

# Sun wins seven awards in APA's Better Newspaper Contest

BIRMINGHAM — Winners of the 2007 Alabama Press Association Better Newspaper Contest were announced this week by David Moore, chairman of the Better Newspaper Contest Committee.

Seventy-one newspapers submitted 2,779 entries in the annual contest. Members of the Louisiana Press Association judged the entries, which were printed in Alabama newspapers during the 2006 calendar year.

The awards will be presented on Saturday, July 21 at APA's 136th summer convention at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach.

**The Choctaw Sun** picked up seven awards in its circulation division (large weeklies, 4,000+ circulation), including four first-place awards, one second-place award, and two third-place awards, including:

■ **Third Place – Best Local Education Coverage.**

■ **Second Place – Best Spot News Story,** for “Plans Announced for new 25-bed Critical Access Hospital”, by Tommy Campbell.

■ **Third Place – Best In-Depth News Coverage or Series,** “Leaving Choctaw County Behind”, by Dee Ann Campbell.

■ **First Place – Best Feature Story,** “Huffing for a High”, by Dee Ann Campbell.

■ **Best Spot News Photo,** “Burglars Caught in the Act”, by Tommy Campbell.

■ **Best Sports Photo,** “Heartbreaker”, by Dee Ann Campbell.

■ **First Place – Freedom of Information Award,** for Publisher Tommy Campbell's reporting on county officials' refusal to answer questions about the landfill situation, and trying to keep those details behind the closed doors of “executive session” meetings.

Earlier this year, the **Sun**

picked up two additional awards in the APA's annual Advertising Contest.

**Sun** webmaster Mickey Bryant traveled to Birmingham on May 11th where he picked up the plaques at the annual Advertising Contest Awards Luncheon, held at the Pine Tree Country Club in Birmingham.

Those awards were:

■ **Third Place -- Best Single Ad Over One-Half Page in Color** – Georgia Pacific ad designed by Colin Merritt and Mickey Bryant; and,

■ **Third Place -- Best Signature Page** – Southern Choctaw High School Indians

playoff game ad, designed by Dan Melvin.

The new round of awards bring to 27 the number of plaques **Sun** staffers have won from the APA in news and advertising contests in the past three years.

“I think it says something for a newspaper that is less than four years old to consistently bring home awards like this,” Campbell said. “We take pride in our work and we are proud of every single member of our staff. We couldn't do this without them!”



## Lots of good music at the Lusk VFD benefit

There was plenty of good food, good fellowship, and good gospel and bluegrass music to go around last Saturday night as the Lusk Volunteer Fire Department hosted its annual fundraiser. Pictured here are just a few of the singers who donated their time and talents to help make the event such a success.

Choctaw Sun photos by Mickey Bryant



## Tickets on sale for Heritage Festival bluegrass, Southern Gospel singing

By Tommy Campbell  
The Choctaw Sun

GILBERTOWN – Unpack your lawn chairs and get ready for a night of toe-tapping, hand-clapping Southern and traditional bluegrass gospel music featuring four groups well-known to folks in this area.

The Choctaw Co. Heritage Festival is proud to present The Cullomburg Quartet, The Lindsey Family, Jimmy D. Mosley and Southern Praise, and Crimson City Quartet in concert on Friday, June 1 at 7 p.m. at the Southern Choctaw High School football stadium, as part of the 2007 event.

The concert will be held on the same big stage that will host the Clay Walker/Rhett Akins concert the following evening.

Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased in advance at Gilbertown Town Hall or at the gate the night of the show. Concessions will be sold and concert goers will need to bring their lawn chairs (unless you wish to sit on the football bleacher seats).

## Coroner attends convention on coast

ORANGE BEACH – Choctaw County Coroner Rocky Bumpers recently attended the Alabama Coroner's Association Meeting in Orange Beach, Ala.

Bumpers has served as Coroner in Choctaw County for the past 32 years.

He received continuing education credits for participation in the seminar, which included seminars on Aquatic Deaths, Alabama Organ Center Updates, Alabama Eye Bank Updates, Toxicology Reports and updates and a program by the Alabama Dept. of Public Health.

Bumpers said the meeting was very informative and well attended by coroners throughout the state.

Bumpers is also the owner of Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler and York.

## Needy residents may call 2-1-1 for help

By Dee Ann Campbell  
The Choctaw Sun

MERIDIAN, Miss. – People who find themselves in need of food, clothing, shelter, and other assistance now have a new easy-to-remember telephone number to call for help.

A 3-digit hotline has been set up by the United Way to connect residents with the human services they need. By calling 2-1-1, needy residents can be put in contact with agencies that can provide the particular type of assistance that is needed. While services that are offered through 2-1-1 vary from community to community, the hotline provides callers with information and referrals to human services for every-day needs and in times of crisis.

