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# COUNTY COMMISSION



# 90th

Convention & Celebration

Volume 62, Number 3 | August 2018



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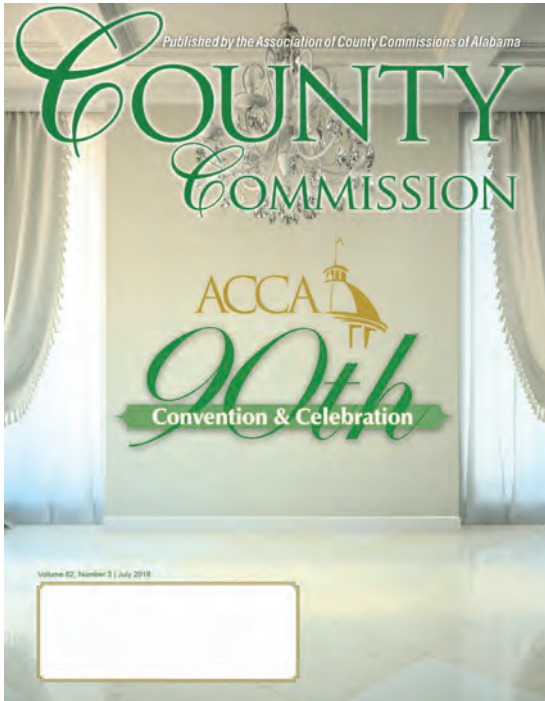
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VOLUME 62, NUMBER 3



**The 2018 Convention and 90th Anniversary Celebration, August 21-23, promises to be a special gathering of the county family to consider where we've been, where we are and where we're going.**



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Hon. Steve McKinnon  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve McKinnon". The signature is fluid and cursive.

## Focusing on the future

Wrapping up one  
great year and  
setting the stage  
for the next

As we approach the Convention and the conclusion of my presidency, I want to express how deeply grateful I am for having been allowed to serve as your president. Certainly, it's been a tremendous honor to serve all 67 counties, and I could not be prouder of the strides we've made together over the past 12 months.

We're preparing to celebrate our 90th Anniversary, and I suspect every president has approached the end of his or her year with a sense of pride but also a deep sense of regret. The time has passed very quickly and, honestly, it seems as although we are just getting started together.

Many of you may remember that my year got off to a rather unusual start. Not long after arriving at the Convention — with my presidential speech in hand — I had to return home and be admitted into the hospital. My friend Mark Culver stood in and delivered that address for me and challenged all of you to "Get in the Game." And you responded.

We had an outstanding legislative year. Among other things, we set ourselves in great position to ensure Alabama is a national leader in reacting to the U. S. Supreme Court's recent ruling on the collection of taxes from internet retail transactions. The passage of this legislation is yet another great example of what counties can achieve — when we speak with ONE voice.

Also during the past year, the Association's Board of Directors and two insurance trustee boards moved forward with the establishment of a new nonprofit, County Risk Services Inc., to provide administration services for our self-funded liability,

property and workers' compensation programs. What an accomplishment and milestone it will be come 2019 when we have an insurance staff focused solely on the needs and interests of Alabama counties.

Knowing the ease at which I can name off our recent and approaching successes, I wish it were somehow possible for me to sit down with the founders of our Association. If I could talk with them for a moment and share just a few of our accomplishments, I truly think they would be amazed at all we have accomplished and at where we, as county government, are today.

At the Convention, together, we'll have the opportunity to take a look back at the early years of the Association and celebrate our history through the eyes of some of our longtime leaders. We'll take stock in where we are today — examining our strategic plan, our leadership program and the successful ATRIP road program. And then, most importantly, we'll focus on where we're going. Everything will culminate with our closing Banquet and Gala, a celebration of 90 years and the beginning of the presidential year of Choctaw County Commissioner Tony Cherry.

There's no question that 2019 will be a most challenging year. Everyone knows we'll focus much of our energy on raising revenue for road and bridge funding. But there will be other challenges — and also other opportunities. And we'll rise to the occasion, again, just as we have for the past 90 years. ■



# Biggest Wins for County Government | 2017-18

- ✓ **Positive Policy Achievements:** Legislature enacted six county-backed bills
  - Disaster Recovery & State of Emergency
  - Evidence in Taxpayer Appeals
  - Workers' Compensation Claims
  - Purchase of HVAC Units for Local Governments
  - Simplified Sellers Use Tax Remittance Revisions
  - Auction of Tax Liens
- ✓ **Gamechanging Member Engagement:** 2,285 tweets and retweets in ALCounties Tweet Competition; 3,036 views of Goat Hill Glance video series; 367 county leaders read the Goat Hill Glance email on the average Monday
- ✓ **Strengthened Unity:** First year for expanded Legislative Committee with representatives from all 67 counties
- ✓ **Ensuring a Bright Future:** Trustees of self-funded insurance programs moved forward on providing better insurance services through self-administration

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**Sonny Brasfield**  
Executive Director

*Sonny Brasfield*

## At the intersection of 'opportunity' and 'challenge'

### Self-funded insurance programs taking services to the next level

How many times have you heard someone say, “We have an opportunity ahead of us,” when they really mean the circumstances they face are going to be a real “challenge?”

These terms are often incorrectly used interchangeably. On other occasions, however, the issue someone calls a “challenge” is really a meaningful “opportunity” if he or she will simply accept the fact that sometimes these terms intersect in a most demanding way.

The Association is directly in the middle of one of those occasions.

Most of you know that almost all of Alabama’s counties now participate in one of the Association’s three insurance offerings. And, in fact, more than 40 counties provide for all of their major insurance needs – workers’ compensation, liability and property – through the Association’s self-funded pooling approach that has well served the citizens for decades.

What hasn’t been on the front of anyone’s notepad is the fact that the back-stage services necessary to make the programs tick – the safety services, claims administration, underwriting, financial services and policy administration – have long been provided by an outside, private company. And, for a couple of decades, that company name has been synonymous with the Association’s self-funded insurance programs. County employees and officials have worked hand-in-hand with the employees in this company’s Montgomery office, establishing a very effective and productive relationship.

Over the last year or so, an opportunity has been knocking at

the Association’s door. And in April, the boards of trustees overseeing the insurance programs voted unanimously to accept a challenge that will, ultimately, enhance and reform the insurance services delivered to employees and officials at the county commission level.

Beginning in 2019, the Association will self-administer its insurance programs through a new nonprofit company established exclusively for this purpose. We’ll give you more details on the changes that lie ahead during the annual insurance funds’ membership meeting at the Association’s 90th Annual Convention and Celebration.

Pushing down to the bottom line, the “challenge” we’re facing right now as we make this transition will provide the Association with a real “opportunity” to take the insurance programs to the next level. The staff, the boards of trustees and everyone involved are very excited about the enhanced service counties will see once this process is fully implemented.

As we move beyond 2019, you will all come to associate this newly-created nonprofit company, County Risk Services Inc. (CRS), with the Association’s insurance funds more closely than you have connected the current company with the programs. The services that allow the funds to respond to and meet the needs of your employees and officials will very soon actually be delivered by employees who will work exclusively on the Association’s programs.

The Association’s employees and those who will work for CRS will all be housed on North Jackson



Street – allowing county officials and employees to be more actively involved in the Association’s programs and the insurance services. Certainly, moving all of the Association’s programs into one location sets in motion a new visual identity for this Association and will make us more efficient and more effective on all fronts going well into the future.

The exclusive nature of the relationship between CRS and the Association will allow the insurance programs to respond more effectively to trends impacting the costs of counties’ insurance services and will ensure we’re doing everything we can to

***The exclusive nature of the relationship between CRS and the Association will allow the insurance programs to respond more effectively to trends impacting the costs of counties’ insurance services and will ensure we’re doing everything we can to protect employees and property, respond to unfortunate events and learn from our experiences so that we can prevent future such events.***

protect employees and property, respond to unfortunate events and learn from our experiences so that we can prevent future such events.

The opportunity given to the Association to make these improvements is evidence of

the success of these programs, the vision of the Association’s Board of Directors and the insight of the insurance funds’ trustees. The financial strength and administrative expertise that has been developed over the years has allowed us to be ready for this “opportunity.”

The “challenge,” of course, is making this change in a seamless and efficient way over the next six months.

We look forward to sharing more details with you in August and to being your partner in this exciting opportunity. Be assured – we have both the opportunity and the challenge in sharp focus on North Jackson Street. ■

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# WHERE *We* WERE COUNTY GOVERNMENT & ACCA THROUGH THE YEARS

## 1929

On July 9, 1929, the Association was founded.



