volunteering for several special projects and committees.” Mrs. Miller is the seventh recipient of the Exceptional Leadership Award.



Terece Shehan

Outstanding ACE Volunteer

This award recognizes an individual who has provided outstanding volunteer service to the ACE program. The 2022 Outstanding ACE Volunteer is Terece Shehan of Brewton. “Terece Shehan volunteers in labor-intensive and creative endeavors as the city of Brewton meets the tasks required to be an Alabama Community of Excellence. From the Tree and Beautification Board to the Garden Club of Brewton, to a resource for celebrations she created called “The Party Closet,” she is an asset to our city.” Mrs. Shehan is the 16th recipient of this Outstanding Volunteer award.

Outstanding ACE Team Captain

This award recognizes an individual who has provided outstanding leadership to an assessment team working with the 2021 class of communities: Aliceville, Ashville, Luverne and Ozark. The 2022 Outstanding ACE Team Captain is Tracy Delaney. “Tracy Delaney is a community planner and contracts planning services with the South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC) serving Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon and Pike counties. Tracy was enthusiastic to serve as the team captain in Luverne and continue planning work for SCADC. The Luverne application for the ACE program included a strategic plan Tracy assisted the town with developing in 2019. The plan includes feasible goals and tasks, success indicators and barriers, timeframe for implementation and responsible parties. This strategic plan includes all of the components ACE requires and had significant involvement from the community. Tracy knows Luverne and the people well, and she was able to identify their needs and recruit team members who could help address them in the assessment report. She prepared the local coordinators - Kathy Smyth and Robin Snellgrove - for the two-day assessment visit resulting in robust community involvement. Tracy developed a great assessment report while dealing with the death of her mother. She will also be involved as Luverne moves forward in the process developing a leadership program and comprehensive plan.” Ms. Delaney is the ninth recipient of the Outstanding Team Captain award. Ms. Delaney (not pictured) was unable to attend the MLI to receive her award. ■



Congratulations to our recipients for their well-accomplished work in our ACE Communities! We look forward to next year’s Star Awards!

ALM Hosts Legislative Reception in Washington, D.C.



On January 3, 2023 the League hosted a reception in Washington, D.C., to congratulate Alabama's federal delegation being sworn into the 118th United States Congress. The League looks forward to working with each member of our delegation on strengthening municipal government.



If Alabama's aerospace industry, which will soon launch humans back to the moon while simultaneously developing the next generation of jet aircraft, is going to continue growing in the Tennessee Valley, the Wiregrass, and the Gulf Coast regions, our students must be fluent in the STEM subjects - science, technology, engineering and mathematics - in order to fill the jobs that will result.

Our current education model is not ideal to achieve that goal, which is why I was pleased to see the House and Senate pass legislation and approve funding to emphasize STEM instruction in the coming years. Combining needed education reforms with a long-term view that anticipates the needs of employers and the jobs of the future can ensure that Alabama continues prospering and our children and grandchildren have stable and secure futures right here at home.

I am confident that by pursuing these priorities, and others like them, while working cooperatively with the members of the Alabama League of Municipalities, we can make an already great state even better and take Alabama to its highest heights yet. ■

Renewing the Alabama Jobs Act and Growing Alabama is a priority issue that is set to expire in July 2023. I believe our local communities thrive when we are competitive among neighboring states to attract high-quality employers, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. These efforts are critical to bringing high-quality, high-tech jobs to Alabama's municipalities. We plan to pass legislation increasing the incentives cap for existing and future businesses to keep Alabama as the best place to do business.

Another critical component of the 2023 session is the disbursement of the more than \$1 billion of the state's second allocation of federal ARPA money. Our budget chairs and legislators will allocate these funds in the most effective way possible.

In our shared goal of keeping Alabama a premier state to live and work, I'd like to thank the Alabama League of Municipalities for all you do to benefit Alabamians. Our state would not be the incredible place that it is if not for the strong leadership of our local government. I look forward to continuing our work together in this coming session and throughout the year. ■

But despite these many impressive successes, we have even more work to do and more goals to accomplish. These issues and a hundred more like them await our action, so the Alabama House is prepared to roll up its sleeves and go to work.

