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Decatur-Morgan

Outdoor Adventures Await

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the food, music, sports
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2024-25 Decatur-Morgan

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Welcome to Decatur and Morgan County

Whether you're visiting Morgan County or moving here, you'll find plenty to do, from experiencing modern science and exploring the outdoors to learning more about the Civil War and railroad history.

In Decatur, the 35,000-acre Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge offers an escape into nature for hikers, bicyclists, boaters, anglers and hunters. The refuge recently renovated exhibits at the Visitors Center and added a photography blind and outdoor classroom.

For indoor fun, head to the Cook Museum of Natural Science, which celebrates its fifth anniversary this year. Highlights of the 62,000-square-foot facility include a 15,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, an immersive cave, an interactive sand table and live animals.

For fun and cooling off during the summer months, it's hard to beat Decatur's Point Mallard Aquatic Center. It includes one of the nation's first wave pools, water slides, a lazy river and children's play area.

If you prefer simpler pursuits, immerse yourself in Decatur's natural beauty that revolves around the Tennessee River. The city also has a burgeoning arts community. Visual arts exhibits are open throughout the year at the Carnegie Visual Arts Center and Alabama Center for the Arts.

History buffs will be interested in Decatur's Historic Railroad Depot and exhibits at the Morgan County Archives.

Have fun exploring.

About the cover

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge offers an outdoor escape for hikers, bicyclists, anglers and boaters. The refuge's new inside exhibit opened in December 2023. Photo by Jeronimo Nisa. Design by Stephen Johnson



Explore

Decatur-Morgan

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The Revenue Commissioner is elected by the people of Morgan County for a six year term and is responsible for the mapping, appraising, assessing, and collecting of ad valorem taxes as levied by the government. The office collects approximately 62 million dollars annually.

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Built in 1833, the Old State Bank, one of four structures in Decatur that survived the Civil War, has served as a hospital, guardhouse, bank and dance hall. While the inside is temporarily closed to visitors, take time to view the building's façade. The columns still show scars from bullets fired during the Civil War.



MORGAN COUNTY ARCHIVES

The Morgan County Archives is a hidden jewel. It has professional exhibits about the area's role in the Civil War, the Scottsboro Boys Trial and the county's development from post-Reconstruction to the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Scottsboro Boys exhibit includes rare photographs of one of the trials in the case, held in Decatur, that produced landmark changes in the nation's legal system. Located in the 1927 Tennessee Valley Bank Building, the archives also serves as a repository for county records and is an invaluable resource for area historians.

MORGAN COUNTY ARCHIVES

Address: 624 Bank St. N.E., Decatur

Website: morgancounty-al.gov/departments-services/archives

Hours: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tuesday-Friday

Admission: Free



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CARNEGIE VISUAL ARTS CENTER



The Carnegie Visual Arts Center houses rotating exhibits featuring paintings, sculptures, photographs and fabric art created by local, regional and national artists. Past exhibits included works by folk artist Mose T, the Gee's Bend Quilters, David Gordon, who worked on "SpongeBob SquarePants," the late George Rodrigue, who created the "Blue Dog," biophilia artist and visual ecologist Doug Baulos, Smithsonian Institute's traveling "Water Ways" and mixed-media artist Arthur Price. Built in 1904, the building that houses the arts center originally served as Decatur's first public library. Focused on expanding beyond the Arts Center's walls, the Carnegie installed exhibits at the Somerville Public Library and the Huntsville International Airport. The center also oversees Carnegie Carnival, one of Decatur's premier events.

CARNEGIE VISUAL ARTS CENTER

Address: 207 Church St. N.E., Decatur

Telephone: 256-341-0562

Website: carnegiearts.org

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday

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Where to Cool Off:

WATER PARKS, POOLS AND SPLASH PADS

By Catherine Godbey
Staff Writer

With waterslides, splash pads and pools, north Alabama offers many ways for people to cool off and beat the heat during the summer.

A highlight of the water recreation scene is Point Mallard Water Park.

Since its opening 54 years ago, Point Mallard, anchored by the wave pool, has become a staple of Decatur's summers, attracting more than 100,000 visitors a year from around the country.

Tucked along Flint Creek in Southeast Decatur, the water park includes features for the entire family – from a splash pad for young children to the lazy river for older guests.

Here are seven can't-miss activities at the water park.

Ride the Waves

The wave pool – one of the first wave pools in the country – was one of the original attractions when the park opened in 1970. To commemorate the opening, Decatur Parks and Recreation workers tossed then-Mayor J. Gilmer Blackburn, visionary of the water park, into the wave pool.

The wave pool offers a combination of relaxation and excitement with waves, up to 3 feet high, coming every 15 to 20 minutes and lasting for about 10 minutes.

Zoom the Flumes

Individuals with a need for speed can head to the three flume slides on the west end of the park. With two of the slides starting at the top of the hill, friends can challenge each other to races.

Make a Splash

From the top of the towering Sky Pond Slide, guests can get a quick bird's eye view of the park before speeding down to the pool below.

Dive In

Diving boards, high dives and diving platforms surround the Olympic-sized swimming pool. The 10-meter diving platform, which opened in 1971, hosted three U.S. Outdoor Diving Championships and served as the training facility for the 1976 U.S. diving team. Gold medalists Jennifer Chandler and Greg Louganis trained at the facility.

Laze Away

Need a break from all the speed slides, waves and diving? Head to the Lazy River. The 1,140-foot path includes geysers and a waterfall mountain, and it winds around a splash pad for the children. A limited number of floats are available at the Lazy River.

Child's Play

Situated between the wave pool and the Olympic-sized pool, the children's area, with a Squirt Factory and Duck Pond, is ideal for the youngest of guests. The area includes slides, a tire swing, tubes and more.

Swirl and Slide

Located near the flume slides, the Pro Bowl slide takes riders through a tube, swirls them around in an open bowl and flushes them out into a pool below.

Things to know

Cabanas: The park rents out cabanas around the lazy river. The large cabana,

which includes two lounge chairs, a side table, a dinner table and four chairs, costs \$99 a day. The small cabana, with two lounge chairs and a side table, costs \$39 a day. Both come with a free locker, which typically costs \$8. Guests can reserve a cabana 24 hours in advance.

Food: From ice cream and shaved ice to pizza and hamburgers, Point Mallard serves up typical park fare. While no outside food or drinks are allowed in the park, guests can bring a cooler in their car and eat at the picnic tables outside of the park.

Floats: A limited number of complimentary floats are available at the lazy river, sky pond and flume slide. Guests can also rent

POINT MALLARD WATER PARK

Address: 2901 Point Mallard Drive S.E.