*The Alabama Statehouse now stands on the site of this former residence that was used as an office for the Association.*

## 1930

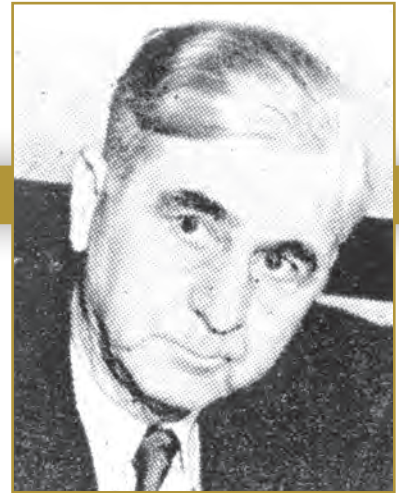
Representatives of more than 60 counties met in Montgomery for the Association's 2nd Annual Convention. The organization's total income for its first year was \$1,250 (or almost \$19,000 in 2018 dollars).

## 1930

Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, counties' top policy priorities included establishing a local option gas tax of up to 3 cents per gallon and protecting the 2 cents per gallon levy that was distributed equally among all 67 counties.

## 1943

The Farm-to-Market Road Act passed the Alabama Legislature.



## 1944

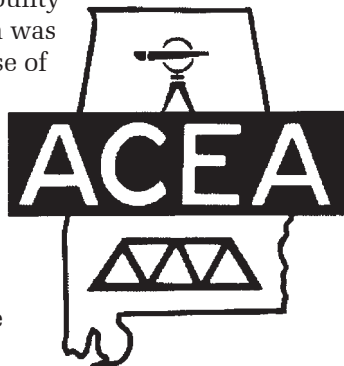
John G. White, who sponsored the Farm-to-Market Road legislation, became the Association's secretary-treasurer, the position known today as executive director.





1952

The Association of County Engineers of Alabama was formed for the purpose of promoting sound infrastructure, exchanging ideas among engineering professionals and maintaining cooperation between counties and the state highway department.



1955

Farm-to-Market Road Program achieved its goal: 100 miles of roads paved in every county.

1963

Registration for the 35th Annual Convention, held at the Admiral Semmes Hotel in Mobile, was \$20 per member. Group meetings were organized specifically for engineers, clerks and probate judges. The keynote speaker for the banquet was Countess Maria Pulaski, a WWII spy.

1955

100% membership: The first time all 67 counties were Association members.

1961

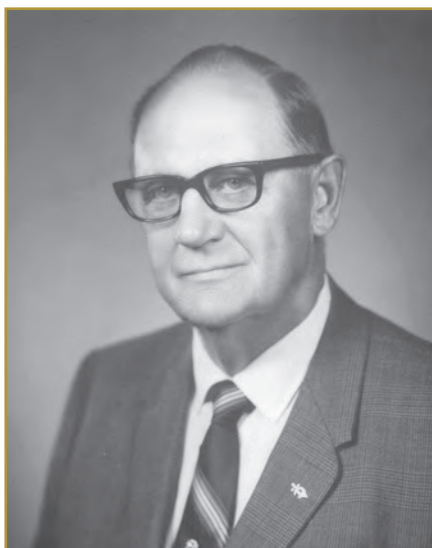
Legislative wins for the counties included two proposals to expand the allowable expenditures for the special road and bridge fund. There was also county support for two newly-enacted tax incentives to encourage construction of fall-out shelters.

1966

At the 38th Annual Convention that June in Mobile, highlights included speeches from the Governor and First Lady. Gov. George Wallace hinted at a presidential run, while Lurleen Wallace, then the Democratic Party's gubernatorial nominee, promised a new road program would be a priority of her administration.

1956

Winston Stewart, longtime probate judge in Coosa County, was named to the Association's top staff position.



1970

67 counties, one name: By act of the Alabama Legislature, county governing bodies were all named "county commissions." Terms such as "board of revenue" and "commissioners court" were retired.

*Honoring the pioneering members of the 2017-18*

# ACCA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE



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Immediate Past President, Chair

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Wilcox | Hon. John Moton

Winston | Hon. Roger Hayes







## 1974

Buddy Sharpless, (pictured above, standing) the Association's third executive director, took the helm.

## 1977

The headquarters that members built: All 67 counties paid assessments to provide a new home for their Association. Without incurring debt, operations were moved to 100 North Jackson Street.

### ACCA Workmen's Compensation Fund Board of Trustees Hold First Meeting



The first meeting of the permanent Board of Trustees of the ACCA Workmen's Compensation Self-Insurance Fund was held on February 25, 1977. All but one of the new members were able to attend. Those present included:

- Hon. E. V. White, Chairman (Morgan County)
- Hon. Charles Braswell, Vice Chairman (St. Clair County)
- Mrs. Mary Lou McHugh, Secretary (ACCA)
- Mr. O. H. Sharpless, Fund Administrator (ACCA)
- Judge Edward Enslin (Elmore County)
- Mrs. Margie Headley (Chilton County)
- Mrs. Aurelia Lee (Colbert County)
- Mr. Ray Edwards (Randolph County)
- Mr. B. A. Riddle (Dallas County)
- Mrs. Corrine Campbell (Lauderdale County)
- Mr. James W. Webb, Legal Counsel (ACCA)
- Mr. Herman Hilliard (Risk Management Services, Inc. of Alabama)
- Mr. Reginald L. Sorrells (ACCA)

Permanent officers were elected to replace those who had served in acting capacities. The new officers are: Judge Edward Enslin, Chairman (Elmore County)

- Hon. Charles Braswell, Vice Chairman (St. Clair County)
- Mrs. Mary Lou McHugh, Secretary (ACCA)
- Mr. O. H. Sharpless, Fund Administrator (ACCA)

Mr. Herman Hilliard of Risk Management Services gave a report of the Fund's progress through January 31, 1977. The report indicated that the Fund was in excellent financial

## 1985

Macon County Commission Chairman Ronald Green began his term as ACCA president, making him the first African-American to lead the organization.



## 1986

The Liability Self-Insurance Fund Inc. was established.

## 1986

Alabama Trust Fund: Legislation was enacted to give counties a 10 percent share of the state's earnings from oil and gas royalties. A few years later, funding was secured constitutionally.

## 1976

The Workers' Compensation Self-Insurers Fund was established.

## 1991

The 1991 Legislative Conference helped lay the groundwork for a landmark year, when legislators increased the state gasoline tax by a nickel. A healthy portion of those revenues were dedicated to local roads and bridges, and the gas tax has not been adjusted since.



## 1994

The County Commissioners College became the Alabama Local Government Training Institute to provide mandatory training for newly-elected commissioners.

## 1995

Legislative victory: Counties became authorized to collect local taxes on their own or contract for this service. Early adopters saw increased revenues.

## 1997

The County Revenue Officers Association of Alabama was organized.

# CROAA

County Revenue Officers Association of Alabama

## 1992

The Annual County Golf Bash began in recognition of the Association's efforts to improve county government in Alabama.



## 2000

Alabama voters approved "Amendment One," which established the \$250,000,000 GARVEE bond program to replace county bridges.





2003

Madam President: Members elected ACCA's first female president, Jefferson County Commissioner Mary Buckelew.



2012

Gov. Robert Bentley began the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP), designed to invest \$1,000,000,000 in local roads and bridges.

2015

Remote sellers: Alabama earned national notice after legislators enact the Simplified Sellers Use Tax remittance program, an ACCA-initiated method to entice online retailers to collect and remit a simplified version of the use tax.

2009

County leadership tapped Sonny Brasfield to be the Association's executive director.

2012

"67 Counties, One Voice" was adopted as the official motto, boiling down everything the Association is and does to just four words.

ACCA

Association of County  
Commissions of Alabama

→ 67 Counties, **One** Voice



2016

The Liability Self-Insurance Fund Inc. entered a new era with the addition of property coverage.





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❧ PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: ANNUAL CONVENTION ❧

# #67Celebrate90 is year's biggest event

ACCA's Annual Convention is always a special time of year. It's a time when all of county government comes together to learn and share the latest, most pertinent knowledge impacting counties — knowledge that will enhance county operations and leadership in each individual county and all 67 counties — knowledge that, when applied collectively, will enhance county government's critical impact on this great state and all who call it home.

