



The ADVISOR

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SERVING OVER 358,000 MEMBERS

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2020: A Chance for Meaningful Progress

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

Alabama is a great state, but we have long ignored many problems facing our state, such as failing prisons, deficient mental health services, an inconsistent education system, an underfunded state police program, and the lack of adequate revenue to address these issues. I may sound like a broken record at this point, because I have been talking and writing about many of these issues for over forty years.

The difference: I now have hope that we may do something to finally fix these problems. I have this hope because of our strong current leadership.

We have a governor who, as I pointed out last month, has already taken bold steps to address our infrastructure problems and seems poised to go even further in addressing Alabama's long-standing problems. Governor Kay Ivey is not scared to make the tough decisions that will help to improve the state of Alabama.

Lieutenant Governor Will Ainsworth is determined to transform a somewhat powerless office into a platform to bring



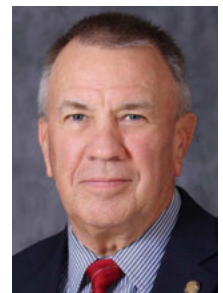
Governor Kay Ivey



Lt. Governor Will Ainsworth



President Pro Tem Del Marsh



Speaker Mac McCutcheon

about change to the state. The President Pro Tem of the Senate, Del Marsh, is a seasoned leader with the skills and experience needed to navigate passing controversial legislation in the Senate. The Speaker of the House, Mac McCutcheon, uses his experience as a hostage negotiator to lead the 105 members in the House from diverse and opposed ways of thinking to points of common ground.

There are many others in both the House and Senate that have exhibited great leadership in working towards the betterment of the state. Alabama has had great leaders in various positions in the

past, but this is the first time we have had so many leaders that are all working together.

I encourage these leaders to keep moving forward. Work together to find ways to raise the revenue to fix Alabama's broken systems. But, the work does not rest solely with Alabama's political leaders. We the people must get involved as well. Do what is necessary to support these leaders as they make the tough decisions necessary to better our great state, the great state of Alabama. It is time to stop talking about our state's great potential, and attack the "historic old problems" of our state. ●

Alabama Golf Resorts

BY MAC LACY, SMALL MARKET MEETINGS | WWW.SMALLMARKETMEETINGS.COM

Golf and meetings have always been complementary for me. Whether it's an afternoon spent on the course with a client or a best-ball scramble with dozens of players, golf has been my go-to for building business relationships. The same can be said for many meeting planners across the country.

In June, I joined about a dozen golf writers traveling on the Robert Trent

Jones Golf Trail in Alabama. Meeting planners who have done business in Alabama know the story of this Trail, which got its start in 1992. It was conceived by David G. Bronner to drive meeting and leisure business into the state to build wealth in the retirement system he manages for state employees.

Almost 30 years later, the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail has become perhaps

Alabama's best-known travel generator. As I discovered, it's not just the golf courses that make an impression on visitors; it's also the splendid resorts along the Trail that accommodate golfers and non-golfers alike.

On our five-day trip, we visited courses and resorts in Huntsville,

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO

Florence, and Auburn/Opelika and were able to enjoy other iconic Alabama destinations along the way. Muscle Shoals, Alabama's storied recording capital, and downtown Auburn were all on our itinerary.

HAMPTON COVE

Huntsville, hamptoncove.com

We began our golf at Hampton Cove's River Course, one of three layouts on the site. This course is the only one of more than 30 courses on the Trail with no bunkers, a tribute to early-day courses that had none. The multilevel clubhouse follows the design of all the Trail clubhouses, with broad stairways on two or more sides leading up to the second-floor pro shop, bar, and restaurant. I have played in or hosted best-ball events at three RTJ Trail courses, and the personnel in these clubhouses are adept at handling corporate outings.

I should note that these RTJ Trail courses are difficult for many players. They are characterized by elevated greens protected by deep bunkers that require very good iron play. Even from forward tees, hitting these greens consistently demands solid shot-making by a fairly good golfer.

