



The Choctaw Sun
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Page 2A

News/Events

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Hill to repace Fendley on TREDP

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – Kelvin Hill, a vice president and general manager of Georgia Pacific's Naheola Mill at Pennington was appointed Monday to replace Dianna Fendley on the board of directors of the Twin Rivers Economic Development Partnership.

Mrs. Fendley, who was also the secretary-treasurer of the group, submitted her resignation citing her inability to attend many of the partnership's meetings because of her work schedule.

Hill will join local residents Earl Ray Nealey and Nancy Gibson who serve as Choctaw County's representatives on the six-person, two-county board.

The motion to accept Mrs. Fendley's resignation and appoint Hill was made by Commissioners Dandy Brown and C.D. "Budd" Ruffin and passed unanimously.

Danny D'Andrea, manager of Alabama Power Company's offices in Butler and Thomasville, thanked the board for approving Hill.

"In January, 2005, I approached the Commission about forming this partnership," he said. "The

Choctaw County Commission appoints three members and the Clarke County Commission appoints three. We are moving along fast at this point, and I hope to have regular updates for you."

Nancy Gibson, the Executive Director of the Choctaw Co. Chamber of Commerce, said that Hill is very well versed in economic development, and will be an asset to the board.

The TREDP is in the process of hiring a full-time economic development consultant who will be working in the two-county region.

"Welcome to Lavaca" signs may have to be taken down unless county signs permit

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – Three "Welcome to Lavaca" signs that were erected last year on Ala. 10 and Ala. 114 may have to be taken down unless the State Dept. of Transportation will allow the County Commission to sign a permit application to keep them up.

Commissioner Dandy Brown said at the Feb. 12th meeting that the signs and accompanying American flags were erected by Walter and Agnew Hall. The DOT requires

that all such signage on state rights-of-way be permitted by a governmental entity, and since Lavaca is not an incorporated municipality, Brown said, the state wants the county to sign the permit application.

He asked for and received permission to get a copy of the permit application and let attorney Lee McPhearson look at it to see if there is any reason why the Commission should not sign the document.

"If we don't, I know two of the signs on Highway 10 will have to be removed," Brown said. The sign on

114 may possibly be on private property, but the distance would have to be measured, he said.

"I'd like for us to save those signs if we can," Brown commented, and said he would try to get the state to hold off from removing the signs until after the board's first March 5th meeting.

"Those are beautiful signs," Commissioner C.D. "Budd" Ruffin said. "They enhance the heritage of Lavaca, and people like them. I would hate to see them taken down."

Road striping machine could cost as much as \$50,000

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – Larry Singley, who is helping out in the County Engineer's Office in the absence of an engineer, reported at Monday's meeting of the Choctaw Co. Commission that – as he was instructed to do at last week's meeting – he has obtained quotes on the cost of a traffic striping machine.

Singley said the cost for a large, equipped truck is expensive, even for an older, used model. A 1989 model that he found was offered for sale at \$21,000, but is not recommended for use in a smaller county like Choctaw. Singley said that if not used regularly, the company advised there would be trouble keeping the paint lines clear and flowing freely.

A portable unit that fits into the bed of a pickup truck sells for \$30,000 to \$50,000, he said.

However, he added that he had also found a company that contracts to perform traffic striping at a rate of \$485 per mile for "solid" striping, or \$290 per mile for "broken" striping, with the cost of the paint itself being about \$230 per mile.

Commissioner Clyde Dixon said he was "extremely pleased" to hear the news.

"A few months ago the lowest price we could find (for a company to do striping work) was \$6,000 per mile," he said. Dixon said he is planning some striping work to improve state inspection scores on roads in District Three.

"I know that's not going to help with potholes, but I have to look at my budget and figure out the best way to get that road to pass inspection," he added.

When local roads fall below a score of 70 on the annual state inspections, the county loses a certain amount of funding until such time as the road is brought back up to standard. Sometimes, the items that result in a failing score are a lack of traffic striping or missing signs.

"Lines would sure bring added safety to our roads, especially at night and in the rain," Ruffin commented. "We have to weigh the cost of buying a machine and doing it ourselves or going with a company to do the striping. That may be the best way, that way we wouldn't have to worry about maintaining a machine."

Singley said the company guar-

antees their work for a period of two to four years, depending on traffic counts.

