

THANK YOU Governor Ivey, Legislators, and RSA Members

EDITORIAL

Governor Ivey fully funded PEEHIP's requested employer contribution rate increase in her budget. The Legislature has included this full funding in the Education Trust Fund budget, which passed the Senate and is now in the House.

Thank you, Governor Ivey and Legislators, for including this funding. And thank you, MEMBERS, for advocating for this increase. It is because of YOU that the RSA and PEEHIP will remain well-funded! ●

Does the New PBM Law Affect My PEEHIP? For now, it does not.

BY JO MOORE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ADMINISTRATION

The Alabama Legislature recently passed SB252, a bill aimed at increasing transparency and fairness in the pharmacy supply chain for independent pharmacies. It places new requirements on Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs). PBMs are the middlemen who help manage prescription drug benefits for health plans like PEEHIP and save PEEHIP a significant amount of money—savings which is passed on to you.

This new law requires PBMs to reimburse independent pharmacies at the Medicaid reimbursement rate (which PEEHIP already does). The law also requires 100% pass-through of drug manufacturer rebates to health plans (which is already required by PEEHIP's contract with its PBM), banning PBMs from "steering" patients to specific

pharmacies (which PEEHIP does not do), and prohibiting spread pricing, where PBMs keep the difference between what they charge a health plan and what they pay the pharmacy (which PEEHIP does not do).

What does this mean for PEEHIP? The good news is that the new law will not increase PEEHIP's costs for now. For many years, PEEHIP has paid independent pharmacies above the Medicaid reimbursement rate; so for now the law's new reimbursement requirement does not affect PEEHIP. This exemption was important because it allowed PEEHIP to keep its current PBM contract in place, which maintained PEEHIP's and the members' savings of millions of dollars in administrative fees and contract guarantees. ●

The Renaissance is Complete

Renovated Inside and Out, a Name Change is Quite Appropriate

SOURCE: *COURIER JOURNAL*

FLORENCE – Following an expansive renovation, which began in 2022, PCH Hotels & Resorts recently announced the official opening of the new Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa in Florence.

The resort reveals updates to the exterior building, all guest rooms, public space, meeting space, restaurants, spa, fitness area, and an expanded pool deck area.

Jim Buckalew, Chairman & CEO, PCH Hotels & Resorts: "PCH Hotels &

Resorts is delighted to continue partnering with Marriott International and



the Retirement Systems of Alabama to reimagine the Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa. The fully renovated hotel, spa, and conference center have been uniquely redesigned to further spotlight the distinctive attributes our award-winning hotel commands. Our newly refurbished resort has enhanced its ability to attract the individual traveler, the group planner, and family fun for all."

The newly renovated and rebranded resort was thoughtfully curated to

The Renaissance is Complete

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showcase the rich music heritage of the Muscle Shoals Area and fully immerse guests into the place Keith Richards called “rock ‘n’ roll heaven.” The Renaissance Hotels brand is all about celebrating the neighborhoods they exist within and connecting travelers to the destination. As such, Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa has ingrained the very fabric of the Shoals past, present, and future into its architecture and every design element.

Renaissance Shoals Hotel & Spa is the premiere destination in North Alabama with 86 King sleeping rooms, 104 Queen/Queen sleeping rooms, which all feature a private balcony with a view of the Tennessee River and Wilson Dam. There are five Junior Suites, two Governor Suites, and a newly expanded one-of-a-kind Presidential Suite. Keeping with the music theme throughout the hotel, all suites are named with the local music industry, past and present, represented.

In addition to the sleeping room renovation, over 34,000 square feet of meeting space is completely reimagined with state-of-the-art technology, new furnishings, and a clean new look. 360 Grille and Swampers Bar & Grille continue to provide extraordinary food and service each with a cool new vibe. The pool expansion provides new cabanas, an outdoor kitchen area, and additional lounging for guests that can also be used as a space for outdoor events like weddings and receptions. Spa at the Shoals also received a facelift with new infrared saunas, modern equipment, and a fresh new feel to relax and unwind!

Located in an area full of cultural experiences, guests have access to many of the community’s iconic and hidden gems. The Renaissance Navigator, the property’s host and local neighborhood expert, helps to unlock all the destination has to offer. From recording studios and sound stages to outdoor trails,

water activities such as fishing and boating excursions, iconic landmarks and attractions, and local restaurants and bars, Renaissance Shoals Navigator will help guests discover the very best the destination has to offer.

