Coosa Valley Medical Center’s New West Wing

New Features... The Steps to Restoring Power
Click your way to energy savings

Plus... Cooking with Electricity, World’s Largest Peanut Boil in Luverne, DAV Chapter #21 in Piedmont and more!
Thirty-six Alabama cities have public power utilities that provide electricity to their citizens. They range in size from cities like Huntsville to cities that serve fewer than 2,000 meters.

Like citizens in more than 2,000 communities across the United States, these Alabama citizens choose to provide electric service through public power systems. Not-for-profit electric utilities are accountable to the customers they serve.

Nationwide, public power provides the electric power needs for 44 million Americans.

Like community police, fire departments, water and sewer departments, parks, schools, and hospitals, public power systems are rooted in the American tradition of local people providing for their basic community needs. Public power systems provide service — electricity at not-for-profit prices.

Public power’s low electric rates are magnets for community economic development. So is its ability to provide stream-lined “one-stop shopping” customer services that encourage existing business customers to maintain and expand their operations and attract new business. Strong, stable employers mean strong, stable jobs for local citizens.

With great commitment and dedication, Mr. Claussen has helped AMEA remain true to its mission of providing for our Member communities a reliable and economical source of electric power, enabling the 11 Member cities to preserve and enhance the benefits of municipal ownership for their citizens and the more than 350,000 electric customers they serve. AMEA has always been and will continue to be a tool that our Members can rely on to help contribute to the betterment of their communities.

On a personal note, my five months as your AMEA Director of Communications have been most rewarding. I contribute a great deal of this enjoyment to the employees of AMEA, your Member city, and of course, to Mr. Claussen. He has been a great teacher to me as I continue to learn and appreciate the rich history of AMEA and the public power industry.

I wish Mr. Claussen and his wife, Julie, the very best in this new chapter in their life. He leaves a legacy of leadership at AMEA. We are all better people having known and learned from Mr. Claussen.

Lisa Miller
AMEA Director of Communications

Some electric power companies come and go...

The Fourth of July holiday is a time for us to reflect on where we have been and where we are going. It’s a celebration of our nation’s independence. We are a proud nation. Nothing gives people more pride and joy than to see Old Glory sporting her brilliant stars, stripes and colors. It’s a symbol of our freedoms and uniqueness.

This is also a proud time for your Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) as we celebrate and reflect on the 23 years of service of retiring President & CEO Robert W. Claussen. Mr. Claussen was hired by your Board of Directors in 1984 as AMEA’s first General Manager. In 2001, his title was changed to President & CEO.

Through Mr. Claussen’s vision and leadership, AMEA has been a successful and vibrant organization. Mr. Claussen has truly been a visionary for you and your Member city. Because of Mr. Claussen’s perseverance throughout his 23-year rein, AMEA has become a force in Alabama’s utility sector. This is something you can take great pride in as a public power customer.

(L to R): Brian Kriel, Derek Lee, Paula Bounds, Jerry Posey and Jan Gunter serve on your Local Communications Committee for the City of Opelika. The committee serves as the “ears and eyes” of your community for the Alabama Currents and other communications efforts to keep you informed about your municipal electric system.
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ON THE COVER
The new West Wing of the Coosa Valley Medical Center, Sylacauga, is featured on the cover. The original hospital was opened in 1945. In 1998, a new ambulatory care center was built under Baptist Health Systems. In 2004, the Sylacauga Healthcare Authority took over the hospital and began plans for the West Wing. The new addition contains all of the patients’ rooms, ICU units, a new cafeteria, and various laboratories/departments. (Photos courtesy of The Daily Home.)
Robert W. Claussen, Alabama Municipal Electric Authority’s (AMEA) President & CEO, said goodbye to the AMEA family and public power industry in June after serving 23 years as the joint action agency’s chief executive.

Claussen was hired by the AMEA Board of Directors in June 1984 as General Manager. In June 2001, Claussen was named President & CEO.

“Bob has demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication to advancing the ideals and goals of public power,” said Fred Clark, AMEA’s new President & CEO. “Throughout his career at AMEA, Bob has been a dedicated servant to our 11 Member cities and their customers.”

On June 8, a celebratory reception and dinner were held in Claussen’s honor in Montgomery. Colleagues, family, friends, AMEA staff, business advisors and partners commended Claussen for his leadership and dedication to the authority. The AMEA Board of Directors presented Claussen with a special resolution and plaque honoring him for his 23 years of service. Dean Argo, Executive Director, Electric Cities of Alabama, presented Claussen with a Joint Senate Resolution on behalf of State Senator Wendell Mitchell of Luverne. Claussen’s official retirement date was June 30.

Some of the milestones in Claussen’s career include the implementation of the Load Management Program to improve Members’ load factor in 1990; launching a scholarship program in 1992 and a technical scholarship program in 2003; the implementation of a Capital Fund Program for Member cities’ economic development purposes in 1997; the installation of a system-wide Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) in 1998; publishing the first issue of Alabama Currents in 2002; and, the dedication of the AMEA-Sylacauga Plant in 2004. AMEA became the first organization in more than 80 years to build a power generation plant owned by a municipality. The AMEA-Sylacauga Plant, which is owned collectively by the 11 municipal electric systems that comprise AMEA, utilizes two state-of-the-art combustion turbine generating units fueled by natural gas, each with a generating capacity of 47,500 kilowatts.

