

# THE ALABAMIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION • WINTER 2018



## Looking Back

Highlights and Awards from 2017



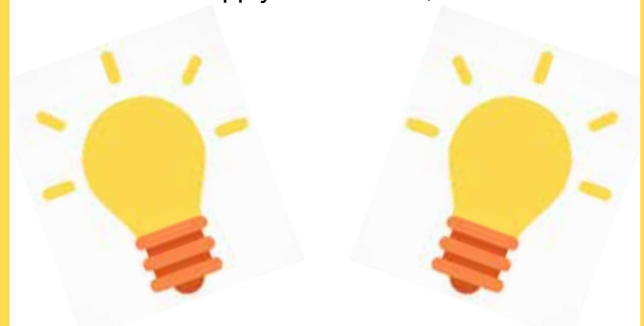
# Show Off Your Innovation

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Awards season for parks and recreation starts this month with applications opening for the National Gold Medal Award and the NRPA Awards, including Innovation Awards, Spotlight Awards, Fellowships and Scholarships, and the Robert W. Crawford Hall of Fame. New this year are the Innovation Awards that will showcase the inspiring park and recreation agencies that have improved and empowered their communities through innovative practices in park design, health and wellness, conservation and social equity.

The four winners of these awards will be put to a public vote to be determined as the NRPA Best in Innovation Award winner. There's no cost to apply for NRPA's awards, so clean out your trophy case and visit our awards webpage to get started.

Deadline to apply is March 23, 2018.



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bmac585@gmail.com

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Alabama Recreation and Parks Association  
P.O. Box 230579  
Montgomery, AL 36123-0579  
334-279-9160  
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*From the*  
**President**  
Drew Peterson

**W**ow, what a year for ARPA!!! I feel we got a lot accomplished, and moving in the right direction. There is much left to do, and I feel that I should have done more during my time. Sometimes I wish this were a two year commitment as President.

I want to thank everybody for their thoughts and prayers during the year with the health issues that my family faced and the loss of my Father at Thanksgiving. It was a very difficult time to say the least and so many of you were there with comforting words and support, can't begin to say enough Thanks.

It is hard to believe that the year is already up and we are quickly approaching another State Conference, I love this time that we get to spend

together, it sets me up for the year. The state conference always rejuvenates me and helps me create new goals and priorities for the job at hand. I wish that we would have more people attend, I love hearing all of the new and creative ideas that are around our state association. It is also a great time to hear of all of the new building projects that are taking place within our individual departments.

I wish everybody a very exciting and fun year of planning and programming.

Sincerely,

Drew Peterson  
2017 President



## Call for Articles!

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If you would like to be published in a future issue of The Alabamian Magazine, please send your article and any graphics to the State Office at [nnorman@arpaonline.org](mailto:nnorman@arpaonline.org).

### **The theme for the next issue is "Show Your True Colors."**

Send hi-res photos that show your organization in the best light. Please include captions for the photos.

The deadline for consideration in the Spring 2018 issue is April 5th. Please call 334-279-9160 with any questions.

*From the*  
**Executive Director**  
Natalie Norman



**W**ell, I can better give a year in review from the eyes of a member for eight months of 2017 and from the State office for the last four months. Looking back I see a strong Alabama Recreation and Parks Association, having nothing but growth and building in its future. I see outstanding agencies with boots on the ground, making vast differences within their communities! Thinking about celebrating ARPA and its 75th birthday, I am so proud and thankful to be a part of such a group of trailblazers! So, thankfully, my retrospective view allows me to see the strength of our future.

Whether looking behind or ahead, we shine as we are difference makers! One of my favorites by Ralph

Waldo Emerson, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

We have it in us to be difference makers, so let’s just go do it.

Until next time,

Natalie Norman  
Executive Director

## How to Effectively Prepare for the CPRP

“Reprinted with permission from Parks & Recreation magazine from its January 2018 issue. Copyright 2018 by the National Recreation and Park Association.”

Did you know that study groups are one of the most effective ways to prepare for the Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) Certification? Many colleges and universities agree that study groups are an effective method of preparation for exams. Study groups can...

**Help with procrastination:** Professionals and students who have applied for the CPRP have one year to schedule and pass the exam. However, we know how busy life can be, and how easy it is for that year to fly by before you know it. Meeting at scheduled times, with a group that is counting on you to engage in the material, can help motivate you to show up prepared, keep on task and focused on the material.

**Help you absorb information more effectively:** For some, self-study is the way to go. However, for a

lot of people working alone can lead to a lot of time spent mulling over difficult concepts or zoning out on challenging material. Working in a group provides the opportunity to share ideas, explain concepts and discuss differing opinions — all leading to a higher level, and faster understanding, of the test material.

