



Baltimore Orioles select Auburn baseball's Ike Irish in 2025 MLB Draft

SPORTS, 1B

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First Watch opens new location

Prattville restaurant features fresh ingredients

Marty Roney
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

PRATTVILLE – First Watch has opened a new location at the site of a closed former restaurant in Prattville. The breakfast, brunch and lunch spot is in the 2300 block of Cobbs Ford Road. The business is open from 7 a.m. until

2:30 p.m. The restaurant renovated the closed O'Charley's location. It employs about 50 people, said Kish Austrie, manager. The company says dishes are made to order using fresh ingredients in a kitchen without heat lamps or microwaves. In addition to favorites like omelets, the all-day menu includes avocado toast, farmhouse hash, lemon ricotta

pancakes and its signature Million Dollar Bacon, as well as sandwiches and salads, including the superfood kale salad, said Mackenzie Garrett, spokeswoman for the company. The restaurant has Alabama locations in Birmingham, Foley, Hoover, Huntsville, Madison, Montgomery and Vestavia Hills. Contact Montgomery Advertiser reporter Marty Roney at mroney@gannett.com. To support his work, please subscribe to the Montgomery Advertiser.



First Watch has opened its location in Prattville. MARTY RONEY/ADVERTISER



The beach in Orange Beach on Tuesday July 25, 2018. PHOTOS BY MICKEY WELSH / ADVERTISER

Group warns of unsafe bacteria levels on beaches

Environmental researchers estimate that people get sick 57 million times a year

Alex Gladden
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USA TODAY NETWORK

An environmental advocacy group has warned that Alabama beaches need more work to alleviate pollution and make them safer for swimmers. The report by Environment America Research & Policy Center labeled Dog River, Orange Beach and Pirate's Cove as the state's least safe beaches. ● Dog River had 16 potentially unsafe test days out of the 35 days the group tested the beach in 2024. ● Orange Beach had 16 potentially unsafe test days out of the 36 days the group tested the beach in 2024. ● Pirate's Cove had 15 potentially unsafe test days out of the 41 days the group tested the beach in 2024.

The organization tested the levels of fecal bacteria in the water to see whether they exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's gauge of estimated illness rates of 32 out of 1,000 swimmers. The report concluded that nine Alabama beaches exceeded this safety threshold on at least a quarter of days tested in 2024. "Even as Alabamians are back to enjoying the fresh sea breeze and splash of waves at the beach, pollution is still plaguing too many of the places where we swim," said John Rumpler, clean water director for Environment America Research & Policy Center and an author of the report, in a statement. "Now is the time to fix our water infrastruc-



Gulf State Park in Orange Beach on July 25, 2018.

ture and stop the flow of pathogens to our beaches." Common issues that make waterways unsafe include sewer overflows and runoff pollution. This past spring, 3.7 million gallons of untreated sewage spilled in Prichard after heavy rainfall, polluting Chickasaw Creek and Three Mile Creek. Researchers estimate that people get sick 57 million times a year from swimming in polluted waters. That can manifest as nausea, diarrhea, ear infections and rashes. The report advises major monetary investments to halt sewage overflows

and runoff pollution. "When Congress passed the Clean Water Act more than 50 years ago, our nation resolved that we would make all our waterways safe for swimming," Rumpler said in the statement. "It is time for Alabama officials to commit themselves to the goal of clean, safe beaches and dedicate the resources needed to achieve it." Alex Gladden is the Montgomery Advertiser's education reporter. She can be reached at agladden@gannett.com or on Twitter @gladlyalex. To support her work, please subscribe to the Montgomery Advertiser.

Medicaid cuts threaten 5 Alabama hospitals with closure

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Five rural Alabama hospitals are considered "at risk" of closing, according to a report from a reputable center for health services research. U.S. senators requested a list of the rural hospitals from each state from the center and attached it in a letter to President Donald Trump, among others. Here are the hospitals in Alabama and why they're being considered.

How is "at-risk" of closing defined?
A rural hospital is labeled as at risk when it meets one or both of two criteria, according to the documents: the hospital is in the top 10% Medicaid payer mix of rural hospitals across the country, and that the hospital has ex-
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Carver grad takes over as Montgomery's new COO

Alex Gladden
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USA TODAY NETWORK

Lucinda Babers is putting her big-city living to good use, returning to her hometown as the new chief operating officer for the City of Montgomery. Babers began the position June 6. Her family originally moved to the city when her father was stationed here through the Air Force. She graduated from Carver High School. "I've always called Montgomery home," Babers said. "... I feel like I'm back home. It's been 40 years though that I lived here." She attended the Georgia Institute
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Babers