Website: pointmallardpark.com

Telephone: 256-341-4900, option 1

Hours: From May 25-July 28, the park is open from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday to Saturday, and 1-6 p.m., Sunday. From Aug. 3-Sept. 2, the park will open on Saturdays, Sundays and Labor Day, 1-6 p.m.

Admission: Daily ticket prices are \$28 for ages 12-61, \$23 for ages 3-11 and 62 and older, and free for ages 2 and younger. Half price admission days are Monday through Thursday, excluding holidays.

Season Pass: Season passes are \$140 for an individual and \$440 for a family of four.



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floats for \$5 a day. Floats from home are allowed, but boogie boards and oversized floats are not allowed. Baby floats and any floats with leg holes are not allowed in the wave pool or lazy river.

Weather: Check the weather before heading to the park. While rain checks and refunds are not given, the park offers a weather discount pass. The pass is good for 50% off admission any day during the season. To qualify for a pass, visitors must have the current day's receipt and pools must have been closed for half of the time of your stay.

Other information

- Life jackets are allowed except for speed slides, the pro bowl, high diving and platform diving.

- Height requirement on most slides is 42 inches. Height requirement on the Pro Bowl is 48 inches.
- Make sure to bring sunscreen, sandals or water shoes and a stroller for little ones.

More ways to cool off

Hartselle Aquatic Center: The 11,500-square-foot aquatic center, 406 Nance Ford Road, includes a lazy river, diving area, splash pad and water slides. Admission is \$15 for ages 16 and older, \$15 for ages 3-15, and free for ages 2 and younger. Anyone 15 and younger must be accompanied by a licensed driver.

Opens Memorial Day for the season. Hours are 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 1-5 p.m. on Sundays. Hartselle.org.

Riverwild Splash Pad: Inspired by Alabama rivers, the splash pad at Delano Park, 825 Gordon Drive S.E., Decatur, is open Memorial Day through Labor Day, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

SNAP Splash Pad: Designed as a place for all children to play, regardless of physical ability, the splash pad features water



cannons, fountains, spray jets, buckets and animals that shoot streams of water. Admission is free. Opens for the season on Memorial Day. 406 Nance Ford Road S.W. in Hartselle.

Moulton Splash Pad: Cool off in Moulton at the Alexander mini-park splash pad. The seven-feature splash pad on College Street in Moulton is open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesday through Monday from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Admission is free.

Athens Municipal Pool: The pool in Athens, 1430 U.S. 31 North, is open noon-5 p.m., Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday during the summer. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$4 for children 12 and younger.



HISTORIC RAILROAD DEPOT

Decatur has turned its historic depot into a museum that includes a model train layout depicting the city. It's also known as a hot spot for watching real trains because both CSX and Norfolk Southern have tracks behind the depot where their trains operate. Built by Southern Railway in 1905, the restored depot also features railroad memorabilia, artifacts and photographs. Notable pieces include the original depot superintendent's

desk, the baggage cart and benches, all from 1905. In November and December, the museum features a holiday layout children can operate. Restored in 2015 and 2016, the building's original features include the doors and brick and plaster walls. The museum celebrates Decatur's railroad heritage, which dates back to the 1830s when the first railroad west of the Allegheny Mountains, the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur railroad, was built.

DECATUR'S HISTORIC RAILROAD DEPOT

Address: 701 Railroad St. N.W., Decatur

Website: decaturparks.com

Hours: Tour times: 1:30 p.m., 2 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday. Weekday mornings will be open for scheduling group tours.

Admission: Free

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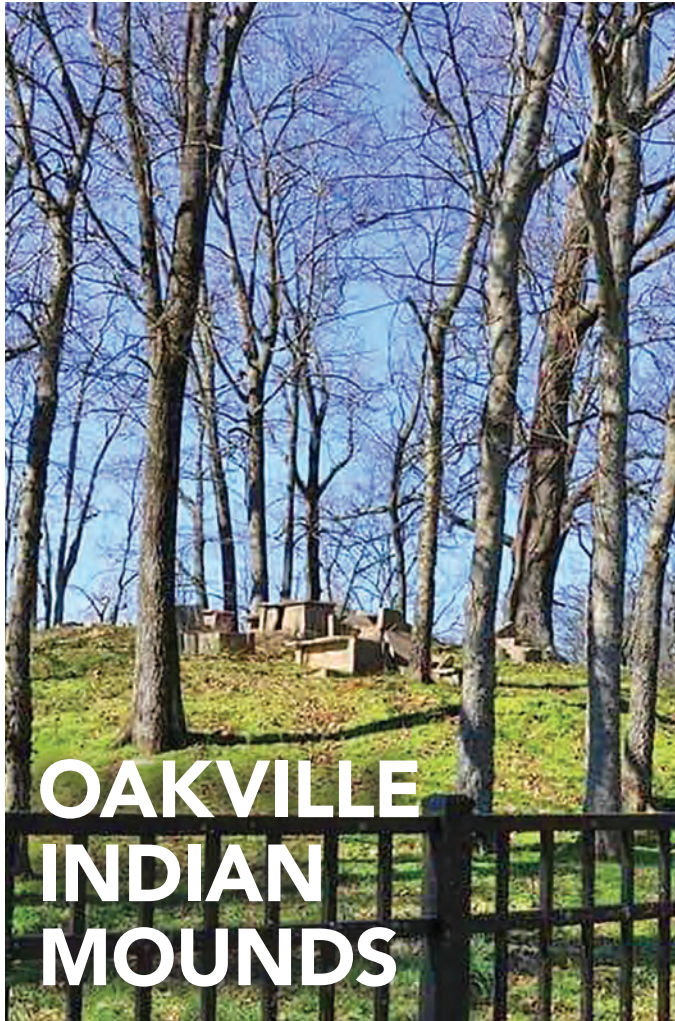
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Home to a museum, artifacts dating back to 10,000 B.C. and what historians believe to be the largest Woodland mound in Alabama, Oakville Indian mounds spotlights north Alabama's Native American history. With thousands of artifacts, the museum provides a look into the area's beginnings when Creek, Yuchi, Shawnee, Chickasaw and Cherokee Indians lived in Oakville. In 1924, a team from the Smithsonian identified five mounds, including two that remained intact. Covering 1.5 acres and 27 feet high, the Oakville Ceremonial Woodland mound is the largest Woodland mound in Alabama. The Oakville Copen mound covers a quarter of an acre and rises 20 feet high. The site also features a statue of Sequoyah, the Old Settlers cemetery, hiking trails and fishing opportunities.

