



These students at Southern Choctaw Elementary took their places in the hallway during a tornado warning that was issued for the southern portion of the county about 1:45 on Thursday.

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

GILBERTOWN — There was no apparent damage in Choctaw County on Thursday afternoon as a line of severe thunderstorms buffeted the region, spawning several tornadoes, one of which threatened the Aquilla, Silas, and Bladon Springs communities around 2 p.m.

The March 1st storms also resulted in a tornado that demolished more than a dozen homes and killed one person in

nearby Wilcox County, and also injured many people and severely damaged Enterprise High School in Enterprise.

About 1:45 p.m., the National Weather Service issued a tornado warning for Choctaw County, as radar indicated a possible funnel cloud just east of Waynesboro, Miss., and moving northeast at 40 miles per hour, prompting local schools to evacuate students to hallways and tornado warning sirens to sound throughout the county.

Damage was also reported in the counties

of Henry, Covington, Coffee, State Emergency Management Agency officials said.

The death in Wilcox County was in the Miller's Ferry community, according to Hollis Curl, publisher of the Progressive Era, a Camden newspaper.

Curl, who is a former Choctaw County newspaper publisher, said that rescue teams were going through 12 to 15 demolished homes.

There were several other injuries in Wilcox County, according to other reports.

At Enterprise, the school's football stadium and several cars were destroyed, and large trees were ripped up by their roots.

At presstime Thursday evening, ambulances, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and other rescue personnel from Choctaw County were enroute to help in Wilcox County, and EMA officials warned that with more storms approaching from the west in Louisiana and Mississippi, it could be a very long night in southwest Alabama.

Panel recommends 3-year study of seatbelts on state school buses

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

MONTGOMERY — School buses in Choctaw County and around the state may be equipped with seat belts, if a recommended 3-year study determines that they are needed.

The debate over whether to require seat belts on Alabama school buses took another turn this week with the release of a recommendation by a 7-member panel appointed by Governor Bob Riley last fall. The study group, which was appointed following a fatal school bus accident in Huntsville on November 21, issued its recommendations to Riley on Wednesday, asking that the state fund a \$1.4 million pilot study over three years to determine if seat belts on buses make children safer.

If the legislature approves funding for the study, 10 new buses will be outfitted with lap/shoulder seat belts, with the buses placed in different school systems around the state. With an Alabama university chosen to create and oversee the program, the study would provide information about the extent to which students use the belts and their behavior on buses that are equipped with the restraint.

According to an Associated Press report, the

study would cost \$750,000 in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2007, with the cost for the second year dropping to \$329,220. The third year would see costs of about \$342,050, anticipating an increase in fuel prices. The costs include hiring additional drivers, bus aides to monitor students to ensure that they wear the seat belts, and more buses to compensate for capacity that will be lost with the addition of belts.

The study group also recommended that Riley lead a state charge pressuring the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to act faster regarding bus safety. The NHTSA submitted a report to Congress on bus safety belts in 2002, but new regulations aren't expected to be implemented before 2013. The study group stated in their report that the 3-year program would give the state the opportunity to be a front-runner in the national debate, providing information that could be used in the formation of new NHTSA guidelines.

Riley said he is confident that legislators will approve funding the study.

Currently, only five states — California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey and New York — have seat belt requirements for school buses.

Keahey co-sponsors pro-life amendment bill

■ **Majority of legislators say they would support amendment affirming life at conception**

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

MONTGOMERY — "I just signed to co-sponsor a bill five minutes ago

that recognizes that life begins at conception," District 65 Representative Marc Keahey told the Sun on Thursday afternoon.

With the legislature just beginning its regular session in Montgomery, Keahey, along with several other representatives, put into motion one of the hot-button issues that surfaced repeatedly during statewide campaigns last fall.

The issue was part of an Associated Press survey conducted last week that revealed that

a growing number of state legislators are in favor of a constitutional amendment that would affirm that life begins at conception.

