



Speaker's Press Clips  
Thursday, July 17, 2014

- *Opelika-Auburn News*: [Our View: Soaring to new heights](#)
- *Al.com*: [Turnout for runoff exceeds expectations, but expectations were mighty low](#)
- *AP*: [Greensboro's Ralph Howard wins House contest in Democratic runoff for Alabama Legislature](#)
- *Montgomery Advertiser*: [Senate chamber undergoing \\$200K renovation](#)
- *AP*: [Alabama Senate Chamber getting new look](#)
- *Anniston Star*: [ACA case could have major impact on Alabama](#)
- *Al.com*: [Congressman Spencer Bachus: Need for 'sensible reform' in state, federal prisons](#)
- *Al.com*: [No money for immigration without concessions from President Obama, Sen. Jeff Sessions says](#)
- *Al.com*: [Rep. Mo Brooks: It's 'financial insanity' to spend \\$3.7 billion on unaccompanied immigrant children crossing border](#)
- *Yellowhammer News*: [Alabama congressman says regs created after financial crisis may be crushing smaller companies](#)
- *Al.com*: [Desegregation judge sets ground rules for Huntsville's mediation with Justice Department](#)
- *AP*: [Houston County sheriff taking Montgomery job](#)
- *Gadsden Times*: [Law enforcement train to face domestic extremists](#)
- *Al.com*: [Record turnout expected for regional auto industry conference planned in Birmingham](#)
- *Al.com*: [Alabama defense contractors, Redstone Arsenal play key roles in \\$11 billion foreign military sales deal](#)
- *Al.com*: [Alabama gets more than \\$287,000 in grants from Clean Vessel Act program](#)
- *AP*: [Alabama tourism awards announced](#)

FULL TEXT

**Our View: Soaring to new heights**

*Opelika-Auburn News*

July 16, 2014

Earlier this month, Auburn University announced plans for a new aviation center that will serve as a hub for instruction, research and outreach for the aviation and aerospace industries in Alabama.

As we stated on this page, that announcement was big news for the university, Lee County and all of east Alabama. The same can be said of Tuesday's news regarding GE Aviation.

At 2:30 a.m. CDT Tuesday, GE Aviation joined state officials, including Gov. Robert Bentley, in announcing the GE Aviation plant in Auburn would soon be home to a new 3-D facility for the jet propulsion industry. They announced the good news at the Farnborough Air Show in the United Kingdom. To say this is big for our county and region is an understatement. It could be transformative.

By next year, the facility will produce fuel nozzles for Leap engines. GE Aviation officials state it will be the first large, dedicated additive manufacturing, or 3-D, facility for jet engine parts in the world.

“Additive manufacturing is the new frontier. It has taken the shackles off the engineering community, and gives them a clean canvas. This first application, the fuel nozzle, is the most advanced part we have ever made,” GE Aviation president David Joyce said.

Auburn Mayor Bill Ham said Tuesday's announcement was a “cutting-edge day” in Auburn. He was joined by other local leaders and officials, including House Speaker Mike Hubbard and Auburn University President Dr. Jay Gogue.

“In economic development, we often use the term ‘cutting-edge,’” Ham said. “We want cutting-edge companies because they are more likely to stick around for a long time; providing jobs, taxes and economic benefits to the community, to the state and beyond.”

The fact that GE Aviation selected Auburn for this facility speaks highly of our local workforce. Undoubtedly, GE Aviation is pleased with what's occurred here since it opened the Auburn plant in 2013.

At the risk of being too optimistic, we can't help but wonder if there will be more good news about aviation and aerospace in our future. Lee County is seemingly soaring to new heights with the two recent announcements.

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### **Turnout for runoff exceeds expectations, but expectations were mighty low**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Mike Cason

MONTGOMERY, Alabama --- Turnout in Tuesday's primary runoff exceeded expectations but those expectations were mighty low.

Alabama Secretary of State Jim Bennett said about 8 percent of the state's 2.9 million voters participated.

Bennett had predicted only 5 percent would take part.

Turnout was stronger in areas with hot races, such as the 6th Congressional District and state Senate District 30.

"While we would have preferred turnout to be higher, it was about as predicted," Bennett said. "We look forward to a higher voter turnout in November."

Bennett said there were no issues reported with photo voter ID.

