



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Inside Lane

Fall 2019

Rebuild Alabama Act to Address Funding Needs

In a special session, legislators passed the first gas tax increase in Alabama since 1992.

Gov. Kay Ivey praised legislators of both parties. "Today we have made a bold step forward, a major step indeed, because we have chosen to work in a bipartisan way," the governor said before signing the bill.

On Sept. 1, 2019, the gas tax saw a 6-cent increase, followed by a 2-cent increase Oct. 1, 2020, and a 2-cent increase Oct. 1, 2021. Beginning in 2023, the tax will be tied to the National Highway Construction Cost Index (NHCCI) and go through automatic adjustments not exceeding one cent per gallon every two years.

The increase is estimated to bring in \$122 million next year. The funds will increase to \$164 million in 2021 and to \$206 million in 2022, before indexing begins.

About 67 percent of the money raised from the tax will go to ALDOT. Twenty-five percent will go to counties, with 45 percent of that allocation distributed evenly among the 67 counties, and the rest allocated based on population.

Alabama cities will get about 8 percent of the funds.

The legislation also establishes a \$200 annual fee on electric vehicles and a \$100 fee on plug-in hybrids. Some of the money raised will fund a grant program to install electric transportation infrastructure, like charging stations.

The Port of Mobile will also see much needed improvements in the future, thanks to \$11.7 million a year from the new revenue. This allocation will allow for a larger pool of federal funding to be drawn down to help deepen and widen the port's channel, allowing for its usage by larger cargo ships that it currently cannot accommodate.

"While this new revenue is not a cure-all for our infrastructure needs," said Transportation Director John Cooper, "it is certainly a step in the right direction."



Gov. Ivey addresses the media on March 1, 2019 on Capitol Steps about the Rebuild Alabama Act



Gov. Ivey signs the Rebuild Alabama Act at a bill signing ceremony on March 12, 2019 in the Old House Chamber of the Capitol building. Joining Gov. Ivey is a bipartisan group of legislators including bill sponsors Rep. Bill Poole and Sen. Clyde Chambliss

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Governor Announces First Year of ATRIP-II Projects

Gov. Kay Ivey and ALDOT on Thursday, Oct. 10, announced that more than \$30 million in funding is being awarded to cities and counties for various road and bridge projects.

The funding is made available through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II), a program created under the Rebuild Alabama Act. The Rebuild Alabama Act requires ATRIP-II to be an annual program setting aside a minimum of \$30 million off the top of ALDOT's share of new gas tax revenue for projects of local interest on the state highway system.

"An investment in our roads and bridges is an investment in the future of Alabama," Ivey said. "I am proud to see projects resulting from the

Rebuild Alabama Act already getting off the ground. Soon, every Alabama citizen will feel the benefits from this additional investment in our infrastructure."

There were 28 projects selected for funding for a total of \$30.13 million from ALDOT. Half of the successful applications from cities and counties put forward local funds, for a total of approximately \$9.5 million. However, matching funds was not a requirement to be eligible. Local governments submitted 121 applications requesting approximately \$148 million in funding, five times the amount available to be allocated.

With a maximum award amount set by the ATRIP-II Committee at \$2 million, three cities

each put forward upwards of \$1.7 million—Saraland: \$2.74 million, Dothan: \$2.46 million, and Springville: \$1.73 million—in order to leverage the maximum award for local projects worth from \$3.73 million to \$4.74 million.

Local projects range from additional lanes to intersection improvements and turn lanes, all of which are on state and U.S. highways.

The projects were selected by the ATRIP-II Committee created by the Rebuild Alabama Act. It is anticipated that all projects will be under contract during the 2020 fiscal year, after bids are taken. Projects are required to move forward within two years of the awarding of funds.

Region Engineer Vince Calametti Retires, Matthew Ericksen Promoted

It was a bitter-sweet March for the Southwest Region as staff said goodbye to retiring Region Engineer Vince Calametti. Calametti served as Region Engineer since October 2013. Prior to ALDOT establishing regions as part of the Department's organizational structure and his appointment as Southwest Region Engineer, Calametti served as Ninth Division Engineer since 2008.

After starting his career with ALDOT on the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge construction project, Calametti led the ALDOT Southwest Region as Construction Engineer. During his 32 years with ALDOT, Calametti was involved in construction projects totaling more than \$2 billion.

In March, Deputy Director of Operations George Conner appointed long-time ALDOT employee Matthew Ericksen as Southwest Region Engineer.

"Matt Ericksen has been exceptional at every job he has held within ALDOT," said Conner. "I have complete confidence that he will do the same as he leads our Southwest Region."

Ericksen began his career with ALDOT in 1992 as a graduate civil engineer following graduation from The University of Alabama. Ericksen, a professional engineer, has held several positions in the Mobile Area, including Mobile District Engineer, Division Materials & Tests Engineer and Division Construction Engineer. In 2013, he was promoted to Assistant



Vince Calametti

Regional Engineer and was appointed as Mobile River Bridge & Bayway Project Director in 2017.

"I look forward to building on the progress made in the Southwest Region by our employees as we



Matt Ericksen

work through the challenges facing our Region's infrastructure," said Ericksen. "I am excited about the opportunity to advance some of the transformative projects in our Region."