This year is extra special because it is the 90th Anniversary of this gathering. Participants will find not just an outstanding convention but also a celebration. In honor of this milestone, the theme this year is *"Where county government has been, where we are and where we're going."*

The first annual meeting drew commissioners from 52 counties to Montgomery back in 1929, and they left a transcript giving a snapshot of county government at that moment. They discussed the issues of the day — road funding, local legislation, rising expenses for local law enforcement — and their limited options to address them.

"If we didn't have these common problems to solve, you wouldn't have gathered here today," said Harry Culverhouse of Jefferson County to his assembled colleagues.

His listeners agreed they were more likely to succeed at solving these problems if they worked together, and they decided to establish this Association. That step was just the beginning, as Culverhouse put it: "No organization and no work and no great good has ever been accomplished without work."

At the time, state lawmakers only met in Regular Session every two years, and one of the new group's first actions was forming a Legislative Committee because counties had been getting beaten up in the Alabama Legislature.

"You have seen laws passed over which you had no control, appropriating your revenue without your having a voice in them," Culverhouse said. "I think in my county, about 65 percent of the revenues are appropriated by laws passed before we have a voice in saying where they should be spent."

By the Association's silver anniversary, county leaders had something to celebrate. "County government has been strengthened in Alabama because of the coordinated effort of the county commissioners' group," opined *The Birmingham News* in 1953. "There is reason to hope for still further improvement.

"But there are many problems ahead of the county commissioners. The question of the best relations between the state and county governments will always be with us."

Jumping ahead to 2018, ACCA is marking the

90th — or emerald — anniversary of the annual convention. County governments have risen to many new challenges, and their Association — the #OneVoice — is growing in strength and influence.

The work to protect and enhance county government is bolstered by affiliate groups for administrators, emergency managers, engineers, revenue officers and 9-1-1 district personnel. And member services have expanded beyond legislative advocacy to include insurance, education programs, debt collection and joint bidding, as well as representing commission interests with organizations of other elected county officials. ■



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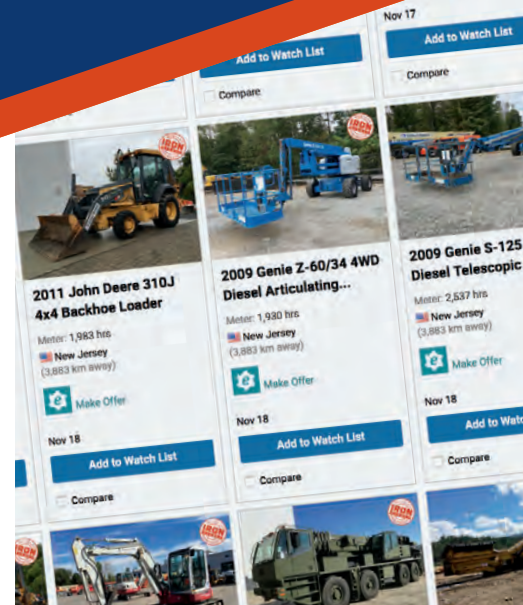
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❧ PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: ROADS & BRIDGES ❧

## County leaders are steadfast advocates

There was a time when it was fairly accurate to refer to members of the county governing body as “road commissioners,” and although that era is quickly receding from view, local roads and bridges remain among the 67 county commissions’ biggest responsibilities.

The history of Alabama’s county roads is highlighted by three game-changing funding initiatives, and county leaders are hard at work to add another one to that list in the near future.

### *Farm-to-Market Roads Act*

Gov. Chauncey Sparks and his administration deserve credit for pushing the Farm-to-Market Act, which set aside a penny of the state gas tax for local roads and bridges. It was a 50-50 matching program, and Elmore County completed the first project – paving a 10-mile stretch from Slapout north to the county line – in 1943.

Work under this program began in earnest after the end of World War II, which may explain why the next man to call the governor’s mansion home gets much of the glory. The goal was to convert 6,700 miles – 100 miles per county – of frequently muddy dirt roads to hard surfaces in just 10 years.

Within a decade of full operation, the program had hit the mark: 6,801 miles paved and 114,388 linear feet of new bridge structures. The penny-per-gallon funding continued for another dozen years.

### *GARVEE Bonds Bridge Program*

In the late 1990s, ACCA and



In 1955, the Association’s magazine printed this photo of a Farm-to-Market program project, with a modern concrete bridge taking shape alongside the covered wooden structure it was replacing.

the Association of County Engineers of Alabama sounded the alarm about structurally deficient bridges, organizing the first County Road and Bridge Summit in 1999.

Many of the spans built by the Farm-to-Market Act had been slapped with weight restrictions as they neared their 50th birthdays. The restrictions were especially challenging and costly for school systems forced to route their buses along miles of detours.

Counties, working in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation, developed the GARVEE Bonds Bridge Program to address the poor condition of county bridges. The program hinged on using the Alabama Trust Fund to provide matching dollars for a five-year, \$250 million bridge program. Voters approved the program in 2000 as the centerpiece of an economic development package known as

Amendment One.

Just a couple of years in, the bridge program had demonstrated that counties could complete large numbers of high-impact projects in a short time, and county leaders were already looking for the next “once-in-a-lifetime” program.

### *ATRIP*

In 2012, Gov. Robert Bentley rolled out the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP) to invest more than \$1 billion in local roads and bridges. Many counties completed 15 to 20 years’ worth of road and bridge projects in a three- to four-year period. Studies showed that this accelerated investment provided Alabamians with more than \$6 billion in benefits.

Looking at Autauga County as an example, ATRIP replaced three deficient bridge structures and resulted in more than 75 miles of

road improvements. This is equivalent to more than 20 years of normal federal allocations to Autauga County but was accomplished in the span of four years.

Despite ATRIP's impact, the state still lacked sufficient funding to meet its 21st century mobility needs. There were multiple locations around the state where citizens were willingly going "back to the stone age," with badly-deteriorated paved roads plowed up and returned to unpaved surfaces.

Growing out of ATRIP's momentum, county engineers formed DRIVE Alabama (Developing a Road and Infrastructure Vision for Everyone) to address the urgent need to educate the public about the state of Alabama's county roads and bridges.

The multi-faceted DRIVE campaign clearly moved the needle in terms of the public's - and legislators' - understanding of the problem and its significant negative impacts on the economy, public safety and quality of life for Alabamians. The only way to address the crisis is funding.

Thus far in 2018, county leaders have taken a two-pronged approach: keeping the need front and center and talking to legislative candidates about their positions on new revenue for local transportation infrastructure. Once again, the time is right for a game-changing road and bridge initiative in Alabama, and county leaders are focused like a laser on making that happen in 2019. ■

“

### *Where we've been*

*When I was first elected in 1986, counties were an afterthought in the eyes of many, taking a back seat to cities and other organizations that wielded much more influence on local and state issues.*

*But now, because of the hard work of Association staff and leadership and many commissioners who have given their time and worked to improve counties' image and place, we are at the table if anything moves forward in our communities or in state government.*



Hon. Mark Culver  
2000-2001 ACCA President  
Houston County

”



## *The Association of County Administrators of Alabama salutes its 2018 honorees!*

*ACAA: An Affiliate of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama*

**Bill Dempsey, CCA**  
HOUSTON COUNTY  
*County Administrator of the Year*



### *Service Awards*

—20 years—  
**John Gordon, CCA**  
FAYETTE COUNTY

—15 years—  
**Steve Golsan, CCA**  
AUTAUGA COUNTY

—15 years—  
**Diane Kilpatrick, CCA**  
BUTLER COUNTY



PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: INSURANCE

# ACCA tailors insurance for counties

Financial concerns have formed a common bond uniting Alabama counties since they formally organized as an association in 1929.

Working together on money matters has taken many shapes, and insurance has been a major element for more than 40 years.

The self-funded insurance programs for workers' compensation and liability coverage have flourished, with expansion into property insurance in just the last few years.

Now, as the Association enters its 90th year, the programs are breaking new ground again – for the betterment of counties – as they transition into self-administration.

The history of ACCA's insurance services can be traced back to the mid-1970s. County budgets were taking a beating from the volatile commercial insurance market, and leaders persuaded the Alabama Legislature to pass a law authorizing counties to set up a self-

funded insurance program for workers' compensation coverage. A total of 33 counties joined during the first year, with a combined premium of just more than \$420,000.

