

THE PELHAM

PATHWAY



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A path apart.

OAK MOUNTAIN
STATE PARK'S
STUNNING PHYSICAL
LANDSCAPE MAKES
FOR AN
UNFORGETTABLE
EXPERIENCE. VISIT
PELHAM AND
EXPLORE ONE OF ITS
GREATEST ASSETS.

PARK EXPANSION

BY: GINA WOMACK



As spring unfolds at Oak Mountain State Park, the buzz is all about the exciting changes for the future of one of Alabama's most beautiful outdoor recreation areas. Oak Mountain State Park is Alabama's largest state park, and it recently grew by 1,644 acres. The new land expansion is almost double the acreage of New York's Central Park and brings Oak Mountain State Park to a total of 11,584 acres.

The land acquisition can be traced back to Birmingham-based EBSCO Industries, and its desire to protect and preserve the beauty of the land owned by the company. EBSCO Industries, along with The Forever Wild Land Trust, formed a partnership to achieve that goal. According to a company statement, Dell Brooke, EBSCO Industries board member and daughter of EBSCO founder Elton B. Stephens said, "This property was originally purchased with the intent to be developed, and many development opportunities exist today. But, the preservation of this land will create more sustainable value for our environment, our surrounding communities, and our citizens for generations to come."

In 2019, Brooke, along with her husband Dixon Brooke, Jr. nominated this tract of land, known as the Belcher Tract for conservation consideration. Because the Belcher Tract sits adjacent to Oak Mountain State Park, the Forever Wild Land Trust Board unanimously voted to acquire the land in August 2021. On December 29, 2021, the transaction for the sale of the land officially closed.

The Forever Wild Land Trust has been a champion of public natural areas since 1992. The organization's tireless efforts have secured more than 270,000 acres of land in Alabama for public use. Forever Wild Land Trust's acquisitions have also created more than 388 miles of recreational trails. Chris Blankenship, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources said, "I appreciate the dedication of the Forever Wild Land Trust and the work of the Board members to approve and fund this purchase."

With warmer weather approaching, the Oak Mountain State Park staff is working diligently to incorporate the increased acreage into the existing park.

Anna Jones, the Event Coordinator for OMSP, said the coming months will be busy ones. "Over the next year, the State Park staff will be working on management plans with the State Lands Division and the Forever Wild Board to address the long-term vision for the Belcher Tract, and how to best implement the stewardship and the public's recreational use of the land."

Established in 1927, Oak Mountain State Park began as a 940-acre park atop Double Oak Mountain. Today, the park currently offers a stunning physical landscape, and the widest variety of activities of any state park in Alabama. The new expansion will certainly increase those opportunities for the general public. Jones added, "The purchase secures one of the largest undeveloped parcels of land along the U.S. 280 corridor. The purchase preserves the popular, forested view from King's Chair Overlook." For those unfamiliar with Oak Mountain State Park, the King's Chair Overlook is the payoff on one of Oak Mountain's more popular hiking trails. Without the land acquisition, many feared future development would have ruined the view. Now, the breathtaking vista will be preserved.



Greg Lein is the Director of the Alabama State Parks Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. He is enthusiastic about the possibilities the Belcher Tract can offer. "Oak Mountain is one of the most popular parks in our system, and we are excited about the opportunity to add this significant property to the park for the benefit of Alabama," Lein said.

Another interesting aspect of the Belcher Tract expansion is that the land is home to an increasingly rare mountain longleaf pine forest. The Southern Longleaf pine just happens to be Alabama's state tree. "The purchase will also preserve the Boynton Oak population located on the new tract of land. This will also place Oak Mountain State Park acreage in the Coosa River Watershed. We are gaining additional lakes and wildlife habitat that we can manage and protect for generations to come," explained Jones.

Blankenship expounded on what the land acquisition means to Pelham and Shelby County as a whole. "We are very excited to get this property closed. It's a great addition to Oak Mountain State Park, and is a beautiful piece of property in fast-growing Shelby County." The land will extend the park's boundaries to U.S. 280 near the Greystone and Chelsea communities.

With all the buzz surrounding the excitement of the expansion of Oak Mountain State Park, Anna Jones took a minute to share what park-goers can look forward to in the short term. "The State Park Road project will be complete by late spring. This includes the much-needed safety improvements to the road and adds six feet of bike lanes from Highway 119 to the park entrance. We are also getting brand new restrooms at the main day-use beach. This project should be complete by spring as well."

In the meantime, we can look forward to years of outdoor adventure and enjoyment at Oak Mountain State Park. Chris Blankenship summed it up: "I think it's going to be something that we can all look back on as a great moment in the Forever program's history," he said. "I also very much appreciate the EBSCO family for selling this piece of property to Forever Wild so that it can be preserved in perpetuity. EBSCO continues to be a great public steward."

NOTE: According to a statement from EBSCO Industries, HQ team members plan to host a "Holding Space" Hike to King's Chair Overlook to commemorate this special event. The hike will also honor those friends and family members impacted by COVID-19. Details are incomplete at this time. The hike is planned for spring 2022. Details will be announced at a later date on the EBSCO Industries website and through social media.

OPERATIONS OVERHAUL

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON



The full potential of the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena is now being realized thanks to the City of Pelham's new partnership with VenuWorks.

As you know, the facility, which is the home of the Birmingham Bulls, holds two NHL-sized ice arenas and 7,000 sq. ft. of multipurpose banquet and conference space. The complex accommodates public skating and is also home to the Birmingham Figure Skating Club and the Pelham Skate School, which provides instruction for beginning figure skaters, hockey players, or recreational skaters.

On October 1, 2021, the Iowa-based venue management company started running the day-to-day operations. VenuWorks has significant experience operating venues similar in size and scope.

"Together with the City of Pelham we look forward to making a positive impact at the complex as we work together to improve and grow operations," said Steve Peters, President of VenuWorks.