Operators Compete at Heavy Equipment Rodeo

ALDOT held its inaugural statewide Heavy Equipment Rodeo at the Garrett Coliseum in Montgomery on July 30, 2019. This was an opportunity for equipment operators to test their skills and safety awareness of the machines they use daily on construction projects.

The Rodeo was comprised of several events. For example, maneuvering a tractor-mower through a pattern of cones or using a backhoe to scoop up golf balls and ring them into cylinders. Other events included parallel parking single and tandem-axle dump trucks or winding them through a serpentine of cones. Points were deducted for things like making safety errors, hitting cones or failure to complete an event in the allotted time frame.

Also, operators showcased their safety and precision with a motor grader by knocking tennis balls from a pedestal. Operators were to drive the motor grader past a series of tennis balls that were on top of pedestals, lowering the blade with just enough precision to knock the tennis balls off while keeping the pedestals upright.

Most equipment operators miss luncheons and holiday parties with their work group because they must leave the office early in the morning to spend most of their day out in the work zone. The Rodeo gave them an opportunity to not only meet other district equipment operators, but to also showcase the incredible dexterity it takes to use these large machines safely and effectively.



Overall Winners

- 1st Place Tuscumbia
- 2nd Place Grove Hill
- 3rd Place Guntersville

Birmingham's I-59/20 Central Business District Bridge Project Update

Birmingham's I-59/20 Central Business District (CBD) bridge project, well underway in Phase III, continues to make steady progress and is on track for the CBD bridges to re-open by March 2020.

About the Project

The 59/20 CBD Project was a necessary investment in Alabama infrastructure, as the original bridges had nearly doubled their original traffic capacity. Designed in the 1960s, the bridges were originally intended to accommodate up to 80,000 vehicles per day over a period of 30 years. Today, nearly 60 years later, daily traffic exceeds 165,000 vehicles per day, and is expected to increase to 225,000 vehicles per day by 2035, making the original design functionally obsolete.

One Project, Four Phases

There were three phases that had to be completed in advance of the current and final phase. Phase A consisted of replacing the bridges at 31st and 12th Avenues. Phase I

involved widening of the I-65 bridges over 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Avenues. Phase II included reconstruction of the interchange at I-59/20 and I-65. The current phase includes demolition and reconstruction of the elevated portions of I-59/20 through downtown Birmingham and the reconstruction of the interchange at US-280/31.

The Construction Process

In order to minimize downtime in one of the busiest sections of Alabama's Interstate, the new bridges are being erected through segmental construction. The bridge's 2,316 segments and 153 columns were pre-cast off-site at a nearby casting yard. The contractor is also working on multiple sections simultaneously to allow for continuous progression. At the time of this report, segment and column casting is nearing completion, segments are being installed at a rate of approximately 400/month, and all new bridge caps are in place.

Communication Efforts & Community Outreach

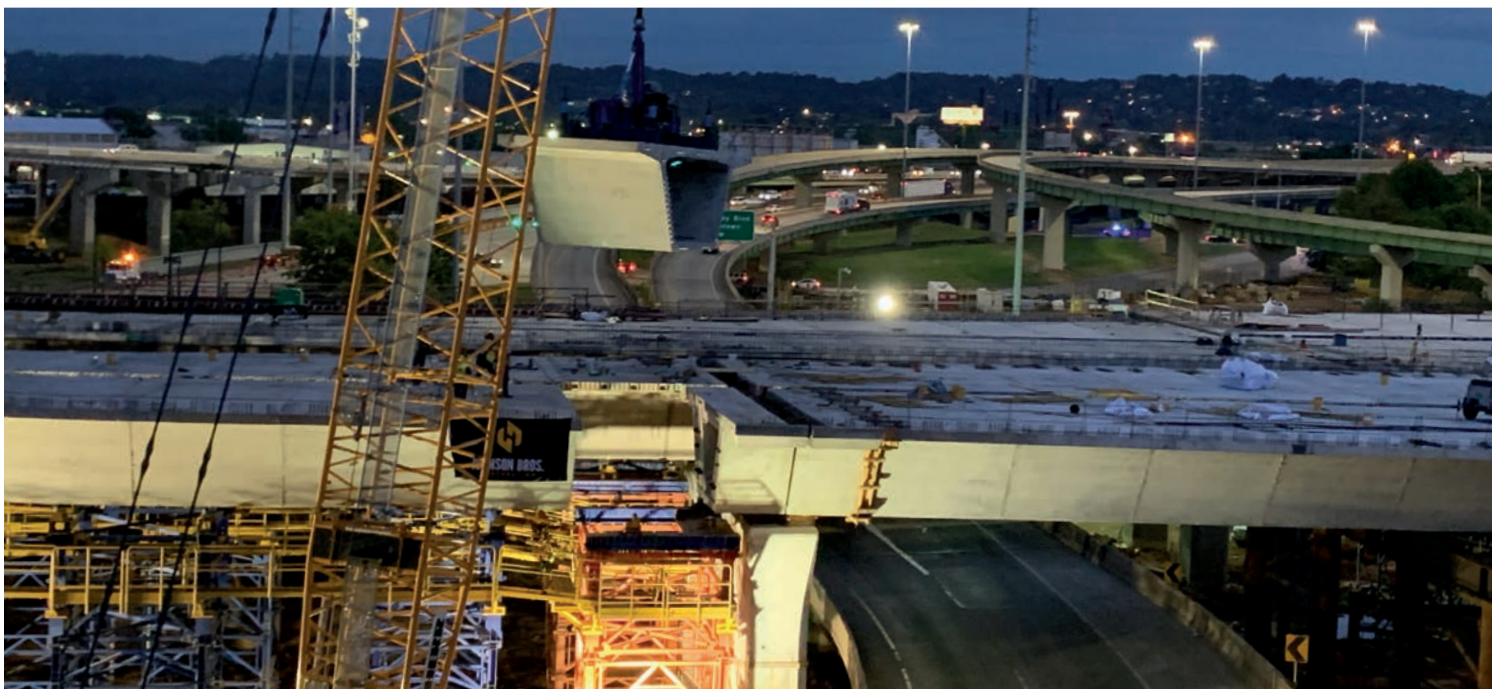
Due to the volume of motorists impacted by this project, an ongoing comprehensive public