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### **Greensboro's Ralph Howard wins House contest in Democratic runoff for Alabama Legislature**

*The Associated Press*

July 15, 2014

Kim Chandler

In the lone Democratic runoff for the Alabama Legislature, incumbent Rep. Ralph Howard of Greensboro on Tuesday defeated challenger Thomas Moore in House District 72 race.

In the lone Democratic runoff for the Alabama Legislature, incumbent Rep. Ralph Howard of Greensboro on Tuesday defeated challenger Thomas Moore in House District 72 race.

Howard had 4,305 votes or 53 percent to Moore's 3,754 votes or 47 percent.

No Republicans qualified for the race in District 72, which includes parts of Greene, Sumter, Marengo, Perry and Bibb counties.

Most of Tuesday's runoffs were on the Republican side as open legislative seats drew multiple contenders and a slate of challengers took on incumbents backed by the current GOP leadership.

Good Hope Mayor Corey Harbison upset incumbent Republican Rep. Mac Buttram of Cullman to win the Republican nomination for House District 12.

With 97 percent of the precincts of reporting Tuesday night, Harbison had 55 percent of the vote to Buttram's 45 percent, according to unofficial returns.

The race became one of the most high-profile of the seven legislative runoffs, attracting the involvement of the state's heavy political hitters. Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard, former Gov. Bob Riley and other Republicans campaigned door-to-door in Cullman in support of Buttram. The Alabama Education Association ran ads against Buttram.

Harbison, 28, ran as a Montgomery outsider and on a platform of repealing Common Core. Buttram, a retired Methodist minister, was elected to the House of Representatives in 2010. There is no Democrat in the race.

Harbison said he was humbled by the outpouring of support. Buttram issued a statement congratulating Harbison and said he hoped Harbison continued to move the county in a conservative direction.

Prattville City Council member Clyde Chambliss Jr. won the Republican runoff for Senate District 30, one of four open Senate seats.

Chambliss Jr. defeated businessman Harris Garner. With 100 percent of the precincts reporting Tuesday night, Chambliss had 65 percent of the vote to Garner's 35 percent.

The seat is now held by Prattville Sen. Bryan Taylor, who is not seeking re-election. No Democrat is running for the position.

Many of the runoffs occurred in open Senate seats.

Tim Melson defeated Chris Seibert to win the GOP nomination for Senate District 1, which is now held by Democratic Sen. Tammy Irons, D-Florence. With 100 percent of precincts reporting, Melson had 56 percent of the vote to Seibert's 44 percent. Melson will face Democrat Mike Curtis in November

Greg Albritton defeated Harry D'Olive Jr. to win the nomination for Senate District 22, which is now held by Sen. Marc Keahey, D-Grove Hill. With 100 percent of precincts reporting, Albritton had 58 percent of the vote to D'Olive's 42 percent. Albritton will face Democrat Susan Smith in November.

Irons and Keahey are not seeking re-election. Republican legislators redrew the two Democrats' districts in a way that would have made it difficult for the incumbents to win.

Shay Shelnett defeated Brett King to win the GOP nomination for Senate District 17. With 100 percent of the precincts reporting, Shelnett had 52 percent of the vote to King's 48.

The seat is being vacated by Sen. Scott Beason of Gardendale, who unsuccessfully ran for Congress. There is not a Democrat in the race.

Arnold Mooney defeated Amie Beth Shaver to win the GOP nomination for House District 43. With 100 percent of the precincts reporting Tuesday night, Mooney had 53 percent of the vote to Shaver's 47 percent. The seat was open because of the retirement of Rep. Mary Sure McClurkin, R-Indian Springs. There is not a Democrat in the race.

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## **Senate chamber undergoing \$200K renovation**

*Montgomery Advertiser*

July 17, 2014

Brian Lyman

The Alabama Senate chamber is undergoing its first major renovation since sessions began there in the mid-1980s.

Senate staffers have been working for the past month demolishing desks, removing old coverings and preparing to install new desks for senators, built by inmates in the state prison system.

"We're updating it, getting out of the Star Wars meets George Jetson look of Formica and plywood," Secretary of the Senate Pat Harris said Tuesday.

The work is expected to continue through November, and could be ready for use for legislative orientation in December. Harris said he hopes to keep the price tag below \$200,000.

Even if the price remains under \$200,000, the expense could be controversial.

The moves come as lawmakers are gearing up for what is expected to be a difficult budget year in 2015.

Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh said earlier this week that the state's workforce, which has undergone significant reductions in recent years, could see additional cuts of up to 9 percent to address a potential shortfall in the General Fund of \$200 million.

Harris said the project will be paid for out of existing bonds issued to pay for State House renovations, as well as funding from his office and Marsh's.

"A lot of this is money in the bond issue, money that couldn't be used anywhere else," he said. "We're not taking a job from anyone. We're not adding anybody and we're not cutting anybody."

The Legislature moved to the State House from the state Capitol in 1985, expecting a brief two-year stay while renovations went on in the older building. However, lawmakers ultimately decided not to return to the state Capitol, and have extended the temporary stay to nearly three decades. As a result, water damage has begun to creep over the chamber and Formica has started to warp.

Removal of the 35 desks in the chambers has also revealed some unpleasant sediments deposited over 30 years.

"When you pull Coke cans and rats and cigarette butts from under those desks, it was time for them to go," Harris said.

The new desks are being built by prisoners enrolled in at Ingram State Technical College in Deatsville, and will be ready for senators who likely will have to make some very difficult

decisions about the overcrowded and underfunded Corrections system next March. Harris spoke highly of the inmates' work.

"Their work product is excellent," he said. "I've used it in the past. If it saves state money to let them do it, I'm all for it."

No contractors have been brought in on the work. Harris said an outside firm may come in to assemble the desks later on in the year. For now, though, he has employed Senate staffers and those in facilities to work on the first phase of the work.

Early Tuesday afternoon, the remains of the senators' desks were piled up in one end of the chamber, with bits and pieces scattered around. The dais where the lieutenant governor sits had also been notably altered. The senators' chairs also had been removed, leaving plastic-covered stumps on the floor. Harris said those chairs will be returned.

The final product, Harris said, should lead to a chamber with different colors, improved conditions and more workspace for senators.

"It will give the chamber a more official look compared to legislatures all over the country," Harris said. "And at a bare minimum price, since we're doing the majority of the work."

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### **Alabama Senate Chamber getting new look**

*The Associated Press*

July 16, 2014

Phillip Rawls

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — The new Alabama Senate elected in November will serve in a redesigned chamber in Montgomery.

Senate Secretary Pat Harris said Wednesday his staff is gutting the Senate chamber, including removing the gray laminate desks and podiums that have been there since the Legislature moved into the old state Highway Department building in 1985.

Harris has lined up the state's two-year college system to build hickory desks and podiums that will be stained dark. Acoustical tile is being removed from the walls, along with stone trim, and they will be painted. The sound system is being reconfigured to provide more evenly distributed sound.

Harris said the project should be finished by Nov. 15 and cost less than \$200,000.

"If I had hired an architect, this would have cost \$1 million," Harris said.

Republican Sen. Phil Williams of Rainbow City toured the work Wednesday and said he's glad to see the sound system changed because he often requested to have the volume turned down. His desk is beside one cluster of speakers that is being moved to a higher location.

The Legislature moved from the Capitol to the old Highway Department building behind the Capitol in 1985 to allow for renovation of the historic structure. The Legislature was supposed to move back after the renovation, but it decided to stay in what is now called the Statehouse.

The original 1985 desks had ash trays and landline phones. Harris said the new desks won't have ash trays because smoking is no longer allowed and there will be no traditional phones because senators use cellphones.

Harris said the only other renovations to the Senate chamber since 1985 were the replacement of the carpet and the removal of two roof support columns to provide a clearer view for spectators. "It was built to last two years, but it's lasted 30 years," he said.

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### **ACA case could have major impact on Alabama**

*The Anniston Star*

July 16, 2014

Zac Al-Khateeb

A federal appeals court for the District of Columbia Circuit could potentially strike a huge blow to the Affordable Care Act.

The court will rule on *Halbig vs. Burwell* any day now, a case that could see potentially 100,000 Alabamians and 5 million people nationwide lose access to Affordable Care Act subsidies.

Section 1311 of the act states that only people who apply for health insurance plans through state-run health marketplaces are eligible for subsidies. However, only 17 states have created their own markets, with seven running marketplaces in partnership with the federal government, and 26 relying on federally run marketplaces.

Plaintiffs in the case argue that the subsidies are legal only for people who bought health insurance plans through state-run health exchanges, which could potentially leave everyone who applied through federally funded health insurance markets uninsured.