"I am excited by the possibilities this professional management team brings to our wonderful facility. Based on a solid history of successful outcomes elsewhere, VenuWorks should be able to help us identify the untapped potential of the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena," said Mayor Gary W. Waters.

Steve St. John is the Executive Facility Director, and he has done exactly what Mayor Waters hoped. In just a few months' time, he has facilitated significant improvements, from new food and beverage offerings to the implementation of a new point-of-sale system. If you haven't visited the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena in a while, you are sure to notice the changes.

"Our goal is to serve visitors as quickly as possible. We just didn't have enough points of sale to adequately serve our guests, so we added more," said St. John. Wait times at our concession areas decreased by approximately 50% as a result. Security measures were also enhanced, with the addition of several new metal detectors.

"The Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena is a major draw for Pelham. It provides unique recreational and entertainment options that set us apart from surrounding communities," said City Manager Gretchen DiFante. "Bringing in VenuWorks and its professional management services confirms our commitment to ensuring our programs and professional partners are successful. We have already heard from many groups who are thrilled with the new opportunities and efficiency," she added.



New Look

Although already planned for 2022, the timeline to produce a new logo for the complex was accelerated once VenuWorks assumed management responsibilities. The City partnered with Copperwing Design to develop a new logo that would complement the City's new branding, which was officially launched in January. The new design is fresh and clean, and it translates well across all aspects of the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena.



Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena

The improved logo isn't the only visual change you'll see around the complex. In February, the City Council approved a bid of just over \$397,000 for a full renovation of the Conference Center and Banquet Hall area. The updates include new paint, ceilings, lighting, and carpet throughout, in addition to new restrooms. In a separate investment, the Council approved a \$90,000 budget adjustment to allow for repairs and replacement of essential food and beverage equipment in the banquet hall kitchen. Work is expected to be completed before the end of the summer.

"All of the updates will make our space more attractive to wedding and event planners," explained St. John. "Once complete, the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena will be prepared to host more upscale events."

Foodservice will now be managed in-house. This allows for ongoing quality control and direct management of menu pricing, inventory management, and financial accountability. The team is led by Food and Beverage Manager Andy Linton, who has 25 years of experience in the industry.

"Guests can expect good, quality, fresh foods from our kitchen," Linton explained. "This applies across the board, from the banquet hall catering to concessions."

Linton describes himself as a 'foodie,' who loves to cook anything from comfort foods to high-end steaks and seafood.

The outside façade of the building is receiving a much-needed update, along with new landscaping and signage. The design is nearly complete, and the project is expected to be advertised for bid by April. Construction had been slated to begin in February, however, changing needs at the facility resulted in some design changes for better efficiency. Instead of dumpsters, a garbage compactor will be added. The space originally designed for dumpsters will be repurposed into storage, which is desperately needed at the facility.



Parking Solutions

Site preparation is underway for a new parking area adjacent to the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. Most do not know or do not realize the large lot between the complex and Oak Mountain Amphitheater is owned by Live Nation. Just 40 spaces are designated for use by people visiting the complex. "The real problem is that when both the Amphitheater and Civic Complex have events occurring simultaneously, there isn't sufficient parking," said acting City Engineer Chris Cousins.

The site must be raised to an acceptable grade, and the City is benefiting from public and private partnerships for this portion of the project. "The work currently ongoing involves taking advantage of excess dirt from the State Park Road and Canopy projects. The contractors are hauling their excess material to city property," said Cousins. "This will allow the City to save a significant amount of money over having to pay a contractor to haul in the material."

Site design will begin once hauling is complete and project planners have an accurate measure of how much the site has been raised. Cousins explained the process: "To allow for natural settlement and consolidation to occur, we will plant grass on the site and allow it to sit for a while. We don't have a construction schedule yet, but my guess is that construction will begin in mid to late 2023."

Planners hope the area will allow for between 173 and 360 spaces, but the final number will depend on how much the site is raised.

Figure Skating & Hockey

For the first time, there is a true collaboration between the Pelham Skate School and Pelham Hockey. With new policies and procedures in place, there's no longer competition for ice time.

Numerous new programs are being offered at the Skate School, all of which are endorsed and developed by U.S. Figure Skating.

Aspire is the bridge between Learn to Skate group classes and U.S. Figure Skating membership. Through the development of athleticism and artistry, skaters build a solid skill foundation that drives success on and off the ice, according to U.S. Figure Skating. Skaters are not the only ones learning in the Aspire program. Parents are coached and educated on the sport and how to help their children succeed.

Icemen was created in 2012 with the goal of unifying the male members of U.S. Figure Skating. The program connects members with peers and role models, provides networking opportunities, and encourages them to stay involved in figure skating.

Ice Explorers is the newest programming geared toward preschool-aged children. This involves parent/guardian participation.

Adult Learn to Skate classes were revamped in order to better serve the needs and desires of the adult skating community. This class is not only for beginning adult skaters but also for any adult skater who wants to spend time with other adults who love to skate.

"IT'S GREAT TO INTRODUCE FIGURE SKATING TO CHILDREN AT AN EARLY AGE, BUT ANYONE CAN START AT ANY TIME. ONE OF THE COOLEST THINGS ABOUT SKATING IS ITS INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY. ANYONE CAN SKATE!"

Susie Gray, Director of Skating

Little Toros, offered by Pelham Hockey, is a hybrid program supported by Learn to Skate USA. This is the first step for children who want to play hockey but need to learn to skate first. The program utilizes Learn to Skate USA's hockey skating curriculum, which is specific to the sport. The goal is to equip aspiring hockey players with the skills they need to be successful in the Learn to Play program. Players from the Birmingham Bulls and the team's mascot, Toro, visit classes regularly.

Pelham Hockey and the Pelham Skate School will be offering spring and summer camps, so keep an eye on social media and the website for details, which are coming soon.

