

Plant explosion in Pinson sends 4 to hospital, page 6

HT coach's 'heroes' his sisters, page 13



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# The Trussville Tribune

December 23 - 30, 2013

Your news source for Trussville, Clay and Pinson

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## Tribune recaps top stories of 2013



The Trussville Tribune has recapped the top stories of 2013, from tragedy and triumph to the progression of the cities we cover. For the complete list of top stories of 2013, see pages 4-5.

### FROM HORRIBLE TO BEAUTIFUL Splintered wood from tornado now displayed in Clay shop

by Gary Lloyd  
Editor

Kim Steffey is a strong advocate of re-using materials. The owner of the newly opened McEnally's Mercantile in Clay, Steffey has lived on a small farm between Argo and Clay for eight years. On Jan. 23, 2012, when an EF-3 tornado ripped through the



photo by Gary Lloyd

A wooden bin and shelf on the produce side of McEnally's Mercantile in Clay northeastern Jefferson County area and caused significant damage in Clay, about 120 trees were uprooted on her property. The 30-foot pines that fell crashed be-

see MERCANTILE page 3

### Perfect timing: Woman, daughter get key to new Clay home



photo by Gary Lloyd

Clay Mayor Charles Webster speaks to Ivory Prince and her daughter, Janiya, prior to the home's dedication ceremony Thursday.

by Gary Lloyd  
Editor

Ivory Prince and her 6-year-old daughter, Janiya, have received their greatest Christmas present yet.

On Thursday in the Winchester Hills subdivision in Clay, Prince received the key to her new home, an unveiling two weeks in the making and part of Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity's "Home for the Holidays."

"I'm very excited," Prince said. "I feel blessed."

Prince said moving into the home, which has tan siding and light brown brick on the front, the week before Christmas was "perfect

timing."  
"It means a lot to me to be receiving a key to become a homeowner," Prince said. "It's been a cool process."

Prince, born and raised in Birmingham, is a Parker High School and UAB graduate. She works at Crestline Early Learning Center and attends New Grace Church. Prince aspires to pursue a master's degree in education and open her own day-care center. Janiya is a student at South Hampton Elementary School and enjoys riding her bike, swimming, skating and taking ballet.

"This means so much to Janiya and me," Prince said. "I can't wait for her to see that I'm able to make our dream come true."

Volunteers are responsible for the majority of the work, including Prince, who put in what Habitat for Humanity calls "sweat equity." All Habitat for Humanity homeowners help in the building of other people's homes before they qualify to have their own build.

In May, 10 families received keys to their new homes at the Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity Eighth Annual Home Builders Blitz in the Winchester Hills subdivision in Clay.

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

### Trussville approves closing on property for Valley Road extension

by Gary Lloyd  
Editor

The Trussville City Council on Thursday approved of Mayor Gene Melton closing on property on Roosevelt Boulevard for the extension of Valley Road to the Pinnacle at Tutwiler Farm shopping center.

The property will cost the city \$1.425 million.

There will be only one remaining parcel of land for the city to obtain from an owner in Florida.

The council in October authorized Melton to sign a quote for MAA Inc., which Colonial Properties is a part of, to sell two parcels of land at the shopping center to the city for \$1.425 million.

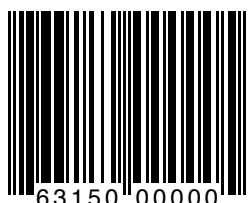
Melton said the acquisition will be paid for with short-term bond money out of the city's general fund.

The two parcels of land are near the hhgregg store. Melton said in October that the asking price for the two parcels, which are 1.5 acres and 2.63 acres, was \$1.76 million but the number came down through negotiations.

Future plans are to have a three-way intersection on Valley Road, and the new connection will run parallel to Interstate 59. Melton said construction of the new road will be between \$2 million and \$3 million, though the city will seek federal and state funding. Melton said the road could be built in the next two or three years.

The road will begin at the sharp curve along Valley Road and emerge behind hhgregg. The goal is to take traffic congestion away from Chalkville Road and U.S. Highway 11.

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# NEWS

## Trussville residents pleased with city services, utilities

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Trussville residents are pleased with city services and Trussville Utilities, according to results from Mayor Gene Melton's survey he mailed out last month.

Melton said that 8,200 letters were mailed to Trussville residents, and about 8,000 were received. He said the most responses to a letter he had received since becoming mayor in 1996 were 200 to 300. This letter garnered 1,455 total responses.

Of the 1,002 people who responded to the question about thoughts on city services, 929 said it was good, while 73 said it was bad. Of the 1,002 people who responded to the question about service by Trussville Utilities, 951 said it was



file photo by Ron Burkett

Trussville Mayor Gene Melton

good, while 51 said it was bad.

Trussville residents were somewhat divided on the survey's first two questions, about communica-

tion and technology. Of the 739 people who responded to the question about the city communicating through U.S. mail or email, 402 said only mail. There

were 337 who favored email.

Of the 742 who responded to the question that if the city had a computer app, would residents use it, 422 said they would, while 320 said they wouldn't.

Of 1,102 responses to the question of a seven-millage property tax increase to fund two new elementary schools, 603 were in favor, while 456 were in opposition to it.

One question asked if residents would renew vehicle tags at Trussville City Hall if allowed to do so. Of 1,048 responses to the question, 985 said they'd favor the renewal process at Trussville City Hall. Just 63 said they would not favor it.

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

## 18 apply for JefCoEd board seat; 1 from area

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Eighteen people have written letters of interest for the open Jefferson County Board of Education seat, which is expected to be filled next year.

The board is replacing Ronald Rhodes, who stepped down Nov. 21. The term of the appointment will end in November 2018.

One person from the area, Rebecca "Bebe" Pitts, of Clay, sent a letter of interest. Other letters of interest came from residents of Lipscomb, For-

estdale, Dora, Adamsville, Birmingham, McCalla, Hueytown, Fultondale, Hoover, Irondale, Morris, Pleasant Grove and Mount Olive.

The Jefferson County Schools district covers Chalkville Elementary, Clay Elementary, Clay-Chalkville Middle, Clay-Chalkville High, Johnson Elementary, Pinson Elementary, Rudd Middle and Pinson Valley High schools, among others.