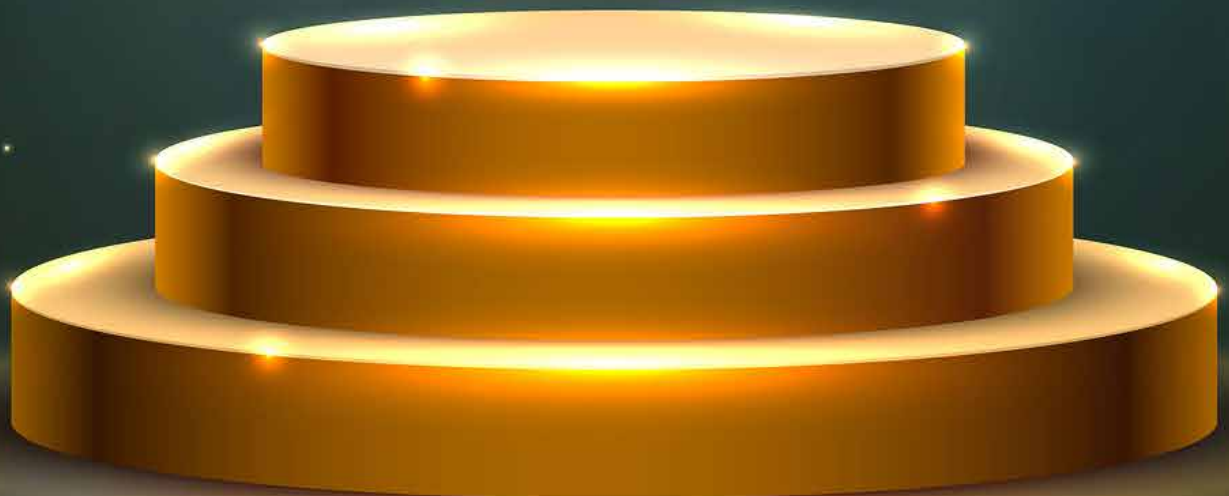
**Provide good company:** Studying alone can become dull and repetitive, while studying with a group can create an encouraging and positive social atmosphere that can help keep you motivated. You and your colleagues can receive group discounts on exams and study materials starting with three or more professionals, by signing up with one of NRPA’s Group Certification Discount Packages.

Now is the time to become a CPRP. Apply by February 28, 2018, to get a free, Online CPRP Prep Course. To learn more, visit our CPRP page.



# Looking Back

**Highlights and Awards  
from 2017**



# Albertville - Sports Complex is Underway

2017 has been a year of planning and preparation and it's difficult to contain our excitement when we think about the plans for a new sports complex in Albertville. This ambitious project will be funded by the community via a 1% sales tax increase. We are currently in the design / development phase and expect to start construction in July of 2018. This world class facility will be built on the current recreation complex site and will consist of 134 acres. Not only will our residents be blessed with state of the art recreation facilities, our community will receive an enormous economic engine that will generate tourism, retail and industrial growth.



The construction phase of this project will be divided into two parts. The first part will include: parks, trails, playgrounds, ballfields, concession stands, amphitheater, dog park, R.V. park, tennis courts, etc. While the second part will consist of: gyms, fitness center and the aquatic complex. Construction will begin on both parts in July of 2018. Construction of part one is expected to take 10 – 12 months to complete, while part two will take about 18 months.

When complete, the new Albertville Sports Complex will include: a fitness center with weight room, cardio equipment, elevated trail, racquetball courts, child care room, gyms with four basketball courts and 8 volleyball courts, meeting rooms, office complex, a full service commercial concession stand / kitchen and locker rooms / showers. Connected to the fitness center will be the aquatic complex that will include an eight lane indoor pool, an eight lane outdoor pool, a family pool with lazy river and water play elements and a splash pad.

All nine baseball /softball fields will have synthetic turf, LED lighting, batting cages, designated warm

up areas with hitting stations and covered spectator seating. The five field complex will have a maximum fence distance of 225' and portable safety fencing and portable pitching mounds. The four field complex will have one field with a maximum fence distance of 370' and three fields with a maximum fence distance of 300'. All four fields will have portable safety fencing and portable pitching mounds.

The football / soccer complex will consist of five fields. One championship field will be synthetic turf and four others will be natural turf.

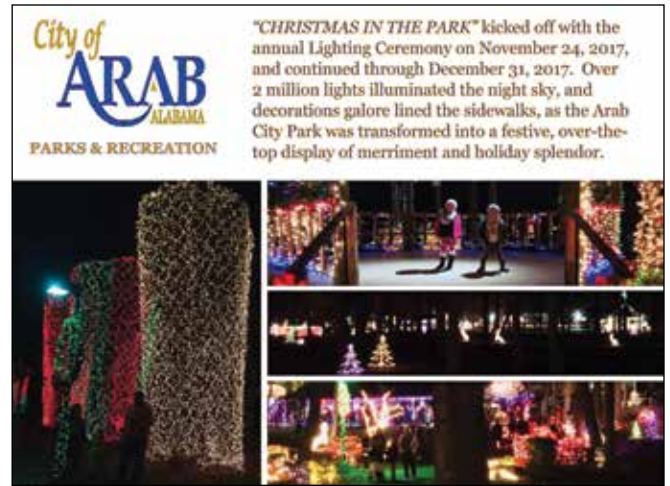
Other unique features of this complex include: amphitheater with seating for 10,000, tennis complex with 12 courts and spectator seating, dog park divided for small and large dogs, R.V. park with water / power / sewer hook ups, playgrounds and nature parks, several miles of trails for pedestrians and bikes, pavilions and picnic areas.

We can't wait until this park is complete and we can host you as our guest at the new Albertville Sports Complex.



# Arab - Disc Golf

During the summer of 2017, the City of Arab's Department of Parks & Recreation opened an 18-hole disc golf course. The course is behind the Arab City Park at 844 Shoal Creek Trail. The course is open during normal park hours and is free to the public. To date the disc golf course has been very successful, with citizens using it every day and outside groups traveling to utilize it. Arab also looks forward to hosting tournaments at the new course once the weather warms up again.



