

# DOTHAN EAGLE

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"For I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" — Genesis 31

75 cents

**Today:** Showers, t-storms  
**High** 88°  
**Low** 69°

**Ukraine sees Russia as threat** **12A**

**Maya Angelou dies at 86 in North Carolina** **8A**

**Alabama wins second straight NCAA golf title** **1B**

## Man's attorneys argue against his eligibility for the death penalty

BY LANCE GRIFFIN  
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Attorneys for a man charged with capital murder claim a series of low IQ scores and other indicators prove he is mentally retarded, or intellectually disabled, and ineligible for the

death penalty. A 2006 murder resulted in capital murder charges against Marcus Dantrell Rivers. Police believe he was the trigger man in the murder of Patrick Dixon. The shooting happened near the intersection of Hamilton Street and Third Avenue in

Dothan. Two other men were charged in connection with the crime. Everett Morton was convicted of capital murder and initially sentenced to death, but an appeals court reversed the sentence after determining the judge should have given the jury a

charge for the lesser included offense of felony murder. Morton received life in prison without parole. Michael James pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 30 years. Rivers is charged with capital murder because the

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*CDBG funds are awarded to communities by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are targeted primarily to projects and facilities that serve low-income areas.*

BLOCK GRANT PROJECT

## City set to approve CDBG funds

BY LANCE GRIFFIN  
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Federal funds for local tutoring, child care, career counseling, sidewalk construction near schools and emergency housing repair are set to be approved as part of Dothan's annual Community Development Block Grant allocation.

Pending approval next week by the Dothan City Commission, about \$447,000 will be distributed among eight public service programs, six public facility and infrastructure programs and two housing repair programs.

CDBG funds are awarded to communities by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are targeted primarily to projects and facilities that serve low-income areas.

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## Smith made service his mission

BY JIMMY SAILORS  
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Todd Smith's mission was to add significance to the lives of others.

"Todd was a follower of Christ," said the Rev. Todd Thorpe, lead pastor at Watermark Church in Ashford. "He loved God, he loved people and he wanted to serve the world."

Thorpe officiated Tuesday at the funeral for Smith, 47, who died Saturday. He said Smith was an encouraging man who was involved in a lot of things, including mission trips to Honduras and an Ethiopian orphanage.

Smith graduated from Northview High School in 1985 and Auburn University at Montgomery in 1991.

He married his high school sweetheart, Lori Hoskins, in 1991 and they lived in Montgomery before they moved back

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## NEW RESTAURANTS HAVE APPETITE FOR OZARK



JAY HARE / DOTHAN EAGLE

Construction has begun on the new McDonald's in Ozark. The city has many fast-food chains receiving construction upgrades as well as locally-owned restaurants opening in the area.

"We feel like it's a good sign that they're reinvesting in the market."

BY JENNIFER CALHOUN  
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OZARK — Signs of construction are everywhere along Highway 231 leading into Ozark, as red dirt, earth-moving machines and stacks of steel beams line the landscape.

And much of that construction has something to do with restaurants.

Whether it's a new Zaxby's on Highway

Eric Basinger, executive director of the Ozark-Dale County Economic Development Corporation

231, or a chic, new tapas restaurant coming to The Square in downtown Ozark, it's all good, said Eric Basinger, executive director of the Ozark-Dale County Economic Development Corporation.

"We feel like it's a good sign that they're reinvesting in the market," Basinger said.

Currently, several projects are ongoing.

Projects include the razing of the old McDonald's building on Highway 231 to make way for a newer-concept McDon-

ald's. A new Hardee's building also is expected to be completed in 110 to 120 days, while the current Arby's, which is being replaced by Zaxby's, will reopen in Love's Travel Stop, once it is constructed.

"We're bullish on Ozark," said Dan Ponder, president of Ponder Enterprises Inc., which owns 24 Hardee's restaurants in various states.

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## Wal-Mart opening Express store in Headland

BY MICHELLE WATSON  
 Headland Observer

HEADLAND — Two weeks after Ashford residents learned a Wal-Mart Express store would be opening



in their town, residents in Headland heard a similar announcement.

Headland Mayor Ray Marler officially announced Tuesday that Wal-Mart Express will be opening along Highway 431.

"We are pleased to welcome a Wal-Mart Express to Headland," Marler said. "This is a

huge benefit to not only our citizens, but to Henry County as well, not to mention all motorists who travel up and down U.S. Highway 431."

The Wal-Mart Express located in Headland will be the first Express store built in the state of Alabama,

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*"This is a huge benefit to not only our citizens, but to Henry County as well, not to mention all motorists who travel up and down U.S. Highway 431."*

Ray Marler,  
 Headland mayor

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