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

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MERCANTILE continued from page 1

tween Steffey's chicken coops, missing them all.

All the wood from the splintered trees was milled, left on her property for a future purpose, a purpose that was noticed by many earlier this month when her store opened on Old Springville Road.

"I am so glad to see the mangled wood become beautiful creations in the hand of a local craftsman," Steffey said.

The craftsman is a friend of Steffey's, Robert Rutledge. The beautiful creations are inside the hardware, home, garden, grocery, feed and supply store. The creations are displays that hold merchandise, furniture in the corners and

signs that line the walls. Those wooden creations, the bins on rollers, shelves and frames were made by Rutledge from oak, cedar and pine trees downed during the tornado.

"It seemed like the logical conclusion to go ahead and use my wood," Steffey said.

Wood used in the store also came from the Marcus Martin House, a historical 19th century home in Clay that was severely damaged during the tornado and later demolished.

Clay Mayor Charles Webster attended the store's opening and came away impressed.

"I love that idea," Webster said of the salvaged

wood, noting that someone donated a cedar bench made from trees downed in the tornado to the Clay Community Center. "I think that's a great idea for her to use that."

Steffey is proud of the store's taking a scar on the city of Clay and making it into something positive.

"To me, the tornado was a horrible thing that happened, but seeing something beautiful come out of it was important to me," she said.

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

# CCMS band recognized by board of education

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Clay-Chalkville Middle School band last week was honored by the Jefferson County Board of Education.

The band on Dec. 6 participated as a feature ensemble at the Southeastern United States Concert Band Clinic. Band Director Chris Walker said the clinic went "very well."

"The students gave a great performance for hundreds of directors and students from all over the South," Walker said. "We

were receiving congratulatory emails, texts and Facebook messages all last week from people from Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi."

The band performed for more than 400 middle school band students and directors. Only two middle school bands throughout the Southeastern United States are invited each year. Flat Rock Middle School from Tyrone, Ga., was the other band invited to perform.

Walker said the invitation came through evaluation of the band's history

of success over the years. The Clay-Chalkville Middle School band has approximately 400 members in the sixth through eighth grades. The band is under the direction of Walker and Erin McLaughlin.

The Clay City Council in October approved a proclamation stating that Dec. 6 would be Clay-Chalkville Middle School Band Day in honor of the band's performance at the clinic.

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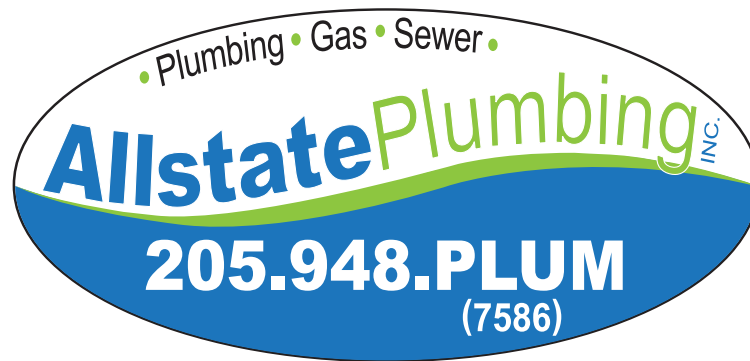
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# TOP STORIES

## Trussville CNG pump opens



file photo by Gary Lloyd

Trussville Mayor Gene Melton speaks at the opening of the CNG fueling station at the Chevron on Deerfoot Parkway.

The compressed natural gas pump at the Chevron station on Deerfoot Parkway in Trussville opened in March. The CNG dispensing station was the result of a public-private partnership. The Trussville Utilities Board loaned McCullough Oil \$1.08 million for the project and will be repaid with part of the proceeds of CNG sales. The cost of CNG at the fueling station is \$1.55 per gallon. The city of Trussville uses CNG to operate 40 city vehicles, from police cruisers to dump trucks. CNG is far less costly for the city, and it's a domestic fuel source that burns cleaner than traditional gasoline. The Trussville CNG fueling station is one of five in the state. There are others in Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Pell City and Evergreen.

## Hewitt-Trussville reaches baseball state championship



file photo by Ron Burkett

The Hewitt-Trussville baseball team prays in right field before Game 2 of the AHSAA Class 6A state championship series at Riverwalk Stadium in Montgomery in May.

The Hewitt-Trussville baseball team in April and May put on a show for Huskies fans, reaching the Class 6A state baseball championship series in Montgomery, which it lost in two games against Pelham. The team was infectious for Trussville, and grounds crew workers at Riverwalk Stadium in Montgomery told first-year head baseball coach Jeff Mauldin they had been working there 10 years but had never seen a school supported like Hewitt-Trussville was by its fans. "That means a lot to coaches and players when you see that," Mauldin said at the time. "It's overwhelming and it's really neat. I think it's great for our kids."

## Trussville decides on 2 elementary schools



file photo by Gary Lloyd

The historic school building on Parkway Drive in Trussville

The Trussville City Board of Education in May approved plans for two new community elementary schools — one in Magnolia Place and the other in the Cahaba Project, preserving the building that housed Trussville's original high school and a middle school. Each school will house roughly 400 students, with a capacity of about 500. Construction, including equipment necessary for students to move in, will cost a total of about \$18 million. Both schools will be built with Federal Emergency Management Agency-approved hard rooms as student shelters during threatening weather.

## Turkey Creek in Pinson named one of 28 national recreation trails



photo courtesy of Turkey Creek Nature Preserve

Turkey Creek Nature Preserve in Pinson

Turkey Creek Nature Preserve in Pinson in May was named one of 28 trails designated as a national recreation trail by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Director of the National Park Service Jonathan B. Jarvis. The 28 trails adds almost 650 miles of trails to the National Trails System. Three nature trails totaling 2.13 miles showcase the unique beauty of Turkey Creek Nature Preserve in Pinson, according to a press release. The paved Highland Trail provides walkers and bicyclists a moderate climb through the Highland Forest; the easy Boy Scout Trail takes hikers past some of the most scenic reaches along the banks of Turkey Creek; and the Thompson Trace offers some of the best opportunities for wildlife viewing.

