PROGRESS

PROGRESS

A SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE ★ SPRING 2025

WE'RE ALL BROTHERS

The Munsons build a community and we're all better off for it.

THE COMMERCIAL DISPATCH

SPRING 2025

BUSINESS ★ HEALTH ★ EDUCATION ★ CULTURE

GTR LINK

REDEFINING ECONOMIC POSSIBILITIES

At the Golden Triangle Development LINK, we're building more than industrial parks—we're shaping futures. From attracting cutting-edge industries to fostering workforce growth, our mission is clear: creating opportunities that last for generations.

www.gtrlink.org

BE BOLD.

Nationally ranked, The W offers a personalized learning experience and unique programs at one of the most affordable tuition rates in the region.

Join a campus community that will empower you to follow your dreams. **Be Bold**—your future starts here!

muw.edu

The W

CONTENTS

PROGRESS MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER **PETER IMES**
CONTENT COORDINATOR **PETER IMES**
LAYOUT/DESIGN **TINA PERRY / PETER IMES**

ADVERTISEMENT **BETH PROFFITT / SARAH BRANNON**
AD DESIGN **JACKIE TAYLOR / LAUREN BYRD**

DESIGNED, WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY

THE COMMERCIAL DISPATCH

Battling breast cancer is an incredibly personal experience. Dr. 'Chip' Wall and his team at OCH deliver compassionate, tailored care to guide each patient through their journey.

CENTER FOR
Breast Health
& IMAGING
STARKVILLE, MS

THE CHAMPS RELOAD

MSU SOCCER'S HISTORIC SEASON BUILDS A FOUNDATION

Alexis Gutierrez (#7), Ally Perry (#5) and Rylie Combs (#16) at the George M. Bryan Airport in Starkville.

When summer turns to autumn, Starkville becomes a football town, but a different kind of football also took over Starkville in 2024.

Mississippi State women's soccer transformed into the premier team in the Southeastern Conference. The team went a perfect 10-0 to win the regular-season conference crown and claim the No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament in November.

"The league table doesn't lie," head coach James Armstrong said after clinching the title, citing a well-used phrase from English football. The results spoke for themselves in terms of the growing crowds at the MSU soccer field.

Less than a month after winning the SEC, 4,022 Starkvillains spent their Friday night watching the Bulldogs win a thrilling 1-0 game against Washington to get to the Sweet Sixteen. The Bulldogs were on the ride of their lives, but it came to an end against Notre Dame in the next round.

As with most sports at all levels, unprecedented success led to departures. The team's backbone – goalkeeper Maddy Anderson, defender Rylie Combs, and midfielders Macey Hodge and Ilana Izquierdo – graduated, along with key starters Alexis Gutierrez, Ruthny Mathurin, Hannah Johnson, and Aitana Martinez-Montoya.

Head coach James Armstrong also departed in December, succeeding his former mentor at Auburn, Karen Hoppa, who retired after 26 seasons in charge of the Tigers.

One of the most important factors in MSU's historic 2024 season was continuity in coaching and roster building. With so many exits, is a slide expected?

Not exactly.

The Bulldogs enter 2025 with Nick Zimmerman, Armstrong's former assistant, as the seventh head coach in MSU history. Zimmerman joined Armstrong in Starkville in 2019 as an assistant and rose to associate head coach in 2022. He was the obvious choice to take over.

Once a player himself, Zimmerman has seen the game at multiple levels. He represented the U.S. at the U15 level, was an All-conference player at James Madison University and played professionally before moving into coaching.

Zimmerman has a reputation for his recruiting. He helped land internationals Mathurin and

Then Mississippi State Associate Head Coach Nick Zimmerman in 2024.

Kennedy Husbands (#19), Aitana Martinez-Montoya(#29) and Ally Perry (#5, in Pensacola, FL.

Izquierdo, who have played for their respective countries, Haiti and Colombia, on the biggest stage. Six players he recruited and coached have gone professional in the United States or Europe.

Zimmerman also retained two assistants, Kat Stratton and Alyssa D'Aloise, while adding Jonathan Garbar and Henry Zapata to the staff.

Top scorer Ally Perry returns for her senior year after a 10-goal campaign, along with veteran winger Chelsea Wagner and defenders Price Loposer and Naila Shoefberger. Veterans Alivia Buxton and Maggie Wadsworth also return after their respective campaigns were interrupted by extended injury absences.

The team also returns midfielder Kennedy Husbands and forwards Zoe Main and Kara Harris, who all impressed as freshmen in 2024.

"We've got a lot of really good pieces, and what's more exciting for me is this is a group that's hungry and they're ready," Zimmerman said on the Dear Ol State podcast. "There were a lot of strong personalities in our group and now it opens the door for some younger players to really open up and grow. It'll be a different group, but it's an exciting different group."

Main scored the final goal of a memorable season, running in behind and finishing with the composure of a seasoned veteran in front of that record crowd of 4,022. It was the fifth time setting a new attendance record that season.

The new standard on the pitch set a new standard in the stands as well, and that may be as important as the returning players.

"The fans bring us up when we're down and they bring us up when we're up," Main said after the game. "They're incredible and their support means everything. They're always ringing their bells and it was just an unreal feeling."

STORY BY **COLIN DAMMS**
PHOTOS COURTESY OF **MSU ATHLETICS**

PULLING THREADS

TRAILBLAZING NEPALI IMMIGRANT CHANGES STATE LAW, EXPANDS CHAIN SALONS

When Dipa Bhattarai first started threading eyebrows, it wasn't because she wanted to change state law or start a chain of salons. It was something she had grown up with in Nepal and that she could do to make some money during college.

"For me, it was part of growing up, but over here, I saw that it could be an opportunity. Because I was in Mississippi, there weren't many people doing it," Bhattarai said.

Bhattarai first came to America in 2013, pursuing a bachelor's degree at Mississippi University for Women on a student visa. There, Bhattarai started charging dorm mates for threading – a method of grooming eyebrows by trapping hairs with a cotton thread and removing them. The procedure is popular in Southeast Asia.

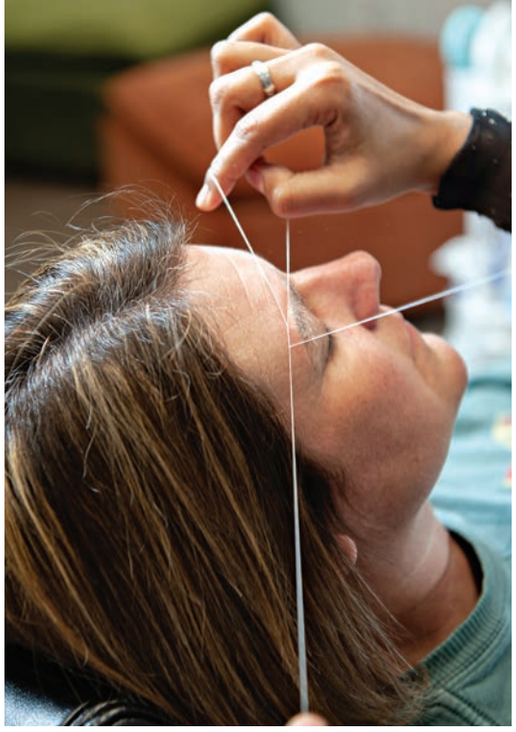
Because of Bhattarai's visa status, she couldn't open her own business immediately. But she had a friend who opened a salon she could run in 2015. She also found other girls with eyebrow threading experience to provide services.