Big Goals

VenuWorks, St. John, and the team at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena have big ideas and goals for the future success of the facility.

Short term, the biggest goal is to see the two capital projects through to completion before the start of the next hockey season. Outside of that, St. John hopes to secure new and different sports and entertainment.

VenuWorks' core management philosophy is centered on events. "Events are the lifeblood of every entertainment and convention facility. We want to offer diverse programming that you can't find anywhere else in this market," explained St. John.

While details can't be released right now, be on the lookout for exciting announcements coming soon!



THE BUZZ AROUND TOWN

BY: GINA WOMACK

City leadership and staff are asked almost daily about new developments. It's to be expected because we're all naturally curious about what's going on when we see dirt moving. Most people get excited about new restaurants or shopping opportunities in our city. We'll break down what is happening right now in Pelham, and update you on some new and ongoing projects.

Campus 124

There's a good bit of talk surrounding the opening of the much-anticipated [Half Shell Oyster House](#). Developers tell us the restaurant is slated to open in April or May 2022.

When the Campus 124 location opens, Pelham residents can expect a menu featuring Southern cuisine with a New Orleans flair. The offerings will include charbroiled oysters, hand-cut steaks, fresh seafood, pasta, and more. At the bar, you will find signature martinis, mixed drinks, wines by the glass, and draft and bottled beer. The décor will have a French Quarter vibe, so get ready to "laissez le bon temps rouler" in Pelham!

"The Pelham community just makes sense for us," said company representative Kelsey Griffin. "We are really looking forward to the unique opportunity Campus 124 presents for our restaurant."

[Slide](#) is the latest restaurant planned for Campus 124, with an anticipated opening date of summer 2022. Chef Raquel Ervin, who has appeared on the Cooking Channel's *Snack Attack* and Food Network's *Family Food Showdown* and, more recently, as a finalist on the network's *Chopped* is bringing her hand-crafted burgers, sandwiches, and salads to Pelham.



Ervin, a Mobile native is the head chef and proprietor of Panoptic, LLC, a Birmingham-based company that includes Panoptic Catering, a food truck, and a restaurant. Ervin's food truck and Irondale restaurant were recently rebranded as "Slide," and she will open a second location of Slide at Campus 124 this summer.

The Pelham menu will feature twice the menu items as the Irondale location with 23+ specialty sliders, four signature salads, six gourmet sides, a kids menu, and dessert options. Chef Ervin said she enjoys creating food, smiles, and continuing to be known for "flavor in every bite." Interestingly, Ervin's Panoptic Catering won "Best Bite" at the 2019 Taste of Pelham.

The owners of The Purple Onion have obtained the old Bojangles' Famous Chicken 'n Biscuits location on Highway 31 and plan to open a new restaurant that will be called **The Little Tomato**. You may have noticed the new awnings that have been installed. In addition to Pelham, The Purple Onion recently acquired shuttered Bojangles' locations in Irondale, Moody, and Rainbow City to expand the flagship restaurants to other cities. According to published reports, the Pelham location will be the only one with a new concept restaurant.

Plans call for The Little Tomato to serve an Italian menu in a fast-casual atmosphere. The restaurant will likely serve everything from pasta to wood-fired pizza to hot subs.

Cahaba Tractor

Cahaba Tractor has been in the same Pelham location for more than four decades. Now, the family-owned company is moving from its building on Highway 31 across from Campus 124 to a new facility located at 2843 Pelham Parkway, across from the library.

Dale Gamble, Manager of Cahaba Tractor said he expects construction to be completed in mid-May, and he is now hiring for at least ten new employees. "Thanks to the citizens of Pelham and surrounding areas, our business grew and we needed a bigger place to accommodate additional inventory. We found the perfect piece of property, and we're happy to stay in Pelham," said Gamble. The new property sits on almost seven acres, a much larger space than the 1.75-acre plot of the existing location.

Gamble anticipated the new building will allow Cahaba Tractor to better serve the public with an expanded selection of tractors, zero-turn mowers, and Kubota equipment. The new location will make it easier to enter and exit from Highway 31, and the economic impact to Pelham should be substantial.



Oak Mountain Trail Development

When it was announced in October 2021 that the City of Pelham had acquired the Susan Schein property, there was some confusion in the community over where the land was located. This property in particular is not the Susan Schein dealership at the corner of Highway 31 and Word Drive. Rather, the eleven-acre property was once owned by Susan Schein and is the parcel of empty land behind the Shell gas station on Highway 52 East. It was named the Oak Mountain Trail development because it sits off of Oak Mountain Trail, the road that connects to Highway 35 from Highway 52 East.

Tractor Supply purchased approximately four acres for a new retail store. Construction is expected to begin in late summer.

City leadership's vision for the remaining seven acres is the development of a 100-140 room hotel, offering amenities such as a restaurant, fitness room, and pool. The hope is that the hotel will be convenient for out-of-town guests who visit the Pelham Racquet Club or Ballantrae Golf Course.

An additional 8,000-10,000 square feet of commercial space can be used as retail, restaurant space, or other neighborhood services. This could be built as a standalone building or two free-standing buildings.



The World Games 2022

This July, nearly 3,600 athletes from over 100 countries will converge on the Birmingham area for The World Games 2022. Thirty-four sporting events will take place at 24 competition venues over an eleven-day period. Pelham's Oak Mountain State Park is one of those venues.

The men's and women's Canoe Marathon competition is scheduled for July 11th & 12th. Men's and women's waterski and wakeboard events will take place July 14th-16th, and the Middle Distance Orienteering event will be held July 15th-17th.

Jay Kasten, Chief Operating Officer for The World Games 2022, was quick to praise Oak Mountain State Park as a venue. "Oak Mountain State Park is an Alabama treasure that is the ideal location to host several outdoor competitions of The World Games 2022, including Waterskiing, Wakeboarding, Canoe Marathon, and Middle Distance Orienteering. The park is a beautiful backdrop for these events, and its proximity to Birmingham is a huge plus for the thousands of visitors from all over the world who will be coming to witness these thrilling competitions."