## Camp Coleman property plan reconsidered



file photo

A sign at Camp Coleman's entrance

The Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama board of directors in June unanimously voted in favor of a resolution to reconsider the three-phase property plan approved in May 2012. The resolution states that no GSNCA camp properties, including Trussville's Camp Coleman, would be sold during the re-evaluation process pending the outcome of a new comprehensive strategic plan that will be developed for the organization. This plan will include obtaining new input from the membership, outside experts and community partners. The camp will open on a "limited use" basis Jan. 15, 2014.

## Clay adopts vicious dog ordinance

The Clay City Council in June passed a "vicious dog" ordinance, virtually banning pit bulls in city limits. Existing pit bull dogs, or any of their variations, must be registered with the city, no new pits may be brought into the city, and any newborn pit puppies will need to be removed from the city limits within a certain amount of time, according to the ordinance. These dog breeds must be confined indoors or kept in a locked, outside pen. If taken for a walk, the dogs must be leashed and muzzled at all times. Within 10 days of registration, owners must post "Beware of Dog" signs in easily seen locations on their property. City Manager Ronnie Dixon said in late July that 15 to 18 pit bulls had been registered with the city since the ordinance took effect in June. He said that also since that time, two dogs in the city had been killed by pit bulls and three more injured by pit bulls. He said in one of those five cases, a dog climbed over a fence, and in another a dog was unleashed. He didn't know the particulars of the other three instances. A small bird dog was killed by an American Bull Terrier in Clay in November.

## Pinson begins work toward city park

The Pinson City Council in July voted to approve the first phase of a city park project, which could begin in Feb-

ruary. The plans will include many existing natural features. The main building will be placed on the top of a hill overlooking a playground and an amphitheater. The first phase includes a walking trail, an event center, a maintenance building, an amphitheater and a playground. The park, which will also include a nine-hole disc golf course, splash pad, covered seating areas, park ranger office, veterans memorial, walkways, and dog park, will be located near Center Point Parkway between Sweeney Hollow Road and Glen Brook Road in Pinson.

## Trussville a go for new football stadium



photo courtesy of Trussville City Schools

A rendering of Hewitt-Trussville Stadium

The Trussville City Board of Education in July approved Blalock Building Company to build Hewitt-Trussville Stadium, the new football stadium to be located behind the Trussville Civic Center. The Trussville-based building company won the project with a total bid of \$14,626,550. Construction began in September. The stadium is expected to be completed by late summer or early fall next year.

## 2 tragedies in 2 months in Trussville



photo courtesy of Principle Portrait Group

Brock Bowman

In early August, Hewitt-Trussville High School student Brock Bowman drowned in the Cahaba River while inner tubing with friends. Bowman would have been a junior offensive lineman on the varsity football team. "He definitely kept everybody laughing and happy," Hewitt-Trussville basketball player Tony Hampton said of Bowman. "He was just fun to be around. I never had a dull moment with Brock. Never." Just over a month later, 13-year-old Brayden Turner was killed when the off-road vehicle he was riding on in the Carrington subdivision in Trussville flipped on its side. A fall baseball tournament was held in Turner's honor in October, when balloons were released in his memory. The city of Trussville rallied around both teenagers' families, providing much support.



photo courtesy of Principle Portrait Group

Brayden Turner

## Clay increases sales tax by 2 cents

The Clay City Council in August voted to increase the city's sales tax by two cents. Shoppers in Clay are now paying a 10 percent tax on every dollar spent. This was the first time sales taxes have fluctuated in Clay since 2003. Ten percent of the increase will be designated to Clay's schools, 35 percent will go toward public safety and the remaining 55 percent will be reserved for the city's budget.

# OF THE YEAR

## Matt Pitt arrested again on impersonation charge



photo courtesy of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office

Matt Pitt

Youth evangelist and The Basement founder Matt Pitt was arrested Aug. 20 on 20th Street near Vulcan after he ran from law enforcement and then struggled with officers before being handcuffed. He was taken into custody on a warrant for impersonating a peace officer. According to a statement, on June 15 at about 6 p.m., deputies were called to the 5200 block of Falling Creek Lane in Grayson Valley to investigate a report of a man impersonating a law enforcement officer. It was reported a suspicious vehicle was sitting in front of the residence about two hours earlier and the resident had seen people going back and forth between the vehicle and a nearby wooded area. The caller reported that he went to investigate and discovered a rifle hidden at the edge of the woods. The people he had seen were nowhere around the rifle. He then called the sheriff's office to report the discovery of the weapon. Pitt's probation in Shelby County stemming from a 2012 arrest in Calera on the same charge was revoked, keeping him in jail for the remainder of his sentence. Jefferson County District Court Judge Katrina Ross decided in December to send his Jefferson County case to a grand jury for consideration.

## Pinson purchases Old Rock School



photo courtesy of Solid Rock Church

The Old Rock School in Pinson

The Pinson City Council in September voted on a financing option to purchase the Solid Rock Church building and nearby Triangle Park for \$975,000. The city council voted to put down a \$75,000 down payment on the property and finance the other \$900,000 at 3.3 percent

interest over the course of five years and amortized over 20 years. Solid Rock Church now owns and congregates at the former New Covenant Fellowship Church building on Pinson Valley Parkway. The Old Rock School has been in Pinson seemingly forever, dating back to 1921. The school building was closed in 1998 and was scheduled to be torn down. Pinson residents saved the building from demolition and in 2003 Solid Rock Church leased the property. The church's first service in the building was Sept. 26, 2004.

## Northern Beltline first phase approved; bids opened



photo courtesy of the Alabama Department of Transportation

A look at the Northern Beltline project

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley in October announced that construction of the Northern Beltline, a highway that will stretch from Interstate 59 near Trussville to the junction of I-459 and I-20/59 in southwest Jefferson County, could begin. In November, bids were opened for construction of the first phase, a 1.3-mile stretch that will connect Highway 75 and Highway 79 near Pinson. The apparent low bidder for the 1.3-mile segment was Wright Brothers Construction Co. Inc. of Charleston, Tenn., which came in with a bid of \$45,999,999.69.