Tony Davis, President, PCH Hotels & Resorts: “Our entire team at the Renaissance Shoals is excited to embark on the evolution of this award-winning hotel within the Marriott chain. Creating unforgettable experiences for each type of traveler at this new and exciting Renaissance Resort, coupled with our company’s Heart & Soul culture creates the perfect recipe to attract and enhance each guest stay, confidently designated as the premier go to tourist, leisure, and group meeting destination in the Southeast.”

Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa is now open for booking. Reservations and more information are available at www.RenShoals.com. ●



Top Golf Trip Destinations: Exploring the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail

BY CHRIS LEWIS, PGA OF AMERICA

In the golf community, Alabama is renowned for three primary reasons.

Gorgeous weather year-round. The Gulf of Mexico, along with the various courses nestled near or on it. And the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

Built in the 1990s, the Trail originally featured eight sites. During the last 20 years, three more sites have been added to it, though, leading to over 400 more holes . . . and proving it remains as popular as ever.

Over the years, one primary focal point has been the Birmingham area, as it features two of the Trail’s most famous sites: Oxmoor Valley and Ross Bridge.

OXMOOR VALLEY

Oxmoor Valley has two championship courses (the Ridge and the Valley) and a nine-hole par-three course, known as The Back Yard, giving the location 45 holes in total.

Created with all ages and skill levels in mind, the Ridge and the Valley provide golfers two completely distinct golfing experiences. For example, the Ridge runs

alongside Oxmoor Valley’s ridge line, which is located on the Appalachian Mountains’ foothills. Providing bentgrass greens and dramatic elevation changes, the par-72 course is 7,055 yards long from the back tees.

“The Ridge’s signature hole (the par-5 3rd) pays tribute to the US Steel mining area that was once here,” says PGA of America Golf Professional Mike Beverly, the President and CEO of Sunbelt Golf Corporation, which manages the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. “It also has an elevated green that’s set into shale rock, which will challenge any golfer.”

Meanwhile, the Valley was fully renovated in 2021, as it has new bunkers and new TifEagle greens. Measuring 7,327 yards from the back tees, the par-72 course also offers golfers a Biarritz green on Hole 13 — the only Biarritz green on the entire Trail.

Finally, for golfers who are interested in being a bit more laid back, socializing more, and working on their short games, The Back Yard is a perfect alternative to

the typical 18-hole experience. Situated on 14 acres, the walking-only course is playable for all ages and experience levels, as its holes range from 57 to 132 yards.

“It is designed to be played in 45 minutes to an hour. Golfers should bring three to four clubs and may carry a cocktail or other drink with them,” Beverly says. “Renovated in 2022, The Back Yard also features music, and a food truck called The Shed.”

AT ROSS BRIDGE, PREPARE TO GRIP IT AND RIP IT

For golfers interested in an even more challenging experience, they may also consider playing Ross Bridge, which is located in Hoover, a suburb that’s about 10 miles from Birmingham. Measuring 8,168 yards from the back tees, it is currently the world’s fifth longest course.

A host of the PGA Tour Champions’ Regions Charity Classic from 2006-10, the course has also recently been

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Alabama Success Story

Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) Expanding Crisis Care and Mental Health Support for Alabamians

Access to critical mental health services and support during a crisis is an ongoing focus of the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH). Thanks to strong partnerships and investments by Governor Ivey and the state legislature, progress has been made to ensure every Alabamian has “someone to call, someone to come to you, and somewhere to go” for crisis services across the state.

For many people in crisis, calling 911 is often the first response, but jail or the emergency department are no longer the only options for first responders. Since 2021, the coordination of crisis services – known as the Alabama Crisis System of Care, comprised of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (*someone to call*), Mobile Crisis Teams (*someone to come to you*), and Crisis Centers (*somewhere to go*) – has expanded significantly. Crisis Centers provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals experiencing a mental health, suicidal, or substance use crisis, offering immediate 24/7 care. The state has six Crisis Centers, which are located in Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa. In just four years, these centers have served more than 16,000 people, while some 8,000 adults in rural areas have received assistance from Mobile Crisis Teams.

“The ability to visit a Crisis Center gives individuals access to care, 24/7. Before, you would be seen in an emergency room or may have to wait for an appointment. Now, any time of day, you or

your loved one can go directly to a Crisis Center and receive immediate care,” said Kimberly Boswell, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, a free and confidential around-the-clock phone service, offers individuals the ability to speak directly to a crisis counselor. To date, the 988 Lifeline has provided more than 115,000 Alabamians with life-saving support and guidance.

If an individual does call 911, ADMH and its partner, the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) Alabama, have equipped first responders with specialized training in handling mental health crises with care and understanding, called Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). More than 1,375 Alabama law enforcement officers completed the 40-hour CIT training; an additional 800 officers completed the 16-hour CIT de-escalation program, and 1,250 trained in a Mental Health First Aid course.