THE SHOALS

Florence, visitflorenceal.com

We spent two nights at Florence's Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa, which sits on a bluff overlooking the Wilson Dam on the Tennessee River. The 199-room property features 40,000 square feet of meeting space, a highly rated spa, and Alabama's only rotating restaurant — 360 Degrees — which sits atop an adjacent tower. We were guests of Florence/Lauderdale Tourism and were treated to a meal at 360 Degrees on a clear summer evening. Recreational boaters were wrapping up their days on the lake beneath us.

We played the Fighting Joe Course in Muscle Shoals, one of two courses on the property. I played with tourism bureau president Rob Carnegie, and we both had at least a few holes worth sharing a beer over. Most of the group went to the Marriott's spa that afternoon, a 6,000-square-foot complex that offers four treatment rooms and seven stations for hair,



Fighting Joe at The Shoals, Florence

By Michael Clemmer



Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa, Florence

By Michael Clemmer



Auburn Marriott Opelika Resort & Spa at Grand National, Opelika

By Michael Clemmer

manicure, and pedicure services.

Selena Miller, the hotel's sales and marketing director, had her shuttle run me in to Florence to see the Rosenbaum House, a Frank Lloyd Wright home there. Jeff Ford, its director, greeted me and showed me the acclaimed yet affordable home Wright built for a young couple in 1939.

Later that afternoon, I crossed an item off my bucket list when we visited Fame Recording Studios and Muscle Shoals Sound Studio in legendary Muscle Shoals. We stood in or near rooms where musicians like Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, and The Rolling Stones recorded, and we finished off the evening with a spirited dinner on the terrace at Champy's. I had

fried everything — catfish, shrimp, you name it — in this local dining institution. For a music buff like me, this excursion was a must. I wouldn't plan a meeting in Florence without offering a trip to Muscle Shoals.

GRAND NATIONAL

Auburn/Opelika, golfalabama.org

We drove over to Auburn and played the Lake Course at Grand National, site of the LPGA's Symetra Tour's Zimmer Biomet Championship held in May. After golf, we were treated to a spa visit at the 221-room Auburn Marriott Opelika Resort & Spa at Grand National. The spa features eight treatment rooms and eight stations for hair, manicure, and pedicure services.

We visited the Red Clay Brewery and the John Emerald Distillery in Opelika before joining the staff of the Auburn/Opelika CVB for dinner at The Hound, an iconic Auburn Tiger hangout. Auburn's historic downtown features classic Southern architecture, and The Hound was buzzing, even though it was summer break.

We got up early and played Grand National's Links Course on the last day of our trip. Grand National has three layouts and is one of the jewels of the RTJ Trail. And true to Bronner's vision, many fans coming in for games against the Tigers arrive a day or two early to enjoy the resort and play its courses. ●

WANT TO HELP?



A FREE CAR TAG

Tired of that worn-out dealer tag on the front of your car? Would you like to help the RSA and our Alabama Tourism Department advertise "Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail" on your front bumper? If so, call to request a tag at 334.517.7000 or 877.517.0020, or write:

Tag, P.O. Box 302150
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Alabama Success Stories

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

The mission of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential. Created by the Alabama Legislature in 1994, the ADRS is the state agency that serves people with disabilities from birth to old age through a continuum of services. Services are provided through 25 community offices, reaching residents in all 67 counties. In FY 2019, the ADRS assisted almost 50,000 Alabamians.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is comprised of four major programs: Alabama's Early Intervention System, Children's Rehabilitation Service, Vocational Rehabilitation Service, and the State of Alabama Independent Living/Homebound Service.

Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) serves children from birth to age 3 and coordinates services statewide for infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) serves children and teens from birth to 21 with special healthcare needs. Every county in Alabama is served through a network of 14 community-based offices. Staff members work closely with local school systems to enable children with disabilities to participate fully in school. More than 27,200 Alabama students with disabilities rely on the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation

Services for classroom success.