## Trussville greenways project unfinished, split into 2 jobs



file photo by Gary Lloyd

The Veterans Memorial Monument in Civitan Park is unfinished.

The Civitan Park greenway project in Trussville was divided into two jobs in November. The first job could be done by February 2014 and the rest of the project by

the middle of summer 2014. The \$1.7 million greenway project began in April 2012 and was supposed to have been completed last fall. The greenways project includes a walking trail that will stretch from Civitan Park to the Trussville Sports Complex. The project has been in the works since 1998. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management in early 2013 notified the city of Trussville in writing of concerns it had with the construction on the greenway project. The letter provided a litany of concerns regarding work done by a contracting company now off the job, including soil erosion, improperly kept silt fences and barren land that hasn't been seeded or covered with hay to stop runoff. ADEM in late May found the project at Civitan Park was in compliance with its standards.

## Elderly Trussville man shot, killed; murder charge dismissed

A judge in December, at the request of the prosecution, dismissed a murder charge against a Trussville man in the Nov. 14 shooting death of 81-year-old Ken Millar. Special Jefferson County District Court Judge Sheila Ann Weil ordered that 53-year-old Freddie Earl Patton be released from Jefferson County Jail after Jefferson County Deputy District Attorney Megan Cuckler made a motion to dismiss the case at the case's preliminary hearing. Patton had been charged with intentional murder in the shooting death of Millar, which occurred at a home in the 500 block of Rockridge Avenue in Trussville. The case will be presented to a grand jury in January.

## Trail of Tears banner sparks outcry



photo courtesy of fiftyfourfortyortight.tumblr.com

A look at the controversial bust-through banner

McAdory High School Principal Tod Humphries on the school's website in November apologized for a bust-through banner that was held up prior to the McAdory vs. Pinson Valley Class 5A playoff football game. The banner read "Hey Indians, get ready to leave in a trail of tears, round 2." The Trail of Tears refers to the U.S. government's removal of Indians from areas in the Southeast to Oklahoma. The Trail encompassed the relocation of various Indian nations. An online petition urged the Jefferson County Board of Education to instruct Pinson Valley High School to drop the Indians as the school mascot. "The Pinson Valley community is very attached to that name," Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Stephen Nowlin said. "I think there's a lot of pride in it. It's a part of the identity."

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# JeffCo superintendent receives satisfactory evaluation

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Jefferson County Board of Education last week gave Superintendent Stephen Nowlin a satisfactory evaluation for his first year on the job.

Nowlin replaced former Superintendent Phil Hammonds, who retired after nine years.

Nowlin was rated by the board on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent,



photo courtesy of Jefferson County Schools

Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Stephen Nowlin

in 11 categories. A score of 3 is average.

Nowlin's best score was a 4.73 in the technology management category. He received a 3.8 in professional development and leadership, and a 3.65 in communication and interpersonal relations. He earned a 3.56 in CEO of the school board and in the financial management category.

Nowlin earned a 3.5 rating in facilities management and management of pupil personnel

services. In the category of professional responsibilities, which means Nowlin performs duties in an effective manner and in accordance with his job, he earned a 3.44. Nowlin earned a 3.4 in educational leadership of schools.

Nowlin's lowest ratings were a 3.26 in personnel management and a 3.2 in community relations.

Nowlin was the Lee County Schools superintendent since 2008 prior to coming to Jeffer-

son County. Prior to that, Nowlin served as interim superintendent of Lee County Schools from 2007 to 2008, and interim superintendent of Madison City Schools from 2006 to 2007.

The Trussville City Board of Education in August gave first-year Trussville City Schools Superintendent Pattie Neill a 4.7 out of 5 on her evaluation.

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

# Christmas bonuses for Clay employees

by Lee Weyhrich

Staff Writer

The Clay City Council is showing its appreciation for the hard work of city employees.

The council last Monday voted unanimously to of-

fer city employees Christmas bonuses. The total cost of the vacation buyback is \$5,268.

The Senior Activity Center has had one less employee this year, Public Works has been working with two less people and the Clay Public Library has

been short of staff, too.

"For this year, I would like to offer these employees a Christmas bonus," City Manager Ronnie Dixon said.

All full-time employees who have been with the city for more than a year will receive three days'

pay. All part-time employees who have been with the city for more than one year, and full-time employees who have been with the city for less than a year but more than three months, will receive \$150. Full-time employees who have been with the city less

than 90 days, and part-time employees who have been with the city less than one year but more than 90 days, will each receive \$100.

Dixon was not included in the bonus plan, an oversight Councilman Ben Thackerson voted to remedy.

"Ronnie Dixon has been a large part of the city and a great team member," Councilman Mark Halstead said.

The council voted unanimously to offer Dixon the bonus, but it is unknown at this time how that will affect the total cost of the Christmas bonuses.

# Plant explosion in Pinson sends 4 to hospital

by Scott Buttram

Publisher

An explosion at a business located at 6179 Sunrise Drive in Pinson sent

four men to the hospital Saturday.

The condition of those transported was not believed to be life threatening.

The address reported is listed as the location of Pin-

son Valley Heat Treating Co., Inc., which processes large and small fabricated and/or cast parts.

"We received the call between 11:30 and noon," Center Point Fire Battalion

Chief Lonnie West said. "By the time we arrived, there was no fire and we were only there about an hour."

West said there did not appear to be any structural

damage to the building and that the cause of the explosion was under investigation.

The company treats metal and uses high heat in the process, West said, though

it was not known if that was a contributing factor.

The men were transported to UAB Hospital. Birmingham Fire and Rescue assisted in transporting the victims.

# College panel discussion planned at HTHS

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Hewitt-Trussville High School will host a panel of college experts to answer questions from parents and students regarding college ap-

plications and admissions, as well as financial aid, on Jan. 9.

The discussion will last from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the school's theater.

Colleges that plan on attending the discussion include Auburn University, the University of Alabama,

Birmingham Southern College, Jefferson State Community College, Samford University, Shelton State Community College and UAB.

The focus group for the discussion will be for students in the ninth through 12th grades, as well as their parents.