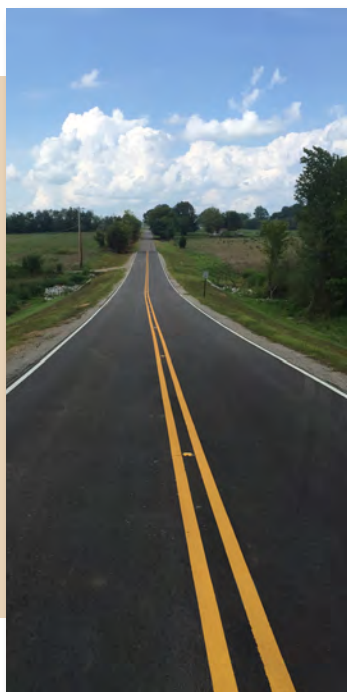
A decade later when counties faced similar challenges with liability coverage, the Legislature consented for counties to organize another insurance program. Today, more than 60 counties participate in one or more of these self-funded programs.

Because these are self-funded programs, there is a long tradition of returning dollars to members when it makes good sense financially to do so. In April of this year, checks totaling \$2,333,550 went out to counties and county-related entities that participate in the programs. The money represented participation in the Safety Incentive Discount Program and a return of investment earnings based on participation and claims experience.

Beginning in 2019, the Association will self-



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administer its insurance programs through a new nonprofit company established exclusively for this purpose. County Risk Services Inc. (CRS) will provide safety services, claims administration, underwriting, financial services and policy administration from offices on North Jackson Street in downtown Montgomery.

“In the end, counties should see improved service, improved access to their data, easier claims reporting, much better loss control services and much more accurate underwriting,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. “We believe having the full Association staff together in downtown Montgomery will be very much a positive, as well.”

Further information about the insurance programs and the transition to self-administration will be provided

at ACCA’s 90th Convention and Celebration in Orange Beach. The membership meeting for insurance participants is scheduled for 2 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 21, at the Perdido Beach Resort.

Anyone who wants to know more about these programs is encouraged to contact Henry van Arcken, ACCA Director of Insurance Services, at 334-263-7594 or [hvanarcken@alabamacounties.org](mailto:hvanarcken@alabamacounties.org). ■

“

## Annual Convention: 90 years strong

*The convention gives commissioners from across the state the opportunity to network and exchange ideas. I also enjoy the breakout sessions; I always get something to take back home that helps me in trying to meet the needs of the public. I encourage all commissioners to attend the convention.*



Hon. Rhondel Rhone  
2006-2007 ACCA President  
Clarke County

”

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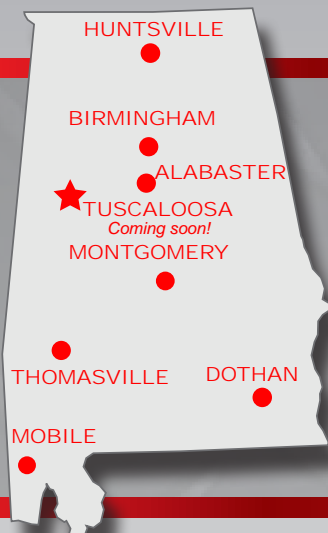
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❧ PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY ❧

## Goat Hill hears unified county voice



In 1999, county leaders from around the state turned out strong for a meeting with Gov. Don Siegelman about unfunded mandate legislation.

Influencing the Alabama Legislature was the driving issue in 1929, and that is no less true for county government today. But there have certainly been changes in the intervening years as counties have continually adapted to maximize their impact in an ever-changing environment.

Counties have an extensive track record of successfully advocating for game-changing legislation. One such standout from recent decades was the limitation on unfunded mandates for local government, now enshrined in the state constitution. Working together through the Association, counties have driven down prices on heavy equipment and other items through a legislatively-authorized joint bidding program.

Back in 1999, the Omnibus Pay Act linked the compensation of local elected officials to the salaries

of county employees, a move that dramatically reduced friction between county governing bodies and other county-level elected officials. More recently, a new mechanism for 9-1-1 funding was created to sustain this vital public service despite dwindling landline phones.

At the heart of ACCA's legislative advocacy is the Alabama County Platform, adopted each year by vote of the membership. It is organized into 11 Foundation Principles

stating out positions on core issues, and under each principle, there are Strategic Goals and Policy Statements that go into greater detail. Find it at [www.alabamacounties.org/legislation/county-platform](http://www.alabamacounties.org/legislation/county-platform).

Looking at the Association's Goat Hill Report Card for the 2015-2018 quadrennium, legislation was recently passed to address 27 strategic priorities in the Alabama County Platform. Among the most significant successes were:

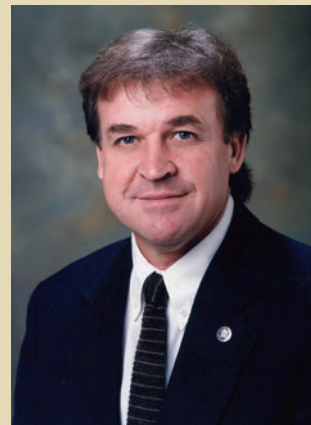
- Simplified Sellers Use Tax Remittance Program, which has brought in previously uncollected revenue from transactions with out-of-state retailers;
- County Modernization Act of 2015, which revised several outdated sections of state law to improve administration of county government;
- Local Legislation Reforms, which reduced the need for local

“

*Keep an eye on the future*

*Our Association is a lot more respected. I praise our staff and our leadership in Montgomery that have directed us, but we don't need to get complacent. We need to stay on our toes. You can tear up more in a year than you can fix in 15; my old coach taught me that.*

Hon. Roger Hayes  
1999-2000  
ACCA President  
Winston County



”

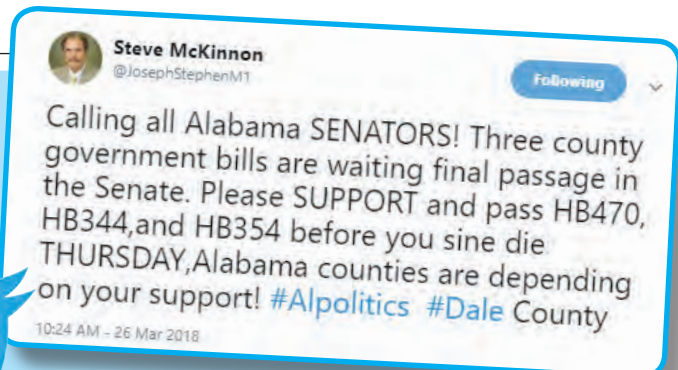


legislation on many routine administrative functions and reduced the likelihood that a local constitutional amendment would be put to a statewide referendum.

“We have been very effective over these last four years,” said ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield. “Because of the collective efforts of all 67 counties, new laws are on the books that positively impact how counties serve the public on a daily basis. We’ve also made a difference defensively; some things we opposed did not pass, and others were modified to minimize harm at the local level.”

All 140 seats in the Legislature are up for election this year, and in many districts, it is not yet known who will cast votes in the Statehouse next year. Nevertheless, county preparations are well underway for the 2019 session, with a representative being selected from each county for the ACCA Legislative Committee.

Committee members have at least two big projects ahead of them: the once-a-quadrennium task of reviewing the County Platform and its Foundation Principles and bringing home a victory next year on increased road and bridge funding. ■



## ALCounties Tweet about #ALpolitics – a lot!

During the Regular Session this year, Twitter was the scene of a little friendly contest among ACCA members.

It wasn't many weeks into the session before ACCA staff started hearing comments at the Statehouse about “counties taking over Twitter.” Altogether, counties generated 2,285 tweets and retweets before lawmakers adjourned for the year.

Contest winners will be announced at the Annual Convention. There will be recognition of the counties with the most tweets and some special awards in additional categories.

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# New Association leadership steps up

In the life of the Association, each year builds up to a single 24-hour span that is Election Day and Inauguration Day rolled into one.

In 2018, this eventful day of choosing and transitioning to new leadership falls on Thursday, August 23, and will feature the grand finale of ACCA's 90th Annual Convention & Celebration.

That day's luncheon will be devoted to saluting Dale County Commissioner Steve McKinnon, who has faithfully served as Association president for the 2017-2018 year, and he will be recognized for his distinguished service to all 67 counties.



There will also be a Business Session that afternoon, where the Nominating Committee's recommended slate of 2018-2019 officers will be considered. It is expected that McKinnon will pass the gavel to President-Elect Tony Cherry of Choctaw County and that Vice President David Money of Henry County will advance into the office of president-elect. The committee will also recommend someone to serve as vice president and another

to carry out the duties of minority director.

The selection process for the 12 district representatives on the ACCA Board of Directors is also handled during the Business Session. Candidates for these positions must declare their interest no later than August 9 in order to be listed on a district's official ballot.

Districts will caucus to select their board representative, and results will be announced immediately. Each county has one vote, and every county will want to be represented during the caucuses.


