

DOTHAN EAGLE

"For I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" — Genesis 37:17



HEAVY T-STORMS 77 • 69 FORECAST, A3 | TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022 | dothaneagle.com

Dothan closes landfill

Recent court ruling leaves city no option but to cease operation

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Dothan closed its landfill last week following a court ruling that sided with landowners who pointed out a technicality in the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's permit approval process.

The ruling reversal by the Montgomery Circuit Court on

Thursday effectively revoked the city's permit to operate the expanded landfill and Mayor Mark Saliba said it closed on Friday.

That closure could be short-term as the City of Dothan has applied to temporarily reopen the landfill until city officials can get another permit approval through ADEM, a process that could take up to a year.

Though the City of Dothan has been operating the landfill again since August 2020, landowners represented by environmental lawyer David Ludder have continued to challenge the city in a

decade-long effort to keep the landfill from operating. Last week, they won on a technical issue matter not involving Dothan Environmental Services' operation.

Montgomery Circuit Court agreed with the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals that ADEM's Environmental Management Commission acted beyond its statutory authority in approving the modification of the permit in June 2020 that allowed the landfill to finally open. The action set

Please see **LANDFILL**, Page A6



A dump truck carries dirt into the Dothan City landfill in this 2012 Dothan Eagle file photo. **JAY HARE, DOTHAN EAGLE**



JAY HARE, DOTHAN EAGLE

Virginia Mayer, president and co-founder of Kingdom College, talks about how the college has evolved since it opened a few years ago and has a new building with classrooms and a library on the square in Headland.

Kingdom College growing

Headland school opens new Educational Center

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HEADLAND — With the recent opening of a new education center, Kingdom College has contin-

ued to grow since it first accepted students in 2018.

Located on South Main Street on the square in Headland, the college's new education center is in what was once the site of a carriage house and stables. The property was heavily remodeled to make room for classrooms, a library and offices for instructors, Virginia Mayer, Kingdom College

president and co-founder, said.

Some of the building's original wood ceiling and brick interior walls were kept in the renovations. Concrete stained floors run through the main walkway between the classrooms and library and to a central information desk and offices where the college's professors can meet with students.

Four classrooms as well as the offices feature large glass panes, making the building feel more open. Each "smart" classroom is equipped with cameras, microphones, large monitors, and electronic whiteboards so that students can attend classes virtually if need. Each classroom

Please see **KINGDOM**, Page A6

Lawmakers return for final days of session

Legislature key bills come down to the wire

KIM CHANDLER
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Alabama lawmakers return to Montgomery on Tuesday with a number of large issues to be decided in the closing days of the legislative session.

Legislators expect to conclude the session next week.

Here's a look at some of the proposals that could be decided in the session's final days.

TEACHER PAY

Lawmakers are expected to give final approval to the largest pay raise in a generation for teachers with nine or more years experience. The Senate approved the raises as part of next year's education trust fund budget. The House of Representatives must decide whether to accept Senate changes, but House leaders have expressed support for the raises.

The raise would be based on the teacher's experience. A teacher with a bachelor's degree and 20 years of experience would see their minimum salary rise from \$51,810 to \$57,214.

School systems in Alabama and across the country have reported concerns about teacher shortages, particularly as the coronavirus pandemic

Please see **SESSION**, Page A6



JAY HARE, DOTHAN EAGLE

Wiregrass Museum of Art is a key part of city plans to transform the downtown city block with significant investments in the arts.

City's tax coffers strong

March tax collections positive for Dothan

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March sales tax collections provided a welcome boost to Dothan's revenue after a slack month in February, according to data in the latest tax reports.

Now halfway through the city's budget year, the city has collected \$44.95 million in sales and use tax revenue, more than 10% above this time last year. Sales and use tax revenue is the dominant income stream for the city's government.

Lodging tax revenue has brought in \$1.74 million in the last six months, which is about

28.5% more than businesses remitted to the city in the 2020 fiscal year.

In March, businesses submitted \$7.956 million in sales and use tax dollars to the city's financial coffers. That amount is \$1.65 million more than the city recorded for March 2021 and about \$2.3 million more than city financial officials predicted in the city's budget. In February, the city brought in only \$5.9 million and experienced a significant decrease in tax revenue compared to the previous February.