Three years later, Bhattarai opened another salon in Starkville, realizing that owning eyebrow threading salons could be a path toward building passive income if she had enough locations. But there was an issue she never saw coming – licensure.

The Mississippi Board of Cosmetology required practitioners to hold a license. The training for licensure would require hundreds of hours of learning other skills that did not apply to her business at all. And then, with little warning, the board shut down both of her salons in 2018 within a few days of each other.

"My whole life came crashing down," she said.

One day, as Bhattarai was scrolling on Facebook, she came across Aaron Rice, the director



for the Mississippi Justice Institute. After hearing Bhattarai's story, Rice took up her case pro-bono and filed a lawsuit against the state board in 2019.

Rice also brought the case to the attention of state legislators. At the same time, similar lawsuits were being filed for other non-invasive cosmetic services, adding pressure on lawmakers to change the law during the 2021 session.

House Bill 1312 swept through the legislature, exempting services like lash extensions, makeup, and eyebrow threading from esthetician license requirements. Bhattarai said the change was thanks to all those who supported her, along with the American legal system. As many hurdles as the government placed on her with her immigration status, Bhattarai felt she also received an equal amount of help overcoming them.

"While the American system was hurting me in this, America also had the system that was protecting people like me with people like Mr. Aaron," she said.

After Bhattarai finished her master's program in 2021, she opened a new salon in Columbus – Deeva Brows and Beauty. Due to her visa requirements, she balanced that with another full-time job as a business counselor at the Mississippi Small Business Development Center.

By 2022, Bhattarai's second location was open in the Tupelo Mall at Barnes Crossing. Then, in 2024, she opened a kiosk in the mall in Gulfport. With three locations, she was eligible for a deal in April 2024 to open salons in any Walmart store.

Since then, she has opened four Deeva Brows and Lashes salons within Walmarts in Starkville, Columbus, Oxford and Olive Branch. She also maintains her location in the Tupelo mall.

Still, Bhattarai has dreams of doing more. Three more Walmart-based salons are slated to open this year, including Meridian, Gulfport and Biloxi. Her goal is to open 11 locations by 2026.

But she doesn't have plans to stop with Mississippi.

"There have been 14 states already that (have) deregulated threading…" Bhattarai said. "Why are we waiting for every state to do it individually? Why are we not federally deregulating it?"

Since starting and expanding her business, Bhattarai's visa status has also changed. She received an EB-1A visa – a green card for foreign nationals who have extraordinary abilities in the science, arts, education, business or athletics.

"I don't know how I got EB-1A as someone who just was doing threading in Columbus, Mississippi, you know," Bhattarai said. "... I'm not a Nobel prize winner, but a Nobel prize winner would have the same category of green card as I have. … There are not many people who have got it, but it all happened because of this business."

STORY BY **ABIGAIL SIPE ROCHESTER**
PHOTOS BY **RORY DOYLE**

Patient safety is our specialty.

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

A

STRAIGHT A's 2012-2024

LEAPFROG HOSPITAL SAFETY GRADE

For the 12th consecutive year, the Leapfrog Group has awarded Baptist Memorial Hospital-Golden Triangle an 'A' rating - the gold standard for patient safety. We are **1 of only 15 hospitals in the United States** to receive this highest hospital safety rating every grading period since 2012.

Safety is your right and it's our specialty. Let safety be your guide for choosing the right hospital for your care.

Visit **baptistonline.org/GradeA** to learn more about Baptist Golden Triangle's latest patient safety recognition.

BAPTIST®

Get Better.

Name: Quan Walker
Birthplace: Flint, Michigan
Hobbies: Traveling, reading, cooking, solving crossword puzzles, playing board games, hiking, walking in the park, flying kits, exploring new experiences

MEET QUAN WALKER

Originally from Flint, Michigan, Quan Walker came to Columbus in 2011. But after a few years focusing on raising her children as a housewife, she decided to get more involved in the community. Walker started volunteering at United Way of the Golden Triangle Region, which led to her working as the organization's volunteer director.

After almost a decade at United Way, Walker recently decided to take a leap – becoming the executive director of the Columbus Arts Council. The organization announced in January Walker's new role encouraging the arts council's mission.

Reporter Abigail Sipe Rochester asked Walker questions about her new position in mid-February.

What originally brought you into the nonprofit world?

My journey into the nonprofit world was inspired by my grandmother, Dorothy J. Walker. She was a true community leader, founding and leading the local block club with unwavering dedication. From organizing back-to-school fashion shows and fundraising events to hosting community Halloween and Christmas parties, she brought people together in meaningful ways. She also collaborated with city officials and the mayor to secure grants that helped beautify and strengthen our neighborhood. Her legacy of service and commitment to bettering the lives of others is what first sparked my passion for nonprofit work.

What do you feel like you learned while working at United Way?

During my time at United Way, I learned that there are countless people in the community who are genuinely committed to creating a better future for our youth, and they are willing to take action to make that happen. I also saw that there are still many good-hearted individuals out there, eager to make a difference. However, one of the challenges we face is getting this information to the right people. It's crucial that we educate the community on the ways they can contribute. While financial support is important, volunteering can make a huge impact as well. People often don't know what they don't know, and it's up to those who have the knowledge to help guide them and show them how they can get involved.

Why did you decide to apply to be executive director of the Columbus Arts Council?

This opportunity wasn't something I initially planned, as I truly enjoyed my role as volunteer director at United. I loved connecting with new people and creating meaningful volunteer opportunities for the community. However, I decided to apply for the executive director position with the arts council as a way to challenge myself and expand my impact. I see this role as an exciting

chance to contribute to the community in a different way – leveraging my experience in leadership and community engagement to bringing fresh opportunities and support to the arts.

What are some of the challenges you are facing, and how do you hope to overcome them?

One of the main challenges I'm facing is increasing attendance, membership and community support. To address this, I plan to build stronger partnerships with local businesses, churches and schools. By fostering these connections, I aim to raise awareness and actively promote the events and activities happening at the arts council, ensuring that more people in the community are aware of the opportunities available and feel encouraged to get involved.

What does art mean to you? How do you see that working into the arts council's mission going forward?

Art means a great deal to me, as it was something my grandmother truly embodied. She was incredibly creative, making handmade wedding bouquets and mastering netting and crocheting. I have vivid memories of spending Saturdays with her at Joann Fabrics, watching her select fabrics for her next project. Unfortunately, I didn't get the chance to sit with her and learn those skills, but I now recognize that those crafts are a form of art that shouldn't be lost. Art is everywhere around us, in so many different forms. From dance, song and comedy to culinary arts, poetry and theater – art is in everything. Even fields like engineering and construction are driven by creativity. Every creation starts as an idea, drawn on paper, and brought to life through talent. Moving forward, I see the arts council as a place to celebrate and preserve all forms of art, ensuring they continue to thrive and inspire others.