# Boaz - Womanless Beauty Pageant

The City of Boaz likes to have a lot of fun at our Senior Center, and in 2017 one of our best events was the Womanless Beauty Contest. How do you judge a Womanless Beauty Pageant, you ask?

To judge a beauty pageant you must keep in mind that you are looking for more than just a pretty face. A beauty pageant demands poise and excellent social skills. Most of all, it means as a judge you have to make the tough decision of who meets these demands above all others. Here's what to consider when judging a beauty pageant:

1. View the contestant for physical beauty and bearing. These two qualities are at



the heart of what the public generally considers 'beautiful.'

2. Remember 'Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder'-scoring is up to you, so squinting your eyes is allowed (and encouraged.)
3. These contestants are very nervous and not at themselves. Be lenient on your scoring.
4. Enjoy the pageant!!!!!!





# Boaz - A truly tasty treat | Record crowd turns out for a Taste of Sand Mountain

*Story and Photo By TAYLOR BECK with The Sand Mountain Reporter.*

Citizens across the area flooded the VFW Fairgrounds in Boaz for the Taste of Sand Mountain by the hundreds on Tuesday night for the third year in a row.

According to Boaz Chamber of Commerce President Peggy Haney, there were more than 800 participants on hand to decide which restaurant was the best on Sand Mountain and, while they were at it, helped the chamber raise money to go toward its Coat-A-Kid Project.

“With all the booths set up and everyone there, I believe we surpassed last year’s event in number of booths and people in attendance,” Haney said. “There were a lot of votes cast and those votes were spread out pretty evenly, too.”

After the food was sampled and the votes were tallied, Haney announced the restaurant voted Best Overall by the public was the Lion’s Den in Sardis City. Spices Catering and Smokehouse Market, and the Boaz Culinary Arts, finished in second and third place, respectively.

As voted by a panel of judges, Grumpy’s Restaurant came away with Best Booth Presentation, followed by Spice’s Smokehouse and Rooster’s Café. Papa Murphy’s Pizza won Best Entree for its chicken artichoke pizza, followed by the Lion’s Den’s prime rib and Villa Fiesta’s Shrimp Chipotle. Rooster’s Café won Best Dessert for its banana pudding and Spice’s Smokehouse took home Most Unique Taste.



*Brian Carnes, owner of the Lion’s Den in Sardis City, serves samples of his award-winning prime rib to patrons waiting in line. The Lion’s Den took top honors after being voted Best Overall Restaurant.*

There were more than 20 restaurants that participated, as well as other groups and organizations that set up booths and provided drinks.

Overall, Haney was proud of how the event went and looks forward to next year.

“It was so fun and that was our goal,” Haney said. “You know, to bring something fun and entertaining for the people of Marshall County to enjoy, and I hope that they did. Sometimes you think it might be hard to top what you did the previous year but there are always ways to improve and we look forward to making this event even better next year.”

## Boaz - 15,000 Attend Boaz Concert

Story and Photo By TAYLOR BECK with The Sand Mountain Reporter.

An estimated crowd of 15,000 people was on hand for the Summer Concert and Fireworks Show in Boaz on Saturday night, and the entertainment was a hit.

Sheila Sanders, chairwoman of the Boaz Area Chamber of Commerce talked about the fun night, saying she and the chamber committee were appreciative of the audience's engagement for the music and fireworks show.

"Everyone on the committee feels that it turned out beautifully," Sanders said. "The performances were all great, even Tessa Frix singing the national anthem – it gave me chills. Everyone just worked hard and we were pleased with the crowd's participation, especially since we had the rain come through; it was muddy and it got a little hot."

Sanders hated to choose but said her favorite performance of the night was The Martin Family Circus, when the 9- and 11-year-old daughters took turns singing a variety of popular hits.

As expected, Worley appeared to be the crowd favorite as he sang a mixture of old hits, coupled with a few new songs, but no moment shined brighter than when the country music star ended the show. As



*Country music icon Daryl Worley closed out the Boaz Area Chamber of Commerce Summer Concert and Fireworks Show by recognizing police officers, firefighters and first responders (below).*

Worley bid farewell, he sang his hit song "Have You Forgotten" and first responders for the City of Boaz stepped out onto the stage. The audience jumped to their feet and immediately showered them with thunderous applause, praising the efforts of all the men and women who serve similar roles around the country.

"It was so unexpected and so special," Sanders said. "It meant so much to all of [the first responders] and the crowd."

## Decatur - The Jack Allen Recreational Complex

In September of 2017, our City of Decatur Parks & Recreation Department was fortunate to be able to resurface our Championship Stadium Field at The Jack Allen Recreational Complex. The Bermuda surface on this field was replaced with a top grade synthetic turf and permanent field markings, assuring competition through all weather conditions. This turf surface on this Stadium Field will complement the

spectator seating of 2500, the accompanying press box perched above the field and the fully equipped state of the art locker room that features four separate locker room areas. This will encourage organizers to consider the facility in hosting their tournaments with the welcomed consequence of positive economic impact for our city.