Just a short time later, convention-goers will don their favorite semi-formal attire for the President's Banquet, where Cherry will present his priorities for the coming year, and then dance the night away at the 90th Anniversary Gala.

Anyone with questions about election procedures is encouraged to contact Chase Cobb, ACCA Governmental Affairs Manager (334-263-7594 // [ccobb@alabamacounties.org](mailto:ccobb@alabamacounties.org)). ■

## Election Central

Get all the latest information on ACCA elections at [www.alabamacounties.org/candidates](http://www.alabamacounties.org/candidates)

- Interested in serving on the Board of Directors? Find forms, info about responsibilities and a district map. The nomination deadline is August 9.
- Access a regularly updated list of candidates for all 12 board seats.



*You are cordially invited*

TO THE

*President's Banquet*

AND

*90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala*

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*Semi-Formal*

# ACCA 2018 ANNUAL CONVENTION &

## *90th Anniversary Celebration*

PERDIDO BEACH RESORT, ORANGE BEACH, ALABAMA

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 21

- 7:00 a.m. Coffee Bar
- 7:30 a.m. Sunrise Yoga Class
- 9:30 a.m. ACEA Membership Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. ACCA Board of Directors Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Exhibit Hall Opens
- 11:00 a.m. Registration Hall Opens
- 11:00 a.m. Registration Desk Opens
- 12:00 p.m. Strolling Lunch Inside Exhibit Hall
- 1:00 p.m. Nominating Committee Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. ACAA Membership Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. CROAA Education Meeting
- 2:00 p.m. Workers' Compensation and Liability Fund Membership Meeting
- 2:30 p.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting
- 3:30 p.m. Minority Issues Steering Committee
- 4:00 p.m. AAND Membership Meeting
- 4:00 p.m. AAEM Membership Meeting
- 5:00 p.m. Registration Desk and Registration Hall Close
- 5:00 p.m. Opening Reception Inside Exhibit Hall

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22

- 7:30 a.m. Convention Breakfast (PLAN Graduates and Prospects to Sit at Red Tables)
- 8:00 a.m. Registration Desk Opens
- 8:30 a.m. Opening General Session
  - ACCA Throughout the Years Leadership Panel
  - PLAN 2018 and Beyond

- 10:30 a.m. Sheriffs' Breakout Session
- 12:00 p.m. County Agents Kitchen Lunch
- 1:15 p.m. Afternoon General Session
  - An Update from Gov. Kay Ivey
  - Gubernatorial Candidate: Mayor Walt Maddox

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 23

- 7:30 a.m. County Agents Kitchen Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Educational Breakout Sessions for Commissioners, Administrators, Engineers, EMA, 9-1-1 Personnel and Revenue Officers
- 11:45 a.m. Convention Luncheon Honoring President Steve McKinnon
- 1:30 p.m. Afternoon General Session
  - Where We're Going: Future of the ACCA
  - Awards Ceremony
- 3:30 p.m. ACCA Business Session
- 5:30 p.m. Cocktail Hour
- 6:30 p.m. President's Banquet and 90th Anniversary Gala (Semi-Formal Attire)





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# Convention training designed for you

Training and professional development are essential elements of the ACCA Annual Convention, and this year's agenda is no exception. Many sessions are focused on implementation of new laws, and others will address hot topics that county leaders are navigating right now. A few topics set to be addressed are:

- Remote Sellers, Alabama's Simplified Sellers Use Tax Program & Recent U.S. Supreme Court Decision
- Dangerous Dogs/Emily's Law
- 2018 revisions to the Alabama Ethics Law
- 2018 changes to the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts
- Single Point of Filing for Motor Fuel Taxes
- Wholesale to Retail Accountability Program Update
- 9-1-1 Dispatchers & CPR Training

*Note: Continuing education units (CEUs) are available to participants in many of the certification programs designed for commissioners and county employees.*

In Case You Missed It: Do you have a question about legislation impacting counties from this year's Regular Session? Take a look at the Goat Hill 2018 Final Report [www.alabamacounties.org/legislation/legislative-reports](http://www.alabamacounties.org/legislation/legislative-reports). ■



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“

*Greater impact than ever before*

*When I was first elected, county commissioners were road commissioners. The most important issue in government seemed to be potholes. That is not the case today. Today, diversification within county government is obvious. The professionalism and level of service provided by county government, i.e., economic development and quality of life issues, have increased, along with its level of importance, and are more impactful. County government, with its ever-growing responsibilities, has a greater impact than ever before on our local communities and state.*



Hon. Hardy McCollum  
1995-1996 ACCA President  
Tuscaloosa County

”

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# Tips for welcoming new commissioners in November

Commissioners are on the ballot in 50 counties this year, and a significant number of department heads will be answering to new bosses come November.

Even in the smoothest transitions, newly-elected commissioners can encounter a steep learning curve as they assume their new responsibilities. For the orientation process, many veteran staff leaders create a custom “go-to” notebook for new commissioners.

Engineer Randy Tindell started providing an orientation in Coffee County when the 1996 election cycle resulted in big turnover on the seven-member commission.

The county had five newly-

elected commissioners, and Tindell wanted any hard feelings from campaign season to stay in the past. He had been hired by the previous commission, but “I wanted to make sure the commission understood that I worked for them and at their direction,” he said.

With that motivation, he put together a day-long briefing supported by a three-ring binder titled “What We Do and Why: Coffee County Highway Department.”

More than two decades later, the most recent edition measures about 3 inches thick. “I try to answer every question they may have,” Tindell said, noting that he includes attorney

general’s opinions addressing some of the most frequently asked questions, such as doing work on private property.

Over in nearby Henry County, Engineer Chris Champion has followed Tindell’s lead. “All the credit goes to Randy for organizing it real well, as far as explaining how state law works, how state law governs the organization of a road department and then getting into the funding aspects of it,” Champion said.

Of course, it takes some time to pull the information together, and scheduling a half-day or more of orientation time with a newly-elected commissioner can be challenging. “The first time I did it, the group was



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Mike Shaw  
MARION COUNTY  
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ACEA: An Affiliate of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama

## On the Web: [www.alabamacounties.org/gotonotebook](http://www.alabamacounties.org/gotonotebook)

### Want to put together a “go-to” notebook for a new commissioner?

Find sample documents and checklists for “must-have” info online:

- May 2018 presentation to county administrators from ACCA General Counsel Morgan Arrington
- The table of contents for a county highway department notebook
- A complete copy of a county EMA notebook



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standing around the gas pumps, and one of the commissioners said, ‘You know what? I had no idea it was this involved. I wish every citizen could know this.’”

New commissioners have been very receptive, Champion said, and have appreciated having a reference manual to better equip them to respond to questions from constituents.

The go-to notebook approach works well for other areas of county operations, too. EMA Director Phyllis Little in Cullman County does something similar – but has taken it a step further. She periodically provides

commissioners with updated pages, which creates another opportunity to share important information.

When addressing county administrators on this topic in May, ACCA General Counsel Morgan Arrington opened the conversation with the following quote from Sonya Parker: “Almost everyone will make a good first impression, but only a few will make a good lasting impression.”

Her presentation (available at [www.alabamacounties.org/gotonotebook](http://www.alabamacounties.org/gotonotebook)) includes detailed bullet points to help administrators cover all the bases. Sprinkled throughout the slides are helpful “Pro

Tips” to maximize usefulness.

New commissioners will take the oath of office in mid-November, which means there is still time to initiate this project or update resources used in previous years.

An informal survey indicates that the notebook – paired with face-to-face briefings and tours – is a very popular approach to orientation for new commissioners, but it is by no means the only one. Some use a Powerpoint presentation instead of the three-ring binder, and there’s a good argument for an electronic version that could be saved to a tablet or other device. ■

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*Elmore County*

# Counties lead communities to clean up



*Covington County*

- Extending the week-long event, Covington County adopted a resolution designating April as a cleanup month.
- One commissioner in Crenshaw County personally sponsored a PALS Pick-up Contest, with cash prizes of \$100, \$200 and \$300 to the top three winners.
- In Elmore County, cleanup crews were organized by county commissioners, schools, a high school ROTC program, Lake Jordan Home Owners & Boat Owners (HOBO), Boy Scouts, the YMCA and others.
- In Houston County, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe branded efforts as the Houston County Spirit of Service Day.
- One of the many projects in Jefferson County was a Day of Service on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. In just one day, a massive roadside cleanup in the Village Creek Watershed brought

The “Don’t Drop It On Alabama” Spring Cleanup made a huge impact across the state this year, and once again, counties were right in the middle of the action.