Has anything surprised you so far since becoming executive director?

What has truly surprised me is the immense love for art within our community. There is so much hidden talent here, and it's inspiring to see how people express themselves through various forms of art. I'm eager to help the arts council showcase all types of art, because much like beauty, art is in the eye of the beholder. There's something powerful in every creative expression, and I want to make sure that we provide a platform for all of it.

INTERVIEW BY **ABIGAIL SIPE ROCHESTER**
PHOTO BY **RORY DOYLE**

3 INSPIRED PEOPLE

In every community, there are those among us who lead by quiet example. They seldom hold positions of power, nor do they have a title or any official designation that distinguishes them from their neighbors. Yet they are often the ones who, having found their own inspiration, serve to make us better people and a better community. The spark of imagination they ignite through the pursuit of their own dreams, passions and curiosity can spread down the street, through a neighborhood, across a community. Their stories are an inspiration and in the telling of their stories, others may be similarly inspired. In each edition, Progress tells the story of three of the "Inspired People" of our community.

PROFILES BY **SLIM SMITH**
PHOTOS BY **RORY DOYLE**

LANA EDWARDS PUGH

In most sports, when athletes reach their 40s, their careers are all but finished.

Even though she is 43 years old and has been off the barrel racing circuit for the past few years, Lana Pugh isn't finished with the sport she has competed in since she was 8 years old.

"Some women compete in their 60s, even their 70s," Pugh said. "I could see myself doing that, too, if I can stay healthy. Lana Pugh isn't finished just yet.

Lana Pugh has been off the barrel racing circuit for a few years now, but she has no thoughts of retiring from the sport.

"I lost my competition horse a couple of years ago, so I had to look around for a new one," Pugh says. "I bought a race horse, a little quarter horse thoroughbred mare and I've had to train her from scratch. It took a year just to get a good handle on her and this past year, it's been getting her familiar with pattern barrel race horses run. She's coming along, though, and I hope to get back to running at least some training classes by the summer. That's my goal."

Barrel racing was a natural fit for Pugh, who grew up in rural Clay County.

"There weren't a lot of neighbors close by, but we always had horses around as far back as I can remember," Pugh said. "I was an old child, so as a little girl, the horses were my friends. I started riding when I was 7."

Pugh' introduction to barrel racing came during one of the frequent visits to relatives living in Houston, which almost always included attending the rodeos held at the Chickasaw County arena.

"I saw a little girl riding in the barrel races and told Daddy that I wanted to do that. When I was 8, I went to a (barrel racing) clinic in the morning and rode in my first competition that evening. I was hooked."

The clinic was the only real training she ever had. She learned the ropes through competition and the support of her parents..

"None of us knew what we were doing, but we had fun learning," Pugh said. "From the time I was 8, except for the past couple of years, I've been riding somewhere just about every week."

Pugh took to barrel racing like a duck to water, competing at 4H, state and regional events.

"My folks had a bookcase of baubles, ribbons, trophies I won," Pugh said. "In the late 90s, I would go to Oklahoma to ride in the big NBRA (National Barrel Racing Association). I got lucky and won the 4D National Championship, which was the biggest event I ever won."

Pugh moved to Macon after meeting her husband, JJ Pugh, in 2007. Their daughter, Allie, is 13.

"As I got older, especially after Allie was horn, I scaled back on competitions," Pugh said. "My husband's a truck driver and I have a job and a daughter so there was no way I was going to be able to compete the way I did before. I still manage to ride at least one day a week and after Allie got older she told me I needed to get back to competing."

Although Allie likes to ride as a hobby, she has other interests to take up her time.

"I never pushed her to barrel race, because it's something you really have to put your heart into," Pugh said. "It just wasn't her thing and that's fine.. "But I do think its a great sport for girls and women because it teaches you that you're not always going to win and that you have to bounce back and not just drag around feeling sorry for yourself. I think it also teaches you a lot as a kid. You learn responsibility very early. Horses take time and attention. It's not just racing and winning. It's the kind of stuff you have to do every day. It teaches you discipline."


MAGELLAN

PHILESA DESMIDT

Each December, many people are moved to participate in toy drives because they can only imagine what it would be like to wake up as a kid on Christmas morning to find nothing under the tree.

Perhaps that's one of the things that makes the toy drive by Philesa DeSmidt different: She doesn't have to imagine.

"I grew up without Christmas," DeSmidt said. "I lost my mom when I was just 8, so it was just my dad and me and my dad didn't work after mom died. I can remember going to school and my friends would come up to me and tell me what Santa brought them or what they got from their parents. I wasn't jealous. I was sad. You don't understand things like that when you are a little kid."

DeSmidt, who has lived all her life in Caledonia, said she never forgot the memories of those childhood Christmases. There were kids in Caledonia who got very little, if anything, for Christmas. She knew that because she was one of those kids.

The idea to start a toy drive specifically for those kids began to take form when she realized that her experiences as a child weren't that rare.

"A lot of that started when my son was a Cub Scout," she said. "I was a Cub Scout mom and I noticed there were kids in our pack that probably didn't have much of a Christmas. I was a substitute teacher for three years in Caledonia and saw the same things. So I decided to start a toy drive."

DeSmidt started the Caledonia Toy Drive in 2014 without a lot of help or resources.

"We just put out flyers and asked people to donate whatever they could," she said. "It's grown a lot since then.

The 2024 Caledonia Toy Drive was the biggest so far, DeSmidt said, providing toys for 90 kids ages 1 to 16.

Prior to 2024, the Toy Drive had provided toys for 50 to 75 kids each year, DeSmidt estimated.

"I don't have a firm figure, but we've given toys to 500 kids at the least, probably a lot more."

DeSmidt said one of the unique things about the Caledonia Toy Drive is that it allows parents the dignity of being involved in the process.

"After we've received all the toys, we open up something like a little store where the parents can come and shop for the things they think their kids will like," she said. They know better than anyone what their kids like. I think it's important that the parents feel like they are a part of this."

How many toys a child receives is based on a simple equation: The amount of the toys donated divided by the number of children who have been identified by people in the community.

"We also give them stocking stuffers and stuffed animals," DeSmidt said.

The donations of toys or cash begin the weekend following Christmas and close in mid-December with four drop-off locations in town.

The Caledonia Toy drive is also supported by a couple of events in Caledonia who decided to use their event to solicit toy donations. The Pack 9 Toy Run, a motorcycle event founded by Schatzi Whitehead, joined the toy drive in 2016. Carl Ulmer's Cruisin' For Tots, a classic car event, came aboard in 2020.

"That's been huge for us," DeSmidt said.

As the toy drive has grown, so have the demands on the mom of two, who works as a civilian employee at Columbus Air Force Base.

"My family knows that beginning the week after Thanksgiving, it's going to be go, go,go," said DeSmidt, 42.