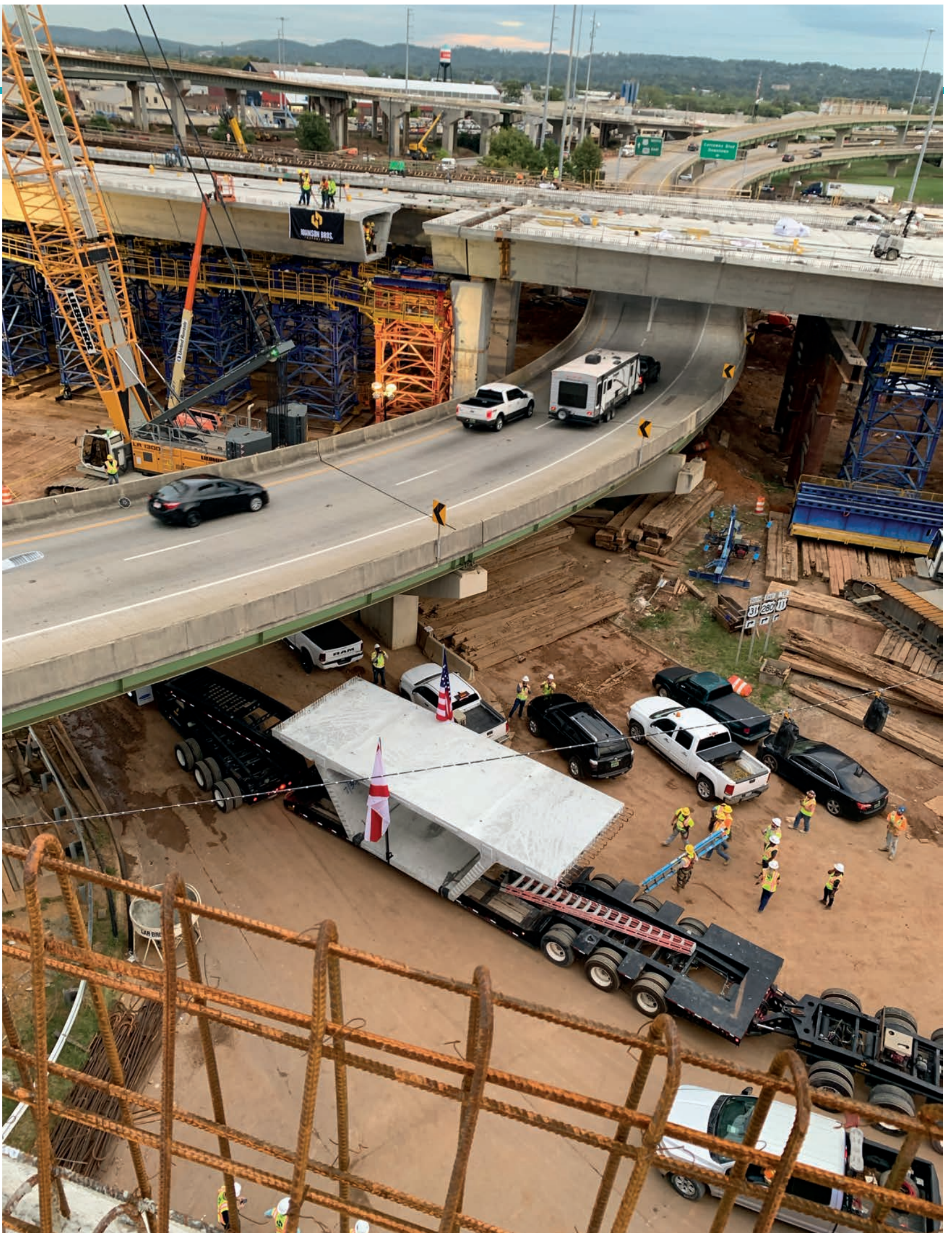
awareness campaign has been implemented. Efforts include a project-specific website with daily updates, including closure announcements and detour routes; social media outreach; geographically-targeted digital ads; and public service announcements on television and radio. Press conferences and monthly webinar-style media briefings, along with daily/weekly media advisories are used to keep the press informed of short- and long-term closures and construction activities. Strategic partnerships with the City of Birmingham, Jefferson County EMA, the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center, the Alabama Trucking Association and the American Trucking Association have served to significantly broaden the communication reach. ALDOT representatives attend monthly neighborhood association meetings to keep citizens informed and address community concerns.

