



How Crimson Tide named Ty Simpson the starting QB

SPORTS, 1B

The Gadsden Times

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UA sues state over DEI law

University attorneys say campus safe spaces are not ‘unlawful segregation’

Alander Rocha
Alabama Reflector

Attorneys representing the University of Alabama system in a lawsuit challenging Alabama’s 2024 state law

banning diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and so-called “divisive concepts” claimed in court filings that new federal guidance on anti-discrimination laws would make it unlawful for UA to reopen open spaces dedicated to minor-

ity students, likening it to “unlawful segregation.”

In a brief filed Aug. 5, attorneys for the university cited a July memorandum from U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi claiming DEI initiatives may be in violation of federal anti-discrimination laws.

“The guidance states that it would be an unlawful practice for ‘(a) university’s DEI initiative (to designate) a ‘safe

space’ or lounge exclusively for students of a specific racial or ethnic group,’ ... and that ‘(e)ven if access is technically open to all, the identity-based focus creates a perception of segregation and may foster a hostile environment’ in violation of federal antidiscrimination laws,” the attorneys wrote, quoting the Trump administration’s guidance.

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AL’s first IKEA store expected to open in early 2026

Jennifer Lindahl
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Swedish furniture giant IKEA is bringing its first Alabama store to Huntsville, with its doors expected to open in early 2026.

“We are thrilled to open our first store in Alabama to bring the dream of a better home within reach for more people,” said Javier Quiñones, CEO and chief sustainability officer, IKEA U.S.

The announcement on Aug. 11 marks a major retail milestone for the Rocket City, and the latest in a string of growth wins for North Alabama.

Here’s what we know about the retail giant coming to Alabama.

Where will IKEA be located in Alabama?

The new IKEA will be located at University Place Shopping Center on University Drive, just off Research Park Boulevard and easily accessible via I-565. The 46,000 square-foot store will be tailored to the unique lifestyle of Huntsville residents and will feature IKEA’s signature blend of stylish, affordable furniture and meatballs.

What will the new IKEA offer?

The Huntsville location will showcase IKEA’s latest store concept, designed to be smaller, faster and more personalized:

- 46,000 square feet of retail space
- 5,000 products on display

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Timeline revealed for Prattville museum



Signage honoring Daniel Pratt is displayed during the announcement ceremony introducing “The Pratt,” an education and entertainment museum telling the history of Daniel Pratt and Prattville, at The Mill in Prattville on Aug. 11.

MICKY WELSH/MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER

Groundbreaking for ‘The Pratt’ project planned for the spring

Marty Roney
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

PRATTVILLE – With fresh funding in hand, the effort to build a new museum in downtown Prattville got a public kickoff on the evening of Aug. 11

– along with the unveiling of an expected start date.

About 200 people gathered Monday in the community room at The Mill apartments to celebrate the official kickoff of the project. Dubbed “the Pratt,” the \$10 million proposal is shepherded by the Autauga County Heritage Associa-

tion. Plans are to continue the fundraising work and hold a groundbreaking in spring 2026, with the museum opening a year later.

The ACHA has kicked in about \$1.9 million of the more than \$9.9 million

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Legend has it Alabama woods are haunted by cryptids

Jennifer Lindahl
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Something is lurking in Alabama’s woods, or so the stories go.

Tales of strange sightings and eerie encounters have been passed around

campfires for generations. Whether it’s backcountry whispers or blurry photos, the legends endure, and they’re as much a part of Alabama as the pine trees and red clay.

There are Alabama’s creepiest cryptids, perfect for your next campfire story.

Tales of the White Thang haunt Alabama

The White Thang is Alabama’s most legendary cryptid, and no one can quite agree on what it is. Some say it looks like a white Bigfoot, while others swear it’s more like a giant cat or wolf. Standing

nearly eight feet tall with glowing red eyes, the creature is fast, elusive and known for an eerie screech.

Most sightings of the White Thang occur in north Alabama between Morgan, Etowah and Jefferson counties.

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