She said the drive has turned out to be a family project for her, her husband, Curt, daughter Bre, 22, and son, Lakelan, 17.

"They've been a big help," she said. "And for the past three years, Shauna Scarborough has been tremendous. That's important because you need a lot of people to toy drive."

Invariably, when the drive ends each year, the thoughts of her childhood emerge.

"It's really a blessing for me to be able to help because I know how much it means to the kids," she said.

ALDEN THORNHILL

Although he may not be a household name in Starkville, Alden Thornhill has had an oversized impact on the town just four years after the 2015 Mississippi State graduate returned to town.

The story of how Thornhill hit upon an idea that would become an overnight sensation and become one of the biggest events in the city is already part of the folklore of Starkville.

In November of 2022, Thornhill said he was trying to think of an event that could be held in the spring to take advantage of the nice weather before MSU students left town for the summer.

Thornhill moved to Louisiana after college. During his time there, he became friends with the person in charge of marketing for the historic New Orleans' Fairgrounds race, which had a race just for dachshunds. Around the same time, Thornhill got his dachshund puppy, Memphis.

"I got to thinking about shutting down a street and doing something fun," he said. "I remembered how funny the wiener dog race in New Orleans was and I just knew the students would love it."

On May 6, 2023, almost a thousand people turned out to see the inaugural Starkville Derby, which raised more than $16,000 for its charity, the Oktibbeha County Humane Society.

Thornhill was stunned by the turnout for the inaugural race, but the 2024 event proved to be an even bigger sensation with an estimated crowd of 5,000 spectators, 150 dachshunds, 64 local sponsors and donors and 13 vendor booths. The second Starkville Derby generated $40,000 for the humane society.

Later that year, the Mississippi Main Street Association recognized the Starkville Derby as the Best Large Event in the state.

Looking back, Thornhill realizes the stars aligned perfectly to create such a successful event.

Upon moving back to Starkville, Thornhill became very active in the community as a board member for the Humane Society, Starkville Area Arts Council and Starkville Community Foundation, as well as a member of Rotary, Starkville Young Professionals and a Partnership ambassador.

The network of community leaders he built, along with the expertise gained in his marketing job, proved indispensable.

"That helped a lot," he said. "I knew people who were getting things done in the community and I knew how to market events. But really, when something succeeds at this level, it's a testament to the students, residents, businesses, city officials and the university. Without all of those groups, it might have turned out to be just a small event, something to fill an empty weekend."

As Thornhill prepares for the 2025 Starkville Derby on May 3, much has changed.

"I'm working in sales with Med Centris, the company I worked for in Louisiana. My sales area is north Mississippi, so I'm traveling all during the week. The only time I have to work on the race is on weekends, but thankfully, we have a good team now. We don't have to reinvent the wheel."

He'll also be devoting time in a different role.

He and his wife, Abby, are expecting their first child, a girl, this spring.

As the founder of the Starkville Derby, Thornhill, 32, can take pride in what it has meant to Starkville.

"I went to school at State and loved it and now it's home for me, my wife and our future daughter," he said. "I love the idea of having these kinds of events and working with people who can do things. It's what makes Starkville special."

HOME SALE TRENDS

REAL ESTATE METRICS FROM JULY - DECEMBER 2024 COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD IN 2023

Data for these 4 counties

NUMBER OF HOMES SOLD

= 20 homes

Lowndes — 269 homes ↑
246 homes in 2023

Oktibbeha — 213 homes ↓
255 homes in 2023

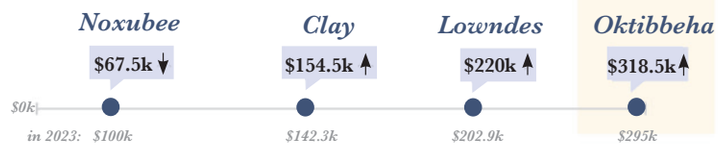
Clay — 42 homes ↑
34 homes in 2023

Noxubee — 8 homes ↓
9 homes in 2023

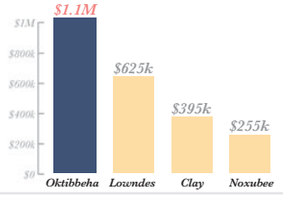
TIME ON THE MARKET

Lowndes	94 days	*(91)*
Oktibbeha	101	*(91)*
Noxubee	108	*(109)*
Clay	108	*(118)*

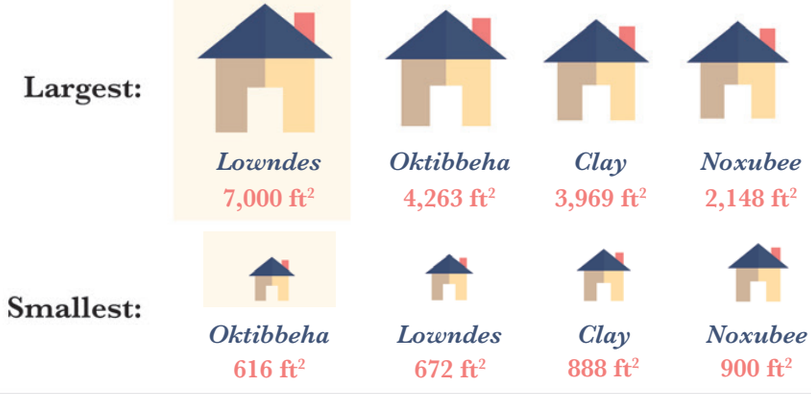
MEDIAN SALES PRICE



MOST EXPENSIVE HOME SOLD



LARGEST AND SMALLEST HOMES SOLD



Data courtesy of Greater Golden Triangle Association of Realtors®

This information is deemed to be reliable, but not guaranteed. This does not reflect homes sold by owner or other homes not listed in MLS sold in these areas.


MUGS MUGS
Lite
MUST BE
TO ENJOY
MILLER TIME
FEB
2004
COORS LIGHT
BUD LIGHT

FROM CHAOS TO COMFORT: GABY HOPE FINDS HER RHYTHM BEHIND THE BAR

At Mugshots Grill & Bar in Starkville, the chaos of game day is in full swing. As tickets pile up and the crowd presses in, Gaby Hope pours one pitcher of Miller Lite after another. She moves effortlessly, dodging elbows and maneuvering around tables with hands full of cocktails and food. Hours pass in a blur of clinking glasses and pregame cheers.

On days like this, Hope shines behind the bar.

"I like the crowd," Hope said. "I like the busyness. You're bringing in your money and you're making the time go by faster while you're doing it."

Though Hope has only been bartending for a year and a half, she moves with the ease of someone who has been behind the bar much longer. Her hands move in a blur, pouring, shaking and measuring drinks to near-perfect precision without giving it a second thought.

"I come in here, and I could do this with my eyes closed," Hope said.

Hope still remembers the first drink she made behind the bar: the Island Cooler.

"It's still my favorite drink to make," she says. "It's really cute."

Aside from making the drinks, Hope's favorite part of the job is making connections.