Project Completion

The 59/20 CBD Project is expected to be completed in its entirety by November 2020.

www.5920bridge.com







West Central Region News

ATV Crew Takes on Litter

ALDOT spent \$6.59 million in 2018 on litter cleanup throughout the state, including \$541,802 in the Tuscaloosa Area and \$351,985 in the Fayette Area, money which could be used to build and maintain roads and bridges.

To combat the litter issue in the West Central Region, ALDOT now has a five-person crew with the sole responsibility of picking up litter. The crew, equipped with all-terrain vehicles, has disposed of approximately 51 tons of litter, the equivalent of filling 18 dump trucks, since it started work in November 2018.

Dallas Richey, the crew leader for the group, said he's surprised at the amount of litter found along the roadway and that some of it could be avoided if motorists tarped their trucks.

"People throw out so much," Richey said. "When you don't tarp your truck, you have trash coming out the back and it gets all over the road. When they bush hog, that cardboard turns into a thousand pieces and doesn't make our roads look good."

Litter harms the environment and has a negative impact on safety while diminishing the natural beauty of the state. According to the U.S. National Park Service, a tin can take 50 years to decompose, while a plastic bottle takes 450 years to break down.

Richey said that the ATVs, which arrived in April, have expedited the litter pickup process.

"We can really get so much more in one day now," Richey said. "The ATVs save on manpower, time and energy and increases production."

There are many ways for residents to keep Alabama beautiful:

Dispose of trash properly.

Never throw anything out of the vehicle window.

Carry a small trash bag in the vehicle.

Properly secure loads when hauling loose items.



ALDOT partners with Keep Alabama Beautiful, People Against a Littered State (PALS) and the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to help keep Alabama litter-free.



East Central Region News

Improvements Coming to Calera Interchange at I-65

Interchange Improvements on I-65 at the US 31 Interchange is an Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP) Project sponsored by the City of Calera in conjunction with ALDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.

The project is for bridge replacement and interchange improvements on I-65 at US-31 (Exit 231) in Calera. Prior to construction, the US-31 overpass consisted of a two-lane bridge with no shoulders. This area is extremely congested between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. daily.

Once the project is complete, the US-31 bridge over I-65 will consist of two northbound through lanes, two southbound through lanes, and dual-left turn lanes to enter the interstate on both the northbound and southbound directions. There are extensive commercial developments at this interchange, and the improved ingress and egress to the interstate will drastically reduce congestion at this interchange.

This project will be invaluable both to the residents and businesses of the City of Calera, as well as to travelers exiting at this interchange for fuel or to



eat at one of many restaurants nearby. The City of Calera was instrumental in the conception of this project, which is a great example of progress that can be made with collaboration between cities, ALDOT, and the FHWA.

The project was awarded in October 2017 to a joint venture of McInnis Construction, LLC and Chilton Contractors, Inc., with a bid amount of \$18,088,259.14. Thompson Engineering is performing the CE&I on this project. Currently the project is about 60% complete and is expected to be finished toward the end of 2019.



When It Rains, It Pours, and ALDOT Pumps



ALDOT personnel worked around the clock for days to reduce flooding that trapped residents on county roads off SR-101 north of Town Creek in Lawrence County when a prolonged rain event capped off a wet winter.

According to the National Weather Service, more than 14 inches of precipitation were recorded at the Muscle Shoals airport during February. More than 30 inches were recorded from Dec. 1, 2018 to Feb. 28, 2019.

“It was unique in our experience in Tuscumbia Area Maintenance because it was the most sustained rain event we had since the Christmas Day floods three years prior, and it was more sustained than that,” said Tuscumbia Area Maintenance Engineer Dallon Ogle. “We had a local farmer who reported 19 inches of rain in a three-day span,” Ogle said.

On Feb. 24, ALDOT closed part of SR-101 in the Lennon Hill community. Ogle said the flooded area is in a topographical depression and drains slowly, especially when the ground is already saturated by weeks of rainfall.

Based on drone mapping and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), engineers estimated about 200 million gallons of water covered nearly 160 acres in the low-lying area. About 1,500 feet of the highway was covered, with a few feet of water covering the roadway at its lowest point.

Lawrence CR-406, which intersects with SR-101, was also underwater. About 25 residents had no way to enter or exit their neighborhood other than a marshy path.

With water levels dropping slowly and additional rainfall in the forecast, ALDOT and the Lawrence County Engineer’s office coordinated to develop a plan to partially drain the area.

ALDOT acquired two 6-inch, diesel-powered pumps from a Birmingham-based rental contractor and on March 8 began pumping water into ditches along nearby CR-268. Lawrence County improved the ditches and replaced pipes to make sure they could handle the heavy flow.

Nine days later, the intersection of SR-101 and CR-406 was reopened, allowing residents of CR-406 to travel the roads around their homes. A few days after that, the highway was reopened to through traffic.

Ogle said a nearby Colbert County road that flooded during the same event didn’t reopen until mid-June. “Had we not looked at extraordinary measures, the road probably would have stayed closed for several more months,” he said.

Lawrence County Engineer, Winston Sitton, said the county alone would not have been capable of such a fix.

“The community and the county were very thankful for all the efforts ALDOT put in to get the water down so those people could get to their homes,” Sitton said.



Southeast Region Expands ASAP and TMC

Traffic incidents take a tremendous toll on the economy, on the safety of motorists and emergency responders, and on our overall quality of life. As part of ALDOT's Traffic Incident Management Program to detect, respond, and clear traffic incidents, the Montgomery Area opened its Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) and has expanded operations to 24 hours a day, year-round.