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

file photo

An aerial view of Hewitt-Trussville High School



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# LIFESTYLE

## Clay-Chalkville senior named Trussville Rotary student of the month

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Trussville Rotary Day-break Club has announced its recipient of the Don Haisten Student of the Month Award for December.

The recipient was Lofftin Hall, a senior at Clay-Chalkville High School. He received a gift card donated

by Jim 'N Nick's Bar-B-Q.

Hall will graduate in May with a Diploma of Distinction, which means he's earned his credits taking rigorous courses and maintaining excellent grades. Hall is an active member in the Clay-Chalkville High School symphonic, jazz, and concert bands. He has received numerous honors including first chair French horn (grades 9-12), 2013

Band Captain, All-County Band, Auburn University High School Honor Band, UAB All-Star Marching Band, Mississippi State Honor Band, and a participant of the University Southern Mississippi Horn Day 2013.

Hall has volunteered with the Birmingham Firehouse Shelter, Safe Haven, Clay Tornado Relief, Operation Christmas Child, and has



photo by Diane Poole

From left are Trussville Rotary Club member Ty Williams, Lofftin Hall and Trussville Rotary Club President Alan Taylor.

taken mission trips with his church. He has also been employed at the Boys and Girls Club. He plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi and will audition for the university's music department in January.

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

## Big present donated to family of critically injured Hewitt grad

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

This gift needs a huge bow.

On Thursday, four months in the making came to fruition when Trussville-based McSweeney Holdings donated a 2008 Mercedes Sprinter van to the family of Jamison Franklin, a Hewitt-Trussville High School graduate paralyzed in a 2011 off-road accident in Grayson Valley.

"What an incredible group of folks," Jamison's mother, Holly Franklin, said in an email.

McSweeney Holdings Managing Partner Michael McSweeney said Hewitt-Trussville High School English teacher Simona Herring, one of his teachers when he was in school, contacted him about four months ago, explaining Franklin's accident. Herring told him that the family had a 1989 handicap van that they transported him in, but that it needed to be worked on.

"We then found out that 'needed to be worked on' was an understatement," McSweeney said.

McSweeney said the McSweeney Foundation, formed with the mission of providing general food, shelter and clothing to meet the needs of those



submitted photo

The Franklin family with the new van

who need it most, wanted to help. The foundation partnered this year with the Trussville Ecumenical Assistive Ministry and Serving You. The foundation this year raised \$59,415 solely from the McSweeney Holdings employees,

and donated \$41,292 to a handful of initiatives.

"We believe that a lot more can be accomplished when more groups with a similar vision pull together in the same direction," McSweeney said.

McSweeney said the

group decided the old van was too far gone to put money into. He said the group searched for a more reliable van that could be donated to them, complete with a handicap lift.

"Through normal course of business, we needed a Mercedes Sprinter van to perform some safety testing on, but we did not need

a new one," McSweeney said. "Then the light went off in my head and I figured we could kill two birds with one stone by purchasing the van for the safety testing, and then fixing it up and donating it to the Franklins once we were done with it. So that is what happened."

McSweeney said a

Braun wheelchair lift and necessary electronics were installed to support Franklin's life support system, and the interior was converted into a passenger van that could accommodate passenger seating.

McSweeney said donating the van to the Franklins was "such a blessing to us all."

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# Chalkville Elementary getting new sidewalks

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Chalkville Elementary School is getting new sidewalks to make walking to school safer for students.

The Jefferson County Board of Education last Tuesday approved an application for construction submitted by Chalkville Elementary School.

The school received a Safe Routes to Schools grant to fund the construction of a sidewalk that will be located on school property and another that runs along Chalkville School Road from the apartments just across the street from the school up to Park Brook apartments, said Principal

Rod Johnson.

"It will make it much safer for those students who walk to school," Johnson said.

A marker in the area of the school represents a memorial to Larry Bevis, a crossing guard who was struck and killed by a motorist on Chalkville School Road in May 2006.

"I have been working since that time to make it safer for our kids," Johnson said.

Construction of the sidewalks could begin as early as May 2014, Johnson said.

Johnson thanked Jefferson County Commissioner Joe Knight, who helped coordinate meetings with all necessary parties, and Nick Sims, who did most

of the work in writing the Safe Routes to Schools application. Johnson said Knight and one of his staff members in August cleared debris and trimmed hedges in order to make it safer for kids who walk to school.

The Trussville Rotary Club and Alabama Baricade donated 20 traffic cones to the school to help control traffic flow.

All work will be approved by the Alabama Department of Transportation.

The project will be done at no cost to the Jefferson County School System.

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

# Former Food Network star speaks in Trussville

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Former "Food Network Star" cast member Martie Duncan spoke at the Trussville Rotary Club meeting last week.

Duncan was on Season 8 of the show. Duncan made it to the final four and when America voted for the winner, she finished as the runner-up.

Originally from Roebuck, Duncan had no culinary training prior to auditioning for the spot on the show. She found out about the auditions the night before and drove all night to Chicago. Duncan said there were about 3,000 people vying for a spot on the show that day, and driving up at the last minute, she didn't have to wait long, since most had already left.

She only spoke a couple words, she said, and was immediately selected for a callback the next day. She hadn't thought far enough ahead to think of what she might need for the next step, so when told she would need to prepare a themed dish, she frantically began to wonder where she might prepare it. Driving around Chicago, she spotted a fire station, ran inside and in her best Southern drawl, pleaded for a place to cook her dish. She ended up cooking for about 45 firemen in the process.

Duncan said she started her first busi-



photo by Diane Poole

Martie Duncan

ness when she was 14, acting as a "booking agent" for the band in which her "secret" boyfriend from Hartselle was playing in order to find ways to get him to the Birmingham area. She has since worked as a police officer and then a manager of a pageant store. Duncan recently made a gingerbread house for Gov. Robert Bentley. She's now working on getting two TV shows and is also writing a book on family traditions.

"God always opens a door for me when I need a job," she said. "He's my partner in everything I do."

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

# Cahaba Countdown set for New Year's Eve in Trussville

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Cahaba Countdown 2014, a New Year's Eve party, will be Dec. 31 at the Trussville Civic Center.

