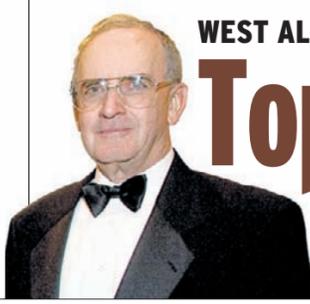




FLOWER FLAVOR

This is the season to add flowers to your plate | 1D



WEST ALABAMA | 1B

Top honors

Barry Mason honored as Citizen of the Year

SPORTS | 1C

Academic report holds good news for Tide athletes

The Tuscaloosa News

TUSCALOOSA, NORTHPORT, WEST ALABAMA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2008 50¢

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Developers scrap Riverside condo plan



By Robert DeWitt
Staff Writer

River Road Park on Jack Warner Parkway, withdrew a request to amend the master plan for Riverwalk Place. Developer Bill Lunsford, a partner in Riverwalk Place LLC, said Tuesday that the company has plans for the property and will reveal them later.

the developers, neighbors and city officials.

"The whole thing is off," said City Attorney Bob Ennis. "He's got to start all over." Ennis also recommended the council move forward with plans to obtain an easement for the River Walk across Lunsford's property. He said it would be better to proceed immediately.

the developers and said he believes they would like assurances that the City Council will approve their new plans before giving the city an easement.

Councilman Lee Garrison, who represents the area where the project is located, said that might not be possible. If the city can't get an easement across the property, it should move to buy the needed property

Developer Bill Lunsford, a partner in Riverwalk Place LLC, said the company's plan for the property will be revealed at a later date.

SEE CONDO | 13A

TUSCALOOSA | The developers of Riverwalk Place are wiping the slate clean and starting over while the Tuscaloosa City Council moves to obtain part of their land for the third phase of its Riverwalk.

Partners in Riverwalk Place LLC, the company that owns the property west of

The city also rescinded the tentative approval it gave for the developer's plans in September 2005, erasing more than two years of planning and negotiations between

Mayor Walt Maddox has negotiated with

New UA program to award 1st degree Construction engineering started in 2006

By Matt Hawk
Staff Writer

After four years of undergraduate work at the University of Alabama, senior Michael Smothers is ready for a career in construction. He will be the first student to receive a degree in construction engineering from the university.

Founded in 2006, the UA program is one of 10 in the country and the only construction engineering program in the Gulf States region. The

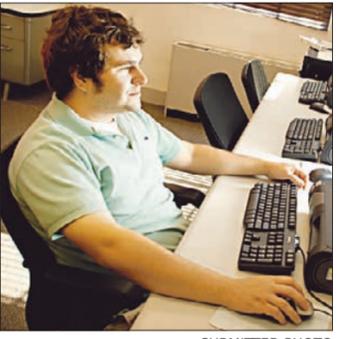
major blends traditional engineering skills with an emphasis on on-site construction techniques and management.

"UA's construction engineering program is perfect for students

interested in working for general contractors as opposed to [doing] strict design work," Smothers said in a news release.

Ken Fridley, chairman of UA's civil, construction and environmental engineering department, said graduates of the program can bridge the gaps between theory and design and the practical execution of a project.

SEE DEGREE | 13A



SUBMITTED PHOTO

University of Alabama student Michael Smothers has accepted a job with a Dallas construction company.

ELECTION 2008

Obama stretches his lead as clock ticks for Clinton



Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., and his wife Michelle react to the crowd in Raleigh, N.C., after winning the North Carolina primary Tuesday.



Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., speaks at a rally Tuesday in Indianapolis as her husband, former President Bill Clinton, applauds.

PHOTOS | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Superdelegates, six final contests all that's left to decide nominee

By Steven Thomma
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON | Barack Obama moved inexorably closer to the Democratic presidential nomination Tuesday, holding on to his lead as time runs out on challenger Hillary Clinton.

His decisive win in North Carolina, even as he trailed narrowly in Indiana late into the night, denied her the

two-state knockout punch that would have left him reeling.

Tuesday's votes were the last in states big enough to give one of the candidates a game-changing boost in delegates or popular vote. Instead, they now head to six final contests in such smaller venues as West Virginia, Kentucky, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Montana and South Dakota.

With only 217 delegates at stake in all six combined, Obama is all but

certain to emerge after five months of voting with his lead among pledged delegates intact. In fact, Obama aides Tuesday night predicted he would win a majority of the pledged delegates this month.

He also added to his nationwide lead Tuesday in the popular vote — a second strong argument to take in June to the party elites who'll cast the deciding convention votes for a nominee.

Obama has one continuing weakness, however, that was reinforced in both Indiana and North Carolina — his inability to win working-class whites. He lost that bloc in both states

SEE CLOCK | 13A

Back taxes to cost Tuscaloosa \$625,000

Employees aren't liable for error

By Robert DeWitt
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | The city of Tuscaloosa will pay about \$625,000 in back withholding taxes and interest to the Alabama Department of Revenue as the result of a payroll bookkeeping error dating back to 1997.

Starting when the city implemented its employee benefits "cafeteria plan" more than a decade ago, the city did not include

its employees' retirement contribution in the amount used to calculate their state withholding tax. Retirement contributions are exempt from federal income tax but not from state income tax.

The city's legal staff negotiated with the revenue department to arrange a three-year payoff, said Senior Associate City Attorney Tim Nunnally at the City Council's pre-meeting briefing Tuesday. The city will pay back taxes from the years 2005, 2006 and 2007.

The statute of limitations has expired on years before 2005, Nunnally said.

TAX-PAYING SCHEDULE

- June 1 \$198,000
- March 2009 \$179,000
- March 2010 \$197,000

Note: The rest of the \$625,000 is interest owed on the taxes.

SEE TAXES | 13A

Deal may mean steel nickels, pennies

By Laurie Kellman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON | Further evidence that times are tough: It now costs more than a penny to make a penny. And the cost of a nickel is more than 7½ cents.

Surging prices for copper, zinc and nickel have some in Congress trying

to bring back the steel-made pennies of World War II, and maybe using steel for nickels, as well.

Copper and nickel prices have tripled since 2003 and the price of zinc has quadrupled, said Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., whose subcommittee oversees the U.S. Mint.

Keeping the coin content means "contributing to our national debt by

almost as much as the coin is worth," Gutierrez said.

A penny, which consists of 97.5 percent zinc and 2.5 percent copper, cost 1.26 cents to make as of Tuesday. And a nickel — 75 percent copper and the rest nickel — cost 7.7 cents, based on current commodity prices, according to the Mint.

SEE STEEL | 13A



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A penny consists of 97.5 percent zinc and 2.5 percent copper.



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CROOM NAMED CITY CLERK
Tracy Croom, longtime associate finance director, was chosen by Mayor Walter Maddox to fill the post of city clerk. | 1B

GEORGIA EXECUTES KILLER
The first inmate was put to death Tuesday since the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of lethal injections. | 3A

High 87
Low 57