"The TMC acts as the communication hub among ALDOT, stakeholders, and the public," said Kris Kiefer, Southeast Region TSMO Engineer. The RTMC monitors more than 120 cameras around Montgomery, Troy, and Dothan to detect incidents.

Once an incident is detected, the Montgomery Area's Alabama Service and Assistance Patrol (ASAP) is called to assist. RTMC staff then communicate the incident to the public through the ALGO Traffic website, ALGO app, and Twitter.

The ASAP program has been a valuable asset to the Department.

"We have assisted thousands of drivers to get them on their way and get off the side of the interstate," said Jerry Farmer, ASAP driver.

Keeping the interstates clear and traffic flowing smoothly means safer roads for motorists. Studies show that secondary incidents that follow an initial incident make up 14-18 percent of all crashes and are estimated to cause up to 18 percent of roadway deaths.

In October 2017, the Southeast Region introduced ASAP in Montgomery with one



driver operating five days week. ASAP now has two trucks and three drivers to monitor the interstates in and around Montgomery from 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

In addition to regular hours, ASAP operates during Auburn football home games two hours before kickoff and two to three hours after the game, depending on need.

From July 2018 to June 2019, the Montgomery Area RTMC confirmed approximately 11,000 incidents with a little over 4,000 of those being crashes. ASAP has stopped more than 3,000 times to assist with incidents along area interstates.



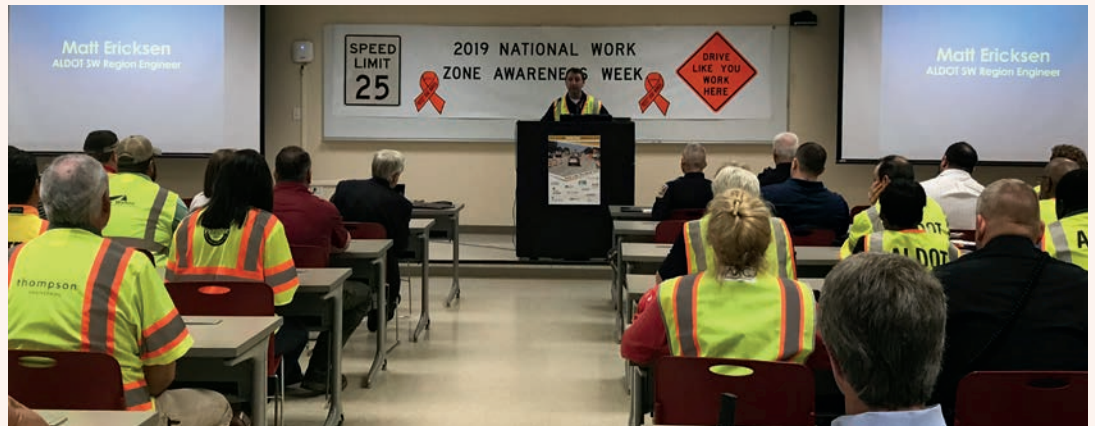
Shining a Light on Work Zone Safety

On March 13, 2019, Clay Crutcher was working in an active ALDOT construction zone on Dauphin Island Parkway when he was struck by a driver and killed. Crutcher was a John G. Walton Construction Company employee highly regarded by his co-workers. The tragedy happened on the cusp of National Work Zone Awareness Week when the ALDOT Southwest Region annually hosts a press conference highlighting the importance of driving safely through a work zone.

In light of the loss of an employee from one of its member firms, the Alabama General Contractors Association, Mobile Section, co-hosted a Work Zone Awareness Week press conference with ALDOT at the Southwest Region Mobile Area offices.

On April 8, ALDOT employees filled the room wearing neon green and orange safety vests. Several local news stations attended the press conference where they interviewed guest speakers such as ALDOT State Construction Engineer Skip Powe and John G. Walton Construction Company owner Johnny Walton. Several Mobile and Baldwin County law enforcement agency officers spoke as well, expressing their continued support to keep work zones safe for both workers and motorists.

There was a heaviness in the room as Walton spoke not only of the



loss of Crutcher but also of his son, Marshall, who was struck and killed by a driver in a work zone in 2015. After the loss of their son, the Waltons effectively campaigned to amend the Alabama vehicular homicide statute to make vehicular homicide a Class C felony punishable by one to nine years in prison.

ALDOT Southwest Region has a police presence and message boards on its active construction zones. Both safety measures are used to remind motorists to slow down and use caution while passing through a work zone. ALDOT Construction and Traffic personnel work together to

develop and implement the best traffic control device placements to guide motorists safely through a work zone in the most effective way.

Recognizing Outstanding Rest Areas and Welcome Centers

Rest Areas and Welcome Centers are convenient and useful stops for motorists traveling through Alabama. They serve a variety of users including tourists, local traffic and the trucking industry. The dedicated employees at each of these facilities work hard to provide a safe and comfortable experience for everyone who visits them.

ALDOT recognizes an outstanding Rest Area and Welcome Center every quarter. The facilities are chosen based on their appeal, maintenance, safety and cleanliness. Of the 27 Rest Areas and Welcome Centers ALDOT operates, four of them stood out from the others. A ceremony is held in Montgomery every quarter to recognize them.



