



Vol. XLVIII—No. 11

SERVING OVER 380,000 MEMBERS

May 2023

BEWARE

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

There is no attack on the RSA from the Legislature or governor. Our elected officials have been very good to us during my fifty years, although we have had to fight numerous times to prevent serious damage to our pension and healthcare programs.

Alabama does indeed have the largest surplus in our history, and we cannot afford to waste it or destroy what few taxes we collect in the future. The future needs to be brighter, not bleak, as some drastic proposals being considered will have substantial negative impacts on the children of Alabama.

Remember the old saying about the person who needs to spend every penny they have? My dad would say, "It must be burning a hole in his pocket."

There is a 50-50 chance of an economic slowdown in this year's 3rd or 4th quarter; hopefully, the slowdown will be small. But if Ukraine, Taiwan, or both go the wrong way, our country and Alabama will have a big problem. Instead, put the money for silly projects into the Alabama savings account; we may need it in the near future!

TAKING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OUT OF CURRENT REVENUE STREAMS WILL RESULT IN SERIOUS FIGHTS TO PRESERVE YOUR PENSION AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS! ●

Our Race to the Bottom

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

Before the current legislative session started, I referred to a former governor who made me a believer in his saying, "When the state is broke, there is less fighting than when the state has a small surplus."

Believe it or not, we have a considerable surplus like never before in Alabama. That begs the question: Are we going to make Alabama better or worse? You may ask, "How can we make it worse?" What a ridiculous question to ask!

Think in terms of the thief who robs you. Yes, you lost the money in your account or billfold. Now imagine the same thief is so powerful as to get you fired from your job! THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE DOING!

Some of the spending proposals remind me of the federal budget that included Alaska's infamous "Bridge to Nowhere." Some will say, "There is always pork for somebody in every budget," and they are correct. BUT, that is only part of the tragedy.

Alabama has proposals being considered that would demolish the General Fund and Education Trust Fund in a matter of years. Proposals such as privatizing Alabama's Alcoholic Beverage Control without a replacement of funds would cost the General Fund \$354 million, or \$3.5 billion over the next ten years. Education Trust Fund proposals, such as killing the state income tax on overtime, is a \$40 million blow or \$400 million over the next ten years. Elimination of the grocery tax would result in a \$600 million blow, which is \$6 billion in lost taxes over the next ten years.

They are worthwhile proposals. BUT ONLY IF you find a replacement for the significant amount of lost revenue. Without a replacement, it is a death sentence for our future! ●

Killing the Future with Tax Cuts

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

The 2022 session of the Legislature passed 18 tax cuts, costing the Education Trust Fund \$160 million per year, or \$1.6 billion over the next 10 years!

The 2023 Legislature has introduced more than 20 additional tax cuts, none of which have revenue to replace the tax cuts.

Currently, the House UNANIMOUSLY passed HB115 and 116, costing the Education Trust Fund \$82 million per year, or \$820 million over the next 10 years.

Having the second lowest taxes, \$50 more per capita than Tennessee to be exact (but they have a lottery), makes for a financial disaster in a matter of years. ●

Wasting Away Without More Funding

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

Executive Director of the State Troopers Association, Neil Tew, says a lack of troopers leads to more accidents. “First 90 days of 2023, rural fatalities increased 12%,” he said. “Looking back five years, the first 90 days of the year, rural fatalities are up 35%. Fewer troopers mean that these troopers, when they get off in the evening at nighttime, they’re often on call one, two, three, maybe even four nights a week,” he said.

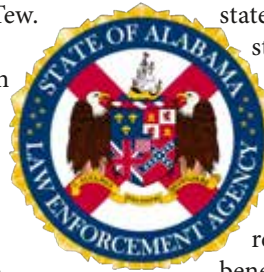
The lack of pay also plays a significant factor in the shortage. State troopers earn less than local police and sheriffs’ deputies. A starting salary for a state trooper ranges from \$39,664.80 to \$66,331.20, depending on education level. “Once not

so long ago, you rarely ever saw a trooper leave ALEA/DPS to work for a local agency, whether it be a county or municipal police department,” said Tew. “You’re seeing that regularly now. And it’s a simple equation they make better money.” There are only 290 troopers, with 285 vacant positions!