The department's largest division, Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS), serves both teens and adults. VRS provides specialized employment-related and education-related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities in becoming employed.

The VRS-Blind/Deaf program provides assistance to Alabamians statewide through its Blind Services, Deaf Services, and OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services) programs.

VRS's Business Relations Program, known as READI-Net (Resources for Employment and Disability Information Network) works with thousands of Alabama businesses on disability-related issues, providing recruitment assistance, disability management, training, and employee retention services.

State of Alabama Independent Living/Homebound Service (SAIL) serves individuals with the most significant disabilities. SAIL provides a wide range of education and home-based services to assist people with the most severe disabilities in leading independent lives at home, at school, or in the workplace through seven community-based offices located throughout the state.

The ADRS is a state agency that is unique in the nation for providing services to children and adults with disabilities through a seamless system of service delivery. In 2018, AEIS received and

processed 9,152 referrals and provided services and supports to 7,350 infants, toddlers, and their families. CRS served 10,784 children and youth with special healthcare needs, including 386 with no insurance. VRS assisted 3,479 individuals with disabilities in achieving their



goal of employment. SAIL assisted 1,521 Alabamians with the most-significant disabilities in remaining in their homes and communities.

Through its continuum of services, ADRS provides assistance throughout a lifetime. To learn more about the ADRS, please visit www.rehab.alabama.gov/.

This is a series of articles about Alabama Success Stories. Please let us know if you have a similar success story you would like to share with the RSA membership. You may contact us at communication.correspondences@rsa-al.gov. ●

Infant Mortality Rate

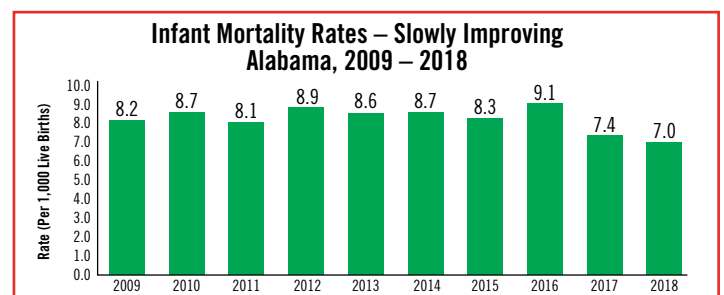
BY UGOCHI ILOKA, WBRC FOX 6

Why does Alabama's infant mortality rate remain one of the highest in the country? In Alabama, more babies are dying faster than the national average.

The University of Alabama's School of Social Work is using a plan called AI-SBIRT to help study and eventually reduce infant mortality in the state through improved wellness among mothers at risk. Research has shown women in Alabama face many risks that influence the state's high infant mortality rate, nearly 9 percent, when the national average is just almost 6 percent. Factors include substance abuse, mental health, and domestic abuse that could be causing the high number of babies dying way too soon.

UA infant mortality project coordinator Dr. Paul Moon said they want to implement the AI-SBIRT model in OBGYN offices starting in Montgomery, Macon, and Russell counties. This initiative will incorporate an alcohol drug screen and intervention

plans for moms or moms to be. "For the sake of not only the woman but the children that's affiliated to the patient, not only current but future. It's working towards positive behavioral change," said Dr. Moon. The counties picked for the treatment and screening research first have the highest infant mortality rates in the state. ●



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- plus a 15% resort fee**
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- March 1-3, 6, 8-31

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TRS Board of Control Election Results and Runoff Election

The TRS Election Committee met Tuesday, November 26, to certify the regular election results. A runoff election will be held for the Retired Position, No. 2, between Joe Ward and Anita Gibson. Ballots for this election will be mailed no later than January 6, and must be returned to Election-America in New York, by 4:00 p.m., February 17. Make your vote count! Your participation will ensure a fiscally sound retirement system for the future. ●



TRS Board Chair Luke Hallmark delivers the Oath of Office to Mr. Jeff Cole, Principal Position.



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