

# The Decatur Daily

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## FORECAST

TODAY	SAT	SUN
46°/24°	37°/32°	41°/13°
Complete forecast, A2		

## SPORTS



### Teams pursuing the championship

The Morgan County basketball tournament continued Thursday night, with West Morgan girls playing Falkville, and Priceville playing the Falkville boys. Check out the scores and highlights. **C1**

## RELIGION

### Community Bible study a big draw

As strands of “Blessed Assurance” sounded through downtown Decatur’s High Point Market coffee shop, dozens of women stood and lifted their arms in praise. For two hours, 72 women sang, prayed and worshipped. **D1**

## RIVERFRONT

### Woman has \$1M bond in drug charge

A Huntsville woman indicted last month in Limestone County on a trafficking fentanyl charge was arrested in Priceville on Wednesday and charged with trafficking cocaine after officers said they found the drug in her vehicle during a traffic stop. **B1**

## NATION

### School official: ICE detained boy as ‘bait’

A 5-year-old boy arriving home from preschool in Minnesota was taken by federal agents along with his father to a detention facility in Texas, school officials and the family’s lawyer said, making him the fourth student from his Minneapolis suburb to be detained by immigration officers in recent weeks. **A5**

### Jack Smith defends prosecution of Trump

Former Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith on Thursday defended his investigations of Donald Trump at a congressional hearing in which he insisted that he had acted without regard to politics and had no second thoughts about the criminal charges he brought. **B4**

## AREA DEATHS

**David Bittle**, Decatur  
**Thomas Hoefler**, Texas  
**William Sigler**, Decatur  
Death notices, obits, **A3**

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Decatur, Alabama  
114th year, No. 285  
20 pages, 4 sections



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## US POSTAL SERVICE

# Funds OK’d for mail issues

By **GraciAnn Goodin**  
Staff Writer

Mail service issues across north Alabama, particularly in Priceville, prompted U.S. Rep. Dale Strong to take action. Priceville has tried to obtain its own zip code for 18 years, and confusion and delays have increased over time, according to Priceville Mayor Sam Heflin. Priceville residents and businesses currently have a Hartselle, Somerville or



Heflin

Decatur ZIP code, meaning they have a different city listed for their address than where they reside. “We’re one of the fastest growing cities in the state,” Heflin said. “We’re going to continue to grow, so the problem is going to continue to get worse. A simple ZIP code or ZIP codes that are available would be a world of help



Strong

to the citizens of Priceville.” In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service began consolidating a mail processing and distribution center in Huntsville. All mail from north Alabama is currently processed in Birmingham. USPS has seven total processing and distribution centers in Alabama, according to USPS Alabama-Mississippi-Florida

district spokesperson Mary I. Falcon.

“When the office was in Huntsville for the sorting, we got mail a lot quicker,” Heflin said. “Now, if you send something in Priceville to a Priceville resident, it goes to the post office in Decatur. Decatur ships it to Birmingham. Birmingham sorts it, goes through it, all that stuff. Then it comes back to Decatur. Then it comes back to

SEE USPS, A5

## DECATUR YOUTH SERVICES

# Spoiling for a fight



**Layona Booker, 12, follows the prompts from coach Danny Scott as she trains last week at Decatur Youth Services' boxing gym for the regional tournament. She and 15-year-old Kevin Lopez are headed to the Elite Youth Boxing Silver Boxing national boxing competition in late February.** [JERONIMO NISA/DECATUR DAILY]

## 12-year-old girl boxer struggles to find competition

By **Bayne Hughes**  
Staff Writer

For 12-year-old Layona Booker, boxing can be a lonely sport. She’s advancing to the Elite Youth Boxing Silver Boxing national boxing competition along with one of her Decatur Youth Services colleagues, 15-year-old Kevin Lopez, but unlike Lopez she did it without throwing a punch. She had no competition in her 114-pound girls weight class last week at a boxing tournament in Little Rock, Arkansas, so was awarded a walkover. Lopez, on the other hand,

won two matches in the 114-pound weight class on his way to the 114-pound boys title. Both will advance to the Silver Boxing nationals at the end of February in Independence, Missouri.

DYS coach Marvin Jones Sr. said Booker was disappointed not to get a fight on the trip. The Decatur Middle School student got her boxing license this fall and has yet to face an official opponent.

She also advanced through the state Silver Sluggers in Montgomery in December with a walkover.

Booker said before leaving for Arkansas that she loves the stress relief that boxing and the workouts that go along with the sport provide. She said she picked up the sport because her father used to fight.

“Dad was really excited when I decided to box and couldn’t wait to see me in the ring,” Booker said. “Mom was scared because she’s worried I might get hurt.”

Booker has a difficult finding female competition. There are only two girls boxing on the DYS team, and there’s a big weight difference between the two. Jones said she has to practice against the guys, including Lopez since he fights in the same weight class.

“She gets good sparring sessions with our guys at the gym,” Jones said. “My only worry is when she has to fight in front of a crowd.”

Booker said she feels like she gets good competition at the DYS home gymnasium

SEE BOXING, A5

## ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

# Immigration bill faces opposition

By **Claire Harrison**  
Alabama Daily News

MONTGOMERY — A local lawmaker’s bill that would expand Alabama law enforcement’s power on immigration enforcement was met with significant criticism during a public hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday.

House Bill 13 would enable state and local law enforcement agencies to enter into memorandums of agreement with any federal agency “for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration and customs laws and the detention, removal, and investigation of illegal aliens and the immigration status of any individual in this state.” The state’s attorney general already has the authority to enter these agreements with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

“This is to help with the flooding of particularly criminal elements into our country over the last several years and collect grassroots help to work together with the federal government on existing laws that will make our communities more safe,” said sponsor Ernie Yarbrough, R-Trinity, while introducing the legislation.

Yarbrough sponsored a similar bill last session that passed in the House of Representatives but never



Yarbrough



Thomas



England

SEE IMMIGRATION, A5

## SEVERE WEATHER

# Huge winter storm to bring crippling snow, ice

By **Emilie Megnien** and **Jeffrey Collins**  
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Bread was flying off the shelves, salt was being loaded into trucks and utility workers nervously watched forecasts Thursday as a huge winter storm that could bring catastrophic damage, widespread power outages and bitterly cold weather barreled toward the eastern two-thirds of the U.S.

The massive storm system is expected to bring a crippling ice storm from Texas through parts of the South, potentially around

a foot of snow from Oklahoma through Washington, D.C., New York and Boston, and then a final punch of bitterly cold air that could drop wind chills to minus-50 degrees Fahrenheit in parts of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Forecasters are warning the damage, especially in areas pounded by ice, could rival a hurricane. About 160 million people were under winter storm or cold weather watches or warnings — and in many places both.

The storm was expected to begin Friday in New Mexico and Texas, with the worst weather moving

east into the Deep South before heading up the coast and thumping New England with snow.

Cold air streaming down from Canada caused Chicago Public Schools and Des Moines Public Schools in Iowa to cancel classes Friday. Wind chills predicted to be as low as minus-35 degrees Fahrenheit could cause frostbite within 10 minutes, making it too dangerous to walk to school or wait for the bus.

The cold punch coming after means it will take a while to thaw out, an especially dangerous prospect in places where ice and snow

weigh down tree branches and power lines and cuts electricity, perhaps for days. Roads and sidewalks could remain icy well into next week.

Freezing temperatures are expected all the way to Florida, forecasters said.

A severe cold snap five years ago took down much of the power grid in Texas, leaving millions without power for days and resulting in hundreds of deaths. Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday that won’t happen again, saying the power

SEE STORM, A5

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