Birmingham, which beat out Lima, Peru and Ufa, Russia as the host city of the World Games, had to wait an extra year to welcome the world. The World Games were originally planned for 2021, but the organization postponed the event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Opening Ceremony is on July 7th. Get your tickets today at www.twg2022.com.



Site Master Plan
Oak Mountain Trail Development



PURPOSEFUL PLANNING

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

No doubt, you have heard city leaders refer to Plan Pelham time and time again. Adopted in January 2020, it is our city's Comprehensive Plan and serves as a guide regarding land use, development, growth management, and capital improvement decisions over the next 15-20 years.

The Plan also influences zoning decisions, which in turn guides development permits in the city. Zoning is complex and often hard to understand, but its purpose is simple. It ensures balanced communities, protecting the rights of property owners while promoting the general welfare of the city.

A Zoning Official is responsible for safeguarding regulations and ensuring compliance for development of all types. Telling current businesses, future businesses, and residents how to manage their property to comply with the City's Zoning Ordinances can be unpopular at times. However, once the information is explained, those individuals see the importance of the Zoning Official's responsibility for maintaining the City's regulations.

Some of the typical regulatory compliance issues that staff encounter are non-permitted signs and banners and cars parked on the right-of-way. Other times it may be a camper, RV, or boat parked in the front yard.

A major takeaway from Plan Pelham was that residents and businesses wanted to see our major corridors cleaned up. The City listened by hiring a Zoning Compliance Inspector.

Rich Knighton's background is in architecture design. He canvases Pelham's thoroughfares daily. If an area is found to be out of compliance, he works with the

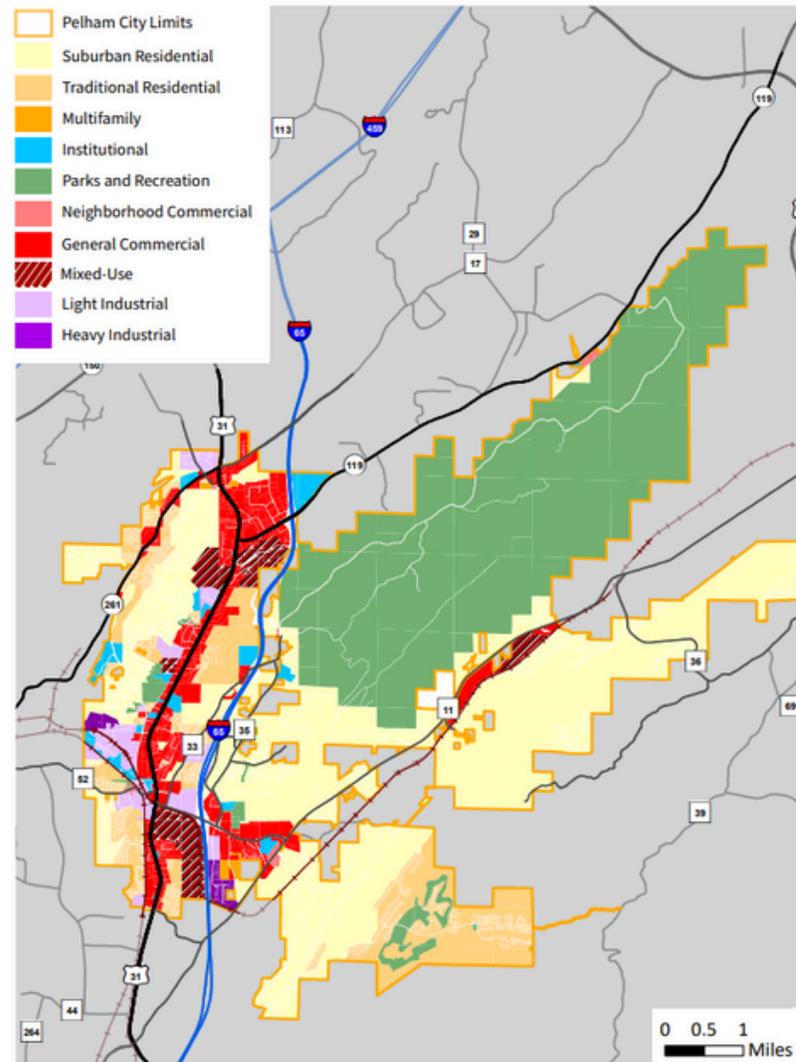


responsible party to ensure any problems are corrected. Knighton has lived in the Pelham area for 20 plus years, so he is invested in our city's success.

Knighton is involved with zoning compliance from the very beginning stages of new development. He assists with plan reviews and business license inspections for new tenants. His previous background has been so valuable in a short time to offer guidance and insights to existing development projects and new ones as they adapt to zoning regulation requirements.

While it is important to enforce current zoning, it is also important to listen. A zoning ordinance is a living, breathing document, and it is crucial to adapt to changes over time. One great example is the recent amendment to the section of the zoning ordinance governing home occupation. Staff had started seeing an increase in residents requesting a license for home business, which was most likely fueled by the pandemic. Prior to the latest amendment, home occupations were limited to residential zones with the exception of R-T TOWNHOUSE RESIDENTIAL and R-A APARTMENT DWELLING DISTRICT. It was discouraging to turn people away based on the current zoning requirements that prevented the resident from obtaining a license because they lived in an apartment or townhome. As a result, staff presented changes to the zoning ordinance to the Planning and Zoning Commission that were ultimately approved by the City Council.