"You get to know a lot of the people who come in," she said. "I have a few tables that are regulars – I know what they get every time they come in."

When those familiar faces walk in, Hope wastes no time. She starts pouring a pitcher of Coors Light and rings up a Katies Kickin Chicken with a house salad. It's the unspoken rhythm of regulars and routine, the kind that makes this place feel like home.

With no end to the rush in sight, Gaby doesn't plan on leaving anytime soon.

"I plan on staying for a while," she said. "It just feels like home at this point."

ISLAND COOLER

1 ¼ oz. Captain Morgan Rum
½ oz. peach schnapps
2 oz. pineapple juice
2 oz. orange juice
½ oz. grenadine

Step 1: Combine 1 ¼ oz. Captain Morgan Rum, ½ oz. peach schnapps, 2 oz. pineapple juice and 2 oz. orange juice into a shaker and shake with ice.

Step 2: Strain into a pint glass filled with ice.

Step 3: Float ½ oz. grenadine.

Step 4: Garnish with an orange slice and a cherry.

STORY BY **CADENCE HARVEY**
PHOTO BY **RORY DOYLE**


GRAND OPENING!
BEER GARDEN
MUNSON & BROTHERS
TRADING POST
OKTOBERFEST
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
OKTOBERFEST!
OKTO
BER
FEST

COVER

‘EVEN YOUR MOTHER CAN BE A BROTHER’

PIECE BY PIECE, THE MUNSONS BUILD THE COMMUNITY THEY WANT, AND WE’RE ALL BETTER OFF FOR IT

One of Ryan Munson’s friends really needed to sell his toaster last spring.

Not for any price. He wanted $15, firm. No one was biting, and every few months, Munson would see the toaster pop up on Facebook Marketplace, always for $15, then disappear after a week or two.

“He was holding steady,” Munson said, which begged the question, “What is with this guy and this toaster?”

A former broker for Edward Jones, Munson decided to become his friend’s “toaster broker.”

“At first, I tried to advertise, ‘Hey, my buddy is really needing to get out of a jam if somebody will buy this toaster from him for $15.’ And it didn’t sell. Then it disappeared and came back (on Facebook Marketplace) a month later.”

Munson, who co-owns Munson and Brothers Trading Post on Second Avenue North in Columbus, thought if his old job couldn’t help his friend, maybe his new one could.

He started a GoFundMe for the toaster, promising to throw a party at the downtown restaurant and beer garden if it raised enough money. All told, it raised $1,500 for the Golden Triangle Regional Homeless Coalition.

“We threw a party in the name of the toaster (with a live band) where people could make their own toast and jam,” Ryan said.

“And we had balloons and all these different types of bread,” added his wife and business partner Katherine Munson.

“Silly events” and community engagement have defined Munson and Brothers’ brand since it opened in October 2020 with an Oktoberfest – a continuing event that marks the establishment’s anniversary each year.

Even the establishment’s name is a touch

whimsical. “Brothers,” Ryan said, is a metaphor for the friends and customers who have supported Munson’s along the way.

“Even your mother can be a brother,” Ryan joked. “We’d be called ‘Munson and Brothers and Sisters,’ but that name is out of control.”

As a business, Munson’s has grown from a small apothecary to a restaurant that serves brick oven pizzas, a beer garden, stage and as many as 70 craft beers, the most available at any one place in Mississippi.

The “silly events” raise money for Columbus Arts Council, United Way of the Golden Triangle and several other local charities.

Even with Munson’s success, the couple looks at their establishment as an art project that will never be finished.

“If you finish growing, then you start dying,” Ryan said. “I hope we’re constantly revisiting, rehoning and changing things to make it better.”

In the Munson marriage, Ryan tends to be the “big idea” partner. Katherine breaks those ideas down to manageable chunks and helps make them a reality.

Look no further than the restaurant’s well-appointed outdoor space, where the colors and designs of everything from the rugs to the tables blend together comfortably and seamlessly. Or inside, where the displayed artwork is intentional and aims to be equally soothing.

“I do all the painting,” said Katherine, a graphic designer by trade. “I put all the artwork up. Color combinations, making sure things are cohesive. … It’s like a melody. Everything kind of weaves together … and it doesn’t violate your senses.”

It comes naturally to her. Katherine’s father is longtime Mississippi University for Women art professor Larry Feeney.

If the full-speed Ryan was in charge of decorating, Katherine said, “It would be crazy.”

But Katherine is quick to note a crucial moment when Ryan was the “practical one.” It’s why the couple still lives in Columbus and why Munson’s exists at all.

Born in Missouri, Ryan grew up in Memphis. That’s where he met Katherine, a Columbus native.

“She moved back home, and I proposed to her and asked if I could come too,” Ryan said. “She let me.”

After the two married, Ryan began work for Edward Jones. Pretty soon, his creative mind turned to making things – candles, soaps, beard

oils, balms, lotions – that he started selling on the side.

A vacation to Asheville, North Carolina, about 10 years ago changed everything for both of them, Katherine said.

"I said, 'I want to move there,'" Katherine said.

Ryan got something else out of the trip entirely. Not only did he see an artisan could make a living selling his creations full-time, he believed they could bring a taste of Asheville to Columbus.

"We have always wanted to be a part of a community," he said. "The conversation since we've been married has been about building the world we want to live in."

Ryan quit his job at Edward Jones and turned his hobby into a business, bought a building on Second Avenue North and used it as a warehouse for his crafts while running a small apothecary in the back. Soon, more than 150 locations carried his products, but in early 2020, COVID-19 turned that business on its ear. So, the Munsons pivoted to using the west side of their lot as an outdoor space and beer garden, posting the craft beer selections on the outside wall and serving customers through a small window.

"Then the Air Force showed up," Ryan said, noting that customer support from Columbus Air Force Base personnel really got the business off the ground. "And we realized we were in a different business altogether."

By 2022, customer demand led to a brick oven for pizzas. Later, they added a stage.

A pair of grants from Main Street America provided $40,000 more since 2024 for additional expansion and upgrades.

"Every time we've needed to do something,

(we ask) 'What is something that's not being cultivated, something new that we can add where we are not competing with our neighbors?'" Ryan said. "... We want a place where people could bring their children and where people were comfortable. … a place where people come hang out and relax without the expectation of spending a bunch of money."

★ ★ ★

On a beautiful March Monday, Nic Parish sat in Munson's beer garden waiting for his guests to arrive.

The vice president of operations at Burns Dirt in Columbus was meeting a group of contractors coming into town for the week. Everyone in the group, he said, was meeting in person for the first time.

"I said, 'There's not a better place to go than Munson's,'" Parish said. "We can all hang out. The weather's perfect. You can't beat it.'"

Parish was at Munson's on Day 1 and is a self-proclaimed regular. He's gotten so comfortable there over the years, he's even grabbed the mic a few times for karaoke night – something he'd never done before.

Every Oktoberfest, Parish helps the restaurant "sling brats and pretzels."

Parish doesn't think he'd have one-tenth of the relationships in Columbus he's built if not for Munson's. Even with complete strangers, the family-friendly setting and vibe make conversations just "spill out."