Mary Jones, a resident of Hobson City who is enrolled through the act, has been enrolled on the act since Jan. 1. Jones said she needs the insurance to be able to afford major treatments, many of which she needed years ago.

"I had major tests that I needed done when I was 50, and I'm 64," Jones said. "It's great for people to be the recipient of health care.

"I hope that the lawmakers will treat people justifiably," Jones continued. "But I hope the Lord don't allow this to happen. I don't think it's fair. It's nothing for them to just make a law to hold other people back."

The ruling could also have significant ramifications for the act's individual mandate, which requires that all eligible Americans have health insurance.

Todd Boozer, the state president for the Alabama Health Underwriters Association, said he doesn't believe the state or the country has the money to subsidize the health plans the way the act intends.

"We really don't have money to subsidize the way we're doing now," Boozer said. "I know our country doesn't have the money. I'm very uncomfortable with that."

Gene Ramsay, vice president of media for the Birmingham Association of Health Underwriters, said the case could be bad for the act in Alabama, which had 98,870 people enroll for the act from Oct. 1, 2013 through March 31.

Still, Ramsay said he believes it will be a long time before any of the ramifications are felt if the courts rule against the act.

"Probably because it's a federal case, and it could take years to get something figured out from this," Ramsay said. "Also, this whole thing has got the president's signature on it. So, I would probably have to veer toward the camp saying it wouldn't have an immediate impact."

Still, Ramsay said the case could open the door for future opponents of the act to continue to attack it. Ramsay said that many people who have followed the act suggest that if it is repealed, it will be from the inside-out.

"The prognostication is, it's going to implode," Ramsay said. "Now that the law is in effect, people are going to start digging into this hole, looking for loopholes, bringing them up."

Jim Carnes, policy director at Arise Alabama, shares Ramsay's sentiments on the potential ramifications of the court case. Arise Alabama is a statewide nonprofit organization to promote policies to benefit low-income Alabamians.

"It's clear that Congress intended for subsidies to be available through marketplaces. Period," Carnes said. "The plaintiffs are just exploiting a poorly worded passage to deny health care coverage to 100,000 Alabamians."

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### **Congressman Spencer Bachus: Need for 'sensible reform' in state, federal prisons**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Jon Reed

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- At a briefing for staff members of Alabama's congressional delegation Tuesday, U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus said there's a need for prison reform on the state and federal levels.



"The issues of prison costs and overcrowding facing the State of Alabama are challenging states across the country and the federal penitentiary system as well," Bachus, R-Vestavia Hills, said, according to a news release. "There is a need for sensible reform in both our state and federal systems."

The briefing comes a day after state Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, told a subcommittee of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee that Alabama's correctional system is "failed" and that "locking them up and throwing away the key is not the solution to our problem." Ward also pointed to corrections reform in Texas as an example for Alabama to follow, though those solutions might not be politically popular.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, which represents inmates suing the state over medical care, agreed with Ward's assessment.

Read what Ward told the panel.

Ward is the chairman of the state's Prison Reform Task Force, which is studying the state's criminal justice system with the goal of recommending ways to improve it. The task force is working with the Council of State Governments.

Bachus said the information Ward presented will help Congress address prison issues.

"State Senator Ward brought a very valuable perspective on how Alabama is approaching this problem to Congress and his views will help both the Judiciary Committee and the special Over-Criminalization Task Force that I serve on to address an urgent issue confronting our criminal justice system," Bachus said.

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### **No money for immigration without concessions from President Obama, Sen. Jeff Sessions says**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Leada Gore

Sen. Jeff Sessions is calling on fellow members of Congress to reject additional funding for immigration measures until President Barack Obama agrees to forgo executive orders that could allow tens of thousands of immigrants to stay in the country.

In a letter sent to all House and Senate members, Sessions, R-AL, said the president's "other numerous unlawful policies must be terminated."

"As a first step, Congress must not acquiesce to spending more taxpayer dollars until the president unequivocally rescinds his threat of more illegal executive action," Sessions wrote.

"Congress must demand that the president use his lawful powers to begin enforcing the law now - instead of passing legislation on the promise of future enforcement - and that he back down from his plan to widen his disastrous (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program, which would of course escalate the existing border disaster to unthinkable proportions," said Sessions, one of the most outspoken critics of the administration's immigration policies.