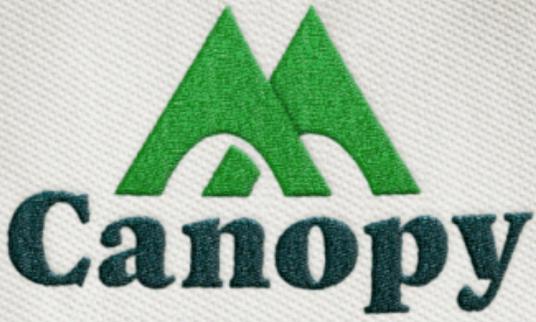
Figure 3.1: Future Land Use Map



Another major change to zoning that came out of the comprehensive planning process was the allowance of mixed-use developments. These are popular among developers these days and are attractive to cities because of the live-work-play experience they offer. The City has one such development underway and another has received approval.

Prior to 2020, Pelham's zoning ordinance did not allow for mixed-use developments. City leaders and staff worked with developers to understand their vision and then partnered with the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission to author an amendment. We now have the ability to work with smaller sites that would otherwise require a minimum of 40 acres for a Mixed-Use in a Planned Unit Development (PUD). This awards a lot of opportunities along the Highway 31 corridor where an abandoned property may have a higher use.





**There's a place where nature meets community.
Where great friends connect in anticipation of great
adventures — in the heart of the great outdoors.
Where spirits are lifted high above the treetops and
life slows to the pace of the noontday sun.**

**Waiting for you at the doorstep of Oak Mountain
State Park, The Canopy is a place like no other. So
stop by and soak it all in. Welcome to The Canopy.**



VOTING CHANGES

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

Alabama's new congressional district map will stand for the 2022 election. The new map was approved during a special session of the Alabama Legislature late last year and was immediately challenged in court by civil rights groups. A lower court struck down the map, ruling it violated the Voting Rights Act, however, the United States Supreme Court put the lower court's ruling on hold in early February, saying its order for a new map came too close to the 2022 election. The Supreme Court will review the case in full, although when has yet to be determined.

The state's House, Senate, and Board of Education district boundaries were also redrawn during the special session. So, what does all this talk about redistricting mean for you? It means the place where you vote may have changed. "Polling places tend to be a source of confusion for our residents when redistricting isn't in the mix," explained Mayor Gary W. Waters. "For municipal elections, every Pelham resident votes at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. That's not the case for county, state, and federal elections. That's why it was important to me that we include this information in this issue of *The Pelham Pathway*."

Precinct Changes

According to the Shelby County Chief Election Official, the Board of Registrars, and the Community Services Department, there are several changes to precincts in and around Pelham, which will shift some voters to new locations. The biggest change in Pelham will be that Pelham Recreation Center will no longer be a precinct, and a new precinct will be added at Westwood Baptist Church. Voters will be notified of any change in their voting location through postcards mailed to the address they provided when they registered to vote. Postcards should arrive prior to the start of absentee voting, which is March 30th.



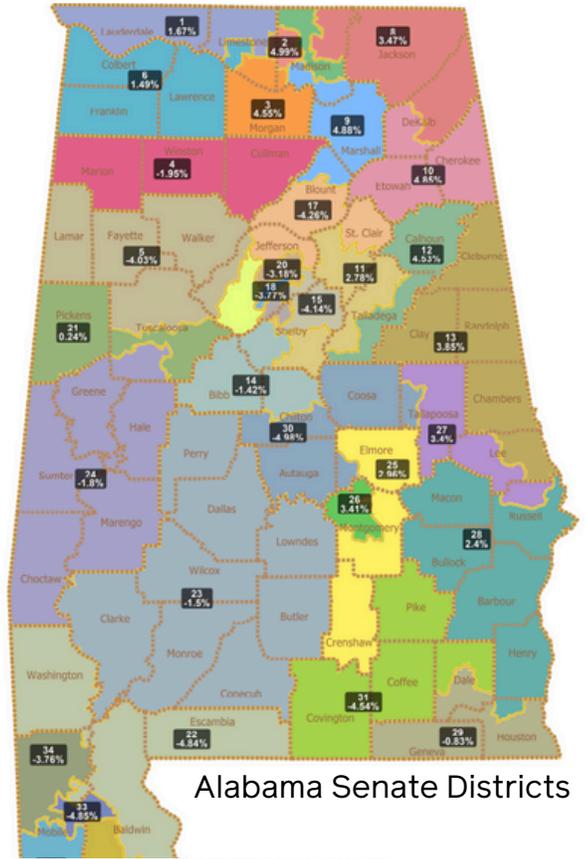
Knowledge is Power

It's important that you educate yourself now regarding potential changes this election cycle. The following is advice from election officials:

There are several things voters can do to ensure the voting process goes smoothly on election day. First, check your voter registration status. This can be done by going to the Elections section of the Alabama Secretary of State's website. Doing this well in advance of the election is recommended to allow time to correct any problems if you find you are not properly registered to vote. Voter registration is closed 14 days before an election.

Second, a registered voter can check the Secretary of State's website to see which races they are eligible to vote in for upcoming elections. While some races are statewide, others are limited to certain districts. This is especially important in a year like this where redistricting has occurred. It can be very frustrating for voters when they support a particular candidate only to learn when they arrive at the polls on election day that they do not reside in the district represented by that candidate.

Finally, it is a good idea to check your assigned voting precinct in order to make a plan of the best time to vote on election day. If you misplace your postcard for whatever reason, you can always find the information on the Secretary of State's website. It also breaks down whether your polling place is different for municipal elections versus state or national elections. We've placed a link to the Secretary of State's website on ours.



Alabama Senate Districts



Alabama House Districts

IMPORTANT DATES

PRIMARY ELECTION MAY 24

PRIMARY RUNOFF ELECTION JUNE 21

GENERAL ELECTION NOVEMBER 8

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE GAME OF GOLF

BY: GINA WOMACK



When Richard Crawford first stepped on a golf course at the age of 12, he never imagined where the game would take him, and the life lessons he would learn along the way. At 82-years old, Crawford still remembers those nuggets of wisdom and challenges himself to be the best he can be at any particular moment he is given.