# Fort Payne - Boom Days

Some things you just don't want to miss out on, and Fort Payne Boom Days Heritage Festival 2k17 was one of those things. The festival is a significant cultural event and a celebration of Fort Payne's unique beginnings nearly 130 years ago. In the late 1880's we became an industrial Boom Town due to our resources of coal and iron. The railroad had been completed by then and people/goods could travel from Boston to "Boom" Fort Payne. This led to our young community flourishing with large Victorian homes, an Opera House, attractive downtown buildings, a grand hotel beautiful railroad depot and a host of industrial complexes.



Our Boom Days Heritage Festival 2k17 celebrated that time of growth with events that tie the history to the present; great historical artifacts and clothing, a miniature railroad system in the original office of the Coal and Iron Company and more than 30 musical acts. City Park, which was once the front yard of the DeKalb Hotel, was filled with some of the finest arts and crafts in the region. There were also quilt displays, artist demonstrations, a 5K race, beer/wine tastings and the traditional Sunset Cruise In with hundreds of classic cars. Additionally, our Mayor and First Lady of Fort Payne dressed up in period clothing of the Boom Days to kick off the festival-which annually starts on the third Thursday of September and runs through Saturday.



Over 8,000 people attended Boom Days Heritage Festival 2k17, bringing in tourists from all over the South to celebrate Fort Payne. This is an annual event and we hope to have you be part of Boom Days in 2018!





# Huntsville - Aquatics Center

One of the City of Huntsville's largest accomplishments in 2017 was the completion of Phase I of the Huntsville Aquatics Center. Architectural design for the Huntsville Aquatics Center (previously the Brahan Spring Park Natatorium) with Nola VanPeurse Architects and the City of Huntsville began in January 2015. The firm worked to address a long wish list of amenities desired by users and produced a plan that is high-tech and beautiful.



The project combined an existing 50-meter swimming pool with two new swimming pools, to create one of the largest indoor aquatics complexes in the United States. While the existing 50-meter pool was still functional, the overall facility was dated, with a lack of amenities, spectator space and no air conditioning. The project required the addition of another 50-meter competition pool and a 25-yard warmer water pool for both therapy and swim instruction. The design required the connection all three pools with a common entrance, locker facilities and support spaces.

The principal objective was to create a connected venue capable of supporting large regional swim meets. Situated in Brahan Spring Park, adjacent to a lake, the site created the opportunity to take advantage of park and water views for the 1500-seat grandstand of the competition pool.

It's swimmer-friendly, designed to be fast: "I predict



we'll not only see local records shattered but when we're able to host a national-caliber event we'll see national records broken here," says O'Neil.

There is a moveable bulkhead that can transform the eight-lane, 50-meter setup into a 16-lane, 25-yard pool, swimming crossways. There is indirect lighting to avoid reflection into swimmers' eyes on the starting blocks. The blocks themselves are Olympic-caliber.

It's spectator-friendly, designed for fans and families: The glass wall helps eliminate that "Vegas Syndrome" of being caught indoors all day with no idea of the time. The aesthetics are pleasing. There are concession stands on the concourse and plenty of parking.

An elaborate ventilation system will keep air flowing and avoid murky water that must be "shocked" with chlorine, which is often necessary on the final day of meets, and which leaves the air thick with the chemical smell. An audio system is included that can reach all three pools, or be limited to one at a time.

"There was nothing pulled back," Wilkinson says of the detail, invoking a construction cliché. "There was no 'value engineering.'"

In other words, no shortcuts.

"We had the opportunity to do something right," O'Neil says, "and we did."

# Huntsville - KaBOOM! Playground

The City of Huntsville's Department of Parks & Recreation was awarded a grant from Let's Play and KaBOOM! to build a playground in the Northwood Neighborhood, behind the Cavalry Hill Community Center. The grant was for the amount of \$15,000 and the remaining costs were paid for by the Department. The playground was built by volunteers and City employees on Friday, October 27-after a few weeks of preparing the site with drainage and sidewalks. The

one day build was a huge team effort with volunteers from all over the City; as well as Mayor Tommy Battle, City Administrator John Hamilton, Parks & Rec Director Steve Ivey and Councilman Devyn Keith. The playground was built on a 100 x 100 foot area next to ball fields, Greengate School for Dyslexia, Boys & Girls Club, Village of Promise and the Community Center. It is estimated that the playground will accommodate around 2,000 local kids in 2018.





# Madison County - Sharon Johnston Park Pioneer Village

In early 2017, members of the newly formed non-profit organization, *Friends of Sharon Johnston Park, Inc.*, began fundraising efforts for the purchase of a nineteenth century pioneer village to be located at Sharon Johnston Park, 783 Coleman Road, New Market, Alabama.



The Pioneer Village at Sharon Johnston Park is a collection of twenty-two buildings representing a rural village, homestead and pioneer city.

The Pioneer Village is a historical site reflecting the daily life of the original settlers of North Alabama. Long before the antebellum home associated with the "Old South," the cabin represents life on the frontier prior to statehood. While visits to Antebellum homes and large plantations allow individuals to experience life in parts of the South, the Pioneer Village at Sharon Johnston Park with its livery stable, mercantile, church/school, train depot, cotton gin, grist mill, inn and other buildings serves as a living, working museum depicting RURAL life of early settlers practicing subsistence farming and performing trades common to the era.