Tuscaloosa County Rest Area on I-59/20 N
Outstanding Rest Area for the Winter Quarter 2018



Chilton County Rest Area on US-82
Outstanding Rest Area for the Spring Quarter 2018

Houston County Welcome Center on US-231 (Not Pictured)
Outstanding Welcome Center for the Winter Quarter 2018



Ardmore Welcome Center on I-65 in Limestone County
Outstanding Welcome Center for the Spring Quarter 2019

Do You Work With an Outstanding Employee?

Nominate Them for Employee of the Quarter

The Employee Recognition Program is a great way to honor exemplary employees every quarter, and we encourage everyone to participate. This is an opportunity for employees to nominate their coworkers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

To nominate a coworker, please fill out a nomination form that can be found on Media and Community Relations' intranet page. If you work in the Central Office, please e-mail the nomination form to Amanda Deem at deema@dot.state.al.us. For employees working in the regions, please send nomination forms to your Region Public Information Officer.

Each nomination must be approved by the nominated employee's supervisor. All nomination forms are sent to a nomination committee and chosen for each quarter.

Outstanding Employee Awards

As a symbol of appreciation to dedicated and loyal employees, ALDOT's Employee Recognition Program honors hard workers from all over the Department every quarter. This award is about acknowledging the hard work and accomplishments of individuals. The

Employee of the Quarter award recipients display diligence, motivation and a dedication to always going the extra mile to achieve what is best for the Department.

Being recognized as the Employee of the Quarter is not an easy thing to achieve; it takes

hard work and commitment. They arrive early, they stay late, and they are simply good at their jobs. Each quarter, we recognize great employees from different professional backgrounds. This award is based on nominations from co-workers and supervisors.

The Outstanding Employees of the Winter 2018 Quarter

Brock Beck, *Transportation Manager, Southeast Region*
Spencer Foster, *Transportation Technologist Sr., East Central Region*
Van Hope, *Transportation Maintenance Tech II, Southwest Region*
Sheronna Peacock, *Region Office Manager, North Region*
Clayton Dodd, Wesley Hallman, Christie Hammons, Jacob Levins, Randall Ricketson, Caitlyn Spann, Ebony Thompson, *Design Team, West Central Region*
Ricky Bruce, *Transportation Worker, Central Office*

The Outstanding Employees of the Spring 2019 Quarter

T.J. Dingler, *Transportation Technologist Sr., East Central Region*
Jerry Farmer, *Service Patrol Officer, Southeast Region*
Clayton McCoy, *Civil Engineer, Southwest Region*
Connie Spradling, *Transportation Worker, North Region*
Joish Vaughn, *Transportation Maintenance Superintendent, West Central Region*
Todd Jones, *Programmer Analyst, Central Office*

Randy Rankin Receives National Recognition

In 2018, Randy Rankin, II, was the winner of the National Roadside Vegetation Management Association's "Turney J. Hernandez Roadside Excellence Award".

This award is the association's highest award and aims to honor outstanding roadside vegetation management programs or individuals. ALDOT has an interest and investment in maintaining its roadsides for the safety of the traveling public, maintaining the integrity of its infrastructure, and promoting tourism. To be named for this award is truly an honor for anyone involved in roadside maintenance and is recognized on a national level.

Award winners and their dates of recognition:

- Randy Rankin** (Central Office) **2018**
- Rodney Goodloe and Glynis Filyaw** (District 21) **2017**
- Farrell Baggett** (District 92) **2013**
- Donnie Blue** (District 62) **2011**



Rankin receives NRVMA Hernandez Award

Inaugural Leadership Class Reunion: Fall Class of 2018



ALDOT hosted its first Leadership Academy Class Reunion in the Fall of 2018. Graduates from the first two classes of the Leadership Academy came together at Lakepoint State Park in Eufaula to learn about different leadership styles, how to adapt to certain work situations, and how to continue their leadership growth. The graduates were challenged to continue to take steps forward

on their leadership journey, to work on self-improvement, and to make ALDOT a better place to work. The Leadership Team plans to continue hosting these reunions every few years to help ALDOT leaders in their current roles and to further equip them with skills that benefit their Bureaus or Regions, co-workers and communities.

ALDOT Hosts its Fifth Leadership Class

Twenty-five ALDOT employees completed the ALDOT Leadership Academy in spring 2019. During the Leadership Academy, participants advance their knowledge and skills as they learn about the department's history, communication, and employee development. Participants interact with ALDOT's current and former leaders who share insights from their leadership experiences. The Leadership Academy will be held once a year. With graduation of this fifth class, 116 employees have now completed the Leadership Academy.