*Crenshaw County*

Altogether, the cleanup netted more than 380 tons of trash, according to organizers at Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State).



*Houston County*

County governments have been actively engaged in the event for many years, and ACCA helps coordinate communication between PALS and counties.

United by a common purpose, Spring Cleanup activities can vary a good bit from one county to another. Here are a few highlights from 2018:



*Tuscaloosa County*



*Mobile County*



*Jefferson County*



together more than 350 people who collected 8.5 tons of material.

- In Mobile County, the county’s environmental enforcement department marked the occasion with special collections opportunities at the landfill and recycling center. More than 800 vehicles dropped off items, adding more than 350 tons to the landfill and collecting tens of thousands of pounds of recyclables.
- In Sumter, Commissioner Marcus Campbell spearheaded roadside cleanups in District 2, hauling in 155 bags of trash, plus mattresses, tires and boards.

If your county would like more information about participating in this annual event, please contact Marcia Collier, ACCA Coordinator of Insurance Services, at 334-263-7594 or [mcollier@alabamacounties.org](mailto:mcollier@alabamacounties.org).



Sumter County



Jefferson County



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GADSDEN/ETOWAH COUNTY EMA

**PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM OF THE YEAR — LARGE COUNTY —**

**Safer Place Program**

ELMORE COUNTY EMA

**PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM OF THE YEAR — MEDIUM COUNTY —**

**Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) Program**

COVINGTON COUNTY EMA

**MITIGATION PROGRAM OF THE YEAR AWARD — SMALL COUNTY —**

**Med Surg Response Vehicle**

AUTAUGA COUNTY EMA

**RESPONSE PROGRAM OF THE YEAR — MEDIUM COUNTY —**

**Phyllis Little, MLEM, CLEM**

DIRECTOR, CULLMAN COUNTY EMA

**PAT NEUHAUSER SPIRIT OF EMA AWARD**

**Roy Waite, CLEM, MLEM, CEM**

DIRECTOR, CLARKE COUNTY EMA

**AAEM PRESIDENT’S AWARD**

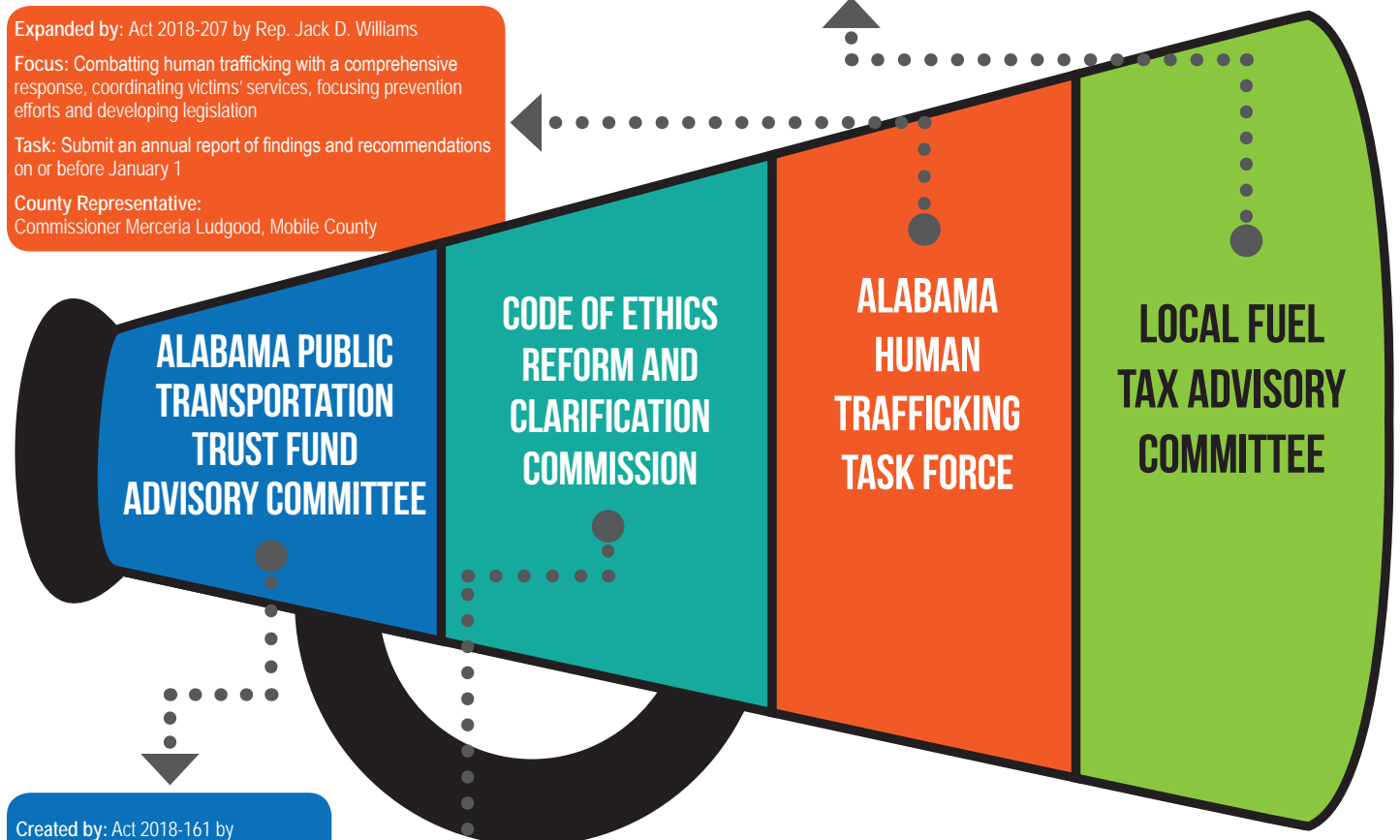


# Speaking with One Voice

This year, the Alabama Legislature established several new working groups to dive into thorny issues and make recommendations. And, once again, the county voice is formally included on key panels, making sure county leaders will be "at the table" for important discussion. Each person's willingness to serve all 67 counties and represent One Voice is greatly appreciated. Here's a rundown of recent Association appointments:

**Expanded by:** Act 2018-207 by Rep. Jack D. Williams  
**Focus:** Combatting human trafficking with a comprehensive response, coordinating victims' services, focusing prevention efforts and developing legislation  
**Task:** Submit an annual report of findings and recommendations on or before January 1  
**County Representative:**  
 Commissioner Merceria Ludgood, Mobile County

**Expanded by:** Act 2018-469 by Rep. Paul Lee  
**Focus:** Implementing Single Point of Filing System for Motor Fuel Taxes  
**Task:** Review the design and operation of the system and make recommendations to the state revenue commissioner regarding system requirements and functionality  
**County Representatives:**  
 Kim Creech, Clerk/Treasurer, Baldwin County  
 Terisa Lang, Deputy Director of Sales Tax Dept., Madison County  
 Darrick Williams, Senior Auditor, Jefferson County



**ALABAMA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**CODE OF ETHICS REFORM AND CLARIFICATION COMMISSION**

**ALABAMA HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE**

**LOCAL FUEL TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Created by:** Act 2018-161 by Sen. Rodger Smitherman  
**Focus:** New trust fund established to increase public transportation options across the state  
**Task:** Advise the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs on the administration of the fund and making of awards  
**County Representative:** TBA

**Created by:** Act 2018-431 by Sen. Arthur Orr  
**Focus:** Studying and making recommendations to reform and clarify the Code of Ethics  
**Task:** Report findings and recommendations to the Legislature by the first day of the 2019 Regular Session  
**County Representative:**  
 Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director

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## COUNTY FAMILY FEATURE



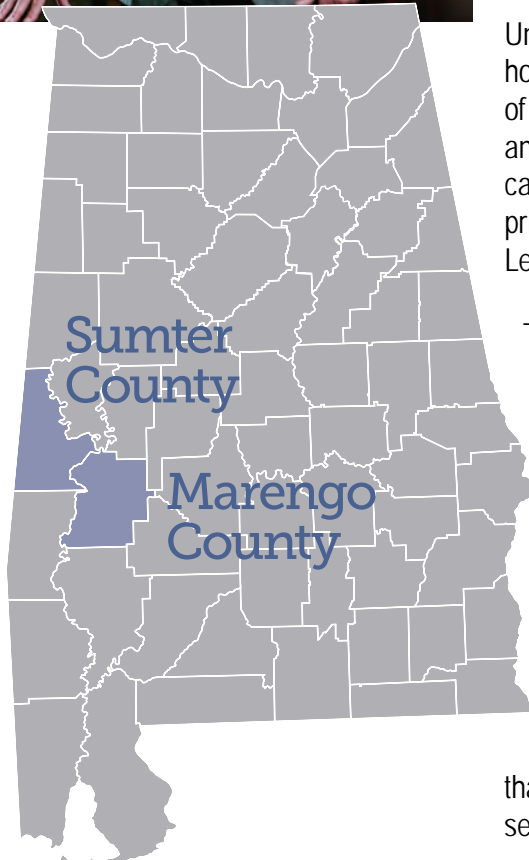
# Stepping from the Commission Chamber to the President's Office



County government is filled with highly effective leaders making a big impact in their communities, and it is not uncommon for commissioners to answer a call to serve at the next level. Many times, this means elected office in the Alabama Legislature or the U.S. House of Representatives.