Serving as a symbol of the westward movement, cabins stand as the practical shelter solution of the period as well as a symbol of the houses of the rural poor. Due to an abundance of trees, cabins were easy to construct becoming a very common, basic form of housing. Homesteaders like the Snider and Fanning Families moved to the newly created Alabama territory seeking fertile land and a permanent settlement in the area of Mountain Fork located in Northeast Madison County. Built in 1833 and part of the village collection,



the Snider-Fanning Cabin is an example of a one-room dwelling for agrarian families of North Alabama.

As westward movement swept the nation and the number of homesteaders and tradesmen increased, the development of small villages would lead to the creation of early cities to support the early settlers. The Pioneer Village represents a historical timeline depicting growth of the territory from early homestead, to village, and pioneer city. Under the master plan, the village will eventually depict Alabama settlement and culture from Native American camps to the Depression era.

The moving and installation of the Pioneer Village is supported through donations and fundraising efforts. In May 2017, the Friends of Sharon Johnston Park sponsored the second annual Bluegrass Classic Car and Tractor Jamboree. A Fall Festival in September welcomed guests to the park for games, food, and hay rides. In December, with the installation of nine buildings, park staff and volunteers turned the Pioneer Village into a Christmas Village. Each Saturday in December, the cabins were opened to families for writing letters to Santa, making sugar cookies, decorating rustic ornaments, and visiting with Santa Claus.

In 2018, *Friends of Sharon Johnston Park, Inc* members hope to have the village established and ready for school groups and visitors.



Anyone wanting to volunteer at the village or make a donation should call the park office at 256-379-2868. Information regarding fundraising events like the 2018 Car Show may be found on the Madison County website and on the Sharon Johnston Park Facebook page.



# Birmingham - We Can Work It Out

It is inevitable that the onset of a new year will bring about many resolutions made that will quickly and unceremoniously get tossed aside. We have the best of intentions, but life has a habit of sometimes getting in the way of that exercise or diet regimen that was going to shoehorn you into that special outfit for that special occasion. It is this excuse that Joel Simmons, recreation center director for Birmingham Park and Recreation and organizer of I Am BHAM (Being Healthy Active Motivated) Fitness, hears far too often. Simmons, who has spent more than 15 years as a certified instructor of fitness activities, four of them with Birmingham Park and Recreation, has created a workout experience that appeals equally to men and women, ages 16 to 60-plus.

"I believe there is a level of exercise that is right for everyone," says Simmons. "It's my role to assist each individual in finding that program that works best for them and meets their unique fitness goals."

The I Am BHAM Fitness Camp has met on two days a week at historic Legion Field Stadium and at select recreation centers. There is no cost to participate. Participants do provide their own towel, mat and jump rope. The plan for 2018 is to expand the program to popular parks such as Avondale, Crestwood, Ensley East Lake and others, which is a great way to take advantage of the amenities—lake, nature trail, steep hills, open green space—found at each.

"We look forward to building continued excitement around this program by adding activities such as trail running, cycling, paddle boating and more to the mix of fitness activities offered to the public," said Stanley Robinson, public relations coordinator for Birmingham Park and Recreation. "Joel and the staff have done a wonderful job providing a successful, fun and supportive atmosphere for our patrons interested in health and fitness training."



More than 150 patrons participate in I Am BHAM activities on any given night, and many longtime fans are quick to share tales of weight loss, prescription medicines no longer needed, and a renewed sense of energy and well-being. And that is exactly the kind of New Year resolution results we like to hear.

If you are interested in knowing more about I Am Bham or other activities offered at Birmingham Park and Recreation, follow us at [www.facebook.com/birminghamparkandrecreationboard](http://www.facebook.com/birminghamparkandrecreationboard).



# Trussville - Highlights from 2017

The City of Trussville had a busy year in 2017, hosting numerous events and tournaments, winning championships, providing new programs and providing services for their community.

- Trussville's U12 Flag Football Team won the ARPA Flag Football State Championship.
- Trussville hosted the 2017 State Masters Games. 492 participants were in town for a week of activities and competition.



- Trussville hosted the 2017 State Track and Field Meet. 120 participants from around the state came to compete for the championship.





# Trussville - Highlights from 2017

- Trussville started their first Archery Program in 2017. They had more than 30 kids participate this year.
- Trussville hosted the first Mayor's Bike Ride in May. Over 40 participants came out for the ride.



- Trussville hosted the first National Walk at Lunch Day program this year and had more than 30 participants.



- Trussville Hosted 31 total Girls Softball Tournaments in 2017, totaling over 800 total teams.
- Trussville hosted one soccer tournament in the spring that totaled 90 teams.
- Trussville had over 500 participants participate in the Spring Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt.
- Trussville had 200 participants take part in the yearly Halloween Candy Drop activity.





# Auburn - New Active Auburn Program

The City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department is proud of its new Active Auburn program. Active Auburn was designed to promote healthy living by providing residents with easy, creative ways to exercise. Auburn Parks and Recreation began Active Auburn in August 2017 with the Mayor's 100-Mile Challenge at Town Creek Park. At this event, residents were able to watch demonstrations of how to use outdoor exercise equipment, participate in walks led by city officials and purchase healthy food from vendors.

In December, Active Auburn sponsored the Jingle Jog 5k and Santa Stroll Fun Run, where residents were encouraged to wear their tackiest Christmas sweater and run off their holiday calories. Active Auburn also hosts the Monthly Market at the Harris Center on the fourth Tuesday of every month, giving Auburn residents nutritious food options while also supporting our local farmers.