In the AP survey, 62% of representatives and 58% of senators — from both political parties — stated that they would support such an amendment. While an amendment affirming life at conception would not produce an outright ban on abortions, many believe it would be a step in that direction.

Although it is

unclear when such a bill would be introduced in the Senate, Sen. Hank Erwin (R-Montevallo) has expressed his intentions to introduce an amendment to ban all abortions except to save the life of the mother.

In addition to the bill that Keahey co-sponsored, Rep. Gerald Allen (R-Tuscaloosa) has been putting together a similar bill, with exceptions for serious medical harm to the mother or in cases of incest or rape.

Local Senator Bobby Singleton (Dist. 24) told

the Sun that he did not respond to the AP survey on the issue because he did not want the commit to taking a stand without seeing the actual wording of a proposed bill. As of presstime, Senator Pat Lindsey (Dist. 22) and Rep. Thomas Jackson (Dist. 67) had not responded to the Sun's attempts to contact them about their stands on the issue.

There were some 10,144 abortions performed in the state last year, with about 1,783 of those abortions involving

girls under the age of 19. Current Alabama law allows abortion with few restrictions, except for parental consent requirements for underage girls.

If passed by the legislature, an amendment affirming that life begins at conception would have to be approved by 3/4 of Alabama voters.

(ED. NOTE: The Sun thanks Rep. Keahey for his stand on this issue and urges other legislators to stand beside him.)

Resturant Review

Home-cooking at The Harbor

Sail on in to The Harbor Restaurant for great tasting home-cooked food! Every Thursday is their now-famous and sought-after Home-Cooking Buffet. The atmosphere along with the food is fantastic.

This buffet comes with food reminiscent of ones grandma or mama's kitchen, where comfort food was lovingly prepared and served and where you're guaranteed a family atmosphere.

Served up by co-owners and siblings, Jackie Pittman and Glenda Adams, this kind of family cooking comes natural.

"We love our customers and

love to see them satisfied. We know that if you come hungry, you will leave satisfied." says Glenda.

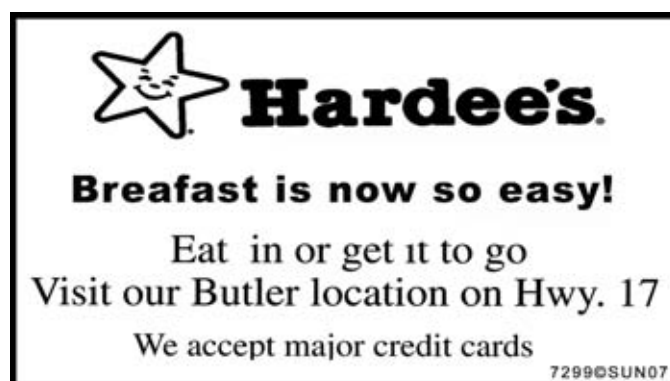
The Thursday night buffet offers great food like hamburger steaks 'n gravy, fried chicken, hot wings, mashed potatoes, Mac-n-cheese, sweet potatoes, peas, butter beans, salad bar, breads, desserts and more all for \$7.95 per person. Or try their Seafood Buffet on Saturday night for \$14.95 per person and choose from frog legs, fried oysters, stuffed crabs, fried and boiled shrimp, fish fillets, fried okra, French fries, Cole slaw, salad bar, breads and their famous peach cob-

bler. Then, Sunday come to lunch and eat off the buffet for \$8.95 per person. The choices are endless and the food is delicious. You may order off the menu anytime and take out orders are welcomed. The hours are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 4-9 pm; Sunday 10-3 pm. Ask about their family take-out meals offered at a great price. The restaurant offers a private banquet room.

The Harbor is located off Mosley Bridge in Gilberttown, Alabama, and may be reached by dialing 251-843-5900 or call 251-843-5328 for reservations.



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Restaurant Review
If you own a restaurant and would like to have it highlighted, then contact Ashley Downing at 251-842-6397
Its a great way to showcase your menu, daily specials, staff and business.

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