"These potholes should come first," Commissioner Brown said. "I know we need striping, but let's look at the potholes first."

Probate Judge D'Wayne May said that he has come across information on possible grants that may be available to help pay for as much as 90% of some of the striping work, adding that he will continue to look into the possibility and report back to the board with his findings in March.

Singley also reported that he was told that "curve" signs are not mandatory on county roads, but could create a potential liability for the county if a particularly dangerous curve isn't marked.

May commended Singley for doing a "great job" filling in while the county is without an engineer.

"We have interviewed a couple of people, and it is of the utmost importance to get an engineer aboard as soon as possible," May said. "Documents have to be submitted at certain times in order to participate in state road funding, and the engineer is usually the one who takes care of the paperwork." Those documents often must be prepared months, if not years ahead of time.

"We have to have the signature of a certified engineer to get funds for these roads," Brown said. "It's a dire need for us." Commissioners Dixon and Henry Lovette agreed.

"The sooner the better," Lovette commented.

On a motion by Ruffin and Lovette, the board voted unanimously to give May the authority to try to negotiate a possible contract with one of the engineer candidates and report back to the board at the next meeting on March 5th.

In other matters before the Commission at the Feb. 12th meeting:

N May asked that copies of the minutes from each meeting be typed and placed in the commissioners' mailboxes no later than 4 p.m. on Thursdays after a meeting so they can have them to read over the weekend.

N Treasurer Alice Carol Smith discussed with the board the details of what is known as the "3-R" Fund, or the Resurfacing, Rehabilitation, and Renovation account.

"That is the major fund for our roads and bridges but is very restricted," she said. The districts

depend heavily on this fund for their operating funds, but the money cannot be "drawn down" from that particular fund until specific work is performed, documented, and approved.

No equipment can be purchased from that fund, she said.

The "3-R" account is expected to bring in about \$994,000 this year, she said.

Each commissioner's district budget is approximately \$387,710, which means that – at that rate – the county will end up about \$374,000 "short" at the end of the fiscal year.

Smith said people do not realize how tightly restricted most of the funds are that come into the county.

"This is not very much to operate the districts on," she said. "It's a tight situation. It's complicated, and hard for anyone to understand. If you picked up the budget you wouldn't know what you were looking at because so many of these funds are restricted, and others are co-mingled."

Plus, some of the tax money is "pledged" to repay various bond issues, which makes the matter even more difficult.

"I hope this is an eye-opener to the citizens," Brown said. "People call me all the time wanting me to pave a dirt road. It takes \$250,000 to pave one mile of road. If I did one mile a year, it would wipe out my budget for the entire year."

May commended Mrs. Smith and said she does an excellent job of "watching the pennies and dimes." "Realistically, we are going to have to work on some new funding for Choctaw County in order to do what we know we need to do," he said.

Attorney Lee McPhearson reported that he had researched two questions asked of him at last week's meeting.

"County employees who drive vehicles are required to have CDL's," he said. "They are not exempt. If they drive a county vehicle, they must have a CDL. If anyone does not have a CDL, you need to make double sure they do not operate a vehicle, or else there could be serious consequences."

As far as the need to display federal DOT numbers on the sides of county vehicles, McPhearson said that is not necessary as long as the vehicle has the proper county "governmental" tag.

Sun Country Calendar

There is no charge to list an upcoming non-profit or charitable event for your church, school, civic group, fire department, etc. Meetings of governmental entities may also be included. Send your announcement as far in advance as possible. Calendar items may be mailed, faxed, sent by U.S. Mail, delivered in person, or left in our drop box at The Country Corner in Butler, or left at our Gilberttown or Butler offices.

Tuesday, Feb. 13th

CHOCTAW CO. BOARD OF EDUCATION meeting, 5:30 p.m., Choctaw Co. Elementary School.

CHOCTAW CO. SADDLE CLUB ANNUAL MEETING at Old Buddies Restaurant. Dutch-treat meal at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m. Dues will be payable (\$25 per year per family) and officers will be elected. For more information call Emelie or Dale Allen at (205) 459-3245.

Wednesday, Feb. 14th

TOXEY REUNION COMMITTEE will meet at Toxey Town Hall, 9 a.m., to begin planning the 9th annual reunion. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Thursday, Feb. 15th

JUNIOR HONEYSUCKLE GARDEN CLUB February meeting, Co. Extension Office, 12:30 p.m.