Active Auburn is continuously on the move, with more exciting events being offered to residents in 2018. Active Auburn will be hosting a Zumbathon in February, where participants will get to move and groove their way to fitness. There will also be an 80s-themed dance costume contest to add a special twist to the event. In April, yoga is being taken to a new level with the Glowga Party, a special event featuring various yoga courses and segments of black light yoga. To learn more about Active Auburn and how you can get involved, visit [activeauburn.org](http://activeauburn.org)



# Lincoln - Special Awards from 2017

## Coach Alfred Groce receives Achievement Award

Alfred Groce or “Coach Groce”, received the Coosa Valley Youth Football Association Achievement Award at the Championship Game on November 22, 2017.

Coach Groce helped start the program and remained a part of it for more than 25 years. He began his career of coaching youth



football when his young sons began playing football in elementary school. Their love of being part of the team made him want to be a part of the team as well. Coach Groce got involved with helping in any way he could.

Due to Lincoln’s growing community, at times there wasn’t anywhere for some of the football teams to practice. Coach Groce went to work to repurpose a baseball field into a football practice field. Lincoln is so thankful for Alfred Groce and his dedication to Lincoln and its youth.

Coach Groce has been married to Linda Ragland for 40 years and they both were born and raised in Lincoln, AL. They are members of the St. Mark Church of God in Christ. He and his three siblings were raised by their Grandmother after their parents and two other siblings were killed in a tragic train wreck.

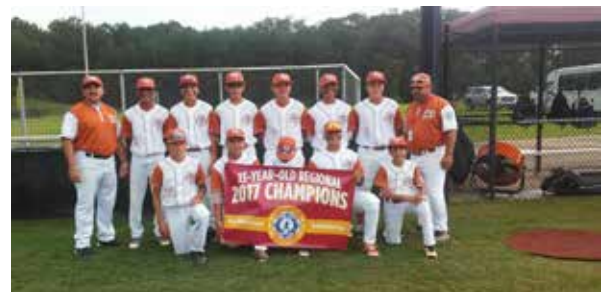
He now keeps busy doing home repairs, hunting and fishing when he has time. He has five children- Talina Groce (Deceased) Stacey Groce, Alfred Groce Jr, Jerald Groce (Deceased) and Andrea Groce; and five grandchildren- Erykah Groce, Eboni Groce, Clenon Groce, Alfred Groce and Caden Groce

Coach Groce has worked at several jobs in the surrounding area, including Honda as a security guard. Coach Groce was also honored



at Lincoln’s 9th Annual Christmas Parade, leading the parade as Grand marshal.

## Lincoln hosted their first Southwest Regional Babe Ruth Baseball Tournament in 2017.



## Ebonie Ferguson is the City of Lincoln’s new Athletic Director.

Ebonie is also a part of all of the events that happen in the Lincoln community, from Senior Citizen Day to the Christmas Parade.





# Opelika - SportsPlex Opens New Playground

The Opelika SportsPlex has a new amenity that provides a new way for children to recreate. A new playground was installed behind the SportsPlex, offering play structures for children ages 2-12.

The playground sits on a 75'x45' space and features three different play structures. A preschool play structure features multiple slides, climbing structures, activity panels and musical components. Older children can enjoy an obstacle course complete with monkey bars, lily pads and multiple climbing apparatuses. Children of all ages can enjoy the Global Motion structure, a rotating net climber with two levels to ride on.

“Our members are important to us, and we want to stay on top of trends and provide the amenities that they are interested in,” said Laura Leigh Chesser, public relations coordinator. “We pride ourselves on being a family facility with opportunities for all ages.”

Children’s play experience will greatly increase during the summer. Parks and Rec staff has plans to open a gate between the splash park and the playground, creating one big play area. That coupled free tot watch has made the SportsPlex a destination location for children.

Sam Bailey, director of Park and Recreation, said that the plans for the playground project initiated from community input.

“It was brought to our attention several times that we did not have a playground for kids on the whole 80-acre property. Once it was decided we were going to install a playground We decided to install the equipment ourselves in order to save the city a significant amount of money installation charges.”

The project began in October and was completed in December. Between the immense amount of work and hours that went into putting on the Fall Festival and Reindeer Express events, Parks and Rec staff worked tirelessly to get the playground completed.

The playground is now open for all SportsPlex members. Guests may also use the playground through the purchase of a guest pass.



# Opelika - Plex Fit Challenge

This past August the Opelika SportsPlex hosted the inaugural Plex Fit Challenge. Designed and implemented by Alden Mezick and Lisa Gallagher of the SportsPlex Fitness Department, the event was nationally recognized by the Medical Fitness Association, placing 6th nationwide for Program Innovation 2017. "The Plex Fit Challenge is a fitness contest for people of all ages and fitness levels. This is a competition designed to create an enjoyable and encouraging environment where every participant regardless of age or ability can test the limits of his/her physical fitness." says Alden Mezick. Winners of the

competition included Regina Constan in the Women's Division and David Hall in the Men's Division. We look forward to seeing participation continue grow this upcoming summer. Contact the Opelika SportsPlex for interest in next year's event.