Doors open at 8 p.m. and photo identification is required to get in.

Tickets are \$50 for a single, \$75 for a couple

and \$275 for a group of eight. There will be hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. The first two beverages are free.

Performing will be the bands Sidecar and Chevy 6. They begin playing at 10 p.m.

Tickets are available at [www.trussvillechamber.com](http://www.trussvillechamber.com) or at the civic center at 5381 Trussville-Clay

Road.

For more information, find Cahaba Countdown 2014 on Facebook or call the Trussville Area Chamber of Commerce at 205-655-7535.

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



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# Pinson moving forward with park project

by Lee Weyhrich

Staff Writer

Jane Ross of Goodwyn Mills Cawood, the architecture firm for the Pinson park project, was at Thursday's Pinson City Council meeting to answer questions about the project.

The questions on the agenda specifically involved the splash pads and the playgrounds.

As it stands, the playgrounds are estimated to cost the city \$80,000, with \$60,000 of that going to equipment. While the playgrounds, one for younger children and another for children ages 5 to 12, feature an array of equipment, they are missing a classic playground

staple. Councilwoman Joy McCain expressed concern that nowhere on the plan was a traditional swing set. A solution for this might be to expand one playground area or replace a covered seating area, Ross said.

Councilman Robbie Roberts also expressed concerns over the cost of the playground equipment and installation. Roberts is pushing for KaBoom!, a nonprofit group that organizes volunteers for community playground projects, to organize this playground project. KaBoom! would be able to handle the procurement and oversight for the playground equipment and installation. This would reduce the cost to a fraction of that \$60,000 amount. Work on the play-

ground could be completed in a day, the equipment would be more cost efficient, and it would be a great community organization project, he said.

Roberts said the council might be able to supplement some of the remaining cost with a grant to further reduce the price.

Mayor Hoyt Sanders suggested making the playground equipment and the swing sets alternative projects while the council did further study into the feasibility of the KaBoom! plan. The prepared areas for the playground would still be finished as planned for the estimated \$20,000.

This brought up the issue of the material proposed for the ground cover of the playground. The plans cur-

rently include the use of a loose wood-based product. Several people expressed concern on whether having loose ground cover was a good idea, including Roberts and Councilwoman Dawn Tanner. Both expressed concerns that the loose bark would become migratory, possibly interfering with the nearby splash pad. The loose covering might also need constant maintenance due to wear and displacement.

While the bark playground covering might be cheaper short term, Sanders asked Ross to look into the price difference between the annual upkeep of the bark versus a more costly upfront surface, such as a matting material, that would not need maintenance and would not have as many pitfalls.

At least one park attraction is in the early stages of production. Tom Monroe, the designer of the frisbee disc golf course for the park, said the course has been drawn up and the proposed course is being surveyed.

"What we've done is design a family-friendly golf course," Monroe said. "One of the aspects we had in mind for doing this was future use for a tournament."

The course will feature 12 holes, which may seem like an odd number to traditional golfers, but that number is ideal for sanctioned Professional Disc Golf Association tournaments. A PDGA tournament requires players to play through 36 holes.

"I'm really excited you are putting this in and I

think people are really going to like it," Monroe said.

Ross was also enthusiastic about the course and talked about how it threaded through open and wooded areas of the park.

With the planning of the course well under way, one change was made to the walking track. Roberts suggested the council add two more park bench sites adjacent to the trail for rest stops.

Ross suggested the city get the bases for the benches installed, but make the installation of the benches themselves a community project. The council voted to install the two extra bases for benches. The other items discussed will be revisited at a later time as more information becomes available.

## Class collects books for fire department

For The Tribune

Monica Brameltt's fifth-grade class at Paine Inter-

mediate School collected books to donate to the Trussville Fire Department.

The donation was part of the Christmas for Kids program.



submitted photo

The class with their donations

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# OPINION

## Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace

The prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of God's son Jesus Christ many centuries before he was born in the little town of Bethlehem. Isaiah said of Jesus that he would be called "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father," and lastly, but certainly not least, "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

All civilized people long for peace in the world. We long for an end to the horrible maiming, mutilation and death that are an integral part of all wars, and the experiences that twist men's minds and leave them to be haunted by fear-

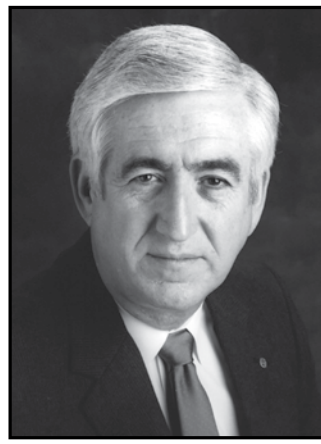
ful nightmares. We long for the day to end when our patriotic young people return to their homeland in flag-draped caskets, when we hear taps echoing across lonely cemeteries, and we see tears streaming down the cheeks of young wives, mothers and newly orphaned children.

We long for the day to come when the billions of dollars spent on war can be used to provide health care for all our citizens, food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and job opportunities for all those willing and able to work.

We long for peace among the various tribes

and religions of the earth. We long for a day in which hatred ceases between Jews and Arabs, Moslems and Christians, Protestants and Catholics, blacks and whites. Hatred is not of God and those who hate do not know God (1 John 2:9).

We long for peace in homes the world over, starting in America. Strong nations are built on the foundation of strong homes. We need homes, two-parent homes, in which husbands and wives love and respect each other, and in which children are taught to love God and respect others, not by words alone but by parental example.



Robert G. Wilkerson, D. Min.

We long for peace in the hearts of people all over the world. Some people's greatest conflict may be within themselves. They feel guilt, fear, conflict and worry. However, they need not feel this way. The

Prince of Peace has come and He offers His peace to all. The Hebrew word "peace" in Isaiah 9:6 is the word "shalom." Shalom means more than just the absence of conflict. It means the rich, harmonious, joyful life of those privileged to live in God's kingdom. To have Christ is to have peace.

