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Bicentennial signs honor legacy street names and heroes

PHS Marching Band picked for Bicentennial Parade

Rotary’s VolksMarch to honor Alabama's Bicentennial

Lunch at the Library showcases Alabama Art

County museum hosts bicentennial exhibit

Share your story with Chestnut Creek

On this day in Alabama - October 17

Upcoming Events

Exhibitions
Help us @ ALABAMA200.org

Alabama has been a state for 200 years, and its people are stepping up to commemorate its bicentennial. We’re here to keep you up to date on events and programs throughout the state and help you tune in to the state’s diverse cultural and historic heritage.

To stay on top of everything that’s going on, check out our community calendar at ALABAMA200.org, and to get the full scoop, like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram and Twitter. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Your participation helps us reach as many people as possible and is an easy and effective way to show pride for our state, from Bay Minette to Tuscaloosa, Huntsville to Old Cahawba, and the many other towns and communities joining in the celebration. Don’t miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate with us. Join the party!
Bicentennial signs honor legacy street names and heroes

From the article by Steve Irvine on CityBlog.Huntsville.gov

Times have changed exponentially from the early days of Huntsville. However, in some cases, Huntsville citizens are traveling the same roads as their predecessors did in the early 1800s.

An interesting aspect about the Twickenham Historic District in downtown Huntsville is that the layout of the roads and the names of those roads have been largely unchanged since the city was founded.

“There are a lot of other cities in the state, Madison for example, that don’t have any of their original streets,” said Sally Warden, Executive Director of Alabama’s Bicentennial for Madison County. “Their streets have changed. Our streets are almost identical. There are some very slight changes, like Fountain Road used to go down to Church Street and now it curves. Once, Gallatin didn’t connect. There are just some very slight changes from 200-plus year old streets. We decided we needed to honor that somehow.”

Warden and Bicentennial Chairman Julian Butler approached the Huntsville Traffic Engineering Department to ask for assistance in telling the story of the downtown streets. After receiving approval from Director of Traffic Engineering Kathy Martin, they went to work.
“We went to (Traffic Operations Manager Karen Brown) and her department and said we’d love to have new signage on these streets,” Warden said. “Our original idea had been to put this logo on the green signs, so people could know. They said, “Let’s see what else we can do, let us go back and think.’”

What it became was much more than simple signage.

The signs are different colors – red, white and black – than regular street signs and are located at every one of the original downtown streets. Most are marked with more than one sign. In addition, there are ‘Did you know’ signage placed on the streets.

Brown and Warden say an important part of the project is educating Huntsville citizens and visitors on how the streets were named.

“One of the great stories is that everyone thinks that Lincoln Street is named for Abraham Lincoln,” Warden said. “When these streets were plotted out, Abraham Lincoln was like 1-year-old. It is not for him, it’s for General Benjamin Lincoln, who was a Revolutionary War hero. As you will see, a lot of the ones, especially the obscure ones who you have not heard before, most were Revolutionary War heroes.”

The Huntsville/Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau helped further tell the story, putting together a walking tour pamphlet that tells the story more thoroughly. It tells the story of the history behind "The Heart of Huntsville" and explains the names for 14 of the downtown streets.

“It’s been a fun project,” Warden said. “It was a great partnership between our Bicentennial Committee, the Convention of Visitors Bureau and the City of Huntsville.”

For the complete article please see https://cityblog.huntsvilleal.gov/bicentennial-signs-honor-legacy-street-names-and-heroes/
PHS Marching Band picked for Bicentennial Parade

From the article by Scott Mims on ShelbyCountyReporter.com:

The Pelham High School Marching Band is one of just seven Alabama high school bands selected to perform in the upcoming Bicentennial Parade in Montgomery.

The band will represent the Sixth Congressional District at the event, which features one band from each district.

The parade is scheduled to take place Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. starting from Court Square Fountain and moving along Dexter Avenue to the State Capitol. The parade’s focus is on Alabama people, places and history.

“We want to be able to represent our community, the community of Pelham and everything it stands for in context with our state,” said Justin Ward, director of bands with PHS.

Ward said the band submitted an application along with a video of its performance at New York City’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade two years ago. He hopes the upcoming gig will similarly provide material for future submissions.

“Our students have been fortunate to have many great performance opportunities,” he said. “For our students, my job is to provide them with the best possible music education, and that includes providing them with life-altering experiences and experiences that they wouldn’t normally get to have.”
The PHS Marching Band has 150 members and is likely one of the youngest in the state, according to Ward.