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Telephone: 256-905-2499

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Jesse Owens Museum and Park

HONORS OLYMPIC LEGEND



By Catherine Godbey
Staff Writer

Celebrate the 2024 Summer Olympics by visiting a museum dedicated to Jesse Owens, one of the area’s most well-known Olympians.

The Oakville-based Jesse Owens Museum and Memorial Park stands 100 yards from Owens’ birthplace. In 1936, Owens, the son of a sharecropper, dismantled Adolf Hitler’s ideology of Aryan supremacy by winning four gold medals at the Olympic Summer Games in Berlin.

The museum and memorial park feature the 40-minute documentary “Jesse Owens: Return to Berlin,” photographs, Olympic memorabilia, replicas of Owens’ uniforms, shoes, medals, birth home, a

gold medal tree and long jump pit, where visitors can test their athletic ability and see how they compare to the Olympic athlete. Along with the long jump, Owens won gold in the 100 and 200 meters and the 4x100-meter relay.

The idea for the park began three decades ago when James Pinion, who was working as the Alabama Cooperative Extension System’s agent coordinator in Lawrence County, met Therman White. They discussed developing a park in honor of Owens. In 1995, Pinion convinced the Olympic Torch Committee to reroute the torch run to go through Oakville.

The Jesse Owens Memorial Park was dedicated in June 1996 and the museum was completed in 1998.

Pinion’s wife Nancy Pinion, who started volunteering at the museum in 2005 after retiring from a 25-year teaching career, now serves as the site’s director.

“The more I work here, the more passionate I become about sharing Jesse’s legacy,” Nancy Pinion said. “I had no idea how many people Jesse touched and how many people respect Jesse until I came here. I feel fortunate that I’m in a place and time that I can be part of Jesse’s legacy. That’s my pay. That’s what drives me day after day and year after year.”

From Owens’ story, Nancy Pinion hopes visitors, both young and old, feel inspired.

“Jesse faced many obstacles. He was a sickly child, faced racism and, as the son of sharecroppers and grandson of slaves, extreme poverty,” Pinion said. “I want the children to know that, despite the obstacles you face, you can be successful, humble and focused. The museum is here not just to promote his legacy, but to share his story to young people who might be discouraged and need someone to be their hero.”

The museum welcomes 40,000 to 90,000 guests each year. In 2016, the last Summer Olympics not impacted by COVID, more than 93,000 people made the trip down the winding two-lane Lawrence County road to visit the museum.

The museum is open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sunday, 1-4 p.m. Admission is \$7.



JESSE OWENS MUSEUM AND PARK

Address: 7019 County Road 203, Danville

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

Website: <http://jesseowensmuseum.org>

Admission: Fee charged



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Address: 2211 Seminole Drive S.W., Huntsville

Website: lowemill.art

Hours: 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Wednesday-Saturday



POND SPRING

The former home of Gen. Joe Wheeler, who served as a lieutenant general for the Confederacy during the Civil War and as a general for the U.S. Army during the Spanish-American War, sits on Alabama 20 between Courtland and Hillsboro. The 50-acre Pond Spring plantation includes the general's home, a log cabin built before 1818 and later used as slave quarters, a log barn, a 19th century ice house, family cemeteries and gardens. Annual events at the site include a plant sale in the spring and a birthday party for Wheeler in September.

POND SPRING

Address: 12280 Alabama 20, Hillsboro

Hours: 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday

Website: ahc.alabama.gov/properties/pondspring/pondspring.aspx

Admission: Fee charged



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ALABAMA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

ATTRACTIONS



The modern style of the Alabama Center for the Arts complex makes it one of the jewels in Decatur's growing downtown arts scene. The complex includes one building for the performing arts, including theater and music, and a separate building for visual arts from painting to pottery to computer design. Windows along the visual arts building on Second Avenue Northeast offer passers-by a glimpse at exhibits on display in the gallery. The center's displays range from national watercolor exhibits to life-size sculptures to creations by the area's youths. Along with the gallery, the Alabama Center for the Arts' performing arts building is home to Calhoun Theatre, Athenian Players and Calhoun Community College's Showband. The building also houses the Alabama Arts Hall of Fame. The permanent exhibit pays tribute to actors Dean Jones and Nell Carter, musicians the Drive-By Truckers and Emmylou Harris, composer Henry Panion III, author Truman Capote, photographer Tillman Crane, artists Nall Hollis, Richard Zoellner, Mildred Nungester Wolfe, the quilters of Gee's Bend, Bruce Larsen and dancer Wes Chapman.



ALABAMA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Address: 133 Second Ave. N.E., Decatur

Telephone: 256-260-4293

Website: alabamacenterforthearts.org

Hours: 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 8 a.m.-noon, Friday

Admission: Free

Mural, mural on the wall



Across north Alabama, works of outdoor art — oversized butterfly wings, a Native American design, veterans memorial and celebration of women’s suffrage — cover area buildings.

To view the public art, follow this guide to murals in Morgan, Limestone and Lawrence counties.

DECATUR

Johnston Street Alley

Alley between Johnston and Grant streets and Second and First avenues

Using vibrant pinks, greens, oranges and blues, North Carolina artist Britt Flood completed Decatur’s newest mural in October 2023. The mural in the Johnston Street alley, since christened Sonny Side after the late Sonny Craig, in downtown Decatur features symbols of the city, including images of fire azaleas, mountain laurel wildflowers, sandhill cranes, hot air balloons, mallard ducks and more.

Tribute to Jimmy ‘Yellowhorse’ Webster

113 Sixth Ave. N.E.

Completed in July 2020, the artistic tribute to Decatur icon Jimmy “Yellowhorse” Webster stands 15 feet tall and 40 feet long. Internationally known artist Michael McPheeters, better known as “Mister Mural,” painted the multicolored war horse surrounded by geometric designs on the side of Webster’s Karate on Sixth Avenue.

The mural, which celebrates the Native American culture in north Alabama and the

influence of Webster, a Cherokee descendant, represents the first project created by the Decatur-based Chasing Art.

“Public art has a responsibility to the community. If it doesn’t inspire the community to want to be better, it’s just paint on a wall. Each piece, I pray, lets us all realize the one thing we have in common is this town. We all want to live in a community we are proud of. I hope the murals create some pride in our community and connect us all,” said Glenn Mitchell, founder of Chasing Art.

‘Welcome to Decatur’

253 E. Moulton St.

Another mural in the Chasing Art project is at the corner of East Moulton Street and Fourth Avenue. Decatur High fine arts students painted the mural to celebrate the city’s welcoming atmosphere.