"It feels like Ryan and Katherine have built a place that has become so accepting of every walk of life," he said. "You walk in and it's the most diverse crowd you're going to see any place in Columbus. … In modern times, it's so easy to get sucked into your home with video games and Netflix. But he has built a place that draws you out of your home and gets you involved in your community, meet people and it not feel like a late-night bar."

That's the vibe the Munsons are going for, and while planned events they host like the quarterly Burns Bottom Arts Festival and Porch Fest – where signed bands and comedians come to Munson's and perform – do great, the organic traditions customers are building there mean just as much.

"It's really fun finding yourself entwined with the community," Ryan said.

★ ★ ★

Ryan had it all planned. Munson's would host a Groundhog Day with a Columbus twist. After

all, Possum Town calls for the appearance of a live possum.

One problem: The morning of the event, the live possum idea fell through, and by the time 200 guests arrived in fancy dress and tophats that evening, the Munsons needed a Plan B.

"I gave this guy, one of our regulars, a free bar tab to dress up as in a possum costume," Ryan said. "He did it, and it went really well."

For St. Patrick's Day, Munson's partnered with Zachary's restaurant for a 0.5K between the two establishments located at adjacent blocks because "a 5K is just too long."

Part of the proceeds went to Munson's charity in-house fund.

"We just get hit up a lot," Ryan said. "There's just so much need out there. We're trying to raise capital so we can be there for more."

Ryan couldn't be more grateful for the community around him and the fact he and Katherine stayed in Columbus.

"I see people all the time discount and talk bad about our community," Ryan said. "I can tell you, this is the best damn community. They've embraced every crazy, wild idea I've had. People are willing to participate, and the more people we have, the more fun it gets. It lights a fire under me to see what else we can make happen."

STORY BY **ZACK PLAIR**
PHOTOS BY **RORY DOYLE**

EARN POINTS

on things you buy everyday!

Some exclusions may apply. Card must be enrolled to redeem or win prizes. Points are not redeemable for cash. Visit any of our stores or check us out at www.sprintmart.com/rewards for details.

Download our App.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

HISTORY MEETS ADVENTURE IN TUSCUMBIA

ALABAMA SMALL TOWN OFFERS ONE-OF-A-KIND ATTRACTIONS, SOUTHERN EATS AND LOCAL CHARM

Rattlesnake Saloon.

Nestled in the historic shoals region of Alabama, Tuscumbia offers more than a quiet weekend vacation in a small town.

A trip to the town seems to send visitors to a different world. Whether it is in the backyard of Helen Keller's childhood home or a quirky restaurant tucked inside a mountain cave, a weekend in Tuscumbia is the perfect balance of history, culture and adventure.

Tuscumbia's population is approximately 9,100 but the broader "Shoals" area, which includes Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Florence, boasts a population of 155,000.

Start your trip with a tour at Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller and the first home built in Tuscumbia. Built in 1820, the Southern architecture-style home, situated on what was once a 600-acre plantation, is still home to much of its original furniture, decor and artifacts that date back to Keller's time.

Tours of the home are given Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., offering a look into what life was like for Keller as a blind and deaf child. Hostesses like Lynn Weaver, who has worked at the home for more than two decades, go far beyond the home's history, diving into the details of Keller's life, from the mischievous childhood pranks to the pivotal moment she learned to communicate.

"It's really a very unique experience," Weaver said. "It's like stepping back in time because we have so much that's still original. It still surprises me when I'm walking up and looking in the little building at those things that were Helen's."

Weaver said the home draws visitors from

Relics from Helen Keller's life at Ivy Green.

across the globe who want to honor Keller's impact on the treatment of disabled people. The home can easily see 200 tour groups a day during June and July when "The Miracle Worker," a play about Keller's life, is performed on the grounds at Ivy Green each Friday.

After Ivy Green, take a five-minute drive south to downtown Tuscumbia, which features specialty shops and locally-owned eateries. Stop by the Palace Ice Cream and Sandwich Shop to grab a sweet treat before walking through Spring Park down the street.

Well worth the short drive to Florence, the Stricklin Hotel offers modern accommodations inside a historic building renovated in 2017 to house multiple businesses along with the hotel.

Ivy Green, Helen Keller's childhood home.

Breakfast at Too Fat Sisters.

The first floor of the building is home to Big Bad Breakfast, which was opened in 2008 by James Beard award-winning chef John Currence. In the basement of the building, The Boiler Room offers an upscale gaming experience with bowling, arcade games and late-night eats and drinks. Room service from both establishments for hotel guests only adds to the stay.

For an authentic southern breakfast, start one morning at the Too Fat Sisters restaurant. Known for its down-home dishes like country ham and eggs or their signature biscuits and chocolate gravy, the cozy diner is the perfect place to fuel up for the day.

Next head to Cane Creek Canyon nature preserve, open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. each weekend.

Originally the backyard of locals Jim and Faye Lacefield, this roughly 700-acre property features 15 miles of well-maintained trails, more than 10 waterfalls and a perfect view of the Freedom Hills. The Lacefields, who purchased the first 40 acres of the land in 1979, began developing and expanding the property with the goal of maintaining its diverse habitats.

The preserve, now managed by the Land Trust of North Alabama, is easily accessible for hikers of all levels and families.

After hiking the hills, satisfy your appetite at The Rattlesnake Saloon, one of Tuscumbia's most popular attractions and one of the country's most unique dining experiences. Situated inside a cave, each night visitors are driven down a steep hill to the restaurant in the Saloon Taxi (an extended cab pickup truck).

Jack Eady, who drives the taxi on the weekends, said he takes hundreds of visitors down to the saloon each Saturday with a line of diners waiting in the parking lot to head down. Most visitors, he said, are out-of-towners drawn by curiosity.

"It's more of people travelling for vacation and people passing through," Eady said. "They want to see what it's like when someone talks about a restaurant in a cave. That draws attention."

Even during an Alabama summer, the cool cavern creates a comfortable experience that includes live music and beer after 6 p.m. on the weekends. While you can't go wrong ordering any burger on the menu, don't miss out on the appetizers, especially the loaded haystacks (loaded fries) or snake eyes and tails (fried jalapeno slices and green beans).

STORY BY **EMMA MCRAE**
PHOTOS BY **EMMA MCRAE AND COURTESY OF COLBERT COUNTY TOURISM**

Lunch at Rattlesnake Saloon.

Cane Creek Canyon nature preserve overlook.

Entrance to Rattlesnake Saloon.

662.243.1900 www.eastms.edu 662.476.5000


STATE
AI
AI

EDUCATION

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

MSU POSITIONS ITSELF TO LEAD SOUTHEAST IN AI STUDIES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

With the artificial intelligence market projected to soar to $1.3 trillion by 2032, Mississippi State University and other postsecondary institutions are leading the charge to equip the workforce with essential AI skills.

With the introduction of its Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence degree last year, Mississippi State became one of a handful of universities – and the first in the Southeast – to offer an undergraduate degree in the rapidly expanding field.