Continuing to improve public education must remain our highest priority. Though we have made dramatic advances across the board, our standardized test scores still lag behind where we want them and our students continue working to make up the progress they lost during extended periods of remote learning in the COVID pandemic.

Identifying the programs that are producing desired results, targeting those that are not and providing underperforming schools with the tools they need to improve, progress and thrive are all key to ensuring every child in Alabama has access to a quality public education.

While the Alabama Literacy Act is working to ensure that students read at grade level by the end of the third grade, the Numeracy Act that the legislature passed and Gov. Ivey signed into law last year is intended to provide proficiency in math and prepare our students for the STEM-based jobs of the future. Both of these areas will need our continued monitoring and support.

Keeping our economy strong and jobs both growing and secure will require new, outside-the-box approaches, especially in today's highly competitive global environment. To that end, I have created a new House Ports, Waterways and Intermodal Transit Committee.

Alabama possesses more than 10 percent of our nation's fresh water, and when combined with the expansion of the state docks in Mobile, the Tennessee/Tombigbee Waterway, the ports of Huntsville and Birmingham and the port being constructed in Montgomery, I believe that transportation hub can be leveraged into one of our state's strongest economic assets. Alabama's rail system and airports will fall under the committee's purview, as well.

Rural Alabama also has a particular set of critical needs, and the closing of hospitals and other health care infrastructure throughout the region has become almost routine. Unless we begin to take action in this area, what is already a crisis may soon become a catastrophe.

The expansion of high-speed, broadband internet into previously unserved areas is expanding the reach of telemedicine and bringing a small measure of relief, but the need for health services in rural Alabama remains high. Under my watch, the House will begin to find solutions to this critical health care problem while, at the same time, adhering to the conservative principles and free market values that many of us were elected to preserve.

If left unaddressed, I believe that the scourge of fentanyl will prove even more damaging, destructive and deadly as the opioid epidemic that ravaged so many of our communities just a few years ago. Due to the toxicity that even the slightest touch provides, fentanyl's threat extends beyond the drug user and endangers the lives of the law enforcement officer's tasked with removing it from the streets. This legislature will work to give those who traffic in the substance significantly stronger punishments and stiffer sentences.

With the opening of four 24-hour crisis care centers in urban areas of the state, the operation of four mobile units serving the rural portions and an additional \$60 million in state funding, the need to provide quality mental health services to Alabamians who require them is finally receiving the spotlight it deserves. These accomplishments represent not the end of our mental health efforts, but the beginning, for there is much left to do.

And while the legislature has gradually streamlined the process for private adoption agencies to operate within the state, too many children still crave the security that only stable homes and loving parents can provide to them. Making adoption faster, easier and more open while also keeping it safe, secure and accountable must be accomplished during this quadrennium.

As a former mayor and three-term city council member in Rainsville, I have a first-hand perspective on the challenges that our cities, towns and crossroad communities face on a daily basis. When the state can provide resources, aid and assistance that local leaders find helpful, I am more than amenable to holding those discussions and working hand-in-glove with you.

Our state cannot be successful unless our localities are successful, so the Alabama League of Municipalities will always find an open door, a warm welcome and an eagerness to help as long as I serve in office of the Speaker of the House. ■

Singleton continued from page 14

were included, but I plan to work to advance legislation to make sure as we rebuild Alabama that all businesses have an opportunity to participate.

The future is unknown but working together with my legislative colleagues to make Alabama a better place to live, for all Alabamians, is certain.

Daniels continued from page 15

Perhaps, one of the most painful lessons we learned during the pandemic was that we need to expand access to affordable health care. The pandemic also made evident the many gaps in Alabama's health care system including hundreds of thousands of citizens who still remain uninsured, the lack of adequate mental health resources and an alarming shortage of physicians and health care workers. We also have a tremendous need to expand postpartum care and access to dietitians. Although we have made large strides to increase telemedicine, we must find more ways to attract and retain health care service providers across our state, particularly in rural communities.

Last, we must fix Alabama's broken prison system and address the issues that were exposed in the two pending Department of Justice lawsuits that call for immediate and significant reforms in Alabama's Department of Corrections. Simply building new prisons will not solve the staffing or other institutional issues that require our immediate attention and action. Creating better pathways for inmates to successfully re-enter society upon completion of their sentence makes our communities safer and helps grow our economy.