However, it seems tax revenues are back on track as Dothan's budget surplus has been bolstered by March revenues, giving Dothan a total \$8,261,895 in revenues beyond projections.

Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba recently said that the city's outstanding sales tax revenue is part of why it's the "right time" to unveil the city and Wiregrass Foundation's new vision for the city center block and get started on some of those downtown projects. The big presentation, which is open to the public, has been moved to Monday, April 11, at 5:30 p.m. in the Dothan Civic Center arena.

Sable Riley is a Dothan Eagle staff writer and can be reached at sriley@dothaneagle.com or 334.712.7915. Support her work and that of other Eagle journalists by purchasing a digital subscription today at dothaneagle.com.

Board ponders Gulf Coast passenger trains, STATE, PAGE A2

Bryce Young solid in basketball, too, SPORTS, PAGE B1

LOTTERY A2 SPORTS B1
OPINION A4 COFFEE BREAK B5
OBITUARIES A6 CLASSIFIED B7

20 PAGES



Command Sergeant Major Horace Bascom "H.B." Johnson, USAR, Ret.



Command Sergeant Major Horace Bascom "H.B." Johnson, USAR, Ret., a resident of Daleville, passed away on Friday, April 1, 2022. He was 90 years old.

A celebration of his life will be held at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, April 6, 2022 in Sunset Funeral Home Chapel with Minister Darden Shadrach officiating. Burial with military honors will follow in Sunset Memorial Park. The family will receive friends at the funeral home on Wednesday afternoon from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm.

H.B. was born on January 16, 1932 in Orlando, Florida to the late Parker and Martha Johnson. He proudly served in the Army for 30 years. While in the service, H.B. fought in the Korean War and in the

Vietnam War. He also received numerous awards and medals including the Legion of Merit, Vietnam Service Medal with 1 Silver Star and 3 Bronze Stars, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Expert Rifle Badge and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. H.B. enjoyed spending time with his family and being in the outdoors, especially hunting and fishing. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his loving wife, Joyce Davis Johnson; his daughter, Donna Johnson Adams and her husband, Julian Bruce Adams; three grandchildren, Christopher Ryan (Callie Ann) Perry, Ashleigh Kristin (Andrew) Wuestenfeld and Julian Bruce (Sara) Adams, Jr.; and five great grandchildren, Anderson Wuestenfeld, Aldrin Wuestenfeld, Julian B. Adams, III, Anelise Adams and Alaina Adams.

Robert Byrd of Sunset Memorial Park Funeral Home (334) 983-6604 www.SunsetMemorialPark.com



Molly Johnston Bell



Mrs. Molly Johnston Bell, a resident of the Bells Crossroads Community, near Echo, went home to be with the Lord on Monday morning, April 4, 2022, at her home. She was 87.

Funeral Services will be held 2:00 P.M. Thursday, April 7, 2022, at Wesley Chapel Community Church with the Rev. Phil Craddock, Rev. Scott Ellis,

and Clint Kosier officiating. Burial will follow in the Bell's Crossroads Cemetery with Fuqua-Bankston Funeral Home directing. The family will receive friends from 1:00 until 2:00 P.M. Thursday at the church.

Flowers will be accepted, or memorial contributions may be made to Bell's Crossroads Cemetery Fund, in care of John William Bell, 8510 County Road 54, Skipperville, AL 36374.

You may sign a guest register at www.fuquabankston.com



Secret intelligence has unusually public role in Ukraine war

JILL LAWLESS AND AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

LONDON — The war in Ukraine is the conflict where spies came in from the cold and took center stage.

Since Russia invaded its neighbor in late February, intelligence agencies in the U.S. and Britain have been remarkably willing to go public with their secret intelligence assessments of what is happening on the battlefield — and inside the Kremlin.

The U.S. last week declassified intelligence findings claiming Russian President Vladimir Putin is being misinformed about his military's poor performance in Ukraine by advisers scared to tell him the truth. On Thursday, a British spy chief said demoralized Russian troops were refusing to carry out orders and sabotaging their own equipment.

Jeremy Fleming, who heads Britain's electronic intelligence agency GCHQ, made the comments in a public speech where he said the "pace and scale" at which secret intelligence is being released "really is unprecedented."

Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert at University College London, agreed that the very public intelligence campaign "reflects the fact that we now live in a dif-



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines appears before the Senate Intelligence Committee for a hearing March 10 on worldwide threats at the Capitol in Washington. Secret intelligence is playing an unusually public role in the war in Ukraine.

ferent age, politically and internationally. And this is a different kind of war."

Officials say the stream of declassified intelligence — which includes regular briefings to journalists in Washington and London and daily Twitter updates from Britain's defense ministry — has several aims. Partly it's to let Putin know he is being watched, and to make him question what he's being told. It's also designed to embolden the Russian military to tell Putin the truth, and to convey to the Russian public that they have been lied to about the war.

The U.S. and Britain also have released intelligence assessments in a bid to de-

ter Russian actions. That was the case with recent warnings Russia might be preparing to use chemical weapons in Ukraine.

It's all part of a closely coordinated trans-Atlantic strategy that has been in the works for months.

Biden administration officials say they decided to aggressively share intelligence and coordinate messaging with key allies, including Britain, as U.S. concerns about Russian troop movements in autumn 2021 put the intelligence community on high alert.

In early November, President Joe Biden dispatched CIA director William Burns to Moscow to warn that the

U.S. was fully aware of Russian troop movements. The White House has typically been tight-lipped about the director's travels, but the Biden administration calculated that in this situation they needed to advertise the visit far and wide. The U.S. Embassy in Moscow announced that Burns had met with top Kremlin officials shortly after his trip was over.

Soon after Burns' Moscow mission, U.S. officials decided they needed to accelerate intelligence sharing.

Officials shared sensitive intelligence with other members of the Five Eyes alliance — Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — and also with Ukraine. Director of national intelligence Avril Haines was dispatched to Brussels to brief NATO members on intelligence underlying growing American concerns that Russia seemed intent on invasion, according to a U.S. official familiar with the matter, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive issue.

Some allies and analysts were skeptical, with memories lingering of past intelligence failings, like the false claim Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction that was used to justify the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Landfill

From A1

aside the commission's decision, making the City of Dothan's permit invalid.

"The negative side to this is that there is no health hazard..." Saliba said on Monday. "It's going to cost taxpayers more to haul the garbage elsewhere and it causes us to spend more money on legal fees as well."

Even though the city's landfill is usable by all

ADEM rules and regulations, Dothan now must ship residents' trash and garbage to a private waste management facility in Florida at a cost of around \$1 million a year.

Bobby Lewis, Michael Del Vecchio, David Del Vecchio, and Peggy R. Del Vecchio are listed as the plaintiffs in the case that continue to fight the operation of the Webb Road landfill. They are identified as landowners and residents near the dumping grounds.

In a December 2017 "request for hearing to contest" filing to ADEM by Ludder, landowners complained that the landfill would generate "fugitive dust" that would affect vehicles and homes, produce odors that are harmful to their health, and attract animals like vultures and insects that have been known to carry diseases.

Saliba declined to address the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, whose legal wins over the years have previously de-

layed the construction and opening of the landfill before bringing operations to a halt on Friday.

The change in garbage hauling will not affect residents' pick-up schedules.

Sable Riley is a Dothan Eagle staff writer and can be reached at sriley@dothaneagle.com or 334.712.7915. Support her work and that of other Eagle journalists by purchasing a digital subscription today at dothaneagle.com.

Session

From A1

accelerated a wave of retirements. That has led states to look at pay increases and other measures to try to recruit and retain educators.

READING PROMOTION

The House of Representatives on Tuesday will debate a proposal to postpone a high-stakes requirement to hold back third graders who don't read on grade level. The requirement of the 2019 Alabama Literacy Act is now scheduled to start this spring, but would be pushed back until the 2023-2024 school year under the proposal.

Many lawmakers expressed concern after the pandemic interrupted classrooms for two years.



MICKY WELSH, THE MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER VIA AP

An overview of the opening of the legislative session in the House chamber at the Alabama Statehouse in Montgomery on earlier this year

There is broad support for a delay although lawmakers have disagreed on how long that delay should be. To move on to fourth grade, students would have to make above a "cut score" on standardized testing or demonstrate mastery of reading standards through a reading portfolio. State of-

icials earlier this year said 23% of students scored below the set cutoff score on the latest assessment.

