

The Decatur Daily

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY SINCE 1912

RACK PRICE: 75¢

Thursday, September 17, 2026

decaturdaily.com



decaturdaily



@decaturdaily

FORECAST

TODAY FRI SAT
HOT HOT HOT
96°/72° 99°/72° 99°/73°
Complete forecast, **A2**

GAMEDAY



Alabama, Auburn to play at home

In this week's edition of Gameday, get previews of Auburn's game against Florida, Alabama vs. Florida State, UNA vs. Alcorn State and the inside scoop on many SEC teams. **INSIDE**

HIGH SCHOOL BLITZ

Priceville's Eubanks leads passing attack

Over the last decade, few things have gone together better than Priceville football and running the ball. This year, however, the Bulldogs have shattered that mold with a potent passing attack. In this week's edition of High School Blitz, also check out prep picks, top performances, stats and more. **C1**

RIVERFRONT

Krispy Kreme robbery defendant set for trial

Days before a Huntsville man is set for trial in the 2020 armed robbery of a Decatur Krispy Kreme, a Morgan County judge again ruled he would not consider motions filed on the man's behalf by his mother. **B1**

WORLD

EU proposes Canada be 'associate member'

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed Canada becoming the first associate member of the European Union, forging a novel transatlantic alliance as President Donald Trump tears apart the old one. **A3**

BUSINESS

Fed's rate hike helps some, hurts others

The Federal Reserve just raised the cost of money — bad news for borrowers, good news for savers. **A6**

AREA DEATHS

Allen Connor, Decatur
Arley Jordan Jr., Hartselle
Death notices, obits, **B3**

Abby	D3	Gameday	G1
Business	A6	Horoscopes	D3
Classified	E1	Obituaries	B3
Comics	D2	Riverfront	B1
Crossword	D3	Sports	C1
Editorials	A4	Weather	A2
Entertainment	D1		

Decatur, Alabama
115th year, No. 181
40 pages, 6 sections



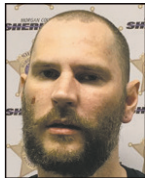
FATAL CRASH

Mental evaluation ordered

By **Wes Tomlinson**
Staff Writer

A Decatur man charged with felony murder in the death of a 17-year-old driver after police say he drove more than 80 mph before crashing into her vehicle on Beltline Road Southwest in 2025 pleaded not guilty this week and was ordered to undergo a mental evaluation.

Kevin Jay Penich, 37, appeared before Morgan County Circuit



Penich

18, 2025, arrest, court records show.

The evaluation will address both Penich's competency to stand trial and his mental state at the time of the offense.

Judge Charles Elliott with his attorney, Brian White of Decatur. Penich has been held in the Morgan County Jail since his May

The evaluation order issued Monday comes months after Penich sent a series of handwritten letters directly to the court in October in which he made unusual claims about his religious identity and described hearing voices.

Penich wrote two letters to Elliott, dated Oct. 3 and Oct. 6. White moved Oct. 8 to seal both documents, and Elliott later ordered the Oct. 3 letter sealed.

In the Oct. 6 letter, Penich told

Elliott he was the second coming of Jesus Christ and said he heard voices that "torture" him. He also claimed a man had been stalking him and cited photographs and other events as evidence of his divine identity.

Penich concluded the letter by denying that he was a murderer and asking to be released.

"I believe I should be out on bond and my charges should be

SEE PENICH, A5

DECATUR

Beginning boxer



Peter Whiston, 10, won a youth boxing championship last month. [JERONIMO NISA/DECATUR DAILY]

Coach says 10-year-old will be winner

By **Jean Cole**
Staff Writer

Beside a large red boxing ring inside a beat-up building off Central Parkway in Decatur, 10-year-old Peter Whiston was preparing for his next fight.

The wiry fellow was pummeling a punching bag hanging from the ceiling while his seasoned coach and trainer, Danny Scott, looked on intently, making sure Whiston was using proper form.

Mario Davis is another coach and trainer with the

Decatur Youth Services boxing program. Scott said Davis helps take the boxers to a higher level. Between 15 and 20 young people are in the program.

"I have about five who are competitive," Scott said.

Whiston is one of them.

"I can tell if they are special," Scott said.