‘What Lifts You’ Wings

219 Second Ave. S.E.

For an interactive mural, stop by the “What Lifts You” art piece on the back of the Shops on 2nd Avenue in downtown Decatur.

Painted by noted muralist Kelsey Montague, the large-scale 15-foot-tall delicate wings feature peacock feathers with hints of pink, green and blue. Position yourself within the wings and let somebody take your photo getting ready to fly.

The mural, completed in nine hours in October 2020, was the second project organized by Chasing Art.

‘Homecoming’

206 Second Ave. S.E.

Depicted on the side of Pineapple’s Home Décor on Second Avenue, “Homecoming,”





which features a young girl holding a flower, pays tribute to the artist's sister.

Adam Stephenson, a Decatur native, used a photograph of his sister, Lara Chandler Whitehead, as a flower girl at a wedding, to create the mural, which covers the wall.

"I've had this photo of my sister for a long time. I've kept it with me in my sentimental belongings. I knew I always wanted to do something with it. I like her pose in it and the innocence of it. This is how most of us who knew Lara remember her," Stephenson said.

Stephenson and fellow artist Yehimi Cambron completed the mural in the fall of 2019. The mural represents the debut project of the Alabama Center for the Arts Foundation's Urban Art initiative.

'A Stitch in Time'

624 Bank St. N.E.

Measuring 24-by-8 feet, the mural on the Morgan County Archives building on Bank Street depicts Decatur's history.

Images representing the Spirit of America Festival, Rhodes Ferry Landing, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Cherokee heritage, architecture of the nearby Albany Historic District and the state bird and flower adorn the piece designed by Las Vegas artist Markus Tracy.

Elementary students at Walter Jackson, Frances Nungester and Austinville assisted Tracy with the quilt-like folk art design.

Other outdoor art

While in downtown Decatur, stop by the Alabama Center for the Arts, 133 Second Ave. N.E., where a 30-foot-tall metal owl sculpture created by Fairhope artist Bruce



Larsen stands. Larsen's sculpture features found and reclaimed material, such as gears and scrap metal. Two of his pieces, a dragonfly and heron gateway, appear at Delano Park's Riverwild Garden, on Gordon Drive Southeast between Eighth and Ninth avenues.

For outdoor art on a smaller scale, search for the turtles on the Downtown Turtle Trail. Envisioned by Lucy Orr, a 2021 graduate of Decatur Heritage Christian Academy, the trail features 10 bronze sculptures of turtles. From the turtle holding a microphone outside the Princess Theatre to the turtle wearing a top hat outside the former Cotaco Opera House, the trail tells pieces of Decatur's history. For more information, go to visitdecatur.org/arts-entertainment and look for the Downtown Decatur Scavenger Hunt link.

ATHENS

Merchants Alley

Merchants Alley is a public space off Jefferson Street where people can relax, listen to live performances in warmer months and enjoy ever-changing art, such as a mural of Limestone County musician Brittany Howard.

There are five art components to the alley. The first is the large mural on the left as you enter the alley, featuring a violin on the side of Terranova's building. It is the only permanent art feature of the alley.

The second component is the tribute board, which will change every two years. Right now, it features Howard, lead singer and guitarist for the Alabama Shakes. It was done in six hours with two cases of spray paint.

The third component is "Passages" created in partnership with the Alabama Center for the Arts. There are doors attached to the alley walls that when opened reveal murals. College students created the paintings, and they will be changed yearly.

The fourth component are murals that are taken from high school students' designs and painted on by volunteers of the Athens Arts League. Enlarged copies of the designs were used to make tracings on the wall, and then paint was applied, sometimes after modifications by the volunteer artists to fit the space.

The fifth component involves early childhood art. They are called art windows because one piece of art goes in each windowpane of the wall on the right side of the alley.

Alabama Veterans Museum

Local artist Jamie Adams, along with Athens State University students, began a mural in honor of area veterans in the summer of 2020. The mural, through portraits, tells the story of hundreds of Limestone County active duty military members and veterans.

"This is a way to honor those individuals who we need to remember, honor and celebrate," said Adams, an assistant art professor at Athens State. "A lot of people don't get the recognition they deserve, especially men like my two uncles who passed away. Having a way to honor their memory, having their portrait where thousands of people see it as they drive by, keeps their memories and sacrifices alive."

The 40-foot-long by 15-foot-tall mural features three soldiers in front of an American flag consisting of a mosaic of 200 photographs of Limestone County servicemen and women.



EARLYWORKS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

EarlyWorks specializes in interactive exhibits. Created and designed to connect children with the history and heritage of north Alabama, the museum features giant-sized instruments, a Kidstruction zone and a talking tree. Children can explore a 46-foot Keelboat, try on clothing from the 1800s and trade wares at the General Store, and get a glimpse of how popular toys such as the Etch-A-Sketch, Hungry Hungry Hippos and jack-in-the-box work. The museum recommends that kids 10 and older bring along a companion to maximize their fun.



EARLYWORKS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Address: 404 Madison St. S.E., Huntsville

Telephone: 256-771-7578

Website: earlyworks.com

Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday; 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday

Admission: Fees charged



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Princess Theatre Center for the Performing Arts

112 Second Ave. N.E., Decatur, 256-350-1745

Known for the art deco styling and neon marquee, the Princess Theatre in downtown Decatur offers large-scale concerts and intimate singer-songwriter sessions.

Founded as a livery stable in 1887, the Princess Theatre transformed into a vaudeville playhouse in 1919. Over the years, the 677-seat theater has hosted George Washington Carver, Lyle Lovett, Shovels & Rope, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Tony Randall, Cloris Leachman, the Count Basie Orchestra, Arlo Guthrie, The Blind Boys of Alabama, St. Paul and the Broken Bones, the Secret Sisters and Roseanne Cash.



Orion Amphitheater [COURTESY PHOTO/JOSH WEICHMAN]

The 2024 lineup includes Grammy Award winners Indigo Girls, Brandy Clark, Ricky Skaggs, Cedric Burnside, Suzy Boggus, Travis Tritt and Marty Stuart.

The second Thursday of every month, the popular singer-songwriter series takes place in the theater's intimate upstairs space.

The theater also hosts comedians, plays by local community theater groups and more. For information on upcoming shows, visit princess theatre.org.