# Opelika - Recycled TeenAgers

Opelika Recycled TeenAgers having an adventure in San Antonio





# Dothan - Bringing Wellness to the Wiregrass

Unique to Dothan Leisure Services Aquatics, the Warm Water Wellness Pool emerged from the growing demands of the Aquacise Program. Aquacise first began with 30 participants, and over the course of 20 years it grew to a staggering 450 participants. Because of the success of the Aquacise Program the Aqua Foundation was formed with goals to raise awareness and funds for an additional pool that is uniquely tailored to the needs of Aquacise participants. While the Foundation raised \$30,000 of the 3.2 million dollar project, the Foundation was successful in exposing the overwhelming demand for a warm water pool to the decision makers (City Commission, Mayor).

While the previous home for the Aquacise Program was a shared competition pool, the 81-degree water temperature could not, ultimately, meet the needs of the Aquacise community. In contrast, the standard for the Westgate Wellness Pool is a warm, 87 degrees. This temperature allows the senior participants to maximize their strength and flexibility during classes. To further accommodate their needs, this 69,000 gallon warm water pool was constructed with a zero-depth entry and accompanied with full-length railing. This allows participants with disabilities or in wheel chairs to enter the pool with ease. Furthermore, the depth of the pool ranges from 3 ½ ft. to 5 ft., allowing participants of all heights to stand while eliminating the need for strenuous treading. Alongside the Wellness Pool is a 10-person therapeutic whirlpool allowing participants to ease joint pain and prepare their bodies for class activities. Participants can also take

advantage of water weights, aquatic belts and aquatic exercise bicycles that were purchased with the money raised by the Dothan Aqua Foundation.

Offering a specialized warm water pool and unique experience, the Westgate Wellness Pool opened its doors to the community in July 2017 and held its Grand Opening September 23rd, 2017.



# Enterprise - 2017 Tourism Award and District VI Awards

## 2017 Tourism Award

The Chamber of Commerce presented the City of Enterprise with the 2017 Tourism Award at their annual banquet in September 2017. This award is given to a business or entity that encourages, promotes and/or brings visitors to Enterprise, thereby, increasing the city's revenue and the appeal to visitors as well as local residents. The City of Enterprise strives to live up to its motto "The City of Progress" and we are grateful for the recognition of our efforts.



From left to right: Eddie Phillips (Banquet MC), Erin Grantham (Chamber of Commerce President), Erin Tullos (Chamber of Commerce Board Chairman), Billy Powell (Director of Enterprise Parks and Recreation)

## The awards presentation from District VI was held on December 13, 2017 in Troy, Alabama

The recipients of this year's district awards are:

### 2017 Grounds Award

Darrius Carlisle from Troy



### 2017 Support Staff of the Year Award

Rosalinda Grace from Dothan



### 2017 Young Professional of the Year Award

Lorena Guttowsky from Dothan



### 2017 Professional of the Year Award

Randall Hill from Ozark



Group Picture – From left to right: Darrius Carlisle, Rosalinda Grace, Lorena Guttowsky, Randall Hill



The awards were presented by Tony Thorne, District Awards Chair and Dan Smith, Director of Parks & Recreation in Troy. We thank our award winners for their hard work and dedication! We are proud of you!!



# Eufaula - Big Accomplishments in 2017

## Playground of Dreams Renovation:

Eufaula's Playground of Dreams was fully restored this past year through grants provided by the Land & Water Conservation Fund & Barbour County Extension Service, along with city funding. The renovation totaled \$173,525.00. Outdated & unsafe structures were removed or refurbished and new elements were added from Landscape Structures. This revitalization would never have been possible without monetary donations & contributions of time provided by Eufaula's supportive community. Eufaula is very excited about this renovation and what it means for our youth.



## 2nd Grade Swim Lesson Collaboration:

The Eufaula Community Center partnered up with the Eufaula City School system last year & taught water safety & swim lessons to over 200 2nd grade students. Eufaula Parks & Recreation believes it is imperative that children enjoying Lake Eufaula have the skills to stay as safe as possible. We are super excited about this collaboration and the lives we may save through this program and are currently gearing up for 2018 lessons.



## Eufaula Tigers Swim Team:

The Eufaula Parks & Recreation department partnered with Eufaula City Schools and offered swim team as an additional sport in 2017. This team was coached by Eufaula WaveRunner's Head Coach, Carrie Smith & Assistant Coach, Lauran Young. Nine students participated, practicing at the Eufaula Community Center pool each day after school, along with strength training at the High School twice a week. Two of these nine swimmers barely missed the cuts for the Alabama School Championships held at AU this past December. Our hope in 2018 is for this new team to grow and also have swimmers qualify to participate in the State meet.



# Gulf Shores - SPARC Summer Camp

The City of Gulf Shores summer camp is offered in the summer months over the course of 11 weeks from May –August.

SPARC Summer Camp will provide a positive recreational, informative and life enriching experience for every child. Our goal is to introduce children to as many new experiences as possible and help each child feel confident and secure in a fun, safe environment. We want to challenge children to grow in imagination, creativity, self-directed initiative and leadership.

Through an array of planned fun activities and field trips, campers will have an opportunity

to gain resiliency, develop life-long skills, grow more independent, learn social skills, and make true friends.

In 2018 the city will be partnering with the elementary school to combine resources in order to deliver quality programming in a larger scale.



# Gulf Shores - New Teen Recreation Club

It is a fun program for teens who want to be involved in activities outside of school and home in a safe, supervised environment. We understand that parents work so when school is out for Fall, Winter and Spring breaks, we will offer structured activities and mentoring opportunities for club members. The club is geared toward Middle School children. (6th grade – 8th grade) In this club the student will be exposed to the following: Leadership Skills, Engaging and Safe Events, Mentors, and Variety of Positive Extracurricular Activities.