Retired state trooper Rep. Phillip Pettus, R-Lauderdale County, has watched this problem evolve. “I came out of the Trooper Academy, and Madison County had 18 troopers in 1988. Now they have eight,” said Pettus. “The governor just gave corrections a \$20,000 a year raise across

the board, which put them way above a state trooper,” said Pettus. “I haven’t found anywhere in the country where state corrections make more than the state police.”

The Legislature is moving in the right direction on the issue. The Senate recently passed a bill to make sure all law enforcement officers in ALEA receive state police retirement benefits and made improvements to those benefits. This goes a long way toward helping with the trooper shortage, but more work must be done on salaries! ●



BE AWARE

Billions Lost to Online Scammers, FBI Says

BY GARETH VIPERS, *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Americans lost more than \$10 billion to online scammers last year, new government data show, the highest level since the Federal Bureau of Investigation began tracking losses in 2000.

The FBI said its Internet Crime Complaint Center, or IC3, recorded more than 800,000 complaints in 2022, or more than 2,000 complaints a day.

So-called phishing expeditions represented the largest number of scams with more than 300,000 complaints, the FBI said in a report. Phishing usually involves the use of unsolicited email, text

messages, and phone calls, purportedly from a legitimate company, requesting personal or financial information.

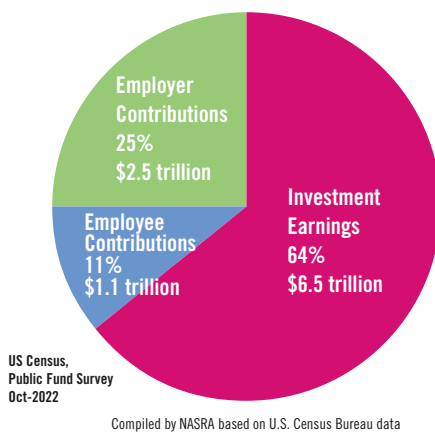
“Today’s cyber landscape has provided ample opportunities for criminals and adversaries to target U.S. networks, attack our critical infrastructure, hold our money and data for ransom, facilitate large-scale fraud schemes, and threaten our national security,” FBI Executive Assistant Director Timothy Langan said.

The total losses to online scammers rose to \$10.3 billion last year from \$6.9 billion in 2021. However, the overall

number of complaints recorded by IC3 fell slightly from 2021.

In 2022, investment scam losses more than doubled from a year ago and were the most common scheme reported, according to the report. Cryptocurrency investment fraud rocketed to \$2.57 billion last year from \$907 million in 2021. AMERICANS AGE 60 AND OLDER REPORTED LOSING \$3.1 BILLION TO SCAMMERS, ABOUT 30% OF THE TOTAL. ●

Public Pension Sources of Revenue, 1992–2021



Top Greenhouse Gas Emitting Facilities in the U.S. (2021)

These facilities led the nation in greenhouse gas emissions in 2021.

	Facility Name	State	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (metric tons)
1	James H. Miller Jr.	Alabama	20,998,639
2	Labadie	MO	15,760,177
3	Monroe	MI	14,379,178
4	W A Parish	TX	13,911,354
5	Martin Lake	TX	13,515,092
6	Gen J M Gavin	OH	13,478,316
7	Oak Grove	TX	12,617,336
8	PRAIRIE STATE GENERATING STATION	IL	12,496,789
9	EXXONMOBIL Bt Site	TX	11,811,121
10	John E Amos	WV	11,528,677

Table: Ramsey Archibald • Source: The Environmental Protection Agency

Alabama Success Story

Investing in Alabama's Workforce of Tomorrow, Today

The Alabama Community College System Celebrates 60 Years

Landmark legislation signed into law on May 3, 1963, laid the groundwork for what would become the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). Legislators wanted a unified system of institutions to focus on accessible training in “arts and sciences and in useful skills and trades” for current and future labor needs. Sixty years have passed, but that important cause remains the purpose of the 24 community and technical colleges that make up the ACCS.