Crawford, an Arkansas native, now calls Shelby County home. He is a regular player at Pelham's Ballantrae Golf Club, where he said the friendliness of the people makes him feel right at home. Crawford is a humble man, and many of his fellow golfers at Ballantrae may not know about his impressive golf resume, which includes back-to-back NCAA championships, a spot in the 1960 Masters Tournament as an amateur, and a member of the PGA Tour for eleven years.

Crawford's golf journey began in El Dorado, Arkansas when a neighbor would knock on the door every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. and say, "Are you ready to go golfing?"

Crawford was the man's caddie and earned 50 cents for 18 holes. The golf pro at the local club was a man by the name of Hogan Rountree. He took a liking to Crawford and hired him to do odd jobs at the club. "Hogan Rountree was someone who had a profound impact on my golfing career, and my life," Crawford explained. "He loved golf, and he loved kids. He went to the superintendent of schools in El Dorado and asked if he would allow children who wanted to take 6th period P.E. to come to the golf course and he would teach them the game. Out of that group came some pretty good golfers."

Rountree kept the young golfer on a level playing field with some wise lessons. "He taught me to hit the golf shot the best I could. He would say, 'Once the golf shot is over, it's over. You have to move on and play the next shot.' That's how I was taught to play golf, and I'm very thankful for that. I was taught to stay out of the peaks and valleys and always look to the next shot. I learned at the end of the day, I had to maintain my focus on the situation I was in. The past is the past.

The future is the future. This applies both in athletics and in life."

Crawford's game was also influenced by another neighbor, Davis Love Jr. "Davis was three or four years older than me, and our houses in the neighborhood were separated by an alley." Love went on to become a professional golfer and instructor and was tragically killed in a plane crash in 1988. He is the father of PGA Tour pro, Davis Love III.

At El Dorado High School, Crawford honed his golf skills. "It was four years of prepping, toning, and building my interest in the game," he said. Interestingly, Crawford was not recruited for college golf. During his senior year of high school, Crawford's uncle, who was in the lumber business, took a trip to see some customers in Houston, Texas. Crawford tagged along, and while his uncle was busy with work, Crawford visited Rice University, the University of Houston, and Sam Houston State University.

"I liked the University of Houston. Jacky Cupit was on the golf team, and I talked to him about going to school there. I was a walk-on my freshman year. I made the freshman team, and then the varsity team the next year. We ended up having a good golf program under Coach Dave Williams," said Crawford. He went on to explain that Williams is regarded as an icon in collegiate golf. He coached 16 national championship teams in his 36-year tenure. "I was very blessed to serve on some of those teams," Crawford reflected. Not only did the Cougars win back-to-back national championships in 1959 and 1960 as a team, but Richard Crawford also won back-to-back individual titles the same two years.



Richard Crawford won back-to-back individual NCAA titles in 1959 and 1960. He still plays golf at Ballantrae Golf Club today.

He reminisced about the closeness of his teammates from those days. "There was a lot of travel. Back then, seven of us would load up in a station wagon packed with golf equipment and suitcases. There was no money to fly on private airplanes. We drove from Houston to Colorado Springs. Being crammed in that station wagon, we all got to be good friends."



University of Houston National Championship team: L to R: Homero Blancas, Tony Merriman, Coach Dave Williams, Jacky Cupit, Richard Crawford.

Another milestone in Crawford's golf career happened during his junior year of college. He played in the 1960 Masters Tournament as an amateur.

Crawford explained in those days, the past amateur champions would vote one amateur into the field at Augusta. "I was very blessed to have the relationships and friendships I had during my college days. The University of Houston had a work program, and I would work on weekends at the Champions Golf Course." The founder of the golf course, Jack Burke Jr., took Crawford under his wing. "When it came time for me to go to Augusta, Jack drove me to Atlanta, and from there I went on to Augusta." Crawford reminisced about the experience of playing in one of golf's premier events. "Just being on the grounds of such a historic place as Augusta National was a thrill." Amateurs playing in the Masters are housed in the Crow's Nest, a bell-tower type structure atop the Augusta National clubhouse. The Crow's Nest is set up like a dormitory with accommodations for the small group.

One of Crawford's fellow amateurs in the Crow's Nest was a man named Ward Wettlaufer. On the Tuesday night before tournament play, Crawford and Wettlaufer decided to go see a movie in downtown Augusta. What they did not know was taxis stopped running at 10:00 pm in the then-sleepy Georgia town.



Richard Crawford joined the PGA Tour in 1964 and played professionally for eleven years. He competed against now-legends Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus.

When the movie was over, the two realized they had no choice but to walk the approximately four miles back to Augusta National. When they arrived, Crawford and Wettlaufer found the gates locked. "We didn't see any other option but to climb over, so we scaled the main gate. Just as we finished the climb, bam! We were hit with bright lights. The security guard questioned us. We told him who we were and showed him our credentials. The guard told us to see Mr. Roberts first thing the next morning," Crawford chuckled. Clifford Roberts, along with Bobby Jones, was the co-founder of Augusta National. The two were also the founders of the Master's Tournament in 1934.

"Of course we were scared. Mr. Roberts was the czar of Augusta National at that time. We went to his office that morning and found him drinking coffee and reading his newspaper. He said, 'Sit down, boys. Tell me what happened.' We explained, and at the conclusion, Ward looked at him and said, 'Do we need to go pack our suitcases and go home?' Mr. Roberts looked at us and said, 'Let me think about it.' He paused. 'Gates close at 10:00 pm; be back on the property by that time. Furthermore, I want you to have a successful golf tournament.'" Relieved, the two went on to prepare for the opportunity of a lifetime.