**#GSWRECKCLUB**

**JOIN OUR NEW TEEN RECREATION CLUB!**

FRIDAY **OCTOBER 21<sup>ST</sup>** 3PM-MIDNIGHT **KICKOFF PARTY WITH ZOMBIE PAINT BALL**

NOVEMBER **JAM IN THE PARK DJ PIZZA GAGA BALL**

DECEMBER **CHRISTMAS BREAK JR COUNSELOR**

JANUARY **GREEN UP GS TEAM** FEBRUARY **MARDI GRAS PARADE WALKER**

MARCH **SPRING BREAK CAMP KAYAKING PADDLE BOARDING**

APRIL **ZYDECO RUN TEAM** MAY **AFTER SCHOOL BASH VIDEO GAMES INFLATABLES**

MEET OR CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN **6th-8th grade** AND ENJOY ALL THE BENEFITS!

CALL THE CULTURAL CENTER FOR MORE INFO AND TO SIGN UP **\$50** INCLUDED: ACCESS TO GROUP, T-SHIRT, HOODIE

**GULF SHORES RECREATION** **CULTURAL CENTER**



# Mobile - 2017 Photo Highlights

## Springhill - Arts & Crafts



## Springhill - Bikes for Christmas



## Springhill - Fun in the Summertime



## Springhill - Christmas Luncheon for the Homeless



## Rickarby



# Corporate Members

**Barge Design Solutions**  
211 Commerce Street Set 600  
Nashville, TN  
dustin.bryson@bwsc.net

**Bliss Products**  
6831 S. Sweetwater Rd.  
Lithia Springs, GA  
info@blissproducts.com

**Carter Landscaping**  
5201 Elmore Rd  
Elmore, AL  
john.carter.landscaping@gmail.com

**Coblentz Equipment & Parts Co., Inc.**  
10400 US Hwy 80 East  
Montgomery, AL  
dhelms@coblentzep.com

**Disc Golf Association, Inc.**  
73 Hangar Way  
Watsonville, CA  
scott@discgolf.com

**Franklin Sports**  
17 Campanelli Pkwy  
Stoughton, MA  
csavage@franklinsports.com

**Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood**  
2660 EastChase Lane, Suite 200  
Montgomery, AL  
john.bricken@gmcnetwork.com

**Great Southern Recreation**  
2441-Q Old Fort Parkway, #462  
Murfreesboro, TN  
rachel@greatsouthernrec.com

**J.A. Dawson & Co. Inc**  
P.O. Box 1178  
Pelham, AL  
dwarren@jadawsonco.com

**J&M Displays**  
2083 Helms Rd  
Rehobeth, AL  
charlesm@jandmdisplays.com

**Lower Brothers Co. Inc**  
P.O. Box 43026  
Birmingham, AL  
linn@lowerbros.com

**Miracle Recreation/Jefcoat Recreation & Construction**  
P.O. Box 6197  
Pearl, MS  
doyle@jefcoatrecreation.com

**Modular Concepts LLC**  
P.O. Box 2337  
Alabaster, AL  
dale@modularconceptsllc.com

**Musco Sports Lighting**  
100 1st Ave W.  
Oskaloosa, IA  
promotions@musco.com

**National Security Insurance Company**  
661 E. Davis St  
Elba, AL  
steve.mitchell@nsgcorp.com

**Off the Hook Rings**  
PO Box 231508  
Montgomery, AL  
natnorman@knology.net

**Outdoor Aluminum Inc.**  
P.O. Box 118  
Geneva, AL  
espears@outdooraluminum.com

**Playworld Preferred**  
11515 Vanstory Drive  
Suite100  
Huntersville, NC  
cathy@playworldpreferred.com

**Protime Sports**  
18289 Olympic Ave South  
Seattle, WA  
don@protimesports.com

**Pyro Shows**  
115 N. First Street  
La Follette, TN  
j.huddleston@pyroshows.com

**Qualite Sports Lighting**  
7600 Lagrange Road  
Pewee Valley, KY  
dsutherland@qualite.com

**Rec12, LLC**  
PO Box 231508  
Montgomery, AL  
tiffanywade012@gmail.com

**Serius LLC**  
208 Knoll Crest Drive  
Birmingham, AL  
tommy@serius-llc.com

**Sports Turf Company**  
1487 Black Dirt Rd.  
Whitesburg, GA  
megan@sportsturf.net

**Sur-Line Turf, Inc**  
19637 Gorgas Road  
Northport, AL  
surline1@gmail.com

**Twin States Recreation, LLC**  
P. O. Box 732  
Magnolia Springs, AL  
max@twinstatesrec.com

**USA Softball of Alabama**  
PO Box 231508  
Montgomery, AL  
natnorman@knology.net

**Vortex**  
328 Avro St.  
Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Can,  
jjasmann@vortex-intl.com



Alabama Recreation and Parks Association  
P.O. Box 230579  
Montgomery, AL 36123-0579

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2018

Calendar of Events

## January

**28-30** 2018 ARPA State Conference  
Tuscaloosa, AL  
Hotel Capstone

## March

**9-11** State Youth Basketball Tournament  
Trussville, AL

## April

**17-18** Creative Camp  
Mentone, AL