Throughout his career at AMEA, Claussen was actively involved in fuel cell programs, during which he served as the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fuel Cell Commercialization Group and served on the Board of Directors of the Direct Fuel Cell Group. Claussen is a former president of the Southeastern Federal Power Customers, Inc. (SeFPC). SeFPC is made up of customers who receive power from the Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA). He has testified before Congress on various issues including Power Marketing Agencies (PMAs) and retail competition.

Claussen served a six-year term on the American Public Power Association (APPA) Board of Directors. For two years of the six years, he served on the Executive Committee. Claussen also served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hometown Connections™, a business venture to provide lower-priced, value-added products and services to APPA members.

Claussen has been honored throughout his career with various professional and industry awards, including the APPA Harold Kramer-John Preston Personal Service Award in 2001; the APPA Alex Radin Distinguished Service Award in 2004; Electric Cities of Alabama Public Service Award in 2006; and, the Electric Cities of Alabama Heritage Award in 2007.

Before coming to AMEA, Claussen served nine years in various senior management positions at the Tampa-based Seminole Electric Cooperative including Assistant General Manager and Vice President of the Technical Division. Claussen, a registered professional engineer, was involved with the planning, certification, design, and construction of the Seminole Plant, the first coal-fired power plant in the U.S. licensed under the more stringent EPA criteria standards. He worked as a Principal Engineer with R. W. Beck and Associates for two years and with Florida Power Corporation for 11 years before joining Beck.

Claussen holds a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering and a Master of Engineering degree from the University of South Florida. He and his wife, Julie, have one son, Jay.

“We celebrate and honor Bob as he enters a new chapter in his life,” said Clark. “Bob leaves an enduring legacy here at AMEA and with our Member cities.”

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Chicken Casserole

1 chicken
1 can fat-free mushroom soup
1 can fat-free cream of chicken soup
1 small carton of fat-free sour cream
1 stick of reduced-fat margarine
1 tube reduced-fat Ritz crackers

Cook chicken. Remove bones and pull apart into small pieces. Mix soups and sour cream. Pour over chicken. Crush crackers and pour over soup mixture. Top with melted butter. Bake about 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

Joann Mathis
Alexander City
Light & Power
In My Opinion

It’s a fact….public power is good for business. More than 2,000 communities across the nation have chosen to provide their own electricity services.

Public power utilities have a long history of working with their communities in the area of business support and economic development. Public power business retention and attraction efforts benefit their communities, including the creation and retention of jobs, the attraction of new workers, and the overall expansion of the local economy. In general, public power utilities provide business support and stimulate economic growth, access to reliable power, assisting businesses through the site selection and development processes, and providing recommendations on energy savings.

From manufacturing to agriculture, the nation’s economy is dependent upon the reliable delivery of electricity. Technological advancements of the past decade have made power quality more important than ever. A simple interruption in the flow of electricity can cause a major setback in today’s technologically advanced and computerized manufacturing facility. Public power utilities understand this and invest in technology and equipment designed to provide a high level of reliable service to their customers.

Publicly-owned utilities serve as a portal to a variety of government offices and services, thereby helping businesses identify and develop the site best suited for their needs. Publicly-owned utilities are often a source of invaluable information regarding the area, including site information, labor statistics, tax information, and community services.

Across the country, publicly-owned electric utilities continue to lead the way in providing low-cost energy to homes and businesses.

Fred D. Clark, Jr.
AMEA President & CEO

AMEA Members see advantage of defibrillators

By Susan Ryba, Marketing, Hometown Connections

Exclusive industry pricing and independent research continues to make portable defibrillators from Philips Medical Systems the superior choice for public power utilities. MD Buyline, an independent healthcare research company, has named Philips as the number one defibrillator manufacturer in overall user satisfaction, as well as in categories including system performance, system reliability, installation, training and service response time. Members of the American Public Power Association (APPA) save up to 35 percent on Philips HeartStart defibrillators and related accessories when purchasing through Hometown Connections™.

APPA members are learning about and purchasing Philips defibrillators either directly from Hometown Connections or through its affiliated public power organizations. For example, the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA), the Indiana Municipal Electric Association (IMEA) and Crawfordsville, Ind., Electric Light & Power (CELP) are conducting Philips AED education programs and training sessions for public power officials in their states.

Riviera Utilities in Foley initially purchased Philips HeartStart defibrillators about four years ago, through AMEA. According to Safety Manager Bill Burchett, Riviera’s purchasing decision was based primarily on the discount pricing arranged by Hometown Connections. “We had investigated purchasing defibrillators previously, however the cost was considered prohibitive,” Burchett said.

The Philips defibrillators purchased by Riviera Utilities have been staged in the two main utility offices, in two electric crew offices, and in the gas and water crew office. Prior to placing the units in service, the utility contacted its local worker’s compensation physician and obtained his consent to act as Medical Director of the AED program. The utility then contacted a local training company to provide training to the employees on operation and usage of the AED units. This ongoing training is conducted on an annual basis, with first aid, CPR and AED training combined. The defibrillators are inspected monthly to verify the condition of the batteries and pads. As of this writing, Riviera Utilities is in the process of purchasing additional Philips AEDs for placement in vehicles.