"We wanted to make sure our students in the Computer Science and Engineering Department were the ones developing the AI systems, and not only that, but also taking those AI systems and applying them to various areas," said Computer Science and Engineering professor and Interim Department Head Andy Perkins in an interview with The Dispatch.

The program, which welcomed its first cohort in fall 2024, was designed with the future demands of the AI industry in mind. As companies like OpenAI, Google and Meta brought generative AI, which creates new content using models trained on existing data, to the forefront, Perkins said MSU was looking for a way to get ahead of the curve.

"In a way, we observed what was happening at the time and got a little bit ahead of everybody else to introduce this to make sure Mississippi State grads were the ones taking the lead," he said.

The program starts with a solid foundation in computer science followed by an in-depth study of AI concepts, like machine learning, human computer interaction and algorithms. But the program is not limited to technical courses, Perkins said.

"We also have students take courses in things like cognitive science, which deals with how humans think. If you're going to teach a machine how to think, it may be helpful to understand how humans think," he said. "They also take an ethics course because we hear a lot about the ethics of AI. I think it's important … to make sure that everyone understands the ethical implications of the things that we do with computers.

The degree culminates in a capstone project where students engage in AI research or work on AI-related projects, many of which are done through industry partnerships, Perkins said.

"We will work with industry partners to pair student teams up on developing AI systems, applying AI in a specific area related to our industry partner and to be able to get that real world experience in developing and using AI systems for a specific industry," he said.

While generative models have only recently garnered mainstream attention, AI has played a role across industries for centuries, Perkins said. From healthcare to entertainment to finance, it is a tool anyone can take advantage of – no matter their career – if they know how to use it, he said.

A newly approved minor in AI at MSU aims to give students across disciplines a chance to incorporate AI into their degree whether it's in computer science, psychology or even performing arts.

"This is for anybody at the university, not just computer scientists or engineers," he said. "It can be people in the humanities or the arts that want to learn the basics of how artificial intelligence works, how are some of the models developed and then how they can apply it in their job after they graduate."

MAKING AI EDUCATION MORE ACCESSIBLE

MSU, along with East Mississippi Community College and Mississippi University for Women, is a part of the Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network, which is a statewide network of partners working to make AI education more accessible to students and professionals in and outside of the computer science industry.

MAIN Director Kollin Napier said the network was created in response to the need for workforce-ready skills when it comes to AI.

"The idea (for the network) came because all of these institutions … were asking the same questions of how do we better prepare our students out of a community college going straight to work or out of a four year university going straight to work to meet that industry demand?" he said.

Napier said there is a misconception that working in or with AI requires an advanced computer science degree.

"When we talk about AI skills for the workforce, it's enabling anyone and everyone – regardless of their background, their discipline, whatever route that they've taken in their career – to understand how they can pull up … a tool and ask the right questions," Napier said.

The network's first partnership cohort of partners included all 15 community colleges and five universities across the state.

Through these collaborations, anyone can access more than 10 AI-focused courses, offering 64 hours of content ranging from introductory AI principles to specialized topics like AI in manufacturing or sustainability. Partnerships also create opportunities for industry collaborations, real-world AI projects and career pathways for participants.

As of 2024, MAIN enrolled more 1,200 Mississippians in an AI course, including more than 2,000 K-12 educators in the program.

"What we've been able to accomplish is just making that available and accessible across the board," Napier said. "The key benefit to all of this is that it is accessible to everyone in the state, whether that's higher ed, K-12, workforce, young or old. It's free. There's no cost involved to anyone."

STORY BY **EMMA MCRAE**
OPENING IMAGE BY **DALL-E ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / OPEN AI**

Starkville road work.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND MORE INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADS, BRIDGES, AIRPORTS SEE HEAVY INVESTMENTS AS MORE DEVELOPMENT BREAKS GROUND

Cities and towns across the Golden Triangle have been hard at work revamping their infrastructure, from parks and bridges to flood prevention and a wide variety of major road reconfigurations. There have also been some notable businesses laying the groundwork for a move into the area.

STARKVILLE/OKTIBBEHA

Roadwork is the name of the game in Oktibbeha and Starkville this year, with the Highway 182 revitalization shutting down much of the western portion of Dr. Martin Luther King Drive. That project won't be done until 2027 but should see major progress in early 2025 as workers use March's warm weather and spring break to lay asphalt along School Street and beyond.

Main Street will get its own revamp when a redesign breaks ground in April. Bids should finalize in March, with major construction continuing for 18 to 24 months. Those looking to check in on the project can use Main Street's new camera, which will be used to make a timelapse of the work once it's done.

Starkville landed a $10 million hotel deal in late 2024 to build a Candlewood Suites between Academy Sports and the Hollywood Premier Cinema. The city is still waiting for the hotel to assemble and file its paperwork, but it expects construction to begin this year and finish as early as 2026.

McKee park has been partially closed for extensive renovations through 2024. Its new facilities, including new play areas, splash pads, dog park, parking and pathways should be finished by October, possibly earlier.

The county is also looking to change its roads, with two separate pilot programs testing dust suppressants and chemical stabilizers for Oktibbeha's dirt and gravel surfaces. Those tests have been arranged and are waiting for warm enough weather in March or April, with the stabilizers along Cannon Road and the dust suppressants along Clifford Lane and two other roads branching off Rockhill. Both could see a broader rollout if the chemicals prove effective.

Oktibbeha launched a comprehensive inventory of its bridges in November after road crews

McKee Park

discovered substantial wear and erosion on six of them. By March county workers had laid eyes on every bridge in each county, though a thorough inspection is still forthcoming. A full inventory of road conditions is also underway, reaching roughly 50% completion in March.

COLUMBUS/LOWNDES

Columbus is revamping its drainage infrastructure to try and reduce its flooding issues, mostly in Wards 1, 4 and 5. With an estimated $48 million in infrastructure investment needed throughout the city, this $6 million won't even come close to fixing all the city's issues, but it will hopefully alleviate some of Columbus' worst flooding.

Recent issues acquiring easements from landowners have thrown a monkey wrench into that project, with contractors and city personnel trying to track down owners, government agencies and executors of estates for permission to work. The money, however, is coming from the American Rescue Plan Act, which means it has to be fully spent by 2026 or surrendered back to the federal government.

Columbus is also laying the groundwork for a substantial revamp of 5th Street North, the stretch of road between Magnolia Bowl and the interchange of Highways 45 and 82. The city is currently waiting for the go-ahead from MDOT, but it's hoping to advertise bids in March or April and select a contractor in May or June, aiming to complete the work before the year is out.

That project will narrow the roads with the goal of making them safer, as well as adding bike lanes and new crosswalks for pedestrians.

The bridge on Waterworks Road is slated for repairs as well, with design complete and $600,000 set aside to reroute water lines currently running through the structure. The city aims to have the water lines relocated and bridge construction started this year, with an estimated completion date of roughly a year later.

Rural King farm and home store to move into the old K-Mart building along Highway 45 North. With $8 million in renovations starting this year and doors opening in 2025 or early 2026, it is expected to be Rural King's first store in Mississippi and bring an estimated 60-70 jobs with $1 million in annual payroll.