But for Ken Tucker, the path from the county courthouse to the next post took a different trajectory. In this state's 200-year history, he may be the only county commissioner to become a university president.

In 2015 – after a dozen years on the Marengo County Commission – he became president of the University of West Alabama. As he sees it, the two roles are more alike than many people might expect, and those commonalities were abundantly clear in April.



That is when, in partnership with AT&T, UWA hosted the first Alabama Summit on Rural Technology to convene diverse leaders for the purpose of enhancing the region's technology infrastructure as a means to improve economic development, education and quality of life. ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield spoke in a session focused on public policy aspects of rural technology.

UWA undergraduate and graduate programs enroll about 2,000 students on campus and a roughly equal number in online programs.

Tucker earned his Ph.D. at the University of Alabama, and today he holds leadership posts with a number of organizations related to education and economic development. His career has spanned both public and private sectors, and he is a member of Leadership Alabama.

A native son of Marengo County, Tucker now lives in Livingston, the county seat for Sumter County. He and his wife are the proud parents of four married daughters, who have given them three grandchildren.

Those who were part of the county family in 2012 may recall that Marengo County took home an Excellence in County Government Award presented by ACCA for a successful rural healthcare initiative that preserved labor and delivery services at the local hospital.



**Q: What sparked the technology summit?**

The motivation for the Alabama Summit on Rural Technology came out of UWA's Economic Leadership Academy as an essential priority for Sumter County's economic future, along with revitalization of the Black Belt region. The summit became the vehicle for bringing rural Alabama together to begin to address the issue of rural technology infrastructure and determine avenues of collaboration to meet this vital need.

**Q: What results have you seen so far?**

The summit ended up having a statewide impact through participation of major organizations, state government, economic development agencies, rural community leaders, elected officials and business groups from across Alabama, which brought

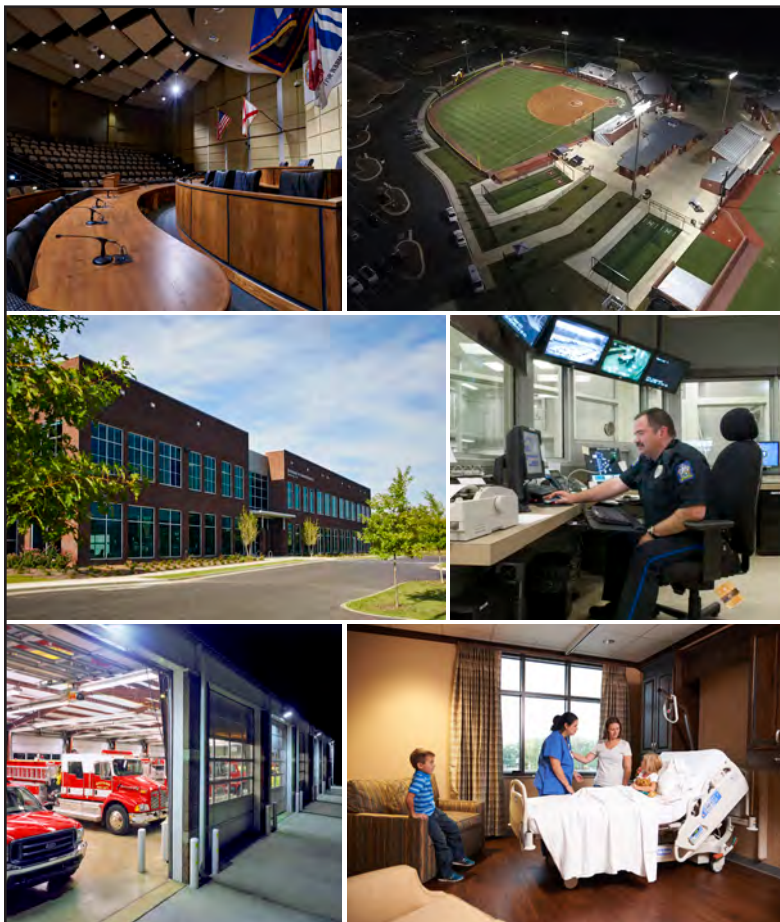
together a new opportunity to build a rural broadband alliance. This alliance is being formed currently and will stretch across the entire Black Belt from the Georgia border to the Mississippi border to provide advocacy, strategic initiatives and new partnerships in the public and private sectors to address and secure investment in broadband for rural Alabama.

**Q: How has your experience as a county commissioner affected your approach as a university president?**

County commissioners, like university administrators, learn rather quickly how to effectively work with many diverse constituencies on a broad array of topics, all for the greater good. In the 12 years that I served Marengo County as the District 2 commissioner, I enjoyed the

opportunity of learning more about the people I served so that I could better understand their needs and interests and, in turn, collaborate with members of the community, my fellow commissioners and many others throughout the region and state to align the resources that would improve the quality of life for all people in the county.

I can compare that role in many ways to my role as president of the University of West Alabama. Everything that we do at UWA can be considered service, and, as a regional university whose mission is to bring about positive change and growth through education, service and outreach, we serve many publics. In my three terms as commissioner, including serving as chairperson, I was very involved with community, economic and workforce development activities, and those are all priorities



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of our university. My time as a commissioner enabled me to build a valuable network of contacts, which placed me in good stead to serve as a catalyst for community and workforce development initiatives in UWA's market area.

**Q: What is UWA's role in helping rural West Alabama to prosper?**

*UWA has met the educational needs of generations of students from throughout rural Alabama and beyond for nearly 185 years. These students have celebrated great success in virtually every career and every walk of life. We believe that offering top-quality education and training can be achieved only if the educational opportunities we provide align with the needs of our communities and business and industry, both existing and prospective. With this in mind,*

*we are continually developing partnerships and initiatives that equip our students with the knowledge and skills that ensure their success. We work diligently to develop educational opportunities that will allow students to thrive and have prosperous careers, and we place a strong emphasis on developing a workforce that will support existing industries and also recruit additional employers that will boost rural West Alabama's economy. We are committed to continued innovation, collaboration, and transformation that will empower our communities to keep pace with changing technology and new challenges.*

*As Sumter County's largest employer, with 579 employees, we serve as the economic engine for West Alabama, having a \$121 million economic impact statewide. Many of our programs, from degrees*

*to certificates, have 100 percent job placement of students prior to graduation, which is an excellent indicator that we are providing our students with the knowledge, skills and ability to meet employers' needs.*

**Q: Anything else to add?**

*I greatly value my years as a county commissioner, where I learned much, made great connections and friendships, and hopefully made a positive difference in the lives of those I was fortunate enough to serve. I have tremendous respect for and enjoyed working with the excellent leadership team of ACCA. I also greatly value the often thankless work of county commissioners and county employees, who tirelessly and selflessly, as UWA's motto says, "Do Something That Matters." ■*

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# FAMILY ALBUM



Photos from Alabama Counties



*The first-ever 9-1-1 call took place in Haleyville, Alabama, 50 years ago this year. The red phone used on that historic day will soon be on display in Washington, D.C., when the National Law Enforcement Museum opens this fall. Blount County 9-1-1 Director Caleb Branch shared this pic from one of the many events at the 50th Annual 9-1-1 Festival.*



@CALEBBRANCH

*The Montgomery County Commission tweeted out this image of Commissioner Dan Harris and the Student Apprentices who are working with the county this summer.*

*What a great opportunity to help the community understand and appreciate the value of county government!*



@MCCALABAMA



*Participants in ACCA's PLAN 2018 leadership program are all working on Passion Projects in their home counties. Cherokee County Commissioner Marcie Foster selected #StepUp4MentalHealth, a nationwide initiative supported by NACo to reduce the number of mentally ill persons in jail. In May, Foster organized an event at Gadsden State Community College that featured remarks from Alabama's Commissioner of Mental Health Lynn Beshear and participation from a variety of other stakeholders and advocates. Foster (on right) is pictured standing with Julie Hope of Enroll Alabama.*



@MARCIE\_FOSTER



*ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield had the opportunity to celebrate and honor a true leader and public servant, Shelby County Finance Director Butch Burbage. He retired after 22 years of county service – years that included active leadership in the County Revenue Officers Association of Alabama (CROAA). Thank you, Butch, for your hard work, and congratulations on your much-deserved retirement!*

**#67Counties #OneVoice**



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Chase Cobb joined a crowd of elected officials and staff members representing city, county and state government gathered to express appreciation to Steve Golsan, who retired after 16 years of service as administrator/treasurer in Autauga County. All 67 counties benefitted from Golsan's efforts, including his dedicated leadership in the Association of County Administrators of Alabama (ACAA).