DIVISIVE CONCEPTS

The bill by Republican Rep. Ed Oliver of Dadeville would prohibit a list of "divisive concepts" from being taught in schools and in

diversity training for state entities. The banned concepts would include that the United States is "inherently racist or sexist" and that anyone should be asked to accept "a sense of guilt" or a need to work harder because of their race or gender.

The Alabama House of Representatives approved the bill after an emotional night of debate. The House-passed bill is awaiting committee action in the Alabama Senate. The list in the bill is similar to a now-repealed executive order that former President Donald Trump issued regarding training for federal employees. Similar language has since popped up in bills in more than a dozen states.

TRANS TREATMENT

The Alabama Senate has approved a measure by Republican Sen. Shay Shelnett

of Trussville to make it a felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, for doctors to give transgender minors puberty-blockers, hormones or surgeries to help affirm their gender identity.

Proponents of the bill said the decisions on the medications should wait until a person is an adult. Opponents say lawmakers are inserting themselves into decisions that belong with families and their doctors.

The Senate-passed bill, along with similar legislation by Republican Rep. Wes Allen of Troy, is pending in the Alabama House of Representatives. The U.S. Department of Justice last week sent a letter to state attorneys general warning that laws and policies that prevent individuals from receiving gender-affirming medical care might be an infringement on a person's constitutional rights.

REDEFINING RIOT

The Alabama House of Representatives approved a bill that would create a new crime of assault of a first-responder and change the definition of riot in state law. The bill defines a riot as "the assemblage of five or more persons engaging in conduct which creates an immediate danger of and/or results in damage to property or injury to persons."

The legislation is pending in Senate committee. Rep. Allen Treadaway, a retired Birmingham assistant police chief, proposed the bill after a protest turned violent in Birmingham in the wake of George Floyd's killing by police in Minneapolis. Opposed lawmakers say the definition of a riot is subjective, and an officer could make arrests based on his or her presumptions about the people involved.

Kingdom

From A1

was "adopted" to cover the costs with small plaques outside each room offering thanks to the supporters.

Mayer admits that upon first sight it was hard to imagine the building's potential. But with a love of archaeology — which was her first major — Mayer collected a bucket of dirt from the site.

"I just want to look at everything, so I've been sifting through the dirt trying to find stuff, and I actually found nails ... from when they were shoeing horses with square-headed nails," she said.

Before opening the 5,000-square-foot edu-

cation center, classes were held at Living Waters Counseling Center in Headland as well as the college's administrative offices located not far from Headland's square. Headland United Methodist Church and Harvest Christian School also hosted classes. Mayer said some classes will still be held at Living Waters and other sites.

The college was born out of Living Waters Counseling Center, said Mayer, who is the counseling center's executive director.

"Living Waters is helping support Kingdom College because we're not accredited yet," Mayer said. "It is hard to get students to come you absolutely have to have regional accreditation."

With a Christian education mission, Kingdom College offers an associate degree in Ministry Helps as well as an associate and a bachelor's degree in psychology a bachelor's and a master's degree in biblical studies and a master's degree in divinity, Christian clinical mental health counseling, and clinical psychology. The college also offers certifications in lay counseling, chaplaincy, and grief and bereavement counseling as well as dual enrollment for high school students.

Like Living Waters, Mayer said she was called by God to establish Kingdom College, and especially the program focused on Christian clinical mental health counseling — something Mayer said she saw a need for during

the pandemic to help missionary families who were struggling.

"Who's doing the work when the family is struggling, and they struggle just like all of us," she said. "We felt like we needed, that God was leading us into the Christian clinical mental health, so that maybe we can place counselors globally."

Kingdom College has held three graduations since it started accepting students in 2018. It currently has about 44 students, Mayer said. The college is fully licensed and is working on accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools — Commission on Colleges Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Council for Ac-

creditation of Education Preparation and Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

Living Waters has 10 scholarships for students to pursue the grief and bereavement studies at Kingdom College because Mayer said the need is so great.

Tuition at Kingdom College is \$275 per credit hour for undergraduate programs and \$375 per hour for master's programs. There are also registration, facilities, and technology fees as part of enrollment.

"When accreditation is in place, they will be able to go and get licensure just like anybody from Auburn or Alabama," Mayer said of students. "More and more people are being drawn to

Christian counseling."

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