



Five college football coaches on the hot seat

SPORTS, 1B

The Tuscaloosa News

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Former News editor dies at 53

Anna Maria Della Costa started at paper as sports writer, returned as assistant managing editor

Mark Hughes Cobb
Tuscaloosa News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Anna Maria Della Costa, a former writer and editor for The Tuscaloosa News, died on Jan. 22 surrounded by family, in her Waxhaw, North Carolina, home. She was 53.



Della Costa

Her journalism career included two stops at Tuscaloosa, where she wrote sports and news, and served as an editorial leader. She joined The Tuscaloosa News first in March 2003 as a sport writer, then left in late 2005 to work as a

reporter for Sarasota, Florida's The Herald-Tribune. Six months later, she became sports editor of The Lakeland Ledger, also in Florida, where she worked until returning to the Druid City in summer 2007.

For her second run, she was hired for the newly created position of assistant managing editor for content, overseeing

city, features and photo desks, and the graphics department.

She also worked for other Sunshine State publications, including The Villages Daily Sun in Lady Lake, Florida Today in Melbourne; and The Fort Pierce Tribune.

See **DELLA COSTA**, Page 4A

Will AL bill bring down utility rates?

Ralph Chapoco
ALABAMA REFLECTOR

Supporters of a bill that would end popular elections to the state's utility regulation board argue it could help bring down Alabama's high power bills.

"I think that if we move toward an appointed Public Service Commission, we have an opportunity to reset things and at least have an opportunity to get our rates down," said Rep. Chip Brown, R-Hollinger's Island, the sponsor of HB 392, which would end elections to the Alabama Public Service Commission, after a House committee approved the bill last week.

But public utility experts said evidence that appointing utility regulators leads to lower costs is, at best, mixed. Electricity rates are tied to other factors independent of how utility regulation boards are formed.

"In general, utility bills reflect decades of utility investment decisions and PSC decisions about the return on equity," said Ari Peskoe, director of the Electricity Law Initiative at the Harvard Law School Environmental and Energy Law Program, in a statement.

Peskoe said that regulators approve the rates that public utilities charge customers from operations and investments.

"Utility rates vary because utilities have different operational costs and make different investment decisions, in part based on geography and a host of factors beyond the utility's control," he said.

See **BILL**, Page 7A

CAPITOL UPGRADE



Construction continues on the new Alabama State House in Montgomery on Feb. 4. MICKEY WELSH/ADVERTISER

Alabama's new State House is nearly complete

Sarah Clifton Montgomery Advertiser | USA TODAY NETWORK

The new Alabama State House will be ready for use by the end of the year, officials managing the project have confirmed. • The project has been in progress for some time, with serious inquiries into the project becoming tangible beginning around 2023. The Retirement Systems of Alabama led the management of the project, as well as the design, with architecture and engineering firm Goodwyn Mills Cawood making the actual construction happen on the ground. • The current state house, which was built in 1963 as the Alabama Highway Department Building, originally housed the Department of Transportation until 1985, according to the state. The Alabama Legislature moved into the upper floors as the Alabama State Capitol building underwent renovations, which prompted its renaming as the Alabama State House. See **STATE HOUSE**, Page 2A

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