Alabama’s Sylacauga Utilities initially purchased two Philips HeartStart AED units through AMEA/Hometown Connections in March 2003. “We wanted to equip two of our bucket trucks with this type of protection, and we were pleased when AMEA contacted us about the Hometown Connections program,” said Darol W. Russell, Operations Director/Safety Coordinator. In addition to the two truck units, Sylacauga Utilities recently purchased a Philips AED for its Operations Center. Furthermore, the Utilities Board presented a Philips AED to each of the schools in Sylacauga, (county and city) during their staff assemblies. The utility plans to purchase two more units to be located at the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants.
Cleaning your dryer lint filter before every load helps dry your clothes more quickly, which means you save money and energy.

Occasionally clean the lint screen with warm water, mild detergent and a brush. Chemical residue from fabric softener sheets can build up on the lint screen. After removing lint, the screen appears clean, but air flow can still be restricted by chemical residue. Similarly, this residue can collect on your dryer moisture sensor and can cause the dryer to run too long. The sensor can be cleaned with alcohol and a cotton ball (see your owner’s manual).

Programmable thermostats save money

Tired of cooling an empty house while you are away? In about an hour, you can be on your way to a more comfortable home. This can be done automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing a programmable thermostat.

By installing a programmable thermostat, you can save money every month by lowering energy use when you do not need it.

A programmable thermostat automatically lets your home get warm in the summer while you are away. Then, the thermostat returns the temperature to normal prior to the arrival time you set. As a result, your system does not run as much when your home is not occupied.

Programmable units range from simple timer-like devices to elaborate multifunction units that can provide special instructions to your climate-control system based on the day of the week.

For more information on programmable thermostats or other energy-saving tips, call your heating and cooling dealer.

Save money and energy each month by cleaning your dryer filter

Cleaning your dryer lint filter before every load helps dry your clothes more quickly, which means you save energy and money.

Occasionally clean the lint screen with warm water, mild detergent and a brush. Chemical residue from fabric softener sheets can build up on the lint screen. After removing lint, the screen appears clean, but air flow can still be restricted by chemical residue. Similarly, this residue can collect on your dryer moisture sensor and can cause the dryer to run too long. The sensor can be cleaned with alcohol and a cotton ball (see your owner’s manual).

Editor’s Note: The following articles contain topics about news within the electric utility industry. Topics include drought conditions and Clean Air requirements. These topics affect your public power system and you as a customer of a municipal electric system.)

Drought could cost TVA $300 million

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News - Dave Flessner Chattanooga Times/Free Press, Tenn.

The lack of rain is drying up cash reserves for the Tennessee Valley Authority, TVA President Tom Kilgore said.

TVA estimates it has lost $200 million of hydroelectric power generation over the past eight months due to one of the driest years on record in the Tennessee Valley.

Without sufficient rainfall, TVA may end up losing $300 million for all of fiscal 2007 because of the drought, Kilgore said.

TVA typically generates nearly 10 percent of its electricity from its 29 hydroelectric-producing dams and pumped storage facility on the Tennessee River and its tributaries. But hydro generation so far this year is down 32 percent from expectations and runoff into TVA lakes is off 39 percent.

Hydro power is TVA’s cheapest source of electricity and normally can be generated during peak demand periods. But rainfall in the Tennessee Valley east of Chattanooga is more than 10 inches below normal this year, making this the driest year in the Valley since 1986.

In Chattanooga, the National Weather Service said rainfall so far this year totals less than 12 inches, or less than half the normal 25-inch total by this time of the year.

“We’re in good shape in terms of our overall electricity supplies and we continue to generate net income,” Kilgore said following a TVA board meeting here. “But our bank account is getting low. We’ve got to conserve our cash, but we won’t make that up unless we have a real hot summer.”

Kilgore said TVA revenues during the first eight months of fiscal 2007 are about 3 percent below budget, primarily because of the recent mild winter.

TVA, which began the fiscal year last October with about $500 million in cash, is down to about $200 million in cash reserves. “With our large operation, that’s pretty tight,” Kilgore said.

Alabama Power moves forward on Birmingham clean air project; Company expects to spend $3 billion through 2012 on technology

Alabama Power is close to completing construction on a major environmental project that will help further improve air quality in the Birmingham area.

“For years we’ve been installing environmental controls and reducing emissions,” Charles McCrary, Alabama Power president and CEO, said today during a media tour of the project at Plant Gorgas in Walker County. “This latest project is just part of our ongoing commitment to cleaner air in Birmingham and across the state.”

At Plant Gorgas, Alabama Power is completing installation of its first “scrubber,” a huge device that will help reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO2), a contributor to acid rain. The scrubber will also help reduce mercury and fine particles.

The $261 million scrubber at Plant Gorgas took five years to design and construct. It is slated to be operational in early 2008. The scrubber is expected to reduce SO2 emissions from three of the plant’s generating units by 98 percent.

Nearly 400 contract and construction workers have been working on the scrubber. The scrubber vessel, one of the largest in the world based on generation capacity, is 12 stories tall. The scrubber stack, at 755 feet, is about 30 stories taller than Birmingham’s biggest skyscraper.

The Gorgas scrubber is the first of several scrubbers slated to be installed at Alabama Power’s largest coal-fired plants during the next five years. The state-of-the-art scrubbers are designed to meet increasingly stringent government standards for clean air.
Another major environmental project is nearing completion at Alabama Power’s Plant Barry, in Mobile County. There, workers are installing Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) technology, which will cut emissions of nitrogen oxide (NOx), a component of ground-level ozone. The $241 million SCR is also slated to be operational in spring 2008. It will reduce NOx emissions from the plant’s largest generating unit by 80 percent during summer ozone season. SCRs have already been installed at Plant Gorgas, at Plant Miller in Jefferson County, and at Plant Gaston in Shelby County.