Orion Amphitheater

701 Amphitheater Drive N.W., Huntsville

Inspired by ancient Roman designs, the outdoor Orion Amphitheater in Huntsville opened in May 2022. To celebrate the opening, the 8,000-seat venue hosted The First Waltz, a weekend concert series, which featured Jason Isbell & the 400 Unit, Brittany Howard, Emmylou Harris, Mavis Staples and more. For more information on upcoming shows, visit theorionhuntsville.com.



Propst Arena [COURTESY PHOTO/BUD GAMBRELL]

Propst Arena

700 Monroe St. S.W., Huntsville, 256-533-1953

With a seating capacity of 10,000, the Von Braun Center’s Propst Arena is one of the area’s largest concert venues. The line-up for 2024 includes Lynyrd Skynyrd and ZZ Top, Judas Priest and Riley Green. The venue also hosts ballets, monster truck events and Huntsville Havoc hockey games. For information on upcoming events, visit vonbrauncenter.com.

Mars Music Hall

700 Monroe St. S.W., Huntsville, 256-533-1953

Completed in 2020, Mars Music Hall’s debut concert featured Grammy Award-winner Jason Isbell playing to a sold-out crowd. The space can hold 1,575 at capacity and features a balcony. For information on upcoming shows, visit vonbrauncenter.com/marsmusic.

Outdoor Tunes

During the spring, summer and fall, Decatur, Athens and Huntsville hold outdoor concerts featuring local and regional musicians.

Decatur Park Concerts

Free outdoor musical performances take place in Decatur’s Founders Park on



Bank Street and Church Street in April, May, September and October. Held on Monday evenings at 6 p.m., the concert series has featured the sounds of big band, rock, jazz, blues and country artists. Food trucks are typically on site. Make sure to bring lawn chairs or a blanket.

Athens Concerts

In Athens, the Merchants Alley Happy Hour Music Series takes place every Friday night in May and June in the

alleyway on Jefferson Street. The free concerts start at 6 p.m.

Athens also hosts Fridays After Five on the Limestone County Square the final Friday in April to July.

Concerts in the Park

Huntsville’s Concerts in the Park takes place weekly from the first Monday in June to the first Monday in August at Big Spring International Park. The free concerts begin at 6:30 p.m.

MOORESVILLE

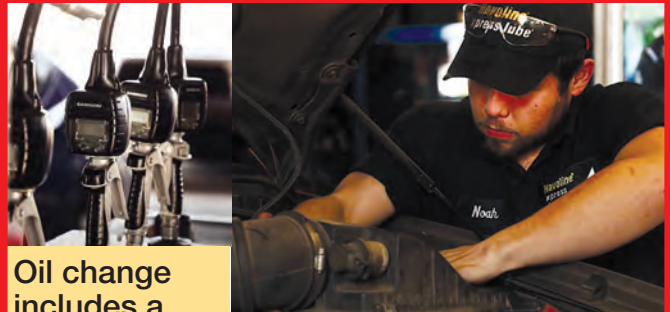


Mooresville, the Limestone County town “older than the state,” is home to a church where James Garfield, the 20th president of the United States, preached in 1863, a post office built in 1840 and the Stagecoach Inn and Tavern built before 1825. Andrew Johnson, the 17th president of the United States, worked in Mooresville while serving as a tailor’s apprentice. The town also served as the filming site of Walt Disney’s “Tom & Huck.” The quaint town currently houses a bike shop, a candy store, a coffee house, biking and hiking trails and a farm. Created by Laurence and Natasha McCrary in 2011, the three-acre 1818 Farms – a nod to the year of the town’s formation – is home to Southdown Babydoll sheep, chickens, pigs and goats. 1818farms.com.



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DECATUR PARKS

DELANO PARK

Sixth Avenue Southeast to Somerville Road and Prospect Drive to Gordon Drive.
delanopark.org



Stop and smell the roses before jumping in the splash pad and playing on the playground at Delano Park, the oldest park in the city. The 28-acre park features a rose garden, splash pad, tennis courts, playground, trail of history, 1-mile walking/running trail and picnic shelter. Alabama's first licensed female architect, Carolyn Cortner Smith, designed the park's stone structure in the 1930s.

RHODES FERRY PARK

100 Market St. N.E.
decaturlparks.com



Set on the banks of the Tennessee River, Rhodes Ferry Park offers visitors a chance to play and learn. Along with the playground and pavilions, the park features historical markers about the Trail of Tears and Benson Field, Decatur's football stadium from 1931-47.

FRAZIER PARK

309 Cherry St. N.E.
decaturlparks.com



Celebrating Decatur's Southern heritage and Japanese influences, the calm and serene Frazier Park includes a Japanese Tea Garden, a Southern garden, a fountain and small stream.

ARCHERY PARK

2900 Point Mallard Circle S.E.
decaturlparks.com



Calling all Robin Hoods and Katniss Everdeens, this is the park for you. Archery Park includes a 20-target course, a 12-foot-high platform and targets ranging from 5 to 50 yards. Archers, 16 to 65, must have a valid hunting or heritage license.

HOSPITALITY PARK

4799 U.S. 31 North
decaturlparks.com



A popular spot for anglers, Hospitality Park sits along

the north side of the Tennessee River and also features a birding trail.

A.C. BANKS PARK

705 McCartney St. N.W.
decaturlparks.com



With two playground areas, a baseball field and pavilions, A.C. Banks Park is a centerpiece of the Northwest Decatur community, often host to gatherings and reunions.

WILSON MORGAN PARK

Beltline Road, between Central Parkway and Sandlin Road Southeast
decaturlparks.com



Situated next to a lake, Wilson Morgan Park features softball fields, a walking trail, the city's dog park and the Adventure Park playground. The park also includes a fitness court. Make sure to bring food to feed the birds or stop by Decatur Animal Services and take a dog for a walk around the park.

DECATUR DOG PARK

6372 Beltline Road S.W.
decaturlparks.com

Opened in May of 2019, the 2-acre Decatur Dog Park offers an area for large dogs,



25 pounds and over, and one for small dogs, 25 pounds and under. The dog enclosures are part of Wilson Morgan Park.

JACK ALLEN RECREATIONAL COMPLEX PLAYGROUND

2616 Modaus Road S.W.
decaturlparks.com



Housed at Decatur's premier soccer complex, the playground's highlights include a balance beam, ladder, rock wall, slides, climbers and more. The park also is home to a Flying Dragon disc golf course. The 18-hole course spans 13 acres.

PINES PARK

1612 Fifth St. N.W.
decaturlparks.com



With swings, slides, benches, picnic tables, multi-purpose court with bleachers and a one-half mile walking trail, Pines Park attracts visitors, young and old.