“I’m really excited because I’ve grown up here my whole life, and so has my family,” said senior and drum major Jesse Clopton, who also plays the French horn. “It’s so cool to be part of something that celebrates the growth of the state like that.”

“I think it’s an honor to be chosen,” added senior Jordan Shapach, baritone player. “It’s such a good thing that we’re able to go to as many events as we are.”

As for the songs to be performed, Ward hinted that he and the band are researching music that is relevant to the state’s history.

“That’s something we’re looking at,” he said.

Ward thanked PHS Principal Amanda Wilbanks, the Pelham City Schools Board and Superintendent Dr. Scott Coefield for their support of the band and band programs.

For the complete article please see https://www.shelbycountyreporter.com/2019/09/26/phs-marching-band-picked-for-bicentennial-parade/

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Rotary’s VolksMarch to honor Alabama's Bicentennial

From the article by Gregg Parker on TheMadisonRecord.com:

In its second year, VolksMarch of Madison on Oct. 26 will pay tribute to the bicentennial celebration of Alabama statehood.
Rotary Club of Madison sponsors VolksMarch. These events started in Europe as a noncompetitive 3.1-mile or 5-kilometer walk.

Participants can park and register at Madison City Schools Stadium as starting point for VolksMarch.

To register online, visit madisonalrotary.org/volksmarch or volksmarch.eventbrite.com.

Event hours will be 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Madison Station Historical Preservation Society will ask walkers to sign a scroll for a time capsule, which also will contain a city key and coin.

Walkers will proceed north on Celtic Drive and meander through downtown streets. In Old Madison Cemetery, members of the Balch, Gooch, Clemens, Palmer and Sturdivant families will detail the lives of generations of city founders.

Rotarians ask participants to dress in period costume from any era between 1819 and 2019. Suggestions include antebellum dresses, a nurse uniform from the 1860s or a Roarin’ 20s flapper.

Re-enactors will present the Bank Robbery of 1928 at 204 Main St.

Girl Scouts also will dress in costume and describe historic homes and their owners on Church Street. A dulcimer quintet will entertain the crowd along the route.

From Fantasy Playhouse Children’s Theatre, actors in two locations will sing Alabama folk songs and demonstrate games that children played in the 1800s. Along the route, a local group will discuss African American history in Alabama.

At the original site of West Madison Elementary School, three Scouts will explain the daily schedules of a schoolteacher and student in the early 1900s. Three re-enactors will discuss Buttermilk Alley, where Mrs. William Humphrey at 23 Front St. fed cornbread and buttermilk to hobos from the train.

On the Village Green, a historical encampment of about 40 actors dressed in period costume will present flags, weapons and other artifacts of 1800s Alabama. A cannon and Union and Confederate soldiers will add authenticity to re-enact the brief Battle at Madison Station.
Also, LaBelle Boyd will open her "tea room" and teach listeners about lifestyles for Alabama women and children in the 19th century. “You may also see President Lincoln and Horace King who built Alabama’s capitol building,” Erickson said.

Huntsville Porch Pickers with lawyers to rocket scientists and the group Mill Towne will perform songs from 1819 to 2019 in the Gazebo.

At 2:15 p.m., Rotarians will bury the time capsule during a ceremony with Madison Mayor Paul Finley by the Roundhouse on Front Street.

After VolksMarch, walkers can attend an Octoberfest party at 2 p.m. at Old Black Bear with a German band, German lunch buffet and awards for Best Costume.

All proceeds will benefit Rotarians’ local projects.

For the complete article please see https://themadisonrecord.com/2019/10/04/rotarys-volksmarch-to-honor-alabama-bicentennial/

Elliot Knight with book "Alabama Creates"
Lunch at the Library showcases Alabama Art

From the article by Brannon Cahela on SelmaTimesJournal.com:

The Selma-Dallas County Public Library welcomed Alabama State Arts Council Executive Director Elliot Knight to Selma.

Elliot stopped by the library to discuss the new book he edited, “Alabama Creates: 200 Years of Art and Artists” as part of the library’s ongoing Lunch at the Library series.

According to Selma-Dallas County Public Library Director Becky Nichols, each Lunch at the Library is a way to showcase another Selma organization doing good within the community.

Thursday’s Lunch at the Library was all about ArtsRevive.

ArtsRevive Executive Director Becky Youngblood was at the library to introduce Knight on Thursday, before he spoke to a crowd of around 40 people about “Alabama Creates”.

“[Knight] is the Executive Director of the Alabama State Arts Council and they’ve always been kind to ArtsRevive over the years,” said Youngblood. “He (Knight) is great.”