Alabama Department
of Transportation

Leadership Academy
Class 01-19

Front Row (L to R): *Chris Bazinet* (West Central Region), *Lawson Brown* (Materials & Tests), *Holly McCain* (East Central Region, Alex City Area), *Dewayne Elder* (Southeast Region, Troy Area), *Adriana Dunn* (West Central Region, Tuscaloosa Area), *Caroline Sandel* (West Central Region), *Bryson Moultry* (Maintenance), *Bryan Fair* (Local Transportation), and *Clay McCoy* (Southwest Region, Mobile Area)

Middle Row (L to R): *Nikki Preston* (Southeast Region), *DeAnna Maddox* (Research & Development), *Barrett Dees* (Local Transportation), *Adam Holder* (Right of Way), *Jonathan Mills* (West Central Region), *Jordy Fleming* (North Region, Guntersville Area), *Taylor Janney* (Aeronautics), and *Zane Hartzog* (Materials & Tests)

Back Row (L to R): *Nate Roberson* (Computer Services), *Brett Paulk* (West Central Region), *Evan Paulk* (Southeast Region, Montgomery Area), *Richard Klinger* (Construction), *Justin Palmer* (Southeast Region, Montgomery Area), *Ramy Abdalla* (Bridge), *Rivera Wheeler* (Southwest Region, Grove Hill Area), and *Mark Vansandt* (Finance & Audit)

Eye on the Future: Public Sector Workforce Trends

It has been said numerous times that any organization's most valuable resource is its people. While this may sound cliché, it holds true for ALDOT. In its continuing focus on the future, ALDOT has been watching public sector workforce trends to identify both the challenges and the opportunities that these trends will present the Department.

The "State and Local Government Workforce: 2018 Data and 10 Year Trends" report by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence outlined the findings from a survey of 6,700 members of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources and 138 members of the National Association of State Personnel Executives.

Among the top workforce priorities, 82 percent report staff recruitment and retention, with employee morale close behind at 80 percent. In 2012, those concerns were cited by 39 and 67 percent, respectively, with the top concern at the time being the public perception of government workers (74 percent). While this last category

might seem a vain concern, such perceptions can not only hinder an organization's ability to accomplish its goals, it can also impact the ability to attract talented new job candidates into the public service profession.

To recruit and retain a skilled workforce, more than 45 percent report offering flexible scheduling or flexible work hours, 65 percent support employee development and training reimbursement, 37 percent are hosting wellness programs or on-site fitness facilities, and 34 percent provide some form of paid family leave.

A wide array of positions was reported as being hard to fill. Over 15 percent of survey respondents cited policing, engineering, network administration, emergency dispatch, accounting, skilled trades, and other information technology positions as being a challenge to hire. The report also noted that interpersonal, written communications, and technology skills are the ones most needed by new hires.

Reflecting the increasing cost of health insurance, half of the survey respondents indicated that

their governments had made changes to the health benefits they offered to their employees. The most common changes included: shifting more costs to employees, implementing wellness programs, and shifting employees to high deductible plans with a health savings account.

Overall, the survey respondents believe that their pay and benefits are competitive with the labor market. However, while 90 percent believe that their benefits are competitive with the labor market, only 56 percent indicated that their pay is competitive with the labor market. This finding is supported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which reported in June 2017 that for private sector workers, benefits comprises 30 percent of compensation as compared to 37 percent for state and local government employees.

Among the other forward-looking concerns cited in 2018 were compensation studies, cross-training, personnel and paid-leave policies, automation, cybersecurity, shrinking labor pools, and potential Americans with Disabilities Act exposures with an aging workforce.

Alabama Strengthens Seat Belt Law

Wearing a seat belt is your best defensive move on the road, and the Alabama Legislature passed a bill this year that requires all occupants of a vehicle to wear a seat belt.

The bill was named after Roderic Deshaun Scott, the Robert E. Lee High School basketball star from Montgomery who died after a car crash in 2016.

"It is my hope that voluntary compliance with this new law will save thousands of lives in the years to come," said bill sponsor Sen. David Burkette, D-Montgomery. "I am saddened that it took such a tragedy to serve as the impetus for passing this law, but honoring Roderic Scott is an appropriate way to preserve the memory of this special young man."

"The Alabama Legislature is to be commended for amending Alabama's seat belt law to include rear seat passengers," said Tony Harris, Government Relations Manager at ALDOT. "Sixty percent of the people dying on Alabama's roadways are not wearing a seat belt, especially those riding in rear seats. Many crashes are survivable with the use of a seat belt."

Alabama becomes the 29th state to require seat belt use by rear seat vehicle occupants.

Since 2000, Alabama law has required use of seat belts by front seat vehicle occupants. The law had not addressed seat belt use in rear seats by occupants over the age of 15.



Gov. Kay Ivey signs the Roderic Deshaun Scott Seat Belt Safety Act into law. Joining Gov. Ivey, from Left to Right: Sen. David Burkette, Rodney Scott, Tony Harris (ALDOT), Allison Green (ALDOT), Renita Scott and Rep. Kelvin J. Lawrence.

Rear seat passengers in a vehicle are three times more likely to die in a crash if they are not wearing a seat belt, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Joint Transportation Committee to Have More Oversight Moving Forward

During the March 2019 special legislative session, the Joint Transportation Committee's mission was broadened due to Gov. Kay Ivey's Rebuild Alabama infrastructure plan. The broadening was meant to create more accountability for ALDOT. The legislation increased the number of committee members to oversee ALDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and ALDOT's long-range plan of road and bridge projects.

Under the new Rebuild Alabama Act, ALDOT, counties and municipalities cannot use the new revenue for salaries and other compensation that are not direct project costs. They also cannot purchase or maintain equipment

or use the revenue for buildings or structures that are not installed as part of a road or bridge project.

All new revenue paid to ALDOT and separately to counties and municipalities will be deposited into a separate fund. ALDOT's proceeds flow to the Rebuild Alabama Fund that will be audited annually, and ALDOT will annually report to the Joint Transportation Committee about specific projects.

