



These 9 Alabama players need big 2026 A-Day performances

SPORTS, 1B

The Tuscaloosa News

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District 3 election set for April 14

Mark Hughes Cobb

Tuscaloosa News | USA TODAY NETWORK

A special election to fill the remaining three years on former Tuscaloosa City Councilor Norman Crow's District 3 seat will be held 7 a.m.-7 p.m. April 14.

The polling place will be Church of the Highlands, 721 Rice Mine Road NE.

Deadline to apply for an absentee ballot was April 9. Mailed absentee ballots must be postmarked by April 13, and received by noon April 14. Absentee ballots can be hand-delivered to the city clerk's office no later than 5 p.m. April 13.

For more, see www.elections.tuscaloosa.com/absentee-voting.

District 3 includes much of Tuscaloosa north of the Black Warrior River. Richard Henry and Douglas McArthur Parrish qualified to run for the seat, vacated by Crow on Jan. 27 after he won the Alabama House District 63 position in a Jan. 13 special election. District 63 includes much of northern and downtown Tuscaloosa, plus the University of Alabama.

Crow replaced another Tuscaloosa former City Council member, Cynthia Almond, who was appointed

See **ELECTION**, Page 2A



Richard Henry, left, and Doug Parrish, right, are candidates for the Tuscaloosa City Council Place 3. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE CANDIDATES



The City of Tuscaloosa unveiled the Tuscaloosa Police Department's Logistics Building on Kauloosa Avenue on April 2 in Tuscaloosa. Acting Police Chief Sebo Sanders speaks at the ceremony.

PHOTOS BY GARY COSBY JR./TUSCALOOSA NEWS

Tuscaloosa police open new logistics building

Jasmine Hollie

Tuscaloosa News | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Tuscaloosa Police Department celebrated the opening of a new \$1.27 million logistics building, a facility that officials say will boost public safety.

The city of Tuscaloosa on April 2 cut the ribbon on the new building, which features 7,600 square feet of enclosed space and six bays for emergency response purposes.

The facility, which is at 3311 Reese Phifer Ave., will primarily serve as a storage and maintenance hub for public safety vehicles, ensuring the vehicles are always ready for immediate deployment during emergencies.

"You know, I get asked sometimes, what is the most important thing we do at the city of Tuscaloosa? And the answer is easy and obvious. It's public safety," said Mayor Walt Maddox during the April 2 ceremony.

The project was funded by the city of Tuscaloosa. The building is designed to accommodate special units like SWAT and bomb squads, emphasizing the importance of readiness and up-to-date equipment.

Maddox said that the investment allows for centralizing heavy assets, facilitating routine maintenance, upgrades and quick deployment.

"This \$1.27 million investment in police logistics gives us the ability to put many of our heavy assets into one place, and that's important, whether it's for routine maintenance, whether it's for upgrades, whether it's just for the fact of quick deployment. We now have it in one space," Maddox said.

The city has plans for additional investments in public safety, including a significant initiative starting in October, the mayor said.

Maddox said the city will convert from a private po-



Former police chief and current Executive Director of Public Safety Brent Blankley shakes hands with Acting Police Chief Sebo Sanders outside the new facility.

lice/fire pension fund to the Retirement Systems of Alabama, resulting in a \$10.8 million investment in year one.

This investment is expected to grow over time, reaching over a quarter of a billion dollars over 20 years.

Tuscaloosa officials have said that converting from the city's police and fire pension plan to RSA will eliminate an obstacle to keeping or recruiting experienced police officers and firefighters.

"It's the largest investment in the city's history and we absolutely believe in it, because we need the best firefighters (and) the best police officers (to) respond when you dial 911," Maddox said.

See **POLICE**, Page 6A

Why April is a big month for Tuscaloosa tourism

Mark Hughes Cobb

Tuscaloosa News | USA TODAY NETWORK

Visitors to the Druid City drop several hundred million each year into local hotels (and other rental lodgings), restaurants, bars, retailers and gas/service stations, and they spend more on attractions, outdoor recreation, arts events and more.

Much of the area tourism is driven by the University of Alabama, with visiting parents, and sports fans — Crimson Tide football continues to be the 500-pound gorilla — fattening coffers, but spring stays a healthy competitor.

For 2025, April's visitor spend — tracked by credit card data — matched or bettered data for September, October and November, and fell only a bit behind August.

Among reasons April comes on strong: The football scrimmage A-Day, the return of fair weather encouraging outdoor activities, including festivals, and the run-up to commencement exercises, typically in early May (visitor numbers drop sharply in May, and stay low in June and July, surging again as the fall semester approaches).

See **TOURISM**, Page 2A

This Alabama city ranks among top 10 fastest-growing US metro areas

Jennifer Lindahl

Montgomery Advertiser | USA TODAY NETWORK

While population growth has cooled across much of the country, Huntsville clearly didn't get the memo. The metro area continues to climb the ranks, landing among the nation's fastest-growing areas.

The Huntsville metro area ranked sixth in the U.S. for population growth between July 1, 2024, and July 1, 2025, increasing by 2.6% to a population of 556,444, according to new estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

This stands in contrast to national trends: while Huntsville's growth accelerates, population gains slowed in most counties and metro areas during the same period. In fact, of the nation's 387 metro areas, 310 posted slower growth between 2024 and 2025.

Why is US population growth slowing?

Census data shows declining international migra-

See **HUNTSVILLE**, Page 2A

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