CHOCTAW AREA CHRISTIAN HOME-SCHOOLERS (caTch) February meeting, Co. Extension Office, 2 p.m. Theme for the month: Culture Day. All homeschoolers are invited.

Saturday, Feb. 17th

HUNTER EDUCATION FIELD DAY, 8 a.m., for ages 10 and up who have completed the Hunter Education CD or Online Course, Bobby's Fish Camp, US 84 east of Silas. For more information on the online course, log on to www.outdooralabama.com.

BUTLER DIXIE YOUTH SOFTBALL/BASEBALL SIGNUPS, Civic Center, 8 a.m.-noon. Boys ages 5-12 (as of 5/1/07), Girls ages 4-15 (as of 5/1/07). Bring copy of birth certificate (boys must also have proof of insurance). \$40 signup fee. For more information on girls signup, call 205-459-4039 or 459-3348; for boys, call (205) 654-2651.

VALENTINE BANQUET, Aquilla United Methodist Church, 6 p.m. Everyone is invited to enjoy a night of good food, fun and fellowship.

BRUNSWICK STEW SALE, sponsored by the Nanafalia Community Association and South Marengo Rescue Squad, at Old Nanafalia School. Sold by the gallon for \$25 or by the quart for \$6.25. To order, call 334-736-4361 or 334-736-4243. Pickup will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. All proceeds will go to the SMRS.

WILD GAME SUPPER, featuring guest speaker Rich Wingo, former linebacker with the Green Bay Packers, 6 p.m., Gilberttown Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. No admission fee but you must have a ticket so that the proper number of meals can be prepared. Contact Richie Abston at 251-843-2575.

GOSPEL CONSOLATORS' 8th ANNIVERSARY, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Butler, 6:30 p.m. All choirs, groups and soloists are invited. Rev. Cleo McGrew, Sr. is the Pastor.

Sunday, Feb. 18th

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of Pastor and First Lady, Rev. Robert L. and Sis. Bobbie Jackson, Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church, 3 p.m. Rev. Jessie Lowe of New Hope Baptist Church in Wilmer, guest speaker. 322 Goodwill Circle, Silas.

BLACK HISTORY PROGRAM, St. Mary United Methodist Church, noon. Rev. Joseph Mason is the pastor.

Monday, Feb. 19th

COACHES MEETING for Butler Dixie Youth Softball, 6 p.m., Butler Civic Center.

Saturday, Feb. 24th

COOPER'S CHAPEL 10th ANNUAL LADIES SEMINAR, Mary Ann Jones, guest speaker. Luncheon speaker is Brenda Hopkins. Special music. Continental breakfast and lunch will be served. To register call 601-776-5057 or 601-776-6659. Cooper's Chapel is located on Hwy. 511 two miles east of Quitman.

Sunday, Feb. 25th

FRIENDS DAY, Gilberttown Church of God, 10:30 a.m., guest speaker Rev. Tim Brimm. Lunch will be served. Pastors Rev. & Mrs. Fred Wiley, Associates Rev. & Mrs. Scott Loper.

INSTALLATION SERVICE for Rev. Lavon Gathright, 3 p.m. at the John The Baptist Missionary Baptist Church, Halsell. Rev. Tony Campbell, pastor of Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Meridian, will be the guest speaker.

Sat., March 3rd and Sun., March 4th

CHOIR DAY, St. Thomas AME Zion Church, 6:30 p.m. Saturday, 1:30 p.m. on Sunday. All choirs, Groups and Soloist are asked to render two selections. Please register upon arrival. Sis. Mary Law, Choir President, Rev. Charles Phillips, Pastor.

March 7th-10th

MUSICAL CHOIR WORKSHOP, Gooden Hill Missionary Baptist Church, 6 p.m. nightly. The Workshop will climax with a concert on Saturday, March 10 at 6 p.m. The Workshop presenter will be Min. Kenneth Braxton, Minister of Music First Missionary Baptist Church, Biloxi, MS. Registration is \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth ages 5-18. For more information contact Essie Landrum (334) 736-4288 or Victor Johnson (205) 398-3037. Rev. Bobby Johnson, Pastor.

Sat., March 31st

CRITTER DINNER, meal and live entertainment, Butler Senior Citizens Center, Ridewood Drive.

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