



ANGELOU DEAD
Celebrated author, poet Maya Angelou dies.
Nation A3

TIMES DAILY

Florence • Muscle Shoals • Sheffield • Tuscumbia • Northwest Alabama



Florence's Rodriguez scored 21 goals to help lead Falcons into 6A playoffs.

Sports D1



PRIMARY PRIMER
Poll workers learn about changes, new machines.
Region B1

FLUSH WITH SUCCESS
Authorities probe urinal part thefts

BIRMINGHAM — Jefferson County sheriff's officials said they're probing a series of thefts involving metal urinal components from several local restaurant bathrooms. Sheriff's spokesman Randy Christian said Wednesday authorities have been told of a man walking into men's rooms and stealing flush valves and supply lines from urinals. Authorities said the man has been able to leave each business without being noticed. Christian said the pipes weren't made of copper, and would have little value if a thief tried selling them as scrap metal. Christian said sheriff's officials are unsure of why the items are being stolen.

FLIGHT RISK
Police seek raven attacking cars

RICHMOND, Maine — Wanted: A raven that's attacking cars in Maine. Richmond Police Chief Scott MacMaster said the bird has attacked three vehicles, causing \$500 in damage in one case. One owner said he watched the bird land and see its reflection in a window before attacking. The bird damaged gaskets around windshields and windows and the windshield wipers on at least three cars. One of the victims wants to make sure raven attacks are "nevermore." He wants to shoot the bird. MacMaster advised them to contact the Maine Warden Service. The raven is not the only animal to attack a car in town in recent weeks. Last month, police had to deal with two goats that climbed atop a car.

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WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?
Tuesday's question: How do you prefer your ice cream?
Cone: 33.3%
Cup: 29.3%
Milkshake: 25.2%
Sundae: 12.2%
Today's question: What is your favorite original Skittles color?
Vote daily online at: TimesDaily.com

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Group plans to appeal

Democrats on Wednesday praised the ruling, saying they argued the act was unconstitutional and bad for public education before it was passed in 2013.

GOP: Ruling against school tax credit law won't stand

By Mary Sell
Montgomery Bureau

MONTGOMERY — Republican lawmakers and supporters of the Alabama Accountability Act said they don't think a Montgomery judge's decision to strike down the legislation that includes tax credits for families leaving the state's worst public schools will hold up on appeal.

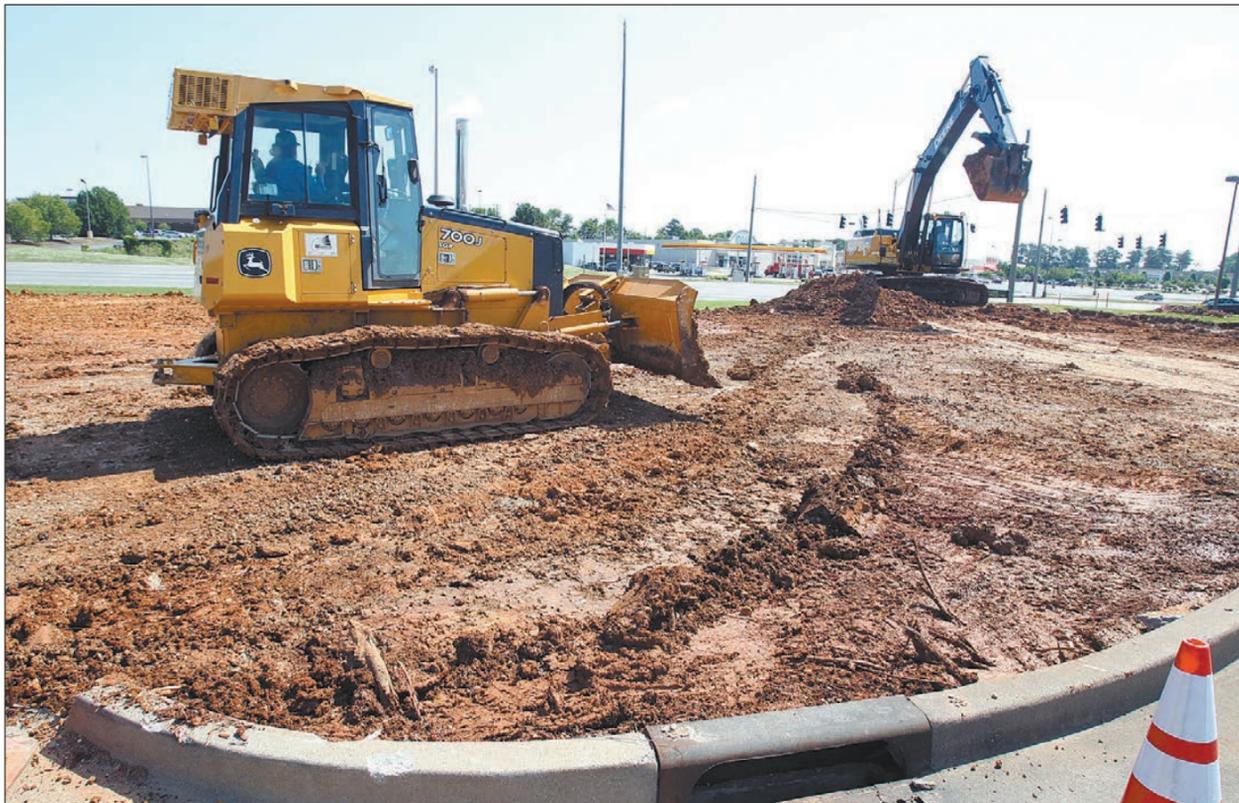
Democrats on Wednesday praised the ruling, saying they argued the act was unconstitutional and bad for public education before it was passed in 2013. Circuit Judge Gene Reese ruled the act violates the state Constitution's requirement for the Legislature to have only one subject in a bill. Reese also said the law violates the constitutional prohibition about providing public funds for private education.

