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"For I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dotti... 7:17

75 cents

Today: Partly sunny
High 70°
Low 56°



Assad may be nearing last stand **11A**



Jones prefers low profile for Falcons **1B**



Pot: Will Obama allow it or will he not? **8A**



CONNECTICUT SCHOOL SHOOTING

'Sheer terror'



People leave the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire House in tears after a shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School on Friday morning in Newtown, Conn.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS / THE HOUR, ALEX VON KLEYDORFF



President Barack Obama wipes his eye as he talks about the Connecticut elementary school shooting on Friday in the White House briefing room in Washington.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS / CAROLYN KASTER

Tearful Obama calls for action after shooting

BY BEN FELLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A tearful President Barack Obama said Friday he grieved first as a father about the massacre at a Connecticut elementary school, declaring, "Our hearts are broken today." He called for "meaningful action" to prevent such shootings but did not say what it should be.

"Our hearts are broken today."

President Barack Obama

"The majority of those who died were children — beautiful, little kids between the ages of 5 and 10 years old," Obama said.

At that point he had to pause for several seconds to keep his

See **OBAMA**, Page 14A



A mother hugs her daughter following a shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., about 60 miles northeast of New York City on Friday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS / THE NEW HAVEN REGISTER, MELANIE STENDEL

Police: Gunman killed mother before killing 26 at school

BY JOHN CHRISTOFFERSEN
The Associated Press

NEWTOWN, Conn. — A man killed his mother at home and then opened fire Friday inside the elementary school where she taught, massacring 26 people, including 20 children, as youngsters cowered in fear to the sound of gunshots reverberating through the building and

screams echoing over the intercom.

The 20-year-old killer, carrying two handguns, committed suicide at the school, bringing the death toll to 28, authorities said.

The rampage, coming less than two weeks before Christmas, was the nation's second-deadliest school shooting, exceeded only by

See **TERROR**, Page 3A

Cowarts murder suspect arrested

Police apprehend man in Loxley

BY GREG PHILLIPS
gphillips@dothaneagle.com

A Cowarts man suspected of killing his stepfather on Wednesday has been apprehended by authorities near Mobile.



Tharp

Police arrested Michael Allen Tharp, 40, in Loxley early Friday afternoon, according to the Houston County Sheriff's Office.

Houston County Sheriff's Capt. Antonio Gonzalez said charges have been filed against Tharp for the murder and robbery of his stepfather, 68-year-old Joseph Bernard Hendley.

Gonzalez said there are warrants charging Tharp with murder during the commission of a robbery,

See **ARRESTED**, Page 2A

Houston County

Safety director paying dividends

BY GREG PHILLIPS
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About three years ago, Houston County officials were looking at rising insurance premiums due to an increasing number of medical cases.

Then they hired Kelly Crowell.

Since Crowell took over as the county's safety director in November 2009, the number of recordable medical cases in the county has dropped from 63 to 22.

According to a letter from the county commission to county employees, the savings in insurance premiums and favorable insurance rebates will be more than \$260,000 in the 2012-13 fiscal year.

"Our main goal to protect our employees and make sure they go home

See **DIRECTOR**, Page 5A



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Center Stage

Judge cleared to hear case of seized cash, bingo machines

From staff reports

The Alabama Supreme Court has denied a petition seeking to have a Houston County Circuit Court judge removed from a case

dealing with cash and electronic bingo machines seized from Center Stage Alabama in July.

The case is related to the July raid by the Attorney General's office on Center Stage Alabama,

where 600 electronic bingo machines were seized, along with \$283,000.

Attorneys for the Houston Economic Development Association had sought to have Circuit Judge

Michael Conaway recuse himself from hearing the case because they said he has close connections to businessmen opposed to

See **BINGO**, Page 2A

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