In all, between 1998 and 2012, Alabama Power’s spending on environmental improvements is expected to total $3 billion. All the improvements are part of Alabama Power’s ongoing efforts to reduce emissions while continuing to meet the ever-growing demand for energy.

Since 1990, Alabama Power has cut emission rates of NOx and SO2 system-wide by 63 percent and 45 percent respectively. (Emission rates refer to the amount of emissions produced for every megawatt-hour of electricity generated.) Over that same period, Alabama Power has significantly increased generation to meet the state’s need for electricity.

“We’re proud of our record of reducing emissions while generating more power to meet the needs of our customers,” McCrary said. “And we will continue our efforts to further reduce emissions while providing Alabamians with reliable, affordable electricity.”

Alabama Power, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based Southern Company (NYSE: SO), provides electricity to more than 1.4 million customers across the state. For more information about Alabama Power’s environmental commitment, log on to www.alabamapower.com

Source: Alabama Power Company news release

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**Click to energy savings**

Warmer temperatures are here and so too are higher energy costs associated with keeping cool this summer.

Your municipal electric system wants to help you be a wise-energy user and put money back into your pocket each month. How? Energy Depot® is the answer.

What is Energy Depot? Energy Depot is simple and convenient, and there is no cost associated with accessing the service. All you have to do to get started is just click to your energy savings each month.

Energy Depot is an Internet-based suite of software applications for residential customers. Customers can receive online personalized energy profiles. You can input your energy billing history to assist your analysis, plus you can access advice on saving energy and a comprehensive library of energy information.

The Internet applications include:

- **Energy Profile:** Both the full audit and “EZ” home energy audit offers customers insight into their energy use and costs.
- **Energy Library:** An up-to-date library of energy facts sheets on home energy use, products, efficiency measures, safety and much more.
- **Energy Calculator:** Allows customers to quickly and easily calculate the energy usage and cost of electric and natural gas home energy systems and appliances.
- **Energy FAQ:** A question and answer tool with the top 100 questions and answers on home energy use.
- **Energy Advisor:** This e-mail Q&A system allows customers to easily e-mail ergy-related questions to an energy resource.

Energy Depot services can make you aware of how much electricity is used in your home and how minimal changes in your consumption habits can result in cost savings each month.

To get started, visit your city or utility web site. If you have a problem accessing this site, visit the AMEA web site, www.amea.com, Energy Depot.

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**New CAN USE**

**Safety NEWS You CAN USE**

Be cautious when using portable electric generators

Portable electric generators are a good source of power for heating and cooling, light, and refrigeration during electrical outages. But, if generators are improperly installed or operated, they can become deadly.

Follow these portable generator safety precautions to avoid dangerous situations:

- Never operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, including homes, garages and basements. Generators produce high levels of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, deadly gas.
- Keep the generator dry. To protect it from moisture, operate on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure.
- Open the main breaker to your house before refueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.
- Make sure fuel for the generator is stored safely, away from fuel-burning appliances. And be sure to prevent backfeed along the power lines that can ultimately electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.
- Make sure the generator is properly grounded.
- Do not overload the generator. A portable generator should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Make sure fuel for the generator is stored safely, away from living areas, in properly labeled containers, and away from fuel-burning appliances. And before refueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.
- Turn off all appliances powered by the generator before shutting down the generator.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for safe operation and maintenance.
- Keep children away from portable generators at all times.
The steps to restoring power

**Step 1.** Transmission towers and lines supply power to one or more transmission substations. These lines seldom fail, but they can be damaged by a hurricane, tornado or ice. Tens of thousands of people could be served by one high-voltage transmission line, so if there is damage here it gets attention first.

**Step 2.** A municipal electric system may have several local distribution substations, each serving thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, the local distribution substations are checked first. A problem here could be caused by failure in the transmission system supplying the substation. If the problem can be corrected at the substation level, power may be restored to a large number of people.

**Step 3.** Main distribution supply lines are checked next if the problem cannot be isolated at the substation. These supply lines carry electricity away from the substation to a group of consumers, such as a town or housing development. When power is restored at this stage, all consumers served by this supply line could see the lights come on, as long as there is no problem farther down the line.

The main goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of customers in the shortest time possible. The major cause of outages is damage caused by fallen trees. That’s why your municipal electric system has an ongoing right-of-way maintenance program. This illustration explains how power typically is restored after a major disaster, like a hurricane or ice storm. While power restoration priorities may differ from utility to utility, electric system repairs generally follow a plan similar to the one illustrated here.

**Hurricanes and ice storms. Tornadoes and blizzards.** Customers of public power systems have seen them all in the past 10 years. And with such severe weather comes power outages. Restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line.
Step 4. The final supply lines, called tap lines, carry power to the utility poles or underground transformers outside houses or other buildings. Line crews fix the remaining outages based on restoring service to the greatest number of consumers.

DANGER!
Stay clear of fallen lines.

Area enlarged: Customers are responsible for damage to the service installation on the building. Your municipal electric system can’t fix this. Call a licensed electrician.

Report your outage to the utility office. Employees or response services use every available phone line to receive your outage reports. Remember that a major outage can affect thousands of other members. Your municipal electric system appreciates your patience.

Individual households may receive special attention if loss of electricity affects life support systems or poses another immediate danger. If you or a family member depends on life support, call your utility before an emergency arises. When a significant outage occurs, your municipal electric system will fix your problem as quickly as possible.