Sessions' letter come as Congress deals with the latest immigration crisis and how to stem the tide of people coming into the country illegally. The president has asked for \$3.7 billion to deal with the more than 50,000 unaccompanied minors that have crossed over the country's southwestern border since October. The money would go towards housing the children, as well as increased border security and immigration judges.

Sessions, who serves as Budget Committee ranking member, said that request should hinge on limiting the president's plan to naturalize as many as 6 million adults who are in the country illegally. Citing a report in National Journal, Sessions said the president's plan is similar to one used to legalize young people through 2012's DACA, which allowed some of those who came to the country illegally as children to remain.

Obama has signaled he would be willing to use executive orders to accomplish the naturalization goal.

Sessions wrote:

The action the President is reportedly contemplating would be a nullification of the Immigration and National Act by the Executive Branch of government. Indeed, it would be an executive nullification of our borders as an enforceable national boundary. By declaring whole classes of illegal immigrants beyond the reach of the law, it would remove the moral authority needed to enforce any immigration law, creating the very open-borders policy explicitly rejected by Congress and the people. And it would guarantee that the current illegal immigration disaster would only further worsen and destabilize.

Sessions said passing the measure without putting limitations on it would be tantamount to handing the president a blank check.

"If Congress simply passes a supplemental spending bill without these preconditions, it is not a question of if the president will suspend more immigration laws, but only how many he will suspend," he said.

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**Rep. Mo Brooks: It's 'financial insanity' to spend \$3.7 billion on unaccompanied immigrant children crossing border**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Paul Gattis

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Huntsville, said in a speech on the House floor today that it is "financial insanity" for Congress to give President Obama \$3.7 billion in emergency funds to deal with the immigration crisis.

Obama made the request earlier this month as the number of illegal immigrant children, who are unaccompanied by adults, crossing the U.S. border has spiked in recent months.

The White House has said part of the funding would be used to house and feed the children until they are returned to their homes. About 50,000 unaccompanied minors have crossed the southwestern U.S. border since October.

"President Obama demands \$3.7 billion to spend in just the next few months on a policy that does not solve the illegal alien children problem," Brooks said. "Think about that. The President proposes spending \$3.7 billion to not solve the problem."

Brooks said 60,000 children could be flown home for less than \$20 million, citing online airline tickets. Using military transport aircraft as flight training hours to return the children home would further reduce the cost, Brooks said.

"How should America fix this problem?" Brooks asked in his speech. "First, the Obama Administration must stop enticing illegal alien children to America with promises of amnesty and money. "America cannot give free food, free clothing, free shelter, free health care, free transportation, free entertainment, and billions of dollars a year in fraudulent tax refunds to illegal aliens and then wonder why we have an illegal alien crisis.

"Second, illegal alien children from Central America and Mexico must be treated equally – prompt returns to parents and homes without costly and time-consuming deportation hearings. All contrary laws must be repealed or amended.

"Third, America must immediately fly illegal alien children home by the least expensive means possible."

Updated at 1:44 p.m. July 16, 2014, to correct a figure. Brooks said 60,000 children could be flown home for less than \$20 million.

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### **Alabama congressman says regs created after financial crisis may be crushing smaller companies**

*Yellowhammer News*

July 17, 2014

Cliff Sims

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL6) on Wednesday expressed concerns that the regulatory reach of the U.S. Federal Reserve has been extended too far and may be crushing smaller insurance companies and asset managers.

During a hearing in the the House Financial Services Committee, Bachus pushed Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen to implement more transparency into their regulatory decision-making process.

The Financial Stability Oversight Council, of which The Fed is a member, has the power to label companies as “systemically important financial institutions (SIFIs),” which is a designation intended for large financial institutions whose failure could pose threats to the U.S. economy. The label carries with it a higher regulatory burden and raises operating costs that are ultimately passed on to consumers.

Unfortunately, Bachus says the label is now being placed on smaller companies, which was not the original intent. On Wednesday, Bachus urged Yellen to provide companies with specific reasons why they are receiving the label, and to give them steps they could take to shed it.

“My experience is that there is often greater resistance to a designation or ruling when parties feel they have not been consulted or when the process is not transparent enough,” said Bachus. “One of the approaches attracting interest is to require that companies being considered for such a designation be provided with specific reasons why and also a description of steps they could take so they might not be named a SIFI.”

Bachus said this “reasonable approach” would lead to more certainty and confidence in the decision-making of the Financial Stability Oversight Council. The Federal Reserve is a key member of the powerful panel, which was created in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis to monitor major potential risks to the economy.