The judge said his ruling will apply prospectively, and it won't affect the \$3,500-per-student tax credits earned for the 2013-14 school year. The act is estimated to cost the state education budget about \$40 million a year. The Republican-backed law was challenged in court by members of the state

teachers' organization, the Alabama Education Association. A group defending the law, the Institute for Justice, said it will appeal the judge's ruling to the all-Republican state Supreme Court. "(Wednesday's) ruling is both disappointing and wrong," Bert Gall, a senior

Please see **Appeal, A8**

Businesses building in Florence



At left is the former Chick-fil-A drive-through location in Florence. A full-service restaurant will be constructed and is expected to open this fall. Below, the former Back Yard Burgers location in Florence is the site where a new Dairy Queen will open.

Jim Hannon/
TimesDaily
photos

Renovation, construction includes Dairy Queen, Starbucks, Chick-fil-A

By Wayne Smith
Staff Writer

Several new businesses are either coming to the Shoals or are being revamped.

In downtown Florence, a new Dairy Queen is opening in the former Back Yard Burgers location on South Court Street, officials said. Carla's Sandwiches and Burgers was in the location most recently.

At Florence Mall, renovation work continues inside and outside the facility.

The Chick-fil-A drive-through has been demolished. It will be replaced by a full-service restaurant that will include a drive-through window. Officials expect the restaurant to open this fall.

Signs will also be going up with the new Florence Mall name, replacing the Regency Square signs.

Nearby, construction of Starbucks



continues. It also is expected to open by summer or early fall.

A new business is going into the former Papa John's location on Flor-

ence Boulevard across from Jack's Gold, Guns and Guitars, a pawn shop, is expected to open in July.

Jimmy John's, a deli and sandwich

shop, is expected to open soon in downtown Florence in the former Quizno's location.

Also in downtown Florence, a couple of investors have bought the former Mefford's Jewelry location and will be looking to offer it for rent.

Ashley Furniture is moving into the old Belle Foods Market on Florence Boulevard behind Pizza Hut. Ashley will occupy part of the structure with another business possibly moving in.

ALDI Foods, a grocery store, is opening a new store on Avalon Avenue in Muscle Shoals where Hardee's was formerly located. ALDI has 1,300 stores in 32 states, including a Florence location.

"We are pleased to bring our first store to Muscle Shoals," said Troy Marshall, Mount Juliet division

Please see **Building, A8**

Man charged with attempted murder, kidnapping, theft

By Bernie Delinski
Staff Writer

SHEFFIELD — Police charged a Tuscumbia man Wednesday with kidnapping and attempting to kill a woman after she refused to have sex with him.

Bobbie Dean Dickerson, 52, was formally charged Wednesday in connection with the reported weekend incident at the woman's home on 13th Avenue Southwest, police Sgt. Ray Terry said.

Warrants were obtained on Dickerson on charges of attempted murder, first-degree kidnapping and first-degree

theft, Terry said. He was in the city jail, awaiting transfer to Colbert County Jail.

Terry said the 54-year-old woman called police early Saturday morning after fleeing to a neighbor's residence. "He came into her residence intoxicated and indicated he'd like to have sex with the victim," Terry said. "When she refused, he became forceful and physically assaulted her over the course of four hours."

In addition to kidnapping, Dickerson allegedly cut the woman's throat twice with



Dickerson

Please see **Charges, A8**

Officer faces charge of domestic violence

By Bernie Delinski
Staff Writer

FLORENCE — A Killen police officer has been charged with domestic violence after he was accused of placing his hands around a woman's throat and biting her nose, authorities said.

Wesley Lee Tidwell, 32, was arrested Tuesday for third-degree domestic violence, said Richard Richey, a Lauderdale County sheriff's investigator assigned to the One Place of the Shoals domestic violence unit.

The charge is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail, court officials said. If convicted, Tidwell would not be allowed to carry a weapon.

Richey said Tidwell and the woman had been in a relationship for about two years when they agreed to meet at Central High

School to break it off. During the meeting, they argued and it became physical, he said.

"Wesley had put his hands around the victim's throat," Richey said. "He also bit her on the nose."

Richey said the woman was able to get away. She went to authorities and filed a report.

A Lauderdale County grand jury indicted Tidwell on the charge, and he turned himself in to authorities Tuesday, Richey said.

Killen Mayor Tim Tubbs said Tidwell is on leave without pay for up to 30 days, pending the outcome of the case. Tubbs said Tidwell also has taken leave from his position as a member of the Killen Volunteer Fire Department.

Tidwell's attorney, Tim Case, who was with him when he turned himself in,



Tidwell

Please see **Officer, A8**