Crawford played four rounds and finished tied for 29th. The low amateur that year was an up-and-coming golfer named Jack Nicklaus. The winner was Arnold Palmer. "One memory I cherish to this day is the 72nd hole, a par 4 at Augusta. On Sunday I had hit the second shot into the right bunker. The wind was blowing in my face, but it hit the bunker. I hit the shot, short of the cup. It bounced, hit the edge of the hole, bounced up, and lipped out. It was only about 3 inches from the hole. I heard the roar of the crowd. I still get chills today just thinking about it. It was the highlight for me. I hit a good golf shot. Had that shot gone in the hole, I would have been exempt to go to Augusta the next year. I missed it by one."



Hole No. 18 at Augusta National | "Holly"
Par 4 | 465 yards

Source: The Masters

Crawford again credits his mentor, Hogan Rountree, for helping to keep him grounded during the success of his college and amateur years. As Crawford was rubbing elbows with the likes of Arnold Palmer and Gary Player, Rountree put things in perspective. "He said, 'Don't get wrapped up in other people. They put their pants on one leg at a time. Be sure to treat them the way you want them to treat you. When you're on the golf course, beat them with the integrity of the game. Remember, it's a gentlemen's game.' I certainly kept that in mind. When I'm on the golf course, all I ask from my competitors is that they give me 100 percent, and do the best they can do. In return, I'll do the same. That's the game of golf. When it's over, you shake hands and say, 'Well, you beat me today. I'll get you tomorrow.'"

Richard Crawford turned pro in 1962 at 24 years old and joined the PGA Tour in 1964. He spent eleven years on the road, and married and started a family during that time. "Those were truly golden days, but it was hard work. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears went into my golf career. I lived out of a suitcase 30 weeks a year and put a lot of miles on my car. I had to get a new car every two years or so because of all of the travel. In those days, we traveled from city to city by car and we'd join up with other players' families at various locations. Naturally, we were trying to be as economical as possible, but it was a joy to spend time with good friends and to have our kids grow up together. We grew close as a family, and we made adjustments due to our life on the road."

In his career, Crawford played in most of the major tournaments. The most memorable of his tour days was the first year of the Heritage Classic at Hilton Head, South Carolina in 1969. "I had to two-putt on the last hole to win the tournament. Arnold Palmer wound up winning. I will always remember those circumstances." Crawford laughed and referred to himself as "the Avis boy," a reference to an old advertising campaign where Avis Car Rental embraced their position as second place in the car rental hierarchy. "I would always come in second," he chuckled. In addition to the 1969 Heritage Classic, Crawford also finished second in the 1967 Atlanta Classic, and the 1970 Greater Milwaukee Open. Crawford's best finish in a professional major championship was a tie for 20th in the 1967 PGA Championship.

Following his time with the PGA Tour, Crawford became the head golf professional at Green Island Country Club in Columbus, Georgia, and the Jennings Mill Country Club in Athens, Georgia. He was also a professional golf instructor in Atlanta. Crawford was inducted into the Arkansas Golf Hall of Fame and the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame.

When asked what made his tenure as a golf instructor so rewarding, Crawford said, "Golf was a game with which I had personal experience. I went through the ups and downs, the joy and the heartache. The thing I wanted my students to remember was simple. Just because you hit a bad hole, you can move on and salvage it on the next. It's how you finish, not how you start. The secret to the game of golf is having the ability, fortitude, focus, and the desire to take sixes and turn them into fives; the fives to fours; the fours to threes, and the threes to twos."

Crawford and his wife Dianne retired to the Birmingham area. "My daughter lives in Birmingham, so when we retired, she said, 'Come live here and I'll take care of you when you're old. We now live about three miles from each other.'" The Crawfords also have a son who lives in Jacksonville, Florida. Between their two children, the Crawfords have one granddaughter and two grandsons.

On November 18, 2021, Crawford underwent triple bypass surgery. He's currently recovering at home. "Hopefully I will be able to get back to visit and play golf at Ballantrae. Just like Arnold Palmer once said, 'I know I don't hit the ball as far as I used to. I can now hear it hit the ground.' I can relate. My golf shots don't go near as far as they used to," Crawford quipped.

After all these years, Richard Crawford is still in love with the game. "It's the competition. I don't mean the competition between me and another person, but the competition between me, the golf course and the golf ball. I like the fact that out there I can produce the best result I'm capable of at that given moment. I always challenge myself to be the best I can be during each moment I'm given."



A GUIDE TO SPRING ACTIVITIES



BALLANTRAE GOLF CLUB

PGA Junior League

Ballantrae Golf Club will field a PGA Junior League team captained by Head Golf Professional Jay Chambers. The program is designed for children ages 8-13 of any skill level. The team will play six matches this summer against other teams from local golfing facilities. The cost is \$299 per player and includes two jerseys, a hat, a backpack, and a bag tag for their golf bag. Players can expect to have eight to ten practices. Registration is open through May 31st.

For more information, contact Ballantrae Head Golf Professional Jay Chambers.