None of these challenges that I've mentioned are inherently partisan or controversial, which means that this is a tremendous opportunity for both sides of the aisle to work together to implement solutions that benefit everyone in Alabama. This type of mutual respect and cooperation in the Alabama Legislature is how we can make 2023 an example of government that genuinely works, defined by our progress and achievement. Together, we can make 2023 transformational by staying focused on our shared priorities. ■



WHICH ONE IS THE **TRAILER?** ↑ ↓

ALAMHA.ORG



TOP: MANUFACTURED HOME
BOTTOM: SITE-BUILT HOME

Join us for **ADVOCACY DAY 2023**

March 8, 2023 11:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Alabama Activity Center (201 Dexter Avenue, Montgomery, AL)



Reception to follow, 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.
More information can be found at: www.almonline.org/2023AdvocacyDay

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT DINNERS

ALABAMA DELEGATION

NLC CONGRESSIONAL CITY CONFERENCE * MARCH 26 - 28, 2023

During the Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C., Alabama's Congressional Delegation will host dinners* for their constituents/guests throughout the conference that require pre-registration and a fee.

Additionally, Alabama will host **two other events**: A caucus meeting and reception on Sunday, March 26 and a breakfast* on Tuesday, March 28 with Sen. Katie Britt.

For the full NLC Conference Schedule, go to: ccc.nlc.org/program/schedule-at-a-glance/

* **Please Note:** Some events require registration and/or fees. More information can be found on the event webpage:

www.almonline.org/2023CongressionalDistrictDinners

The League Welcomes New Communications Director Lori Jhons

Lori Davis Jhons, a native of Browntown, AL, joined the Alabama League of Municipalities as communications director in January 2023. She previously served as Gov. Kay Ivey's director of digital media relations.

Lori graduated from Billingsley High School, in Autauga County, as salutatorian in 2012. She then went on to graduate summa cum laude from Alabama State University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications with a focus on radio and television. As a student-athlete on the ASU women's track and field team, she won eight indoor and outdoor track and field Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) championships and holds the school record in javelin throwing.

Upon graduation, Lori was appointed by Gov. Robert Bentley in 2016 to serve as a digital content producer on his communications team. In 2017, Gov. Ivey appointed Lori to serve in her administration. A jack-of-all trades in the public relations field, Lori was promoted to various roles including serving as a spokesperson, speech writer, video producer, social media manager and website facilitator, among others.

Throughout her professional career, Lori has gained invaluable experience in crisis management, media relations, internal and external communications and event planning. In her spare time, Lori serves on the communications committee for the nonprofit Women in Training, Inc. and is a member of the Billingsley High School FFA Alumni Association. She is married to Michael Jhons, who proudly serves as an Alabama State Trooper, and they have a beautiful daughter, Isabella. ■



Leadership Perspective ————— continued from page 5

President Haygood

Bryan Parker and Baker Allen) throughout the year in the event there are special issues or concerns in your community where you may need additional support. One of the most valuable resources the Advocacy Team produces is the *State House Advocate*, a weekly e-newsletter distributed throughout the legislative session that reviews the actions taken by the Alabama Legislature the previous week and outlines what we can expect to take place during the upcoming week.

As elected officials, advocacy is one of our strongest tools for delivering services to our communities and for protecting the quality-of-life and economic investment in our communities. We must stay engaged, be alert and be aware of actions at the state and federal level that impact our communities so that our voices are heard and our positions are known. ■

Vice President Bourne

officials to know that officeholders at all levels of government hear from voters mostly when there is a problem or a complaint and that social media attacks are at an all time high. Given that, an encouraging word means more than it ever has. I urge you to commend your legislators for the work that they do for you and your citizens, especially when they have been of help on specific issues or projects.

With that context and those relationships established, we can address specific matters coming before the legislature. Please read the *Alabama Municipal Journal* and watch your emails from the League to make sure you are well informed about the issues we will face in the coming session. As always, we may have to play a little defense this year to ensure that municipal authority to solve local problems remains in place. If we work together and express our views, we'll have a successful legislative session, one that leaves cities in a position to improve our communities for our citizens. ■

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