The committee is made up of 13 state representatives and 13 state senators, which includes a House and Senate member for each of Alabama's seven Congressional Districts and the five ALDOT regions.

Fleet Program Honored as One of the Best in the Americas

ALDOT's Fleet Management Program was selected as one of the Best 100 Governmental Fleets in the Americas for 2019. ALDOT has been honored with this designation for seven of the last eight consecutive years.

The 100 Best Fleets program recognizes and rewards peak-performing fleet operations in the Americas. Currently in its twentieth year, the program identifies and encourages ever-increasing levels of performance improvement and innovation within the public fleet industry. The contest is open to more than 38,000 public fleets in North and South America.

"Our fleet management success is a testimony to the legacy of ALDOT fleet professionals who had the insight and temerity to design and implement a program of excellence, and to the hundreds of fleet management team members over the years who have committed themselves to an attitude of excellence," said Stan Carlton, Equipment Management Coordinator.



2019 Legislative Session

While the Rebuild Alabama Act captured many of the headlines in the 2019 legislative session, several other pieces of legislation were passed that will impact ALDOT and its employees.

The Roderic Deshaun Scott Seat Belt Safety Act was passed, which now requires all occupants in a vehicle to wear a seat belt. Previously, only passengers in the front seat, and passengers in the back seat under 16 years old were required by law to wear a restraint.

Important tolling legislation was passed this session that helps pave the way for productive P3 projects in Alabama. The first bill amended the current law that dictates how toll enforcement is handled. The second piece of legislation clarified tax exemptions for the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge, and Tunnel Authority. While both were technical in nature, their passage creates an important avenue of opportunity for a new way of meeting Alabama's infrastructure needs.

ALDOT employees will also see a 2 percent pay raise this fall, as the legislature passed a cost-of-living increase for state employees for the second straight year. Before 2018, state employees went 10 years without a cost-of-living adjustment.

A change to the State General Fund budget allows ALDOT to now retain \$35 million of its funding that had traditionally been diverted to the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Gov. Ivey Announces Rebuild Alabama Projects for Autauga and Cherokee Counties

Two of the first projects that will be funded by the Rebuild Alabama Act are widening projects in Autauga and Cherokee counties. Gov. Kay Ivey announced the projects as part of the Rebuild Alabama First Year Plan 2020.

“Drivers across Alabama have experienced the troubles of the state’s crumbling infrastructure for far too long,” Gov. Ivey said. “In selecting these projects in Autauga and Cherokee counties, we’re showing that stagnation is no longer the case in Alabama. For the ease of our drivers, for the safety of our drivers and for the future of our state, it’s finally time we Rebuild Alabama!”

In Autauga County, ALDOT will widen US-82 in Prattville. These enhancements to US-82 will

shorten the daily commute of over 17,000 drivers and complete the Prattville Bypass. The widening of US-82 in Prattville will improve access for loggers traveling to the International Paper plant from 18 Alabama counties. Six hundred workers from 23 Alabama counties will also find ease in their work commutes. Additionally, this project improves access to the James Hardie Building Projects Facility and the other companies in the area.

In Cherokee County, ALDOT will widen US-411. Cherokee County is one of 16 Alabama counties currently not served by a four-lane route to an interstate. This Rebuild Alabama project will fulfill a promise that the people of this area have

waited for since the early 1960s.

Beginning in January, state, county, and municipal governments in Alabama will begin to see additional revenue from the fuel tax increase of 6 cents which began in Sept. In fact, once the 10-cent increase is fully implemented in 2021, Autauga County will receive an additional \$1.02 million, on top of what they already receive, to be used for various transportation infrastructure projects. Cherokee County will see an additional \$750,000 on top of what they already receive.

Gee’s Bend Ferry Goes Green

ALDOT’s Gee’s Bend Ferry began carrying passengers and automobiles across the Alabama River in April 2019, as the nation’s first all-electric ferry. Once powered by diesel engines, the ferry now uses a large tower of batteries that is recharged at docking stations in Camden on the north and Boykin on the south sides of the river.

The ferry runs from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and makes five round trips daily. Tickets are \$3 per car and rider and \$1 for each additional rider. Children under age 12 ride free. Large vehicles like motor homes and tractors pay more.

“ALDOT owns the Gee’s Bend Ferry, plus two ferries in Mobile,” said Tim Aguirre, General Manager of HMS Ferries Inc. of Alabama, which operates the vessel. “The ferries provide an important service by saving time, fuel, and wear and tear on automobiles.”

About 20,000 people and 10,000 vehicles ride the ferry annually. The trip is just more than two miles and takes 15-18 minutes depending on the current. The first ferry between Gee’s Bend and Camden ran on cables in the 1930s. It was shut down in



The Gee's Bend Ferry prepares to dock on the Boykin side of the Alabama River.

1962 and is on display at the Gee’s Bend Nutrition Center, a short drive from the Boykin landing. In the 1990s, Congress allocated money to pay for ferry service and operating costs. The ferry reopened in 2006.

Gee’s Bend is famous for beautiful, hand-stitched quilts and folk-art. Now, the area is making history as home of the nation’s first all-electric ferry.



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Parting Shot

As part of Alabama's Celebration of its 200th year, the Alabama Constitution has been making its way around the state for public viewing.

ALDOT provided the van used to transport the constitution.

Pictured here are law enforcement officers at the Huntsville city limits as the constitution made its way to Huntsville.



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