Meanwhile in Lowndes the board of supervisors has put out $25 million in bonds for the Cinco Megasite, a 1,500-acre property that

economic developers plan to use to lure more industry to the area and add to other industrial sites such as Paccar, Steel Dynamics and Aluminum Dynamics. As of press time, that property purchase was expected to go through in March.

The Golden Triangle Regional Airport finally has a westbound flight in the works, courtesy of American Airlines and financial assurances from all six surrounding municipal governments. Those flights will run between GTR and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, and are scheduled to start May 5.

The Columbus-Lowndes County airport finished fully resurfacing its runway in late 2024 and is now building a new storage hangar. The hangar will be finished in April, expanding the airport's capacity for jet traffic. The new runway surface should serve for around 15-20 years. Construction on the airport's terminal expansion is ongoing. In front of GTRA, construction on the Golden Triangle Development LINK's new office building is proceeding.

Origis Energy in the southern reaches of Lowndes County has spent three years working on two solar farms with combined output of 350 megawatts, and both finally came online in 2024. The company's four projects in the Golden Triangle, meant to generate power for the Tennessee Valley Authority, will bring a combined 750 megawatts of solar power and 550 megawatts of battery storage.

Delta Connection jet at Golden Triangle Regional Airport

Golden Triangle Regional Airport terminal work continues

WEST POINT/CLAY COUNTY

West Point residents saw their grocery options expand with the opening of Fresh Value West Point in October. Situated on the former site of a Sav-A-Lot, which closed

in June, the supermarket's offerings include fresh produce and meat.

Owl's Head Alloy, an aluminum recycling company on East Industrial Access Road in the former Blazon Tube facility, which will supply recycled aluminum to Aluminum Dynamics' mill in Lowndes County, began hiring employees in November. It already had over 20 employees on staff in its first week of operations, with almost 70 new jobs expected over three years as it ramps up production and finishes constructing facilities. All told, the company's complex represents an almost $30 million investment in the area.

Solar development has also had a burst of activity in Clay County, courtesy of Origis Energy's Hope and Optimist solar developments just north of West Point. Together the two will bring 400 megawatts of power generation and 250 megawatts of storage.

Those projects aren't as far along as their partners further south, with Optimist under construction targeting a December 2025 completion and Hope just now starting TVA public review, targeting a December 2028 completion.

MACON/NOXUBEE COUNTY

The new hangar group in Macon Municipal Airport is all but complete after delays due to supply chain disruptions, though Macon hasn't found tenants for the facility's four separate "T"

Owl's Head Alloy

Noxubee county's new emergency operations center is under construction in the background.

hangars yet. The city plans to begin renting them out in the near future, with each space typically going toward an individual pilot.

The Old North Street Bridge replacement is nearing completion. The city aims to have that done in late spring or early summer, largely depending on how much the weather obstructions construction.

Huber Engineered Woods has broken ground in Noxubee County near Shuqualak. That project, which represents a $400 million investment from the Atlanta-based J. M. Huber Corporation will continue through 2025 and should be done in 2026. Employment estimates put that mill's number of new jobs at roughly 160.

That construction should have a minimal impact on traffic in the area just north of the city, since workers are also adding an access road to accommodate traffic to and from the site.

The county is building a new emergency operations center, with an estimated completion date in late 2025. Its location will still be right by the current one in the Macon city center on Washington Street, with a relatively small 4,000 square foot single-story building. It will, however, provide a 'war room' with updated emergency dispatch equipment and a director's office.

The county collaborated with the city and the school district last year to complete renovations at the Noxubee Sportsplex as well, giving the facility new bleachers and an updated concession stand.

STORY BY **CULLEN PARADIS**
PHOTOS BY **DEANNA ROBINSON**

COMMUNITY IMPACT
IT MATTERS

You can make a big difference in your community with one easy choice. Simply do business with an independently owned bank like Citizens National Bank.

Every dollar you invest with us stays in Mississippi. That strengthens your local economy. If you are already a customer, thank you. If not, our dedicated hometown banking experts are eager to introduce you to innovative financial solutions.

Join us today and experience *The Power of Local*℠

601.693.1331 | **YourCNB.com** |

Citizens National Bank

The Power of Local℠

Member FDIC

Business & Industry
Energy Efficiency Incentives

FOR MORE INFORMATION
visit us at
www.columbus-lw.com/business-industry-rebates

Columbus Light & Water
"The Power of People"

Columbus Light and Water in partnership with TVA EnergyRight® is offering financial incentives on qualifying equipment purchases to help you reach your energy goals. Visit our website for more information at **www.columbus-lw.com/business-industry-rebates**

Custom Incentives
Gives you the flexibility to make energy efficiency improvements unique to your facility and operations and receive an incentive by installing new, energy-saving electric technologies.

LED Lights
Improve workplace safety and visibility while lowering energy costs with our LED lighting incentive for indoor, exterior, or street lighting for new construction and upgrades.

Forklifts
Lift profitability and lower emissions with electric forklifts that are quieter and require less maintenance. Enjoy incentives toward the purchase, lease, or fleet expansion of electric forklifts.

HVAC
We're offering incentives for energy efficient replacements, upgrades, expansions, and new installations including variable refrigerant flow (VRF), dual fuel heat pumps, and air-cooled chillers.

Refrigeration
Reduce energy costs and improve customer experience with refrigeration incentives for electronically commutated motors (ECMs), evaporator fan controllers and high-efficiency reach-in cases.

Thermal Ice Storage
Thermal ice storage systems work with conventional refrigeration equipment to produce cold water or ice in a tank. Our incentives can help offset your project's costs for partial or full storage projects.

Variable Speed Drives
Variable Speed Drives — also known as Adjustable Speed Drives (ASDs) or Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) — control the speed and torque of motors that drive fans, pumps or compressors in HVAC systems. We are now offering a horsepower (HP) incentive for the installation of variable speed drives (VSDs) on existing HVAC equipment.

TVA EnergyRight®

GOT KNEE PAIN?

Contact us about GENICULAR ARTERY EMBOLIZATION

GAE is a new non-surgical, minimally invasive procedure providing immediate and long-term pain relief for patients with osteoarthritis by reducing the blood flow to the lining of the knee.

WHY CHOOSE US?

- Expert physicians and staff trained in the latest vascular techniques
- Industry leading technology and care in an expeditious, more affordable outpatient setting
- A comfortable environment conducive to your healing and restoration

Whatever your needs, your health is our priority.

JOHN J. KING, MD, FACC

If you are interested, call and schedule a consultation.

662-240-2227

425 Hospital Drive, Suite A
Columbus, MS 39705
Phone: 662-240-2227
Fax: 662-243-0047

msvascular.com

NMVC
NORTH MISSISSIPPI VASCULAR CARE

KING & ASSOCIATES PLLC CARDIOLOGY

425 Hospital Drive, Suite 4B, Columbus, MS 39705
Phone 662-368-1169 | Fax 662-570-1492