Today’s hearing marked the final time that Bachus will participate in the twice-annual appearance of the Federal Reserve Chair before the committee. Bachus announced last year that he would not seek an eleventh term in the U.S. House.

During more than two decades on the committee, including a six-year leadership term, Bachus has heard testimony from and questioned Fed Chairs Alan Greenspan, Ben Bernanke, and Dr. Yellen, the most recent presidential appointee.

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## **Desegregation judge sets ground rules for Huntsville's mediation with Justice Department**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Challen Stephens

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- The judge overseeing Huntsville's desegregation dispute this week wrote that she hadn't done an adequate job of explaining the upcoming mediation with the U.S. Department of Justice.

So she filed a seven-page supplemental mediation order laying out a few ground rules.

She asked that the board attorney provide copies to Superintendent Casey Wardynski and each member of the city school board.

She didn't rank or number her guidelines. But here are six points of emphasis from the order:

First rule, the whole thing is confidential.

"The parties and the mediator may not disclose information regarding the process, except the terms of settlement, to the court or to third persons unless all parties agree," writes U.S. District Judge Madeline Hughes Haikala.

That means it could be a while until Huntsville hears anything about what will happen next. In her June 30 order sending Huntsville into mediation, Haikala suggested both sides might reach agreement by the end of the year.

She explains: "Confidentiality is an important part of mediation because it allows parties to work efficiently and to share information with the mediator that may not be admissible in evidence in proceedings before the Court."

Second rule, the whole thing is confidential. This means board members.

The mediator, Chief Magistrate Judge John Ott, may name Wardynski and one or more board members to take part in the mediation with the U.S. Department of Justice. But she warns that whoever participates must "remain silent about matters discussed in mediation."

Those who aren't involved in mediation are free to speak. But she notes this could cause confusion.

"Should a Board member or another individual not involved in the mediation say something about the process that is inaccurate, no one participating in the mediation may correct the mistake unless all parties agree to the correction and Judge Ott approves the disclosure."

This applies to the lawyers, too.

She explains: "Parties and members of the community may continue to direct questions that they have to counsel for the parties, but the Court respectfully asks for understanding if a lawyer or a participant in the mediation is unable to respond while the mediation is underway."

Third rule, the public will ask questions. The whole thing is still confidential.

Intense public interest may present challenges for public officials, she acknowledges.

After all, Haikala has ordered federal and city officials to bargain behind closed doors over everything from zone lines to remedies for long-standing racial disparities. They have to come up with a roadmap on how to retire the city's 1970 desegregation order.

Those decisions stand to affect parents and homeowners in every neighborhood in this city.

"The public understandably prefers transparency," she writes, "and public officials such as Superintendent (Casey) Wardynski and members of the Huntsville School Board have an obligation to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the citizens of the City of Huntsville."

But that doesn't change anything.

"Judge Ott may tailor specific rules regarding confidentiality for the mediation in this case, but generally speaking, neither the Court nor the public will receive information about the mediation until the process concludes unless the parties agree to disclose information sooner."

"...the Court respectfully asks for understanding if a lawyer or a participant in the mediation is unable to respond while the mediation is underway."

Fourth rule, the mediator determines the process.

"One of Chief Magistrate Judge Ott's first tasks in this matter is to identify the individuals who will take part in the mediation and to establish the rules that will guide the mediation," she writes.

She spells out the general nature of his role. The mediator will meet with at least one lawyer for each party and one representative. The mediator may ask each side for some written statement of priorities and concerns, written statements which are kept confidential.

He may meet with each side separately at times, but there will be at least one joint session.

The mediator may hear from witnesses and may ask for input from the public.

But mostly the mediator sets the rules to guide the process.

"Chief Magistrate Judge Ott brings a wealth of experience to this case," she writes. "He is highly regarded as a mediator, and he is familiar with issues unique to mediations involving municipal entities such as school boards."

Fifth rule, the court determines the facts.

"Judge Ott will not make findings of fact, make recommendations to the Court about how to decide issues in the case, or render a decision on the merits of the case," she writes.

Instead, when it's all over, he will report to the court.

"He will let the Court know whether the parties were able to reach an agreement on one or more topics, including a proposed plan that will pave the way toward a motion for a declaration of unitary status and/or a proposed joint student assignment plan that includes proposals for equitable educational programs."