Whiston had just come off a win last week that brought him a gold championship belt after he captured the youth boxing championship in Helena. The event was open to city boxing clubs throughout Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Arkansas and Mississippi. Whiston fought three 1½-minute rounds.

The Decatur Youth Services Boxing Program is a free community sports and mentoring

initiative designed to build strength, discipline and confidence in kids ages 8 to 19. Whiston has been boxing with the program for about two years.

"He's ready," Scott said. "He's humble, he's disciplined, he's respectful, he has a good attitude, he has good sportsmanship, he's a crowd pleaser."

As Whiston sparred with a punching bag, his remarkable hook and keen concentration were apparent.

Whiston's father and his older brother Hector, 18, have boxed for exercise but have not competed. Whiston said his own interest in boxing began after watching another older brother, Paul, who is

SEE BOXER, A5

US SENATE

Britt defends backing tariff exceptions

By **Alex Angle**
Alabama Daily News

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., asked the Trump administration to consider tariff exemptions for four Alabama companies in the wake of "Liberation Day" in April 2025, despite publicly expressing support for the president's tariff agenda, according to an email obtained by the Wall Street Journal and depicted in a recent opinion piece by the paper's editorial board.

On Tuesday, Britt affirmed her general support for President Donald Trump's economic policy and defended her strategy of using her leverage as a senator to help carve out relief for Alabama companies. The Journal's editorial board called it a "tariffs for thee, exemptions for me" approach.

Britt doesn't see it that way. "I certainly support President Trump with regards to actually getting us on a level playing field," Britt told Alabama Daily News, responding to the Journal's article. "In the interim, you have to make sure that you are going eyes wide open to what's happening in our state and what's happening across the country, and how we can make sure that people aren't penalized for the components only being made somewhere else."

In an opinion article from the Journal published Monday, the editorial board wrote that an email from the senator's legislative director showed that Britt

SEE SENATE, A5

NATION

Fed hikes key interest rate for 1st time in 3 years

By **Christopher Rugaber**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate Wednesday for the first time since 2023 in an effort to quell stubbornly high inflation, and the central bank signaled another rate hike could occur later this year.

The quarter-point increase lifts the Fed's key rate to about 3.9% and, over time, could result in higher borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards. In a set of quarterly

projections, the Fed also signaled its rate-setting committee could raise it a second time to 4.1%.

The move comes as Americans are already struggling with high costs for groceries, gas and housing. Affordability has taken on a leading role in the upcoming midterm elections, just seven weeks away.

It adds another potentially dicey economic variable for Republicans and President



Warsh



Trump

Donald Trump, who blasted the decision Wednesday and accused the governors of trying to hurt him politically.

Chair Kevin Warsh, who was nominated by Trump, emphasized after the announcement that the economy has shown signs of gathering speed since the central bank decided to keep rates unchanged in late July. Inflation has also remained stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target, and he noted

there is little sign it is cooling.

"The plain fact is that inflation is too high and has been for too long," Warsh said. "We must be confident that underlying inflation is moving to our objective clearly and at sufficient speed. Today the FOMC decided that this standard has not been satisfied," he added, referring to the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee, an arm of the Fed.

"Warsh's tough talk around inflation in the post-meeting

SEE FED, A5

CLASSIFIEDS

See More in Today's Classified Section

- Classifieds on the cover -

FULLER CONSTRUCTION
Custom building, repairs, decks, vinyl siding, etc.
Licensed & Insured
256-685-0110 or
256-303-5582

- Classifieds on the cover -

Pioneer Roofing Company is hiring in Decatur/Huntsville area
Experienced Roofing & Sheet Metal Technicians
Starting Pay \$25 per hour
Call 256-260-6917 or 256-701-3334

- Classifieds on the cover -

The Moulton Advertiser has an immediate opening for a
News Reporter/Staff Writer
See our ad in today's Classified section for how to apply.

- Classifieds on the cover -

To Place Your Front Page Classified ad,
Call **Gina O'Kelley** at **256-740-5816**
Mon. thru Fri., 8am-5pm

- Classifieds on the cover -

TRADITIONS FENCE
FREE ESTIMATES
Wood, Vinyl, Aluminum and Chain Link Fencing.
Call 256-773-0662