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HARTSELLE PARKS

SPARKMAN PARK

1102 Main St. S.W.
hartselle.org

A centerpiece of Hartselle, Sparkman Park features baseball and softball fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, a walking trail and disc golf course. The park sits next to the city's Aquatic Center and SNAP Playground for all children.

JOHN MARK STALLINGS SNAP PLAYGROUND

406 Nanceford Road S.W.
hartselle.org

Named after the son of former University of Alabama football coach Gene Stallings, the John Mark Stallings SNAP Playground was built to be accessible by all children, specifically individuals with disabilities. Features include slides, climbing bars, musical instruments, a periscope, sensory panels, elevated sand pile, pulse tennis table, seesaw and more.

MOULTON PARKS

H.A. ALEXANDER PARK

13550 Court St.
cityofmoultonal.com

H.A. Alexander Park, an entertainment staple of the Moulton community, features baseball fields, softball fields, tennis courts, walking track and playground.

MOULTON SPLASH PAD

College Street
cityofmoultonal.com

Located next to H.A. Alexander Park, the splash pad, open Memorial Day to Labor Day, includes seven water features to entertain young children.

ALEXANDER MINI PARK

Byler Road and College Street
cityofmoultonal.com

Just south of the splash pad sits Alexander Mini Park. A celebration of nature, the 10-acre park features mature hardwoods, a creek and an amphitheater, where Moulton's Music in the Park concert series takes place during the summer months.





Fan Zone:

CHEER ON AREA SPORTS TEAMS

North Alabama loves sports.

Just pass by Toyota field, home of the Rocket City Trash Pandas, on game days, or see the flocks of fans clad in hockey jerseys streaming into the Von Braun Center for Huntsville Havoc games, or hear the shouts of “goal” echoing from Huntsville City Football club games at Joe Davis Stadium.

The Tennessee Valley offers excitement for baseball, hockey and soccer fans.

Baseball fans can cheer on the Trash Pandas, in its fourth season, from April to September. Beyond the action on the field, the games also include activities that make minor league baseball games endearing, from fireworks on Friday and Saturday nights, to astronaut races every game and bring your dog to the ballpark games on Wednesday nights.

The 2024 home opener for the Trash Pandas, part of the Los Angeles Angels’ farm system, will be April 9. The last home game of the regular season will be Sept. 8. The Trash Pandas compete in the Double-A Southern League with the Birmingham Barons, Chattanooga Lookouts, Tennessee Smokies, Mississippi Braves,





Pensacola Blue Wahoos, Biloxi Shuckers and Montgomery Biscuits.

The \$47 million Toyota Field off Interstate 565 in Madison is 20 minutes from downtown Decatur. Tickets start at \$9. milb.com/rocket-city.

When not hosting baseball games, Toyota Field serves as a community center. Past events include concerts, fall festivals, food festivals and holiday light shows.

Think a community in the South can't be a hockey community? Think again. The past nine years, excluding 2020-2021 due

to COVID, the Huntsville Havoc averaged an attendance of more than 4,000 people for home games.

Like the Trash Pandas, the Havoc's games are filled with audience participation events, including small dog and baby races on the ice. The Havoc plays in the Southern Professional Hockey League with the Birmingham Bulls, Evansville Thunderbolts, Fayetteville Marksmen, Knoxville Ice Bears, Macon Mayhem, Pensacola Ice Flyers, Peoria Rivermen, Quad City Storm and Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs.

The Havoc's seasons run from October to April. Tickets start at \$14. huntsvillehavoc.com.

A newcomer to the north Alabama sports scene is the Huntsville City Football Club. The club posted a 9-12-7 record, with nine wins, 12 losses and seven ties, in its debut season. Games take place at Wicks Family Field at Joe Davis Stadium, a former minor league baseball stadium renovated into a multi-use recreation facility.

Huntsville City Football Club's 2024 season features home games on March 30, April 13 and 20, May 10 and 18, June 8, 16 and 28, July 27, Aug. 10 and 17 and Sept. 8 and 22. Tickets start at \$9. mlsnxtp.com/huntsvillecityfc.

NEARBY GOLF COURSES

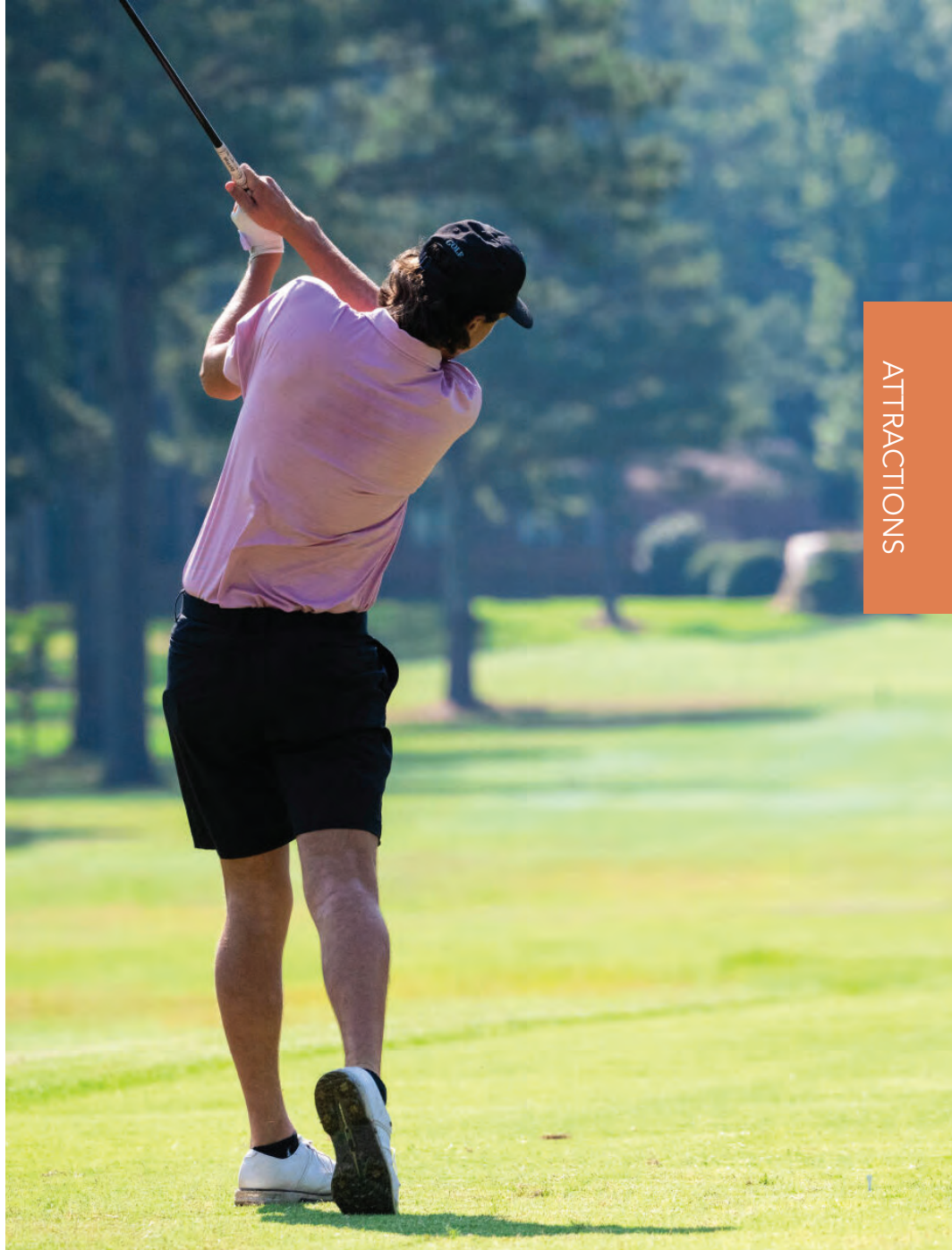
The options are varied for those looking for a round of golf in Morgan County and the surrounding area.