Sometimes, damage will occur between your house and the nearby pole. Why you have your neighbor needs to know here, so a repair it.

Tap Line

Local Substation
Mamie’s Place Children’s Library receives art donation
By Judy Tidwell

On Aug. 24, 2006, the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) celebrated its 25th anniversary. Several activities were held throughout the day, including a golf tournament. During the golf outing, the spouses of the golfers gathered for lunch and a painting activity.

Once the painting was finished, it needed a home. Joann Mathis of the Alexander City Light and Power Department found an excellent spot for it at Mamie’s Place Children’s Library in Alexander City. Recently, Lisa Miller, AMEA’s Director of Communications, presented the painting to the library.

“We welcome visitors to drop by to see this wonderful donation that is now hanging in our Children’s Library,” said Children’s Library Director Judy Tidwell.

Recreation Program growing by leaps and bounds
By Sherry Sullivan

The City of Fairhope is completing work this summer on a new tennis complex at Stimpson Field on Morphy Avenue. The site, once home to softball fields, also includes a paved walking trail around the perimeter of the park.

“The actual courts are finished and ready for day light play,” said Aaron Norris, electric superintendent. “We will continue work this summer on restrooms, landscaping and lighting.”

The new tennis complex replaces old courts at Volanta Park that will be removed to make way for the city’s expanded Recreation Center.

“Plans for the Rec Center, still in the drawing stage, will include a gym, walking track, racquetball court, meeting space, exercise rooms with equipment such as stationary bikes, weights and treadmills, and a game room,” said Eddie Boyett, recreation supervisor. “At Volanta Park, we have added a water feature to our existing pool and opened a new outdoor pool. In addition to providing more swim and play space, it also will have an expanded pool deck and four-foot wide ‘sunbather steps’ that allow you to soak up the sun and sit in the water at the same time.”

Work is also underway this summer at Barnwell Park, a new site that is leased and maintained by the City, which will include youth football fields, cheerleading space and possibly additional youth soccer fields in time for fall play. Softball fields are already in use at that park.
Angela McCord selected for the AMEA/Riviera Utilities Scholarship

By David Horton

Angela McCord, daughter of Nicole Osborn of Montrose, is the 2007 recipient of the AMEA/Riviera Utilities Scholarship and will be attending the University of South Alabama this fall. The scholarship amount was $4,555.

Angela is a member of the Pride Club, Disc Golf Club, Track and Field Captain, and HIQ Club at McGill-Toolen Catholic High School. She is also involved in various community activities and babysits part-time. Angela has plans for a career in the medical field.

Mike Dugger, General Manager, Riviera Utilities, said, “Angela is a very deserving person. I am confident that as a student at South Alabama, she will represent her school, community and Riviera Utilities well. Riviera Utilities is proud to be a part of her endeavor for knowledge and we wish her the very best as she begins a new phase of her life.”

“I was really excited when I was notified about being one of the top three candidates in competition for the AMEA/Riviera Utilities Scholarship,” Angela said. “Then I became worried. When I got the call that I had been chosen for the scholarship, my Mom and I began cheering and hollering.”

Angela said, “I plan to use the scholarship wisely and work toward getting a degree in the medical field. I will also be part of the track and field team at USA where I will throw the javelin and pole vault.”

Ryen Bowyer Receives Robert M. Davis Scholarship

By David Horton

Ryen Bowyer is the first recipient to receive the newly established Robert M. (Bob) Davis Scholarship. The Robert M. (Bob) Davis scholarship was set up to recognize contributions made by Davis, a Riviera Utilities board member, and to its customers for over 24 years of dedicated service.

“Mr. Davis was a faithful, loyal and dedicated board member to this utility and community for a lot of years,” said General Manager Mike Dugger. “We are proud to recognize him with this scholarship in his honor. This will be a constant reminder of the willingness Bob Davis had to serve his community and fellow citizens.”

“After meeting Ryen Bowyer, the first recipient of this scholarship award, I believe we are off to a good start,” said Davis. “We have awarded this scholarship to a student that I believe will represent us all well as he begins a new era in his life. Ryen will use this scholarship at Faulkner State and we wish him well in his endeavors,” Bob Davis commented.

“I am very honored to be the first to receive this award,” Ryen said. “It will help me get established in school where I plan on working toward an Associates Degree in Technology with emphasis on Networking and PC Repair. I appreciate the fact that Riviera Utilities and Mr. Davis have made this scholarship available to a person in the technical field.”
City of Lanett adds new convenience for its utility customers

By Joel Holley

The City of Lanett, a proud member of the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA), has added a new feature for its utility customers, according to City Manager Joel Holley.

"Last year, the city began accepting all major credits cards as a convenience to our utility customers," he said.

The city has two billing cycles with utility bills mailed out on the 5th and 20th of each month. Customers have 15 days before the bill is considered late at which time a $20 late fee is assessed to the delinquent account. After five more days, then if not paid, the account is listed for cut-off.

In an effort to make utility payments even easier and more convenient, the city has developed in-house an added service for our customers. By using a link on our city web page, customers can now pay their bills online at a secure 128 byte encrypted site, said Holley. The site lists with pictures all credit and debit cards that are accepted as well as all fields required to be filled in, he added.

Holley said the site is very "user friendly" and is just like ordering items from businesses on the Internet.