205.620.4653

jchambers@pelhamalabama.gov

Book Your Event at the Fireside Grill

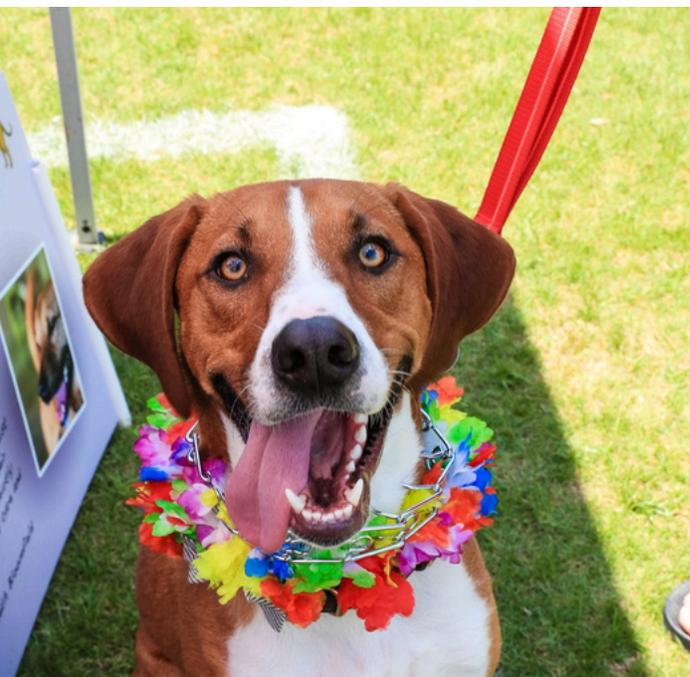
The Ballantrae Clubhouse has plenty of room to relax before or after a round of golf. There is a fully stocked bar with an assortment of beverages and food and a great seating area for you to watch your favorite sports team.

The Fireside Grill is available for many types of functions ranging from small business meetings up to wedding receptions after golf hours.

To reserve the Fireside Grill for an event, please contact Food and Beverage Manager Tori Rawlins.

205.620.4653

trawlins@pelhamalabama.gov



THE CITY OF PELHAM PRESENTS



PALOOZA

IN THE PARK

MAY 21, 2022

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

TRAIL SYSTEM @ PELHAM
RECREATION CENTER

Artisan Vendors

Food Trucks

Live Music

Kidzapalooza!

Walking Trails

Dog Park

pelhampalooza.live

USTA PRO CIRCUIT

Pelham Racquet Club **Pro Classic**

May 15th - May 22nd

The Pelham Racquet Club is one of the largest public clay court facilities in the state, with 20 clay courts and five hard courts. It has an impeccable reputation in the tennis community here at home and around the world.

The Pelham Racquet Club hosts an annual USTA Pro Circuit women's tournament, which is sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation. Typically a \$25,000 event, the ITF and USTA chose to elevate it to a \$60,000 event in 2022. Because the purse is bigger, this tournament will attract higher-ranked players.

The USTA Pro Circuit tour serves as a pathway to the US Open and tour-level competition for aspiring tennis players and is a frequent battleground for established players who are looking to earn points and prize money.

"The Pelham Women's Event has been a staple of the USTA Pro Circuit family for almost 20 years and we have been incredibly fortunate to witness the growth of the event during that time," said Pro Circuit Senior Manager Idelle Pierre-Louis. "We are thrilled to see they are elevating to an ITF W60 and will be cheering them as they continue their tradition of world-class tennis combined with world-class hospitality in Pelham."



PARKS & RECREATION

Paws in the Park

Join us for a fun-filled day with four-legged friends at Pelham City Park. Bring a donation of dog or cat food to support Pelham Pet Pantry. Shelby Humane Society will have adoptable pets on-site and will also host a vaccine clinic.

Where: Pelham City Park

When: March 20th

Time: 2:00 pm

Create a Nature Scrapbook

This fun and educational class will teach children about the two basic types of leaves, along with their variations. Using this information, students will collect ten leaves and press them into a scrapbook. The session will be led by a Shelby County Master Gardener.

Where: Pelham City Park

When: April 9th

Time: 9:30 am

Ages: 7-12 with adult

Register at www.pelhamalrecreation.gov

A Very Special Easter Egg Hunt

This special event is for families of children with a disability or limitation and their siblings. There will be two egg hunts: ages ten and under and ages eleven and older. Siblings are welcome to hunt, too.

Where: Pelham City Park Practice Field

When: April 12th

Time: 5:30 pm

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Find plants, amphibians, fungi, fish, reptiles, arachnids, birds, insects, mollusks, and mammals. After a Master Gardener briefing on species native to our park, this workshop sends children on a scavenger hunt along the park trail to find those species.

Where: Pelham City Park

When: May 7th

Time: 9:30 am

Ages: 7-12 with adult

Register at www.pelhamalrecreation.gov





LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Understanding Medicare

This monthly presentation simplifies complex issues such as the different Medicare parts, enrolling, and more. The seminar is free and open to the public.

Register at www.pelhamlibraryal.gov

Homeschool 4-H Club

Homeschool students ages five and up will learn about the world around them as part of this club. To become a member of Shelby County 4-H, children can register at <https://v2.4Honline.com>.

When: April 12th & May 10th

Time: 9:30 am

*Masks required

Star Wars Day

Celebrate Star Wars with fun activities in the Children's Department throughout the day. May the fourth be with you.

When: May 4th

Time: All day

Special Performers

Magic, puppets, and wild animals. You never know what you might see at these special programs! No registration is necessary.

When: Tuesdays, May 31st-June 28th

Time: 2:00pm

Preschool Storytime

Ms. Rebecca & Ms. Ashley present stories, songs, and more along with a craft and a snack.

When: Wednesdays in April

Time: 9:15 am & 10:30 am

PJ Storytime

Wear your favorite PJs as you join Ms. Ashley for fun and stories along with a craft and a snack.

When: Thursdays in April & June

Time: 6:30 pm

Storytime in the Park

Join us at the pavilion in City Park for stories, songs, and more along with a craft and a snack.

When: Wednesdays in June

Time: 10:00 am

Tech Time

For children ages eight through twelve. Enjoy fun STEM activities at the City Park Pavilion.

When: Thursdays in June

Time: 2:00 pm

Register at www.pelhamlibraryal.gov

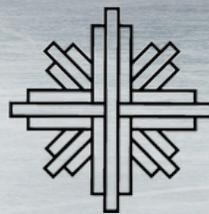


Summer Reading Program
Registration begins May 21st

Blades in Birmingham

April 23rd & April 24th

BFSC
BIRMINGHAM
Figure Skating Club



Pelham
Civic Complex
& Ice Arena





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THE WORLD GAMES
JULY 2022



TEAM USA
SOFTBALL



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