

FORECAST

TODAY

THU

FRI

90°/65°

91°/64°

94°/65°

Complete forecast, A2

REGION

Student dabbles in restoration

Prentiss Fowler, a junior at the High School Career Academy, has been utilizing AutoCAD in her first professional opportunity — recreating 139-year-old wallpaper for interior designer Paige Thornton. B1

LIFE

4 no-stress dinners

The best weeknight meals are ones that come together with minimal prep and a fairly short cooking time. D1

NATION

Suspect charged in Kirk murder

Tyler Robinson, the 22-year-old Utah man accused of assassinating conservative activist Charlie Kirk, was charged on Tuesday with aggravated murder, a prosecutor announced. A3

WEIRD NEWS

Chef creates largest jollof rice dish

LAGOS, Nigeria — A Nigerian chef has broken the world record for cooking the largest ever pot of jollof rice. Guinness World Records confirmed the achievement on Monday for the largest jollof rice serving by celebrity chef Hilda Baci. Baci, who briefly held the world record for the longest cooking marathon in 2023, last Friday prepared a pot of 8,780 kilograms of jollof rice, a popular West African delicacy made from rice cooked in a pepper sauce. The food is a staple across the region. “It took nine hours of fire, passion, and teamwork,” the chef said after the day-long cooking and serving, which involved a moment of high drama when the huge retrofitted pot collapsed under a crane during weighing. — The Associated Press

YOUR OPINION

Tuesday’s Question: Should securities regulators stop requiring companies to issue quarterly financial reports?

Yes: 15.7% No: 84.3%

Today’s Question: Do you think there will be a named hurricane in the Atlantic after Nov. 30 this year?

Vote at TimesDaily.com

Vol. 136 No. 222

Celebrity news...A2

Obituaries.....B2

Classified.....C5

Opinion.....A4

Comics.....D3

Region.....B1

Crossword.....D4

Sports.....C1

Life.....D1

Weather.....A2

TIMES DAILY

FLORENCE ■ MUSCLE SHOALS ■ SHEFFIELD ■ TUSCUMBIA ■ NORTHWEST ALABAMA

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UNA FOOTBALL: Freshman DB Martin continues to impress. C1

RUSSELLVILLE

Former day care worker to serve 6 years

Joel Wells, grandfather of the late Autumn Wells, holds a photo of his 4-month-old granddaughter who died in March 2022 at Tiny Tigers Daycare, outside the Franklin County Courthouse on Tuesday after the sentencing of ex-caregiver Payton Gann. [PHOTOS BY DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

‘Every day is a reminder of what happened,’ grandfather says

By Bernie Delinski

Staff Writer

RUSSELLVILLE — A former Red Bay day care worker will spend six years behind bars in the death of a 4-month-old who had been left alone for up to two hours after the woman placed the infant on her stomach on a “Boppy” pillow. Payton Nicole Gann was sentenced Tuesday after being convicted in June of manslaughter in the March 9, 2022, death of Autumn Wells at Tiny Tigers Day Care. Franklin County Circuit Court Judge Brian P. Hamilton issued a 20-year split sentence with five years to serve

Franklin County District Attorney Jeff Barksdale speaks Tuesday outside the courthouse after former caregiver Payton Gann was sentenced to prison in the 2022 death of 4-month-old Autumn Wells. in prison, followed by one year in the Franklin County Jail. Manslaughter is a Class B felony and carries with it a sentence of 2 to 20 years.

The one-year county jail sentence is for false reporting to law enforcement. Gann of Golden, Mississippi, pleaded guilty on the first day of her trial. She had claimed Wells was in a swing when the baby died. Testimony during the trial revealed state regulations call for babies under 12 months old to be placed on their back when put down to sleep. There should not be a blanket covering the baby. Wells’ grandfather, Joel Wells, said he hopes this sends a message to day care workers and owners everywhere about

SEE WORKER, A5

TALLADEGA

Board chair: Employee took ‘appreciable’ sum from museum

Gerald Dial issued a statement regarding the alleged misappropriation of funds following a recent meeting with the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts staff, who were conducting an audit of the attraction’s finances. The person had been hired on a part-time basis to pay bills for the museum. “Unfortunately, there are always those who believe they can beat the system— who think they can misuse taxpayer money for personal gain,” Dial, a former state senator, said in a written statement. “That is exactly what has occurred at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame.” The former employee has not been charged with any crime, and the matter will be referred to the Alabama Attorney General’s office for possible prosecution, Dial said. Dial did not release the former employee’s name in the statement or during an interview Monday with Alabama Daily News. The examiners’ office confirmed to ADN that an audit was underway but can’t comment until it is released. Dial said that should happen in early October. Dial told ADN the missing funds probably total \$100,000 to \$200,000. He said the former employee worked for the museum for about two years. The board thought it was saving money by

SEE MUSEUM, A5

MUSCLE SHOALS

Council OKs tax on vape products

By Russ Corey

Staff Writer

MUSCLE SHOALS — A new ordinance that levies a tax on nicotine-based vape products was unanimously approved by the city council on Monday and will go into effect Oct. 1. After council members voted for unanimous consent, the ordinance was approved following its first reading. The ordinance allows the city to levy a local excise tax on all vape products sold, distributed, delivered, stored or taken out of storage within the city limits or its police jurisdiction. According to Alabama Law 2025-377, which becomes effective Oct. 1, the tax is 10 cents per milliliter for businesses operating inside the city limits, and 5 cents for those operating within the police jurisdiction. City Clerk Brittany Walker said any county or municipality that does not levy the tax will receive a portion of the state vapor products tax based on a per capita distribution rate. “The city has chosen

A new ordinance unanimously approved by the Muscle Shoals City Council will levy a tax on consumable vape products sold within the city and its police jurisdiction starting Oct. 1. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

SEE VAPE, A5

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