@ALABAMACOUNTIES



@CHASECOBB67



Please send your photos to ACCA for the Family Album! County Commission magazine wants to publish a selection of member photos in every issue to showcase the many ways county government touches the lives of Alabamians and to recognize the dedicated men and women who make counties work. Please send photos (large file sizes preferred) to Abby Luker Fitzpatrick, Director of Communication & Engagement, [afitzpatrick@alabamacounties.org](mailto:afitzpatrick@alabamacounties.org).

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# A voice from Alabama's 67 counties

**Josh Harvill, CEA**  
*Chambers County Engineer  
President, Association of County Engineers of Alabama (ACEA)*

**Q** How has the conversation about infrastructure investment in Alabama changed over the last few years?

**A** In my county engineering career, there has always been a need for additional funding for county infrastructure. The ACCA has helped county commissioners and county engineers deliver that message over the last few years better than any other time since I've been in county government. Whether it is communicated through community meetings, commission meetings, local media or social media – our message is as clear as it has ever been.  
The question today is not whether we need additional funding; I think most believe that we do. From my

perspective, the conversation has moved to “Are we, as taxpayers, willing to pay for it through an increase in taxes?” and “Would we, as taxpayers, want our legislators to develop a temporary or a long-term solution?”

**Q** ACEA has taken a leadership role in the push for increased road and bridge funding in our state. What are members focusing on this summer?

**A** County engineers are always planning. We will continue to keep our plans updated and be in position to deliver projects quickly if additional funds are appropriated, but education will be our primary focus. We are educating our citizens and legislators on the role county highway departments play in our state's transportation system and “telling our story.” At the same time, we are also explaining the impacts we face if we continue to deny our communities the funding needed for local infrastructure.

**Q** County commission seats are on many ballots this year. What can a county engineer do to build a good working relationship with a newly-elected commissioner?

**A** Communicate effectively and invest time with the commissioner. I've learned so much about county engineering from those who have preceded me. One tool I have taken from other counties and implemented in Chambers County is a “Highway Department Introduction.” Some counties accomplish this through a manual, but we utilize a PowerPoint presentation that introduces commissioners to laws that govern the expenditure of gasoline tax dollars, our chain of command, transportation plan, work-order system, interdepartmental rules and policies, etc. Most importantly, I encourage county engineers to spend as much time as possible with the commissioners. Give them as many opportunities to communicate their concerns to you while getting to know you and vice versa.



**Q** What kind of impact are counties seeing from the award-winning Motor Grader Operator Training Program initiated by ACEA?

**A** Three years ago, Henry County Engineer Chris Champion had a vision of providing a higher level of customer service to the citizens of Alabama while minimizing liability to county government. Through his and his committee's dedicated and unselfish leadership, Alabama county engineers now enjoy a reliable resource to provide quality training at little cost to both existing and prospective motor grader operators.

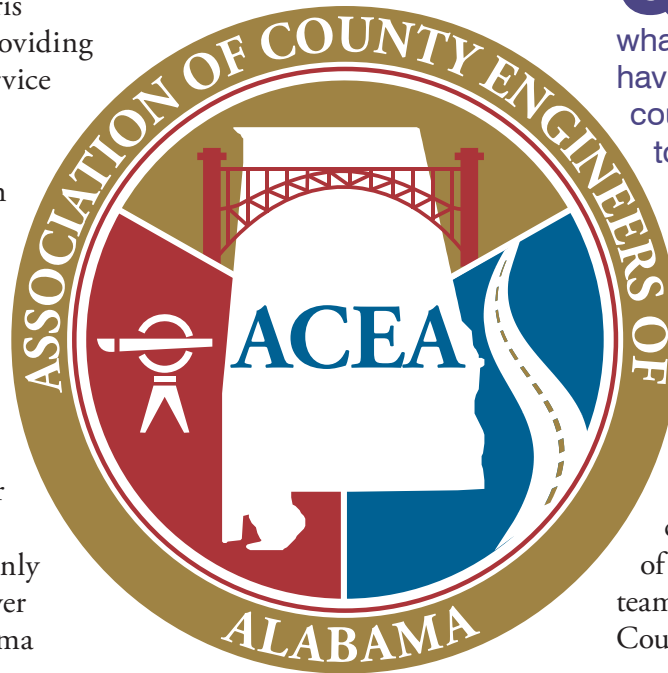
While the program has only been in place for one year, over half of the counties in Alabama

have already benefitted from Chris's vision. The successful development of this program required two years of dedication from Chris and his committee and the partnership of all 67 counties within Alabama. They have created a program

that will not only train countless county motor grader operators but also provide the blueprint for additional training developed and implemented in the future.

**Q** With this being ACCA's 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, what are some advantages of having elected officials and county department heads together for this event?

**A** Every county has a team, led by the commission and consisting of multiple departments, striving to meet the needs of the public on a daily basis. During my tenure in Chambers County, our commission has been committed to the education of both its members and their team. Today, our Association of County Engineers is one of the



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strongest in the country because the commissioners of Alabama understand how important it is for their team – the staff – to participate in the Association’s affiliate organizations, both at the state and national level, in order to continue their professional development through education. I would encourage all county commissioners and their staff, from all departments, to be involved with this association and attend ACCA events such as the Annual Convention, where they will undoubtedly build relationships and collect an unlimited amount of knowledge that can be brought back to their county.

**Q** What does “67 Counties, One Voice” mean to you?

**A** To me, it symbolizes that there is strength in family. “67 Counties, One Voice” is some of my closest friends – my county family – representing each of our communities at the local, state and national level with unity. ■

# What does CEA stand for?



**Q** The “CEA” designation is listed at the end of your name, which means you’ve received a Certificate in Engineering Administration from the County Government Education Institute. What does this mean?

**A** I graduated from Auburn University in December of 2001 with a bachelor’s in civil engineering. I was fortunate to have worked in Chambers County as a student and stay on as an engineering assistant following graduation.

Immediately after graduation, it was clear to me that while I was proud of my degree from Auburn and valued the education that I received, there was much to learn about county engineering and county government in general. Most of what I know about county engineering can be attributed to the numerous mentors I’ve had throughout my career and the education I’ve obtained through the ACCA.

The Certificate in Engineering Administration is the ACCA’s educational program geared specifically to the positions of county engineer or assistant county engineer. I think everyone recognizes that it’s an invaluable program that isn’t available through any other association or institution. But, most importantly to me, it represents countless hours that fellow

*New graduates from the County Government Education Institute will be recognized during the Awards Ceremony at the ACCA 90th Convention & Celebration.*

*More info: [www.alabamacounties.org/education/county-employees/](http://www.alabamacounties.org/education/county-employees/)*

county engineers volunteered to participate in training young, aspiring county engineers, such as myself, across this state. To me, there is no better training available than that which is provided by our peers in county government.

As the county engineering field and county government continue to evolve, it is important to me to keep this designation through continued education. It is also very important to me to volunteer my experiences and participate as a speaker so that I may help another young engineer, just as my mentors helped me.



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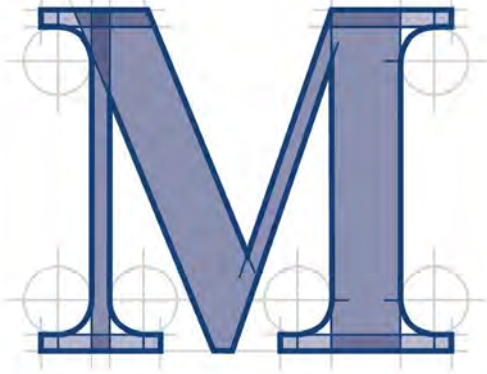
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