Sixth rule, if mediation fails, the judge makes the call.

If mediation works, both sides can file a joint motion and the court might hold a hearing before ruling on the motion.

"If the parties are not able to reach an agreement, then the Court will give the parties an opportunity to submit separate proposals regarding benchmarks and timelines for unitary status, and the Court will resume its consideration of the parties' student assignment proposals."

That means, if talks fail, Haikala could select the city's rezoning plan or one proposed by the Justice Department. But it also means, if talks were to fail, that the judge could decide on much more, including identifying the necessary steps to end the 1970 desegregation order.

Seventh rule, the court's work will be public.

While all aspects of mediation must remain confidential, Haikala writes that the court's findings will continue to appear in the public court record.

"While the parties are engaged in mediation with Judge Ott, the Court will continue to work on other aspects of the case," she writes.

On June 30, she ordered the appointment of a special master to assist her in collecting information about racial disparities in Huntsville City Schools.

"Although some evidence in this matter may be sealed to protect, for example, the identity of students, the Court will continue to place as much information about this case in the open record as possible."

Haikala concludes the supplemental order: "The Court apologizes if its failure to provide a more thorough explanation of the mediation process in its original order generated confusion."

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### **Houston County sheriff taking Montgomery job**

*The Associated Press*

July 17, 2014

DOTHAN, Ala. (AP) — Houston County Sheriff Andy Hughes is resigning his office to become the state's assistant director of homeland security.

Hughes says his last day as sheriff in Dothan will be Aug. 17, and he will start his new job in Montgomery on Aug. 18. He will work alongside Spencer Collier, the secretary of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.

Hughes was elected sheriff in 2006 and re-elected in 2010. He says Gov. Robert Bentley will appoint someone to serve the last few months of his term, and the Houston County Republican Executive Committee will appoint someone to take his place in the sheriff's race for the general election on Nov. 4.

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### **Law enforcement train to face domestic extremists**

*Gadsden Times*

July 16, 2014

About 400 law enforcement officers from Northeast Alabama and Northwest Georgia will attend safety training Thursday in Oxford to better prepare them for potential encounters with domestic extremists, U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance, FBI Special Agent in Charge Richard D. Schwein Jr., and Oxford Police Chief Bill Partridge announced.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Alabama, the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Oxford Police Department will present the training at the Oxford Performing Arts Center.

The training is designed to give local, state and federal law enforcement officers and government security personnel survival skills and best practice tips in case they do encounter domestic extremists, such as members of the Sovereign Citizen Movement or militia groups. The training also will address deadly force survival and weapons of mass destruction.

"Law enforcement officers must, first, protect themselves in order to protect the communities they serve," Vance said.

"The goal of this training is for each participant to gain a greater appreciation of the potential threats associated with domestic extremism and how best to protect himself or herself if ever confronted with such a situation."

"As sovereign citizens' numbers grow, so do the chances of contact with law enforcement and, thus, the risks that incidents will end in violence," Schwein said.

"Law enforcement must understand the sovereign citizen movement, be able to identify indicators, and know how to protect themselves from the group's threatening tactics and techniques."

Partridge offered this advice: "Under pressure, you don't rise to the occasion; you sink to the level of your training. You react the way you're trained," Partridge said. "Train hard and train often. Your life depends on it."

The afternoon session of the day-long training will be a study of the Aug. 5, 2012, mass shooting at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wis., in which a white supremacist shot and killed six temple worshippers.



The gunman, a U.S. Army veteran, also wounded three other worshipers and the first officer on the scene, who was struck with 12 bullets.

The shooter killed himself with a shot to the head after another police officer shot him in the stomach.

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### **Record turnout expected for regional auto industry conference planned in Birmingham**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Dawn Kent Azok

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association will hold the annual Southern Automotive Conference this fall in Birmingham, an event that is expected to attract more than 500 industry professionals.

The annual trade show rotates each year among sites in Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi. This year's event will be held Oct. 8 to 10 at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex.

It is a forum for automakers and major suppliers to show off new products, share best practices and discuss strategies to strengthen the region's industry.

Early projections indicate a record turnout for the event, organizers say.

Read more about Alabama's auto industry.

"Automotive manufacturing is a significant employer in Alabama and in hundreds of communities across the South," Ron Davis, AAMA president, said in a prepared statement. The industry is in a state of continued growth that is very positive for our economies and quality of life. This conference contributes to that success in a big way."

