

# The Decatur Daily

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FORECAST

TODAY SUN MON  
  
 86°/58° 83°/62° 70°/46°

Complete forecast, A2

SPORTS



Area players receive postseason honors

Eleven local players have been named to the state All-State basketball team, with another four named honorable mention. C1

RIVERFRONT

Hartselle students making sparks fly

Eighteen young men and women participate in the dual enrollment welding class at Hartselle High School, getting a head start on their college education, and possibly a career. B1

STATE

Bill to close primary elections advances

After a lengthy discussion and opposition from both sides of the aisle, the Alabama House passed on Thursday a bill to limit participation in primary elections to Alabamians registered with a political party. B1

NATION

Moon rocket rolls out for April launch

For the second time this year, NASA moved its moon rocket from the hangar out toward the pad Friday in hopes of launching four astronauts on a lunar fly-around next month. B3

AREA DEATHS

- Becky Bryan, Eva
  - Angie Champion, Somerville
  - Ronald Childers, Falkville
  - Kyle Holladay, Danville
  - Barbara Norwood, Moulton
  - Linda Roberts, Scottsboro
- Death notices, obits, C5

Abby .....	E4	Horoscopes .....	E4
Books .....	E5	Inspirations .....	D4
Business .....	D1	Living .....	E1
Dogs, Cats & More .....	D3	Obituaries .....	C5
Classified .....	F1	Riverfront .....	B1
Crossword .....	E4	Sports .....	C1
Editorials .....	A4	Weather .....	A2

Decatur, Alabama  
 115th year, No. 21  
 30 pages, 6 sections



SOUTHEAST DECATUR

## Coyotes again concern residents

By Bayne Hughes  
 Staff Writer

Coyotes are becoming bolder and more brazen in at least one Decatur neighborhood, even though officials say there's not been a population spike in the city. Residents in the Gordon Drive-Sherman Street area of Southeast Decatur, on the east end of Delano Park, said the

coyotes are going into backyards and up onto porches in search of food sources. Gordon Drive resident Margaret Wenzler told The Daily this week that "coyotes are all over this area, and we're just fed up." Wenzler and her neighbors say they would like to see the city do something about the problem. Her neighbor, Tony Gillespie, said Lila Nell, his West Highland

Terrier, has been afraid to go outside for the last few weeks. "She is absolutely terrified," Gillespie said. "She can sense something is out there." He said he is also guarded with their ventures outside because of the coyotes. Sherman Street resident Robin Williams said she couldn't sleep early Thursday morning, so she was up doing some office work

when a coyote started howling at 3:30 a.m. "It was horrible," Williams said. "It was directly behind my house." She said the coyote howling now occurs several times a week. "My neighbor next day said, 'My dog doesn't even want to go outside,'" Williams said.

SEE COYOTES, A5

BUSINESS

## Harnessing safety



Hunter Safety System owner Jerry Wydner shows one of his products, the "Lifeline," at the company's headquarters in Danville. [JERONIMO NISA/DECATUR DAILY]

### Danville-based hunting company looking ahead

By GraciAnn Goodin  
 Staff Writer

Danville-based hunting gear company Hunter Safety System found its start unconventionally with two brothers, an almost life-altering accident and what they view as a God-given call. Now, 25 years later, it has sold well over a million safety harnesses, heard countless stories of lives saved, received multiple awards and has just acquired a second company — all while still operating out of Morgan County with a team of just 14 people. In 2000, John and Jerry Wydner had just climbed up into their tree stands when John called for help over their two-way radios. "I didn't know what was going on at the time, but I could hear in his voice some desperation, so it scared me," Jerry said. "I got down out of my tree as fast as I could,

came to him, and what I found is the base of his tree stand had fallen." John had caught himself, but by the time that Jerry helped him to the ground, he was scraped up, bleeding and exhausted. Jerry asked John why he wasn't wearing his harness. John asked if Jerry had been wearing his. "He had a good point because I didn't have mine on either," Jerry said. "We didn't have them on for the reason that they were so confusing, so tangling, and so un-hunter-friendly to try to get them on. Both of us had a harness that day. Both of us tried to put them on, but we failed in our attempt. So, like most hunters, we chose to do it without one. That was just a bad choice." That night, they sketched out the design for a harness that was built into a vest without the weave-through buckles and cumbersome straps of traditional harnesses. They never intended to sell the vests, but as other people saw the design and asked for one, they

recognized the need. Their first official customer was Cabela's. Jerry jokes that they went about the process in the wrong manner and shouldn't have ever been given a sales offer. "We took one, put it in a cheap, little plastic bag, sent it off to Cabela's with a note in there that said: 'If you like what you see, call us,'" he said. "We didn't send it to any department, any division, any person. We just sent it to Cabela's. It happened to get on the buyer's desk in that department." The buyer called them. He said he never opens boxes that don't come from people who he knows or are dropped off by a company representative. He ordered 500, which far exceeded the three the brothers had previously made. After panicking, applying for and being approved for a business loan, the company was officially born. Cabela's placed two other orders for 500 in the first

SEE BUSINESS, A5

CONGRESS

## White House urges light touch on AI regulations

By Seung Min Kim  
 and Matt O'brien  
 The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House said on Friday that Congress should "preempt state AI laws" that it views as too burdensome, laying out a broad framework for how it wants Congress to address concerns about artificial intelligence without curbing growth or innovation in the sector. The legislative blueprint outlines a half-dozen guiding principles for lawmakers, focusing on protecting children, preventing electricity costs from surging, respecting intellectual property rights, preventing censorship and educating Americans on using the technology. House Republican leaders swiftly endorsed the framework and said they're ready to work "across the aisle" to pass legislation, but doing so would be heavy lift, requiring agreement with Democrats in the Senate as public divisions over AI run deep. The announcement comes as state governments have forged ahead on their own regulations for AI while civil liberties and consumer rights groups lobby for more regulations on the powerful technology. The industry and the White House have pushed back, arguing that a patchwork of rules would hurt growth. Trump signed an executive order in December to block states from crafting their own regulations. "This was in response to a growing patchwork of 50 different state regulatory regimes that threaten to stifle innovation and jeopardize America's lead in the AI race," said White House AI czar David Sacks in a social media post Wednesday. Sacks said the next step is to work with Congress to turn the administration's principles into federal legislation.



Sacks

SEE CONGRESS, A5

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