

Thursday, August 19, 2010

# DOTHAN EAGLE

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**Today:** Mostly cloudy  
60% chance of rain  
High 93°  
Low 74°



**Feds give no timeline for completing relief well 8A**



**Last U.S. combat brigade leaves Iraq 12A**



**Dyer expected to contribute right away for AU 1B**



## Community foundation gets new start

**Debbie Ingram**  
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An idea formed more than 10 years ago to help direct philanthropic funding resources in the community is being revitalized as the Southeast Alabama Community Foundation.

The new revamped public foundation dates back to 1998, when it began as the Community Foundation of South East Alabama — an offshoot of the local United Way.

The foundation of that day, however, was never staffed and had minimal success at large-scale fundraising. The group hopes to be more effective as part of the Montgomery-based Central Alabama Community Foundation.

“They were run by a board of directors,” said Central Alabama foundation development director Burton Ward. “They never could quite get things going. There were some donations and funds given, but they couldn’t quite get it done.”

Foundation board member David Jamison said there were talks about the local group joining with the Wiregrass Foundation, but the latter is a private foundation, with funding derived from a single source — the sale of Wiregrass Hospice.

The Southeast foundation is a different entity.

“We, the Central Alabama Community Foundation, have talked to them off and on as community foundations around the state do,”

Ward said, “and about a year ago, they approached us and said we can’t do this as a board anymore.”

Talks followed and the Southeast Alabama Community Foundation has emerged as an affiliate of the central foundation. While the local group will fall under the other’s governing board, it will maintain a local advisory board that hears grant requests and awards funding, as well as solicits donations. The money will be kept in the local community of Houston, Henry, Coffee,

Dale and Geneva counties.

“We will have an office locally in Dothan and are finalizing a location and getting a part-time person for the Dothan office to help spread the word on what the foundation is and how we are there to help the community and other non-profits,” Ward said.

The foundation, she said, operates under the slogan “Gather, Grow, Give.”

See **START**, 3A

## Study in the shade



Danny Tindell / dtindell@dothaneagle.com

Ashford Academy student Megan Sampson enjoys a moment in the shade while studying math at the campus in Ashford on Wednesday afternoon.

## Calls tie Bentley to Country Crossing

Source of messages unknown

**Lance Griffin**  
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A recent automated phone call circulating throughout the Wiregrass is further evidence that electronic bingo will be a major issue in the governor’s race between Republican Robert Bentley and Democrat Ron Sparks.

The recorded message — the source of which is not known — attempts to tie Bentley to individuals who oppose the use of electronic bingo at Country Crossing in Houston County. It states that Bentley recently received campaign money totaling \$100,000 from the group.

Part of the recorded message states: “The people who gave Bentley the money want to stop you from voting to determine the future of Country Crossing. They gave Bentley the money to make sure he closes Country Crossing for good and does everything in his power if elected governor to abolish all gaming in Alabama. These people want Country Crossing dead and this money will make sure of it. It’s time to stop the corruption in Alabama politics.”

A written statement from the Bentley campaign said he did not care to speculate on the source of the call, but added that his position on electronic bingo would not change based on campaign contributions.

See **BENTLEY**, 3A

## Wiregrass sees rise in infant mortality rates; state numbers at lowest level

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Declines in the number of teenage pregnancies and smoking mothers in 2009 likely led to more infants surviving in Alabama than any year over the last century, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health.

The department announced Wednesday that the infant mortality rate was 8.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, or 513 infant deaths statewide, which is the lowest number since data was first recorded in 1908.

A total of 612 infants died in the state in 2008.

According to the department, declines in smoking

### Infant deaths in the Wiregrass

	2007	2008	2009	Death rate*
Alabama	641	612	513	8.2
<b>Counties</b>				
Barbour	6	6	6	16.6
Coffee	9	6	7	10.4
Dale	7	3	10	8.5
Geneva	6	2	2	10.6
Henry	0	2	0	3.4
Houston	13	11	14	9.1
Pike	2	5	3	8

\*per 1,000 live births  
Source: Alabama Department of Public Health

mothers and teenage pregnancies contributed to lower statistics statewide. Past data

of teen mothers were 68 percent more likely to die.

Infant deaths appeared to increase between 2007 and 2009 in the Wiregrass, but Area 10 Health Department Administrator Peggy Blakeney said the individual numbers are more unstable than the overall rate.

“You see in Dale County that the deaths jumped from three to ten, but that the rate there is 8.5. That is in relation to approximately 62,500 births in the state,” she said.

“Still, eight babies is too many, so we continue to strive and have made some significant progress over the last decade.”

See **INFANT**, 3A

## Honor Flight will soar one more time

**Lance Griffin**  
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Four months ago, when 90 World War II veterans stepped off a chartered plane at the Dothan Regional Airport on a rainy Saturday night, it was supposed to be a final welcome home party for the Wiregrass Honor Flight participants.

The fourth — and supposedly final — flight had carried what appeared to be the last of 360 Wiregrass-area veterans who served during World War II to Washington, D.C., to view

the World War II Memorial. Organizers called the Wiregrass Honor Flight a long overdue thank you.

The Honor Flight board had just closed the books on the project when they opened their post office box and found more applications from veterans.

“We were thinking, ‘What can we do? We can’t turn these guys down. We can’t just stand by and watch nothing happen for these people,’” said Jim McGhee, director of communications for Wiregrass Honor Flight.



Max Oden / Eagle file

A World War II veteran from the Wiregrass is greeted by an active-duty Marine in Washington, D.C., in April.

See **FLIGHT**, 3A

## Man found guilty of Christmas Eve murder

**Matt Elofson**  
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A teenage boy said the actions of a Houston County jury on Wednesday brought him happiness.

Fourteen-year-old Naquel McIntyre and nearly a dozen of his relatives said the jury helped bring them justice for the loss of their loved one, Zachary Severson.

After nearly two hours of deliberation, the jury found 22-year-old Vincent Trawick guilty of murder. Police charged him with shooting Severson to death on Christmas Eve 2005. McIntyre is the oldest of Severson’s six children.

“I’m happy, sad and hurt all together,” McIntyre said. “I’m hurt that they tried to lie, and I’m sad because my father is still not here today.”

Houston County Sheriff’s deputies took Trawick into custody shortly after 5 p.m. Circuit Court Judge Michael Conaway said Trawick will be held without bond at least



**Vincent Trawick**

See **GUILTY**, 3A

