



141 YEARS OF SERVING THE GREATER GADSDEN AREA

The Gadsden Times

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EDUCATION

WEATHER

Attalla eyes new school

System will use bond money for project

BY MO JACKSON
Times Staff Writer

A new elementary school may be in the Attalla school system's future if Superintendent Danny Golden has anything to say about it.

The Alabama Public School and College Authority, headed by Gov. Bob Riley, this week approved hiring lawyers and financial advisers in preparation for a

bond sale late this year rather than spreading the sale out for two years.

Now that they can expect to receive a lump payment of the \$1.07 billion state bond issue for their construction needs, local school systems are springing to action.

Golden said the Attalla system's portion, \$1,770,538, would be used for the first phase of a new elementary school.

The project has been in the preliminary stages for several years.

Golden keeps a three-year-old architect's rendering of the



Golden

school in his office.

"We still have the same plans," Golden said Wednesday. "... We're going to be meeting with the architect pretty soon and break it down in two or three phases."

Golden said school officials will be looking to the city to help pay for the project.

"We haven't met with the City Council yet," he said. "The council members that I've talked to

(informally) have been positive. If we've got four council members on board, I'm OK with that.

"I've heard a lot of positive comments from the citizens of Attalla about the elementary school. ... Financially, it makes a lot of sense."

He said Etowah High already has several top-notch academic programs and a successful vocational program through its partnerships with Gadsden State Community College, which produces a steady work force for the area.

Golden said the quality of the

PLEASE SEE ATTALLA | A5

Rains from Humberto did little to ease drought conditions

BY BOB JOHNSON
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Rains from the remnants of Hurricane Humberto did not provide relief for the drought that has dropped lake levels to near record lows in Alabama and jeopardized its river system as it gets less water from a key Georgia lake, a federal official said Wednesday.

Col. Byron Jorns, district commander of the U.S. Corps of Engineers in Mobile, told a weekly drought task force teleconference that rains from Humberto last week provided only temporary help in Alabama and Georgia, where the Corps plans to cut the water flow from Altoona Lake, which feeds into Alabama rivers.

Alabama Power Co. spokesman Michael Sznajderman said later the reduction of water from Altoona Lake would cut the flow of water coming into the Coosa, Tallapoosa and Alabama rivers by about a third.

He said it could force Alabama Power to reduce the flow of water to the Alabama River, but said that would not happen until an important dredging project is completed.

"The fact of the matter is we have to preserve water. Municipal water systems draw from

our lakes. We don't even know if we will be able to fill the lakes again next spring," Sznajderman said.

Charles Stover of Alabama Power told the teleconference that if there continues to be a shortage of rain, the situation could become dire on Alabama lakes, which are currently below the level seen during winter months, when water levels are lowered because of winter and spring rains. He said there is concern the drought could continue into next year.

But the continuing drought and plans by the Corps of Engineers to cut the flow of water from Altoona Lake near Atlanta will not stop the dredging operation currently under way on the Alabama River to open the river to barge traffic south of Montgomery.

Jerry Sailors, executive director for the Coosa Alabama River Improvement Association, said Wednesday the dredging project has been cut back so that only a 100-foot wide area is being dredged rather than a 150-foot wide area, as originally planned. He said cutting back on the width of the dredging would not prevent barges from being able to use the river, but would allow the project to be completed despite the drought.

Chalking it up to the Constitution



GADSDEN TIMES | MARC GOLDEN

Chalk artist Cliff Beaman of Jacksonville, Fla., presents a patriotic art show Wednesday at Mitchell Elementary School in Gadsden in conjunction with Constitution Week. The show was sponsored by 21st Century Learning Centers in partnership with the Gadsden City Schools' Community Education program and Mitchell Elementary.

CRIME

Murder victim's family backs King

BY PHILLIP RAWLS
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY— With a murder victim's family by his side, Attorney General Troy King accused district attorneys across the state Wednesday of turning their backs on crime victims when they sided with a Shelby County prosecutor who wants a death sentence reduced in a double homicide.

"No more coddling criminals. No more standing against victims," King said at a news conference in his Statehouse office.

Standing with King were family members of slain pawn shop owner John Burleson.

"Never did I think, ever, that a district attorney, the guy that represented us, would turn his back on us — turn his back on the victims and the people of Shelby

'Never did I think, ever, that a district attorney, the guy that represented us, would turn his back on us — turn his back on the victims and the people of Shelby County and the people of Alabama and side with a murderer.'

—KASEY BURLESON
Son of murdered pawn shop owner John Burleson

County and the people of Alabama and side with a murderer," said Burleson's son, Kasey Burleson, of Birmingham.

King's news conference came two days after the Alabama District Attorneys Association held a news conference in view of King's office to defend Shelby County District Attorney Robby Owens, a Republican like King. The association called on King to apologize for "his needless attack" on one of their own.

"I will not apologize to anybody for doing the right thing," King

in Shelby County. Two males — ages 16 and 18 at the time — were convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death.

The younger defendant, Marcus Presley, fired the fatal shots but got his sentence switched to life in prison without parole after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled defendants under 18 at the time of their killings couldn't be executed. Because the triggerman avoided the death penalty, the district attorney supported changing the sentence for the older accomplice, LaSamuel Gamble, and a Republican judge agreed.

To thwart the district attorney, King used his power as attorney general to take the case from Owens on Sept. 12 and put out a news release accusing Owens of shirking his duties and turning against crime victims.

OUTDOORS

Judge hears testimony in suit challenging boat ban from lakes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTGOMERY — A state judge could decide in a little more than a month whether to uphold an Alabama law banning high-speed cigarette boats and large house boats from three popular Alabama lakes.

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Johnny Hardwick heard the final testimony Monday in a lawsuit challenging the law.

He gave attorneys for both sides 30 days to prepare proposed orders and said he would rule shortly after receiving them.

In 2006, the Legislature passed — and the governor signed — legislation that banned some boats from three Alabama Power Co. lakes: Martin, Weiss and Harris, which is also known as Lake Wedowee. Banned were cigarette boats longer than 26 feet, 11 inches and rated for speeds more than 60 mph, and all new boats, including houseboats, longer than 30 feet, 6 inches.

Houseboats already on the lake could remain, provided they had sanitation systems designed to prevent waste from getting into the lakes.

Opponents of the law challenged it in court, and state Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley delayed enforcement pending a ruling.

"We still feel that there's no reasonable basis to single out these law-abiding boaters," Montgomery attorney Frank Wilson told the Daily Home of Talladega.

Wilson represents a Jasper boat dealer and several boat owners on Lake Martin.

Montgomery attorney Bobby Segall, who represents four Lake Martin residents, said the law "reflects what 95 percent of the residences on Lake Martin want."

He said the state has the right to set aside water for specific uses much like it does land.

Alabama Power intervened in the case in support of the law, saying it has an interest in protecting property values and property uses because it is a significant landowner at the lakes.

The push for the law began after Georgia developers expressed an interest in building a resort community on Lake Harris, provided boating restrictions were enacted.

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CONSERVING

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TODAY'S WEATHER



It will be partly sunny with a warm, but pleasant afternoon. High 88 Low 62 For details, see A10