Two years of celebration, called the ACCS Diamond Jubilee, will mark the System's 60th anniversary. Beginning in April — which is National Community College Month — dozens of Diamond Jubilee celebrations and community service projects across the state will highlight the positive impact made by Alabama's community and technical colleges.

ALABAMA IS OUR PRIORITY.

Every investment in ACCS is a long-term investment in our state. More than 95% of the students who attend our colleges live in Alabama, and more than 71% who graduate remain in Alabama to work and raise their families. Their lasting contributions to our state are immeasurable.

COMMUNITY IS OUR MIDDLE NAME.

Every resident can benefit in some way — whether through academic and skills training or community projects and events. With more than 130 locations among our campuses, adult education providers, and instructional sites, we are uniquely positioned to offer accessible, affordable, and flexible educational opportunities anywhere in Alabama.

WE STRIVE TO IMPROVE THE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE.

Our colleges and alumni add more than \$6.6 billion to Alabama's economy and support one of every 27 jobs in Alabama. But with Alabama's labor force participation rate below 60%, more can be done. That is why we have strengthened our partnerships with Alabama's businesses and industries to ensure our training programs align with their needs for skilled workers. We are advancing transformational programs for rapid

training, apprenticeships, student services, and many others that will positively impact our state's labor force for decades to come.

OUR SUCCESS IS OUR STUDENTS' SUCCESS.

More than 155,000 students receive training through a local community college for industry-backed credentials, certifications, and two-year associate degrees. Enrollment continues to increase at our colleges, even as it is declining in other states. For students who look toward completing a bachelor's, we have a structure in place that helps them seamlessly transfer from a community college to four-year public and private universities in the state.

Students as young as high school can gain college experience through their local community college with dual enrollment, saving them time and money. Adult students interested in GED and workforce credentials, degrees, and transfer opportunities have many programs and options to choose from at their local community colleges.

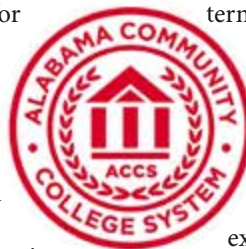
THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO THE STORY.

Sustainable success for Alabama's workforce requires a deliberate investment in that workforce — our neighbors, colleagues, and children. Nothing that

Alabama's community colleges do is meant for short-term impact; the long-term benefit is always the focus.

We invite all of Alabama to take the opportunity of our Diamond Jubilee to reflect on how we started, take a look at where we are, and be inspired by where we are going as we pursue excellence.

Cheers to another 60 years!



WEBSITES TO REMEMBER:

- Donate to scholarships: www.pathsforsuccess.com
- More about ACCS' impact on Alabama: www.accs.edu/impact
- Share your alumni success story: www.accs.edu/alumni
- More about the ACCS Diamond Jubilee: www.accs.edu/jubilee
- Locate a community college near you: www.accs.edu
- More about rapid training: innovation.accs.edu
- What's happening at Alabama's Community Colleges: www.facebook.com/theACCS

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. ●



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ENJOY YOUR SPRING/SUMMER A Special Deal FOR RSA MEMBERS

The Battle House,

A Renaissance Hotel \$129

- May 1-3, 7-11, 14-18, 21-24, 28-30
- June 1-10, 14-20, 25-30
- July 1-3, 5-13, 21-23, 29-31

The Battle House RSA Spa Package \$244

- May 8-10, 15-17, 22-24, 30
- June 5-7, 14, 26-28 • July 3, 5, 10-12, 31

Riverview Plaza \$119

- May 1, 5-10, 19-24, 29-31
- June 1-3, 9-10, 14-15, 17-20, 25-28
- July 2-3, 21-24, 27-31