Holley said the system was developed by the city's Information Technology (IT) company, Veribil, Inc. "Our IT experts developed our system in-house saving the city money, and by doing so, the city will not be paying extra fees to a third party to administer the new customer service benefit," Holley said.

All payments are directed to a city administrative employee who can run the credit card payments to insure the credit card used will be accepted by the credit card company or bank, he said. The same applies to debit card transactions, as well. If the credit card is rejected, then the city will have sufficient information to contact the customer immediately to inform them so that the customer can make other arrangements for the utility bill payment. Holley said the city will charge a $5 transaction fee to offset the costs unless enough customers begin using the pay online system.

"In this time of rising gas prices and knowing our customers’ time is valuable, we hope this new added customer service feature is good for the city and for our customers," Holley added. "Lanett is proud to belong to AMEA and just like AMEA, the city is always looking for ways to do things smarter and better."

Mayor Oscar Crawley agrees. "Our team is always looking for ways to improve the city and the added convenience of paying utility bills online is just one more way we can assist our customers and our citizens."

Check out the new customer service feature by going to www.cityoflanett.com and clicking on Current News, where you will find the Pay Your Utility Bill Online button.
World’s Largest Peanut Boil draws crowds to Luverne

By Regina Grayson

It may be hot, but that doesn’t stop all of the Crenshaw County Shrine Club members and all of the volunteers from standing over boiling vats of peanuts, loading the peanuts into the bags, or from standing long periods of time selling the bags of boiled peanuts to the vast number of people waiting to buy them.

The “World’s Largest Peanut Boil” runs through Labor Day weekend in Luverne, every year, and according to Chuck Gorey, 2006 President of the Crenshaw County Shrine Club, everything has always “gone great.”

Last year, Gorey said that they were able to keep up with the demand for the peanuts.

Gorey said that they had several volunteers to sign up so that all shifts could be covered.

“Some volunteers signed up to work almost every day,” Gorey said. “Plus, we really appreciate all of the Shriners’ wives who have come out to help, too.”

Last year’s boil started out with a little over eight tons of peanuts. Gorey said that the work began around 5:30 a.m. and lasted “til we can’t go anymore,” he said laughing.

He specifically wanted to thank everyone who helped with last year’s peanut boil.

“We can’t say ‘thank you’ enough to all of the Shrine Club members, their wives, and to all of the volunteers who donate their time to this,” Gorey said. “Plus, we owe a big thanks to all of the businesses who donate their supplies to the peanut boil every year to help make it a success, as well.”

All proceeds from the peanut boil will go toward paying the transportation costs of burned children and for children with orthopedic needs, from ages 0 to 18, free of charge, to designated hospitals. The Shriners also use the proceeds from the peanut boil to help pay for the parents’ room and board at motels that are near the hospitals where their children have been admitted.

The Crenshaw County Shrine Club is a part of the Alcazar Shrine Temple of Montgomery.

The annual peanut boil was the brainchild of the late W. E. Granger, when in a quarterly meeting of the Shriners in Montgomery in July of 1975, he suggested that a peanut sale should be held to add funds to the Shriners’ Hospital Transportation Fund, which was depleted at that time.

Mr. Granger returned to Luverne, and after a couple of meetings with 15 other Shriners, plans were made to have a peanut sale on Labor Day weekend. Granger was one of the charter members of the Crenshaw County Shrine Club.

Last year’s peanut boil was specifically dedicated to all of the Crenshaw County Shrine Club charter members who first formed and organized the club on April 28, 1976.

Volunteers for Luverne peanut boil come from near and far

By Regina Grayson

No one asked Joan Taylor of Pelham to volunteer at the Crenshaw County Shrine Club’s Peanut Boil last year, but it was just something she had “always wanted to do.”

“I’ve wanted to do this for years,” Taylor said.

Her husband, Joel Taylor, is retired from the Alabama Department of Agriculture.

“He’s working out there right now,” she added.

“Whatever they need done, he’s willing to do it.”

This was the second year the couple had participated in the peanut boil.

“I couldn’t do this while my children were growing up, obviously,” she said. Joel Taylor works in Goshen at Anderson Peanuts. His wife said that he would work there at least until Thanksgiving.

“We do this just because we want to,” she said.

“We want to help.”

Joel Taylor is the son of Dixie Taylor and the late J.C. Taylor, formerly of Luverne. Mrs. Taylor, who is 97, presently resides in Old Town Assisted Living Facility in Linden.

While Taylor and her husband are new to the “peanut boil” scene, there were plenty of people there who had been involved with it for years.

Mrs. Hazel J. Worthington of Luverne reminisced about her husband who had been a member of the Shrine Club since 1960.

Parker Worthington, who served as sheriff of Butler County from Jan. 20, 1979 until 1987, became a Mason in Butler County in 1952 when the couple first moved to Greenville. He then became a member of the Butler County Shrine Club in 1960.

“Our major project for the Shrine Club in Butler County back then was selling stew,” Mrs. Worthington said.

The couple then moved to Luverne on Jan. 23, 1989. Worthington said that her husband had been involved with the Crenshaw County Shrine Club and the peanut boil from that year until his death July 18, 1998.

“He used to get started around 4 a.m.,” she said.

“He would go get the salt... just do whatever was needed. Parker just loved it.”

Mrs. Worthington was also on hand to volunteer during those years.

“I’ve been hanging out here ever since,” she said smiling.
Summertime is a great time to be in Opelika and enjoy all of the activities going on in the community, thanks in great part to our Parks and Recreation Department.