The auto industry is one of the largest employers in the southeastern U.S., and it is a major driver of the region's economy.

The theme for this year's conference is "Geared for Growth: Accelerating the Global Automotive Industry." The general sessions and breakout panels focus on improving operational excellence, strengthening the workforce and increasing process and product innovations.

For more information on the conference, and to register online, visit [www.saconf.com](http://www.saconf.com).

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### **Alabama defense contractors, Redstone Arsenal play key roles in \$11 billion foreign military sales deal**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Leada Gore

Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal – as well as several major North Alabama defense contractors – played key roles in the largest foreign military sale so far this year.

The Pentagon has agreed to sell Apache helicopters and Patriot and Javelin defense systems to the nation of Qatar. The sale is worth about \$11 billion.

Qatar is home to the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East.

"Today's signing ceremony underscores the strong partnership between the United States and Qatar in the area of security and defense and will help improve our bilateral cooperation across a range of military operations," Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said in a statement.

The sale is being overseen by through the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command, or USASAC, the Redstone Arsenal-based organization that handles Foreign Military Sales for the Army.

USASAC's Commanding General Major Gen. Mark McDonald, who attended the signing ceremony, said the sale was the result of years of working with Qatar "to ensure they have the capabilities they need, particularly in missile defense, and helps us shape the environment.

"Their choice of systems is also a huge compliment to Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, and its defense industries as all the systems selected by Qatar have ties to this area," he said.

Included in the sale will be about 10 batteries for Patriot systems, as well as 24 Apache helicopters and 500 Javelin anti-tank missiles. The Patriot systems and Javelin missiles are manufactured by Raytheon and Lockheed, while Boeing produces the AH-64 Apache. All of the companies have a heavy presence in North Alabama.

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### **Alabama gets more than \$287,000 in grants from Clean Vessel Act program**

*Al.com*

July 16, 2014

Debbie M. Lord

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded Alabama \$287,952 in grants under the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) program.

According to the USFWS, the Clean Vessel Act helps states fund "construction, replacement, renovation and maintenance of facilities that assist recreational boaters in properly disposing of on-board septic waste."

Alabama will receive \$205,151 in grants for use along coastal areas, and \$82,801 for use inland. Twenty-one states will split \$16.6 million in grants from the CVA this year.

"Clean water is a fundamental need for both people and wildlife, and a perfect example of how the fates of both are intertwined," said Service Director Dan Ashe in a press release. "Clean Vessel Act grants not only help ensure that clean drinking water, sustainable ecosystems and healthy recreational areas are accessible to the American people, they also provide a substantial economic benefit for local communities."

Funds for the CVA program are provided from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Below are the amounts the 21 states will receive from the fund this year.  
Clean Vessel Act Awards for Fiscal Year 2014

Alabama - coastal \$205,151; inland \$82,801  
Arizona – inland \$160,000  
Arkansas – inland \$1,391,793  
California – coastal \$915,000, inland \$1,462,000  
Connecticut – coastal \$1,500,000, inland \$145,643  
Florida – coastal \$1,410,651, inland \$770,126  
Georgia – inland \$113,886  
Illinois – inland \$100,000  
Indiana – coastal \$104,518, inland \$257,518  
Kentucky – inland \$161,250  
Massachusetts – coastal \$1,049,875  
Michigan – coastal \$200,000  
Missouri – inland \$50,000  
New Hampshire – coastal \$78,596, inland \$38,347  
New Jersey – coastal \$258,750  
New York – coastal \$917,375, inland \$1,153,875  
Oklahoma – inland \$304,904  
South Carolina – coastal \$757,264; inland \$382,500  
Texas – coastal \$240,000; inland \$225,000  
Virginia – coastal \$557,991; inland \$94,500  
Washington - coastal \$1,500,000

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**Alabama tourism awards announced**

*The Associated Press*

July 16, 2014

AUBURN, Ala. (AP) — The USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile will be recognized as Alabama's Attraction of the Year during the Governor's Annual Conference on Tourism in Auburn.

The state Tourism Department says the battleship park will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year.

The tourism conference is Saturday through Tuesday at the Hotel at Auburn University.

Organizers say the Gadsden Riverfest will be recognized as the Event of the Year. It is marking its 30th anniversary.

Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange will receive the Government Advocate award for his leadership in the redevelopment of downtown Montgomery and for preparing for the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march in 2015.