Point Mallard, a public course, offers 18 holes covering 6,988 yards close to the waters of Wheeler Lake. The course, designed by John LaFoy, is part of the Point Mallard Park complex that is operated by the City of Decatur.

Burningtree Country Club is a private club that offers special opportunities to golfers wanting to test their skills on the 7,000-yard course across 180 acres. The course was designed by prolific golf course designer George W. Cobb, who wanted to create attractive layouts that the average golfer would find enjoyable.

The course is home to the annual Spirit of America Classic. It has also hosted qualifying rounds for the U.S. Amateur Championship.

Quail Creek Resort in Hartselle features a par-71 course that covers 6,500 yards. It was co-designed by John C. Eyster Sr. and Matthew L. Nail.



MORGAN COUNTY

Point Mallard Golf Course

2600A Point Mallard Drive, Decatur
Pro shop: 256-341-4925

Burningtree Country Club (Private)

2521 Burningtree Drive, Decatur
Pro shop: 256-355-5982

Quail Creek Resort

233 Quail Creek Drive, Hartselle
Pro shop: 256-784-5033

LIMESTONE COUNTY

Southern Gayles Golf Course

22230 Mooresville Road, Athens
Pro shop: 256-232-9888

Canebrake Club (Private)

23015 Founders Circle, Athens
Pro shop: 256-232-2412

MADISON COUNTY

Hampton Cove Course

450 Old Highway 431, Owens Cross Roads
Pro shop: 256-551-1818

Sunset Landing

346 James Record Road SW, Huntsville
Pro shop: 256-464-5050

CULLMAN COUNTY

Chesley Oaks Golf Course

1035 County Road 1583, Cullman
Pro shop: 256-796-9808

Terri Pines

700 Pine Hill Drive, Cullman
Pro shop: 256-739-0738

PERFORMING ARTS



Dream Weavers: The community theater group, which reorganized after a 10-year hiatus, began offering acting experiences for young thespians and introducing newcomers to the stage in 2017. The casts, which number 100 and more, have staged “Sleepy Hollow,” “Moana Jr.,” “Charlotte’s Web,” “Beauty and the Beast, Jr.,” “The Wizard of Oz,” “Frozen, Jr.,” “Cinderella” and more. dreamweaversct.com.

Bank Street Players: Since re-forming in 2012, Bank Street has performed

sold-out productions of “1776,” “Fiddler on the Roof,” “Oklahoma” and “Hairspray,” brought plays to local coffee houses, schools and arts centers and premiered “Humbug!,” a creation by local actor and playwright Chuck Puckett. In December 2022, Dream Weavers and Bank Street Players partnered to present “ELF.” facebook.com/bankstreetplayers.

Calhoun Theatre Department: Headed by Calhoun Community College faculty member Lauren Cantrell, the Calhoun Theatre Department performs at the Black Box Theater at the Alabama Center for the Arts. The theater group has staged “Legally Blonde,” “Doubt,” “Little Shop of Horrors,” “RENT,” “Cabaret,” “Our Town” and a musical version of Shakespeare’s “Two Gentlemen of Verona,” complete with a live six-piece band and aerial performers.

The Athenian Players: Headed by Hugh Long, The Athenian Players of Athens State, which calls the Alabama Center for the Arts in downtown Decatur home, staged productions ranging





from Greek tragedies to Shakespearean comedies to modern dramas. The theater group's resume includes "Hamlet," "Log Cabin," "A Comedy of Errors," "Clue: Stay-At-Home Version," "American Idiot" and more. In April of 2023, the group premiered "The Rocket Men" from New York playwright Crystal Skillman.

College Street Players: The Hartselle community theater group appeals to both youth and experienced actors. The group's offerings range from "Aladdin Jr.," "Seussical Jr." and "Peter Pan Jr." to "The Lion King, Jr.," "Beauty and the Beast" and "Mr. Popper's Penguins." collegestreetplayers.org.

Outlet Stage Company: Decatur's newest community theater company formed in 2023. Shows in the company's inaugural year included a Halloween and Valentine's Day Cabaret, "Songs for a New World" and "Ride the Cyclone." outletstagecompany.org.

Curtain & Lights Theater Company: Based out of First Baptist Church in Decatur, the Curtain & Lights Theater Company, headed by Heather Anderson, stages two shows a year. Past shows include "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Goose," "Little House on the Prairie: The Musical" and "Charlie Brown Christmas."

Orchestra Sul Ponticello: In 2014, Viljar Weimann created Decatur's first orchestra, Orchestra Sul Ponticello. In recent years, the orchestra's members have performed compositions by



ATTRactions

Bach, Mozart, Raid, Beethoven, Vivaldi, Verdi and Prokofiev and selections with singers, from "Barber of Seville" to "La Boheme" to Handel's "Messiah." facebook.com/orchestrasulponticelloAL.

Decatur Youth Symphony: Created in 1998 as a way to teach the violin to all third grade students in Decatur City Schools, the Decatur Youth Symphony expanded to include other string instruments and drum circles. The group performs a free winter and spring concert every year and is often a featured performer at Decatur Park Concerts. decaturyouthsymphony.org.