This dynamic staff goes well above the “call of duty” to bring fun-filled family activities to the community all summer long. Of course, there’s your traditional little league baseball and softball, and days at the pool watching kids of all ages frolicking in the water, trying to stay cool on a hot summer day. However, our Parks and Recreation Department also offers all sorts of fascinating “kids’ camps” for youth in the summer. One of the most popular camps come from the “A Day in the Life of…” series, and involves one-day camps for kids to learn what it’s like to be a firefighter, a policeman, and a lineman with our Light & Power Department or a health care professional. This captivating series of “academies” gives kids, ages 6-11 close-up experiences in being around, and seeing how some of the equipment works that Opelika City employees use in their daily professions.

For instance, in the “Health Care Career Academy” kids get to see what it’s like be inside of an ambulance, and meet “real” health care professionals who operate all of those “gadgets” inside. In the “Light and Power Academy” kids get to see the bucket trucks and how they are operated, and see linemen demonstrate how they climb poles to repair lines; kids even get to “help” set a utility pole. They learn about safety around electricity and the answer to that age old kid’s question “Why don’t birds get electrocuted?”

During the “Fire Fighters Academy,” kids can explore the fire trucks, try on the uniforms and hold the hoses. And last, but certainly not least, in the “Police Academy,” kids get to learn about the various divisions within the police department and see the special units, like the K-9 Unit and the C.O.P.S. unit, demonstrate their special skills with their trained police dogs and bikes, respectively. The kids just think they’re having fun, but parents should know that all of these professionals are teaching kids important things about safety and health that everyone needs to know.

Of course, these camps aren’t the only activities the Parks and Recreation staff offers during the summer months. For a complete list of all that’s being offered in Opelika, why not go to our website, www.opelika.org, and click on “Parks & Recreation”. On their front page you will find “summer 2007 Programs”. Click on that and you can see the array of activities for everyone between two and 102.

And don’t forget Tuesday nights at 7 p.m. in Opelika’s Municipal Park (also known as “the Monkey Park”) all summer long. That’s when you and the whole family can enjoy “Summer Swing,” a delightful series of concerts featuring a different genre of music each week, but always the same relaxing, fun-filled night of family entertainment, good food, and cold lemonade, courtesy of First American Bank of Opelika.

The City of Opelika hopes you’ll check out the Parks & Recreation range of activities for families this summer. It’s a great way to enjoy Opelika. It’s also a great way to see why Opelika residents love living here.

Sometimes best practices are delivered when collaboration between two separate organizations take place. Utilities Board of Tuskegee (UBT) has provided the tools and the manpower, while the City of Tuskegee Fire Department is providing the blueprints and leadership to get over 500 hydrants painted this summer, according to code specifications.

UBT’s General Manager Mark Ennis said, “Our Summer Youth Program is an excellent resource for the Fire Department. These youth can assist in aiding the Fire Department in a very tedious task, while at the same time allowing them to earn experience and pay.”

Getting the hydrants painted has been a top priority for the Fire Department. UBT’s efforts will assist them in achieving one of their priority goals. “This is a great relief”, said Fire Chief Derrick Swanson. “We are currently swamped and have limited manpower. Having these youth is perfect timing for this quarter. We are happy to collaborate with UBT because it’s always a winning experience.”

The youth will work eight weeks for the Fire Department ensuring that all the hydrants are cleaned, freed from weeds and painted the appropriate colors according to the water pressure information provided by UBT’s Water/Wastewater Division.
Alexander City
Alexander City Farmer’s Market every Saturday through September. Located at the fountain on Broad Street. Call ahead for weather-related changes, (256) 329-9227.

Charles E. Bailey Sportplex: Senior Aquatic classes, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Classes held at the Russell outdoor pool. For more information, contact Corley Holt, (356) 329-2910.

July 4, Annual Fourth of July Fireworks Show. Lake Martin Amphitheater (located on Highway 63). Hosted by Russell Lands. Admission is free to one of the largest fireworks displays in the Southeast. Accompanied by a benefit concert earlier in the afternoon. Fee for the concert. For more information, call (256) 329-9227.

Week of July 4, Mamie’s Place. During the week of July 4, come by and see the American flag wall exhibit outside the Children’s Library. For more information, call (256) 234-4644.

July 7, Alexander City Horse Riding Club. July 28, Talladega 4-H. Aug. 4, Alexander City Club. Aug. 11, EAHA Youth Club. Aug. 18, EAHA Climate Show. All shows are held at the Alexander City Horse Riding Club, located at the Charles E. Bailey Sportplex. For more information, call (256) 234-2925.

July 10, 10 a.m., Adelia M. Russell Library. Art with John Moore. July 12, 10 a.m., clay pottery with Carol Moore. July 18, 3:30 p.m., music with mark Seymour. Aug. 14, 11 a.m., James Spann, meteorologist with ABC 33/40, will be at the library to speak on weather topics, in particular hurricanes in Alabama. For more information, call (256) 329-6796.

Aug. 18, Main Street Alexander City 11th Annual Auction. Beginning at 6 p.m. with preview party, art show and silent auction. Followed by live auction. Tickets available at local businesses.

Aug. 25, Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. The 8th Annual “Muster on the Tallapoosa”, 9:30 a.m. Features various activities during the day, including living history camps of the Creek and Cherokee Indians and the Tennessee Militia. Guest speakers offer insight into the Creek War. The event is free to the public. For more information, call (256) 234-7111.