“Alabama Creates” is a coffee table book containing 200 years worth of Alabama’s artists and their works.

“‘Alabama Creates’ is just a wonderful, beautiful compendium of artists,” said Nichols.

Knight and his team worked for five years to compile the volume, making sure artists from as many of the state’s regions and eras were represented.

Though proud of the final product, Knight says the book is by no means the definitive collection of Alabama art.

“There’s no way to capture all of the people who are worthy of being recognized in this way,” said Knight. “There are a lot of great artists who were not included.”

Knight referred to the collection as a “sampler” of “all the great art to come out of Alabama over the last 200 years.”
According to Knight, the volume features over 100 artists and displays their works in chronological order.

Though Knight says the book is certainly educational, he doesn’t want anyone thinking it’s some dull, art history textbook.

“We designed it to be really accessible so everyone could appreciate it,” he said. “Anyone can pick it up and thumb through it and appreciate it.”

After working on the book for five years, Knight was proud to see it completed.

As the compendium’s editor, Knight’s favorite part of the process was experiencing all of the works featured in the book.

“I’m a lifelong Alabamian, and I’ve worked in the visual arts for years,” said Knight. “I learned a whole lot through this process. It’s been really rewarding visiting all these places and learning about all of this art.”

For the complete article please see
https://www.selmatimesjournal.com/2019/10/03/lunch-at-the-library-showcases-alabama-art/

Making Alabama traveling exhibit panel
County museum hosts bicentennial exhibit

From the article by Daniel Dye on TheWetumpkaHerald.com:
A uniquely Alabama exhibit that celebrates 200 years of state history opened to visitors Monday at the Elmore County Museum.

The exhibit, a project by Alabama Humanities Foundation, began its journey in Montgomery March 18 before a 19-month tour of Alabama’s 67 counties. Now, it is available for county residents to view.

There are four exhibits presenting the same information being used so the tour can wrap up by the end of 2019.

The exhibit breaks Alabama history into eight periods that span from the state’s pre-historic period to the present day and into the future.

All eight sections allow guests to read about important events in Alabama history on interactive computer tablets. Illustrated artwork printed on black fabric are used as backdrops for each display.

Additional display items include eight retractable banners that present information specific to Elmore County from a crater located in Wetumpka, a meteorite that is estimated to have collided with Earth 85 million years ago and the tornado that struck parts of the county earlier this year.

“Without Dakota Steed this would not be put up,” museum curator Sharon Fox said. “There were 21 crates and they were massive. It was a lot of work and a lot of organization.”

According to Fox, fourth-grade students in the county will have a chance to see the exhibit.

“We have field trips almost every day coming to see it,” she said.

The museum shares the stories of the county and its people. It features permanent and temporary exhibits and provides educational programs throughout the year.

The exhibit will remain in Wetumpka through Oct. 26. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday. Admission is free.

Chestnut Creek Heritage Chapel

**Share your story with Chestnut Creek**

From the article by Joyanna Love on ClantonAdvertiser.com:

In celebration of the Alabama Bicentennial, Chestnut Creek Heritage Chapel began a Sharing Our Stories oral history project to gather stories of local people.

Board members are recording interviews with those who have memories of the Verbena and Cooper communities.

“It’s fun,” Taylor said. “We kind of started with the idea of talking to people about the type of work that people used to do.”

The first few interviews were with people who had ties to the logging industry. Next, they interviewed people about the old Cooper school.

More people willing to be interviewed are needed for the project.

Taylor said they are really interested in “anything having to do with life, maybe what
kids did in those days, entertainment, even stories they remember, anything about the area.”

Those interested in participating can contact Taylor at 205-217-9466.

The interviews will eventually be transcribed into written form and turned into a local history book.

Taylor said the opportunity will be ongoing because they want to include as many people as are interested.

Chestnut Creek Heritage Chapel is an organization dedicated to preserving the former Chestnut Creek Baptist Church’s building. The group was originally formed by family members with ancestors buried in the adjoining cemetery.

The group hosts musical events and fundraisers each year.

For the complete article please see https://www.clantonadvertiser.com/2019/09/26/share-your-story-with-chestnut-creek/
October 17, 1965

WBMG debuted its first broadcast with NBC’s “The Capitol: Chronicle of Freedom” on Oct. 17, 1965. The station originally only broadcast during prime time hours.

WBMG experienced a tough time at its outset. The station later found an identity with unique programming, with sports broadcaster Tommy Charles wadding up his scripts after reading through them, and several local shows like live studio wrestling and a children’s show known as “Sergeant Jack.”