Grand Hotel (plus a 15% resort fee) \$137

- May 1-2, 7-8, 16-17, 24
- June 1, 4, 6, 21 • July 9, 27

Grand Hotel RSA Golf Package (plus a 15% resort fee) \$209

- May 1-2, 7-8, 16-17, 24 • June 1, 4, 6, 21 • July 9, 27

Grand Hotel RSA Spa Package \$285 (plus a 15% resort fee)

- May 2, 16-17, 24 • June 1, 6, 21 • July 27

Marriott Shoals \$119

- May 6, 14, 21, 29-30 • June 4, 11, 18-19, 25
- July 9-10, 16, 23, 30

Marriott Shoals RSA Spa Package \$229

- May 6, 14, 21, 29-30 • June 4, 11, 18-19, 25
- July 9-10, 16, 23, 30

Renaissance Ross Bridge \$129

- May 3, 7, 14, 17-18, 21, 29-30
- June 4, 7-8, 11, 18, 25, 28-29
- July 3-4, 10, 30-31

Renaissance Ross Bridge RSA Spa Package \$260

- May 7, 21 • June 4, 7, 25, 28 • July 18, 25

Auburn/Opelika Marriott Resort \$119 (plus a 10% resort fee)

- May 1-2, 8-13, 22-25, 30-31
- June 5-7, 26-28 • July 11-12, 31

Auburn/Opelika Marriott Resort RSA Spa Package \$234 (plus a 10% resort fee)

- May 1, 8, 10-13, 22, 24-25, 31
- June 5, 7, 26, 28 • July 12, 31

Prattville Marriott \$99

- May 14-15, 21, 28-29 • June 1, 4, 10-11, 29
- July 2-5, 9, 23, 30

Renaissance Montgomery \$129

- May 7-8, 14, 28-30 • June 11, 18-19, 25-26
- July 2-6, 9-11, 23, 30

Renaissance Montgomery RSA Spa Package \$244

- May 30 • June N/A • July 4-6, 11

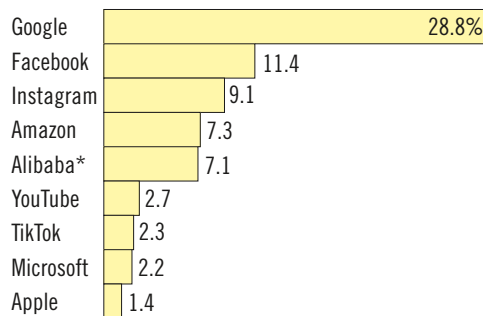
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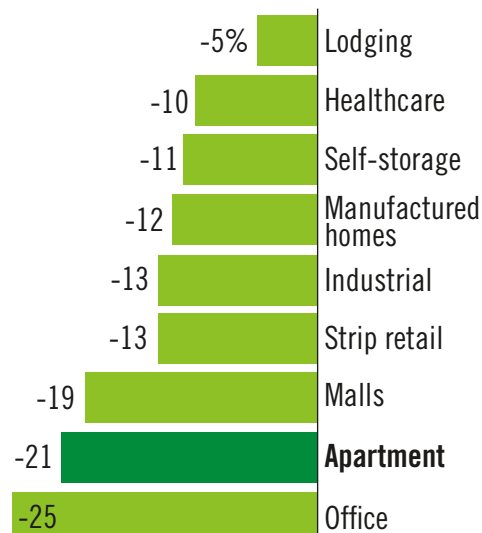
Largest Platforms for Digital Ads

Projected global digital ad market share in 2023



*Includes ad revenues from Alibaba's Core Commerce Operations and Youku Tudou. Data: Insider Intelligence

Change in COMMERCIAL PROPERTY Values, Past 12 Months



Source: Green Street Commercial Property Price Index



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