Peer support is a “tool in the toolbox” of the Alabama Crisis System of Care. The ADMH Office of Peer Programs has trained over 440 Certified Recovery Support Specialists, many of whom work in the Crisis Centers, within emergency rooms, and at peer organizations. These specialists offer a unique level of understanding, as they have walked similar paths themselves.

For many, peer support services are life-changing. One individual shared their experience:

“The peer support specialist who I was assigned to, changed the course of my life. I earnestly believe I would not be alive today without her compassion, zeal, selflessness, guidance, and persistence.”

– RECOVERY ORGANIZATION
OF SUPPORT SPECIALISTS
(ROSS) CLIENT

Despite these advancements, there is still more work to do. Our goal is to have crisis services in all 67 counties.

To bring mental health to the attention of Alabama communities, ADMH has created the **Mental Health Matters** license plate. Proceeds from the plate will go toward promoting mental health awareness and information. To learn more, visit <http://almentalhealthmatters.org> to preorder.

Alabama’s **Mental Health Matters** license plate is more than just a tag. It’s a symbol of support, awareness, and hope. By displaying it on a vehicle, we all help to *steer the conversation* toward mental health.

To learn more about mental health programs, visit the ADMH website at www.mh.alabama.gov, call 334.242.3417, or email publicinformation.dmh@mh.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. ●



Top Golf Trip Destinations

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renovated, as a full renovation occurred in 2023. For example, to provide golfers pristine greens, each of its 18 greens were converted from bentgrass to TifEagle

UltraDwarf Bermuda grass.

From an architectural standpoint, holes 2, 10, 14, and 18 were especially transformed, resulting in completely different golfing experiences than before. Every bunker on the course was restored too, as their bottoms were eliminated, reshaped, and raised to ensure they’d drain more effectively and become more playable. For further playability (and faster rounds), some cart paths were also moved closer to the course’s fairways, greens, and tees.

Due to each of these changes, golfers simply can’t go wrong, regardless of which course they choose to play. Of course, if at all possible, Beverly advises golfers to play all of them whenever they visit the Birmingham area.

“These two properties (Oxmoor Valley and Ross Bridge) are only 1.5 miles apart from one another,” Beverly stresses. “And, just as importantly, they’re only 30 minutes from the Birmingham International Airport, allowing out-of-state golfers to easily visit them!”... ●

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- July 1-3, 6-12, 18-20, 27-31

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- May 5-6, 19-21, 26-28 • June 4, 11, 16-17, 23
- July 1-2, 7-9, 28-30

Riverview Plaza \$119

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- July 6-12, 18-20, 25-27

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

- May 11-12, 18-21 • June 2-3, 22-25
- July 6-8, 13-14

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

- May 11-12, 18-21 • June 2-3, 22-25
- July 6-8, 13-14

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

- May 11, 18-21 • June 2-3, 22-25 • July 6-8, 13

Renaissance Shoals \$119

- May 4-5, 18-19, 26-27 • June 1-2, 15-16, 29-30
- July 6-7, 13-14, 27-28

Renaissance Shoals RSA Spa Package \$229

- May 4-5, 18-19, 26-27 • June 1-2, 15-16, 29-30
- July 6-7, 13-14, 27-28

Renaissance Ross Bridge \$129

- May 4, 8, 11-13, 26-28 • June 1-3, 8, 17-19, 29-30
- July 3, 13-14, 23-24, 27-28

Renaissance Ross Bridge RSA Spa Package \$260

- May 4, 27-28 • June 1-2, 8, 29-30 • July 14, 28

Auburn/Opelika Marriott Resort \$119 (plus a 10% resort fee) Web reservation will show \$144, including \$25 resort fee. Guest will only be charged RSA rate at checkout.

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- July 5-6, 20-23

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

- May 19-21, 26-29 • June 1-2, 22-23, 29-30
- July 20-21, 23

Prattville Marriott \$109

- May 4, 9-11, 25-28 • June 1, 8, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30
- July 6-7, 13, 20-21, 27-28

Renaissance Montgomery \$129

- May 4-5, 25-29 • June 8-9, 21-22, 29-30
- July 1-3, 9-10, 30-31

Renaissance Montgomery RSA Spa Package \$244

- May 27-29 • June N/A • July 1-3, 9-10, 30-31

*Rates available the 1st of the month and
are not applicable to groups.*

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BY CHRISTOPHER C. GALLUP,
DIRECTOR OF FIELD SERVICES

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