God's Word tells us that as long as the world stands there shall be wars and rumors of wars. There is little, if anything, an individual can do to change that; however, every human being can enjoy the peace that God gives. It is personal, and it passes all

understanding. It is a peace that one can have even in the midst of the storm. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

*Dr. Robert Wilkerson is a minister, writer and founder of People for the Christian Way, an organization whose mission is to encourage all people to practice Christian principles in business, politics and every area of life.*

## 11 things wanted for Christmas and the New Year

When I say I don't want anything for Christmas, that's really not true. It's just that what I want, you can't buy. And really, it's much more fun to give anyway. It's one of the many blessings of getting older.

With that said, there are real estate topics related to gifts that I could discuss here, really helpful information for homebuyers, especially those first-time homebuyers that are so strapped for cash and wanting to participate



Dave Parrish

*The Real Story ... News and commentary about the real estate market and related topics.*

in the American Dream. While I'm more than happy to help answer those questions and provide that guidance, that's not how I wish to use this space today.

Yes, I know this is supposed to be a real estate column, so I'll try to keep it in those lines. But what I really want to share with you today is my Christmas list. Maybe you can help.

What I want for Christmas (and 2014):

- Make at least one less person/family homeless
- Make it possible for a

family to get their children in a good school system

- To listen to those in need and help them satisfy that need
- Help save a homeowner from foreclosure
- Help build at least one Habit for Humanity home
- Guide a family in making the best choice for their new home

• Counsel individuals on how to improve and protect their credit

- Be a resource for helping connect people to others who can help
- Help a family move on after loss
- To make a difference in the community that I live and serve
- Help spread the joy of giving

While the economy is

improving, we still have many who are hurting. It could be your neighbor, a family member or may be even closer to home. Become a listener. Together, we can make a difference, ease some pain, instill some hope and build a stronger community.

May the market be with you, and may the love of giving infect your life.

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# Bama softball coach talks memories, culture in Trussville

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

University of Alabama head softball coach Patrick Murphy spoke about memories he has in his position and the culture of the program at Thursday's Trussville Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

Murphy talked about having winning seasons every year since the team went 29-29 his first year. He told a story about meeting Joe Namath in a Tus-

caloosa hotel when he first arrived as coach and about his last conversation with former Alabama Athletics Director Mal Moore, who died in March.

Alabama had just defeated Auburn, and Moore was in a North Carolina hospital, watching the game. He called Murphy after the game and said, "Congratulations, that was awesome." It was the last time Murphy spoke with Moore.

"That's what Mal would do," Murphy said. "Out of



photo courtesy of www.rolltide.com

University of Alabama head softball coach Patrick Murphy

the blue, he'd call you." Murphy also talked

about the uniqueness of the Alabama softball program, comparing it to a homemade birthday cake as opposed to a store-bought birthday cake. He said the cake is a little bit burnt, the letters may be messed up and the frosting may have run some due to cooking too hot.

"That's Alabama softball," he said. "We're a mom and pop organization."

Murphy said that 2,600 season tickets were sold last year, more than some

college football programs sell. Trussville City Schools Athletics Director Karen Johns said season tickets are delivered personally by the team, not through the mail.

"It's a very unique program, and that's why it's the best in the country," Johns said.

Murphy has been the head softball coach at Alabama since 1999, and in 2012 Alabama won the NCAA Women's College World Series. Alabama has reached the Women's

College World Series eight times under Murphy, won four SEC championships and reached the NCAA Tournament 14 straight years.

Murphy's career record, including one season at Northwest Missouri State in 1995, is 817-233. He was the assistant softball coach at Alabama from 1996 to 1998.

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

# State Troopers step up patrols for Christmas, New Year's

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Alabama State Troopers will step up patrols this holiday season to protect the lives and promote the safety of Alabama motorists.

"It is one of the busiest and most exciting times of year, and that seasonal hustle and bustle is evident on the state's roadways as many of us will travel more between now and New Year's," said Col. Hugh B. McCall, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety. "We all must make safety a priority -- no matter how rushed we feel."

To prevent crashes, injuries and fatalities, the Ala-

bama Department of Public Safety will step up efforts to include extra patrols, sobriety checkpoints, line patrols and LIDAR speed detection. Troopers will also focus on violations that often contribute to crashes, including speeding, following too closely, driver distraction and improper passing. These additional enforcement activities will be made possible through grant funding from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

In addition, troopers will be available to assist motorists and can be reached via cell phone at \*HP (\*47), which will direct motorists to the nearest

Highway Patrol post.

Troopers will also partner with law enforcement and traffic safety agencies throughout the state and nation to work to curtail impaired driving.

"If your seasonal celebrations will include alcohol, please take a moment to designate a non-drinking driver or to make other arrangements to be sure you -- and others on the road -- arrive safely to your destination," McCall said.

Special enforcement period begins at 12:01 a.m. Friday and ends at midnight Jan. 2.

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

# Pinson Valley teacher finalist for teacher of year

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

A Pinson Valley High School teacher is a Jefferson County Schools finalist for the Alabama Teacher of the Year award for 2014-2015.

Michael Vise is one of 10 teachers from the Jefferson County Schools district to be nominated.

Vise, who has been at Pinson Valley for five years, teaches AP chemistry, AP biology and advanced chemistry.

"It is a special honor to be recognized as Teacher of the Year because you are nominated by your peers for this honor," Vise said. "I was selected as Teacher of the Year for Pinson

in 2011-12, but this is the first time I have been one of the finalists for Jefferson County. The recognition helps validate the hard work and effort I try to put in for each and every one of my students. Sometimes you miss the results as you focus on the day-to-day tasks that demand your attention. Awards that originate from your peers or students have special meaning and gives me the boost to continue facing the daily challenge of preparing my students for their next step."

The nine other nominees are Ashley Kizer (Adamsville Elementary), Taylor Ross (Gresham Elementary), Allison Hart (Hueytown Elementary), Lisa Baxter (Lipscomb Elemen-

tary), Erika Mason (West Jefferson Elementary), April Mitchell (Bottencourt Middle), Amy Akin (North Jefferson Middle), Pam McClendon (Oak Grove High) and Kimberly Mitchell (Shades Valley).

Each of Alabama's 133 school districts conducts its own competition, and from the 10 finalists one secondary winner and one elementary winner are chosen. District winners move on to a congressional competition statewide. In late April or early May, a Teacher of the Year for the state of Alabama is named.