For example, 2-1-1 can offer information about the following types of services:

- Basic human needs resources, such as food banks, clothing closets, shelters, rent assistance, and utility assistance.

- Physical and mental health resources, including health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health, children's health Insurance programs, medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

- Employment support by providing information about Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance, and educational programs.

- Support for the elderly and the disabled through adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, and homemaker services.

- Support for children and families, such as child care, after-school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps, and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services.

The 2-1-1 system will also be used to provide coordinated emergency response following disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes.

The United Way office servicing Choctaw County is located in Meridian. For more information about 2-1-1, visit [www.211.org](http://www.211.org).

## Commission wants update on trucking company's plans for industrial park site

By Tommy Campbell  
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Last fall, the Choctaw Co. Commission agreed to lease a tract of property in the county's industrial park to the Industrial Development Board of the Town of Butler, which in turn sub-leased it to a Theodore, Ala.-based trucking company which had tried unsuccessfully for two years to get the county to prepare the site for use as a freight yard.

Accelerated Freight Group — a major hauler for Tamko, which is another industrial resident of the park on Ala. Hwy. 10 across from the airport — had said that having a freight yard in such close proximity to the plant would be a major benefit. Also at the time, plans had been announced for a major new modular home plant which was to be built in Butler's own, separate industrial park ... a project which AFG said could create additional hauling opportunities for its trucks.

Probate Judge D'Wayne May last week questioned why the project has not begun, and asked about a clause in the contract with the town's ID Board that essentially says that once operations begin at the site and then cease for a period of 90 days, the lease can be terminated with the property reverting to the county.

“At the time, there was a sense of urgency to get the lease done,” attorney Lee McPhearson said. “Someone did go in and level the site and put gravel down, but there's no trucking company there now.”

McPhearson said that about the time AFG signed the lease with the ID Board, Tamko severely cut back its local operations.

“Therefore, the business was not there for shipping,” McPhearson said. “Tamko is back up and running full speed now, but I don't know what the status is with the trucking company.”

The Sun made several attempts

to contact AFG President Rob Bowman by phone and email, but as of presstime Tuesday, those calls and emails have not been returned.

“We would like to see industry come into the county, but there seemed to be a great deal of urgency in getting the lease, and now we still have no trucking company out there,” May said.

May asked McPhearson to check on the status of both the trucking company and the modular home plant, and to have someone from the Butler ID board be at the Commission's meeting on Tuesday, June 5th.

“I'd like to know what we can reasonably expect in the next 90 days,” May said. “Just looking at the lease, when you put terms like that in a document and then don't follow up on it, that's when disputes come up. The Commission wants the trucking company here as bad or worse than anybody.”

Commissioner Dandy Brown said he wants new industry as much as anyone.

“That was a hot topic at one time but seems to have died down,” he said. “We may be able to get someone else out there.”

May said the tract, which fronts Ala. 10 at the entrance to the industrial park, is prime commercial real estate.

“My only concern is that no one ever follows up on these things and reports back to the commission,” he said. “There were several meetings and, as I recall, it got real heated down toward the end. The Commission deserves the courtesy of a report. The citizens want to know what is happening.”

Commissioner C.D. “Budd” Ruffin said he didn't appreciate the board being “blasted as being stupid.”

“The implication was that we were so slow we couldn't get job done,” he said. “We voted to put it in their hands and it seems to me like they are just as slow.”

Commissioner Clyde Dixon said

a lot of people in his district have brought up the delay.

“The way the people see it, the city (ID Board) leased it to these people who were no-shows,” Dixon said. “Maybe we could get it back and use it for some other purpose.”

Treasurer Alice Carol Smith said that her office never received a signed, executed copy of the lease agreement back from the Butler ID Board.

“Is that something that is supposed to be recorded in the Probate Office?” Commissioner Ruffin asked.

“Yes sir, it is,” May responded, but added that he was not in office at the time and could not address what happened.

The board took a brief recess while attorney McPhearson went to search for a copy of the executed lease agreement. Finding none, the meeting resumed with Dixon calling for a report from the city and the company outlining what the plans are for the site.

“It was such a hot item then, but now it's turned into a cold potato,” he said.

“Someone owes us an update,” Commissioner Henry Lovette agreed.

“A lot of things are done during elections to boost the chances of some people, and someone may have lost paperwork,” Ruffin said.

If there is no activity at the site within 90 days from the date of the agreement, May said, the Commission could terminate the lease or agree to reaffirm it.

“You have it in the minutes where this board approved the lease to the Industrial Development board,” he said. “If they don't have an executed agreement with the Choctaw Co. Commission, I would think that would be a slight legal problem.”

Dixon said the Commission “took a pretty good browbeating” over the matter last fall, and he for one would like to see some progress being made to use the property for the intended