

FORECAST

TODAY WED THU

54°/43° 64°/57° 64°/42°
Complete forecast, A2

REGION



Firefighters trained for cardiac care

Dr. Joe McIlwain, Keller EMS director and hospital emergency department physician, just finished cardiac training for the Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals fire departments. **A5**

LIFE



Facing limitations

Poll shows many seniors don't consider themselves disabled. **B8**

NATION



Trump to deliver State of the Union

President Donald Trump will stand before Congress on Tuesday to deliver the annual State of the Union address to a suddenly transformed nation. **A3**

WEIRD NEWS

Reggae the seal plays with rubber ducks

BOSTON — It looks like pure play: a harbor seal gleefully chasing a rubber duck. But for Reggae at the New England Aquarium in Boston, the toy is part of a training routine meant to keep him learning.

When the 33-year-old Atlantic harbor seal plays fetch with the rubber duck in his habitat built to mimic the region's rocky shore, he's practicing memory, problem-solving and focus — skills trainers say are essential to keeping animals in human care mentally and physically engaged.

The routine recently drew attention on social media after the aquarium posted video of Reggae tightly hugging the duck while floating on his belly. In another moment, he sits on a rock with the duck tucked under his flipper, appearing to pat its head.

The sessions are designed not just to stimulate the seals cognitively but to strengthen relationships with trainers, with even physical play — manipulating objects with their front flippers or moving a toy through the water — becoming part of that challenge.

— The Associated Press

YOUR OPINION

Saturday's Question: Do you think the tariff's President Donald Trump placed on other countries helped or hurt the U.S. economy?
Helped: 49.0% **Hurt:** 51.0%

Today's Question: Will you watch President Donald Trump's State of the Union address Tuesday night?
Vote at TimesDaily.com

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TIMES DAILY

FLORENCE ■ MUSCLE SHOALS ■ SHEFFIELD ■ TUSCUMBIA ■ NORTHWEST ALABAMA



HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL: Wilson's run ends in regional final. **B1**

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OAKLAND

House gutted by morning blaze



A firefighter sprays water inside a burning home Monday morning on Rainbow City Drive in the Oakland community. [PHOTOS BY KEVIN TAYLOR/TIMESDAILY]

By **Bernie Delinski**
Staff Writer

OAKLAND — A Monday morning fire gutted a home on Rainbow City Drive, but nobody was home at the time.

The fire was reported at 9:22 a.m., said Brad Holmes, director of the Lauderdale County Emergency Management Agency.

A next-door neighbor said nobody was in the house when the fire broke out. She said she began smelling smoke while she was in her home and then someone called and told her something was on fire near the single-story home.

She went outside and saw the neighbor's home on fire. A stiff wind was blowing smoke and flames toward her house, but firefighters knocked it down before the fire reached the home.

Central Volunteer Fire Chief Jeremy Bevis said at least 15 firefighters worked the scene. He said no firefighters were injured while battling the blaze.



Firefighters begin to pull hose off a truck in front a burning home Monday morning on Rainbow City Drive in the Oakland community.

Firefighters stayed on the scene until 12:39 p.m. to ensure there were no hot spots. Bevis said the house was a total loss.

He said the fire's point of origin was in a bedroom near the middle of the house. He said there was a heater in the bedroom, but he said he couldn't say for sure if the heater may have been the cause of the fire.

The winds created a challenge with National Weather Service data indicating they were gusting from the northwest at speeds as high as 21 mph while firefighters were working the scene.

The fire engulfed the 90 Rainbow City Drive residence and

SEE FIRE, A7

SHOALS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Bill would allow Lauderdale to stop payments

By **Bernie Delinski**
Staff Writer

FLORENCE — A bill filed by state Sen. Tim Melson would pave the way for Lauderdale County to remove itself from paying into the Shoals Economic Development Fund.

Senate Bill 91 also would allow the county to establish an entity within the county to replace the Shoals Industrial Development Committee,

allow the county to decide how to distribute those funds, and increase or decrease taxes in the county by as much as 2%.

Melson, R-Florence, said the bill is not intended to do away with the Shoals Economic Development Authority, or do away with the Shoals Economic Development Fund, which was established in 2007. The fund is fueled by a half-cent sales tax in Colbert and Lauderdale counties.

"It gives them the option to get out if they so desire," Melson said. "I'm not trying to get rid of SEDA."

The Shoals Industrial Development Committee is comprised of local municipal and county elected leaders who oversee the Shoals Economic Development Fund. The Shoals EDA makes recommendations to the authority on uses for the



State Sen. Tim Melson, R-Florence, filed a bill which would pave the way for Lauderdale County to stop paying into the Shoals Economic Development Fund. [FILE/DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

SEE SEDA, A7

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