Eventually the station became the full CBS affiliate in 1973, and, after several decades, changed its name to WIAT. It is still the CBS affiliate for the Birmingham, Anniston and Tuscaloosa market.

Oct. 1–31 – Huntsville History Month (Huntsville)
Huntsville History Month is back for its second year, with a variety of history-centric events and activities for visitors and locals alike to enjoy. Huntsville History Month, an initiative spearheaded by the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau, celebrates the area’s rich historical heritage. The focus point of the campaign - a digital, month-long calendar of events – is a one-stop shop for those eager to take a step back in time through the variety of historical events taking place in October.

Oct. 21 – Rosenwald Schools in Alabama Traveling Exhibit (Huntsville)
You are invited to the opening of the Rosenwald Schools in Alabama traveling exhibit on the Drake State Community and Technical College.

Oct. 23 – Alabama Natives Bicentennial Concert Series (Montgomery)
Kate Campbell, Spooner Oldham and Will Kimbrough will perform at the Pine Bar Old Cloverdale from 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

Oct. 23 – Judson College Authors Symposium (Marion)
The Judson College Authors Symposium will celebrate Judson College alumnae who are published authors with emphasis on five of the more than 100 identified to-date. There is no charge to attend the event. Lunch may be purchased at $35 per plate. Ribeye will be served. Luncheon reservations can be made by contacting Beth Poole, Alumnae Director at Judson College at bpoole1@judson.edu or 334-683-5167 by Oct. 10. High School groups attending the event must email Beth Poole their completed and signed registration form for school participation by Oct. 10. Visit https://www.judson.edu/news/judson-authors-symposium-to-celebrate-alumnae-authors-oct-23/

Oct. 30 – A Commemoration of Alabama's Constitutions (Montgomery)
The Blackstone & Burke Center for Law & Liberty at Faulkner University Thomas Goode Jones School of Law announces “A Commemoration of Alabama’s Constitutions,” a symposium addressing the complex history of Alabama’s six constitutions. The event will feature seven sessions that include a variety of speakers with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Nov. 1–11 – Clean Home Alabama Initiative (State-wide)
Community college students, faculty and staff will serve alongside residents and members of several community organizations on Clean Home Alabama days for a number of beautification and litter pickup projects in Alabama’s counties. Several community organizations have already committed to projects. Visit www.accs.edu/CleanHomeAL.

Nov. 2 – Butler County's Bicentennial Celebration (Greenville)
Celebrating Alabama's Bicentennial as well as 200 years of Butler County's existence, our celebration event will include: Center Stage, a flag ceremony, local history displays, local tours, a vintage auto show and children's hands on history discovery area. Visit http://alabama200.org/events/butler-county-bicentennial-celebration

Nov. 3–Dec 31 – We the People: Alabama’s Defining Documents (Montgomery)
Celebrate Alabama’s bicentennial with the documents that defined our state and shaped
its history. All six of Alabama’s constitutions will be on view together in a special exhibition presented by the Alabama Department of Archives and History. The exhibition will also highlight intensive conservation work recently completed on the constitutions and the 1861 ordinance of secession, which declared Alabama’s separation from the Union on the eve of the Civil War. The ordinance will also be included in the exhibition. Visit https://www.wethepeoplealabama.org/

Nov. 6 & 7 – Teacher Professional Development Workshops on Alabama's Six Constitutions (Montgomery)
Featuring the Alabama Department of Archives and History's new bicentennial exhibition We the People: Alabama's Defining Documents, these day-long workshops for grades 3-12 teachers will delve into the history of Alabama's six constitutions and provide valuable tools and resources for incorporating them into your classroom curriculum. Visit http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=rmg54lcab&oeidk=a07egmle02j3eae74a2

Go to Alabama200.org/events for more information on these and other events.

Exhibitions

Unframed Images: Photography from the collection of P. H. Polk
Sept. 16 - Oct. 31 Madison Co., City: Huntsville, Venue: Alabama A&M University Library
Nov. 1- Nov. 29 Dale Co., City: Dothan, Venue: Troy University Dothan Campus Library
Dec. 2 - 30 Jefferson Co., City: Birmingham, Venue: Springville Road Public Library

Alabama Justice: The cases and faces that changed a nation

Making Alabama: A Bicentennial traveling exhibit

Oct. 4 - Oct. 25 Etowah Co., City: Gadsden, Venue: Gadsden Museum of Art

Oct. 8 - Oct. 25  Walker Co., City: Jasper, Venue: Bankhead House and Heritage Center

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