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

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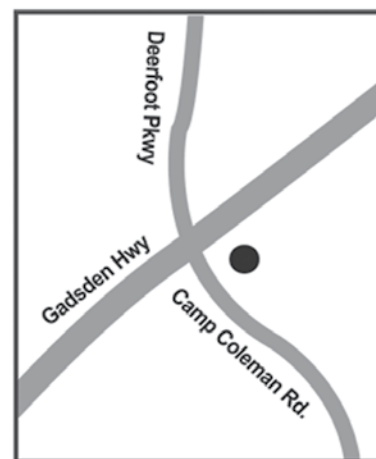
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# CALENDAR

## Zumba on Mondays, Wednesdays in Trussville

Zumba with Karla is at the Trussville Civic Center Mondays and Wednesdays at 9 a.m. The \$7 classes are for members and non-members. For more information, email kgeopet@yahoo.com or call the civic center at 205-655-9486.

## Wrestling at Palmyrdale Homesteads Community Center

GCW Wrestling is the first Saturday each month at 7 p.m. at the Palmyrdale Homesteads Community Center. The Mark Taylor Band performs the fourth Saturday each month, clogging and line dancing, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

## Georgiana Davis Masonic Lodge meetings

Georgiana Davis Masonic Lodge No. 338 in Trussville meetings are at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday each month. Practice nights are on the first and third Monday. Family nights are on the fifth Monday of the month. The lodge is at 190 Beechnut St. in Trussville. For more information, call Bryan Stover at 205-706-5220.

## Clay Public Safety meeting Monday

The Clay Public Safety Committee meets Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Clay City Hall, located at 2441 Old Springville Road in Clay.

## Clay Historical Society fundraiser

The Clay Historical Society is selling its 2013 limited edition Christmas ornaments. The ornament depicts Chalkville/Bryant park during the 1960s. The park dates back to 1905. This ornament is the sixth in the series of historical sites in Clay. The ornaments sell for \$12 each. Previous year ornaments can be purchased for \$10. For

more information, contact BJ Allen at brdnrd1022@bellsouth.net.

## Jazzercise at Trussville Civic Center

Jazzercise is Mondays at 5 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., and Saturdays at 9 a.m. at the Trussville Civic Center. For more information, contact Beth Gilbert at 205-966-9893.

## Candlelight Christmas Eve service in Clay

Mt. Calvary Presbyterian Church in Clay will have a Candlelight Christmas Eve Service on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.mtcalvarypc.org or call 205-681-4119.

## Square dancing Jan. 20, Jan. 27

A free introduction to square dancing class will be Jan. 20 and Jan. 27 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Friendship Hall in Fultondale. For more information, contact Dan Bailey at 965-8572 or Rilla Mewbourn at 680-4711.

## Cahaba Countdown 2014 New Year's Eve

Cahaba Countdown 2014, a New Year's Eve party, will be Dec. 31 at the Trussville Civic Center. Doors open at 8 p.m. and photo identification is required. Tickets are \$50 for a single, \$75 for a couple and \$275 for a group of eight. There will be hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Performing will be Sidecar and Chevy 6. Tickets are available at www.trussvillechamber.com or at the civic center at 5381 Trussville-Clay Road.

## Trussville property tax vote Feb. 25

A special property tax election in Trussville will be Feb. 25, 2014, for the purpose of two new elementary schools. Voting places will be Trussville City Hall

and First Baptist Church of Trussville. Polls will be open that day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Seven additional mills in property taxes would cost Trussville residents \$70 per year on homes appraised at \$100,000, \$140 per year on homes appraised at \$200,000 and \$210 per year on homes appraised at \$300,000.

## First Trussville City Council meetings of 2014

The Trussville City Council's January meetings will be Jan. 14 and Jan. 28 at Trussville City Hall. Both meetings are at 6 p.m.

## Trussville Public Library Storytime Jan. 9

The Trussville Public Library has outgrown its regular 10 a.m. Storytime on Thursday mornings. Starting Jan. 9, 2014, Storytime will change. The Trussville Public Library will have two presentations of the same Storytime. There will be one at 9:30 a.m. and a repeat presentation at 10:30 a.m.

## Trussville school board meeting Jan. 21

The Trussville City Board of Education will hold its first meeting of 2014 on Jan. 21 at 6 p.m. at the Trussville City Schools Central Office on North Chalkville Road. A public work session begins at 4:30 p.m.

## Literary reading session at Trussville library Jan. 12

The Friends of the Trussville Public Library will host its next literary reading session, "In Our Own Words," Jan. 12, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. In most cases, writers must read their own works, although surrogates may be used if approved by Friends. At least six writers must register in order for the program to be held. Estimated reading time for the family-friendly material, including introductions, should be less than eight

minutes. To reserve a spot, call Mary Lynne Robbins at 205-655-7694.

## Reading book club meeting in Clay Jan. 21

Join the Clay Public Library's popular reading book club, which meets on the third Tuesdays of most months. Our January selection is "The Astronaut Wives Club" by Lily Koppel. The meeting will be Jan. 21 at 6 p.m. at the library at 7257 Old Springville Road in Clay. Please register if you would like to attend. Call 205-680-3812 for more information.

## 'The Night Sky' storytime at Pinson library Feb. 21

Join Ms. Allison for "The Night Sky" storytime on Feb. 21 at 10 a.m. at the Pinson Public Library. Hear songs, stories and enjoy a snack. The library is located at 4410 Main St. in Pinson.

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Solid Rock

Solid Rock Church will hold a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Dec. 24 from 5 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. There will be Christmas music and prayer. The church is located at 5050 Pinson Valley Parkway in Birmingham.

## First CERT training Jan. 9

The first Community Emergency Response Team training in Trussville is Jan. 9 at the Trussville Civic Center from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. This training is about disaster preparedness and covers basic skills important to know in a disaster when emergency services are not immediately available. For more information or to enroll for the course, contact John Griscom at jgriscom@charter.net by Jan. 2.

*Have events you want to share? Email them to news@trussvilletribune.com.*

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