Dothan
July 4, Family 4th Celebration. National Peanut Festival Fairgrounds, Dothan. For the first time in a number of years, Dothan residents won’t have to leave town on the Fourth of July for a top-notch fireworks show and day of family fun! This year, the Kiwanis Club of Dothan will be hosting the event and all are invited. It will be a day full of fun and family activities. There will be a dozen live bands on stage throughout the day entertaining from the time the gates open until the fireworks show at dark. Also, there will be a car show, a bike show, and large kids zone to keep everyone in the family busy. (Kids should bring a swimsuit and towel, if they want to play in the water slides!) As if that weren’t enough, there will be arts and crafts vendors inside the air-conditioned commercial building, and a wide variety of food and drink vendors will be on hand to sell their wares. Tickets are $5 in advance and $8 at the gate. Tickets may be purchased at any area Movie Gallery location through July 3. There are also several other locations and additional information on the event, which can be found on the web site, www.Family4thCelebration.com, or by calling (334) 699-1475.

Fairhope
Aug. 24-26, 29-31, Sept. 1 and 2, Hamlet - Presented by Theatre 98, Fairhope by William Shakespeare, directed by Brent Murrill. In this, the Bard’s most famous and often quoted masterpiece, “the play’s the thing.” The melancholy Dane, Prince Hamlet, measures the actions he should take upon learning of his father’s murder at the hands of his uncle, the new husband to his mother. Ought he take vengeance, or take his own life? Sweeping through the halls of Elsinore Castle is a wealth of intricately drawn characters such as the love-wracked Ophelia, her meddling father Polonius, the scholarly Horatio, and the restless Laertes. Come and experience why this powerful play is still relevant 400 years later. All show times are daily 8 p.m.; Sundays 2:30p.m. Tickets $10 for students, $15 for adults. For reservations or more information, call (251) 928-4366, or visit us at www.Theatre98.org.

Foley

Aug. 10 and 11. Rodeo for Youth. 8 p.m. each day. City of Foley Horse Arena on Highway 59, north of Foley. Benefiting the Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation. Action packed family event with contestants competing from the southeastern U.S. Refreshments available. Contact Bob Schaefer, (251) 961-3501. All proceeds from the festival fund the Optimist programs for area youth.

Opelika
Farmers Market. Every Tuesday, 3-6 p.m., downtown Opelika. Last year’s Farmers Market was held at the Depot. But this year, Opelika Main Street Director, Velinda Wheelers, moved the event to Railroad Avenue between 8th and 9th Streets for easier access. The City blocks off the north side of the street, so folks don’t have to worry about car traffic. We hope you’ll come downtown and visit this wonderful “weekly event” and enjoy home grown vegetables and fruits, home grown “honey” and many other items from area farmers.

Sylacauga
July 23, Red Cross Blood Drive, J. Craig Smith Community Center.
July 28, 7 p.m., Miss Talladega County Pageant, B. B. Comer Memorial High School.
Comer Museum will display artwork created by Glen Loo- ney and students during the month of July.
Aug. 27, Red Cross Blood Drive, J. Craig Smith Community Center.
Aug. 10-12, Crazy Days. Comer Museum will display art- work created by Tommy Moorhead and students during the month of August.
The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) E.J. Kirkpatrick Chapter #21 are a vital part of the Piedmont community. The Piedmont DAV chapter was formed on February 9, 1987. E.J. Kirkpatrick was a World War II veteran and was one of the first veterans from Piedmont to be killed in the war. The DAV Chapter #21 has 186 members and is still growing. They have members from Calhoun, Cherokee, Cleburne, and Talladega counties who attend the meetings. They are one of the largest chapters in the area and have received awards for their recruitment efforts.

Meetings of the Piedmont DAV are held the second Tuesday of each month. There is also an auxiliary unit that meets as well that consists of men, women, children, and spouses of veterans. The DAV welcomes any members, but especially veterans that were wounded or injured in the line of duty. Their main goal is to make sure all veterans are served and to make sure they are aware of the benefits that the Veterans Administration and government have available for them.

Since their chapter began in 1987, the DAV has had to meet at several locations around the city. For years, they hosted their meetings in a local school cafeteria. On Feb. 16, 2000, Lindsey donated a building in the downtown area to them. The donated building had been damaged by fire; nonetheless, being a non-profit organization, they counted on donations, volunteers, and countless hours of hard work to renovate the building to a beautiful place they can call “home.” The building contains pictures of veterans dating from the Civil War to Operation Freedom. A sweater President Ford wore while visiting Camp Casey in Korea, letters, metals, leggings, backpacks, flags, World War I and II helmets, and many other memorabilia from different wars also decorate the building.

One can tell that the men enjoy serving and giving back to the community because they are a vital part to many functions within the community. They present programs at local schools and share with the children about themselves and the sacrifices they have made while serving their country. They have a member Chaplin that makes visits to ones in the hospital and nursing homes. They also sponsor an activity for the entire family once a quarter. They hold ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day each year at Veteran’s Memorial Park so that the community remembers those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Also each year they post the colors at the annual Piedmont 4th of July Celebration. In a ceremony on May 26, they dedicated a Farewell Monument at the Veteran’s Memorial Park — not only to the men and women who lost their lives from the effect of war, but also to all of the veterans who have served our country.

They serve the community well. They take care of others, and they take care of themselves.