Dancers Inc.: The studio in Decatur teaches students ages 4 through high school styles of dance ranging from jazz and tap to modern and ballet. Attending Dancers Inc.'s annual production of "The Nutcracker" at the Princess Theatre has become a holiday tradition for many Decatur residents. facebook.com/dancersincorporated



Huntsville Symphony Orchestra: Under the direction of Gregory Vajda, the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra brings to life the music of classical composers, popular bands and more. hso.org.

Huntsville Ballet Company: Directed by Phillip Otto, the professional ballet company typically stages three to four productions a year. Past productions include "Peter Pan," "Romeo and Juliet," "Cinderella" and "The Nutcracker." huntsvilleballet.org.



Cook Museum: NATURAL SCIENCE WONDERLAND



A climbable tree, explorable cave, interactive kinetic sand table and giant squirrel's nest big enough to hold children and adults await visitors to the Cook Museum of Natural Science.

With hands-on interactive exhibits, the museum in downtown Decatur represents a natural science wonderland.

Make sure to devote at least several hours to exploring the 62,000-square-foot museum, which features a multitude of bugs, 260 animals, including lizards, snakes, alligators, frogs and hellbenders, a rope bridge, beaver dam, meteorite and seven aquatic tanks.

"In our mission to engage, excite and educate visitors of all ages about the natural created world around us, we intentionally designed each exhibit gallery with something for everyone," Cook Museum executive director Scott Mayo said.



Walking through the facility, which opened in June 2019 at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Lee Street, visitors are immersed in the worlds of rocks, minerals, weather patterns, oceans, space, caves, rivers, the arctic, the desert and insects.

One of the favorite stops in the museum is the award-winning interactive kinetic sand table. Playing with sand, children can build volcanoes, snow-capped mountains, hills and flowing rivers, create lava spills and rain storms and observe how weather changes can impact their creations.



608 Holly Street NE
Decatur, AL
256.355.1045



SCAN ME

Lash's Seafood

1091 Highway 101
Just past Wheeler Dam
on the left
256.247.1203



SCAN ME



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Caring for the aquarium and the animals requires divers to clean the tank once a week. The two-hour procedure includes washing the gravel and removing algae from the coral.

Feedings take place twice a day – once in the morning and once at night. The morning feeding includes a pellet, which Cassie Worlund, the museum’s animal services director, compared to dog or cat food, specifically formulated for salt-water fish. The second feeding features a mix of frozen fish and shrimp.

Other tanks in the oceans exhibit house jelly fish and coral.

The museum’s collection of endangered and threatened animals includes diamondback terrapins, an eastern indigo snake, Mexican alligator lizards and hellbenders.

To allow guests to get up close and personal with wild animals, the museum features dozens of taxidermy animals, including songbirds, beavers, a bald eagle, golden eagle, black bear, juvenile whooping crane, alligator and 9-foot-tall brown bear.

After exploring the exhibits, stop by the museum’s play area for young children.

Check cookmuseum.org for special activities, including aquarist for a day camps, the science on the spot series and ocean tank feedings.

Another must-see element is the oceans exhibit, which features a 15,000-gallon, 28-foot-long and 6-foot-deep aquarium, which houses approximately 100 fish representing 30 species.

The aquarium’s inhabitants include the palette surgeonfish, teira batfish, coral hind, harlequin hind, angelfish, lookdowns, the barred flagtail, black-bar soldierfish, blue-lined rabbitfish, bristletooth tang, foxface rabbitfish, freckled hawkfish, orange shoulder

surgeonfish, Pakistani butterflyfish, powder brown tang, regal demoiselle, sailfin tang, scopas tang, squareback anthias, Thompson’s surgeonfish, two spot surgeonfish, Vlamingii tang, yellow and blueback fusilier and the yellow tang.

A hit among young museumgoers is the palette surgeonfish – better known as Dory in the animated films of “Finding Nemo” and “Finding Dory.”

COOK MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

Address: 133 Fourth Ave. N.E., Decatur

Website: cookmuseum.org

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission: \$20 for ages 15-64, \$17 for ages 65 and older and military members with a military ID, \$15 for ages 3-14 and free for ages 2 and younger. Discounts available for groups.



ALABAMA VETERANS MUSEUM



Thousands of artifacts spanning from the Revolutionary War to present day fill the Alabama Veterans Museum & Archives in Athens. Through the items, which include uniforms, medals, photographs, letters and weapons, the museum curators bring the experiences of Alabamians in the military to life.

ALABAMA VETERANS MUSEUM

Address: 114 West Pryor St., Athens

Telephone: 256-771-7578

Website: alabamaveteransmuseum.com

Hours: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Saturday

Admission: Donations accepted

HUNTSVILLE MUSEUM OF ART

The Huntsville Museum of Art features a permanent collection of more than 3,200 objects, including pieces of American art from the 19th and 20th centuries, pieces by Andy Warhol, James McNeill Whistler and Robert Rauschenberg and contemporary works in wood, glass, metal and clay. The museum also hosts traveling exhibits.

HUNTSVILLE MUSEUM OF ART

Address: 300 Church St. S., Huntsville

Telephone: 256-535-4350

Website: hsvmuseum.org

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursday; noon-5 p.m., Sunday

Admission: Fees charged

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AVE MARIA GROTTO

1600 St. Bernard Drive, Cullman

Phone: 256-734-3946

Website: avemariagrotto.com

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

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Natural Escape:

EXPLORING WHEELER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

By Catherine Godbey
Staff Writer

For Park Ranger David Young, deciding on his favorite element of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge’s new exhibit proved difficult.

“The two cranes standing in front of the refuge sign, I think that is my favorite. The fall scene would be a close second with the white-tailed deer and the fall foliage behind her. And you really have to look for the bald eagle, which is unique, because many times it is front and center,” Young said. “The more I think about it, the more I change my mind about what I like most.”

After 21 months of gutting, designing and building, the new exhibit at the refuge’s Visitors Center opened in December. On the first day, more than 300 people stopped by.

“We were so excited and also a little nervous because we had been planning for it

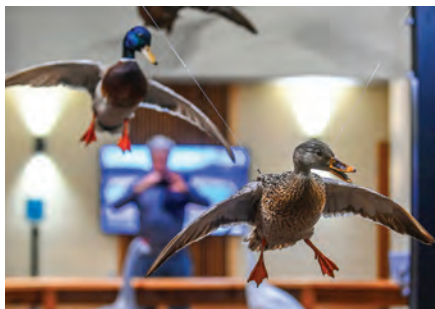
for so many years,” Young said. “We are finally happy to be able to share it with the public. We could feel people were ready to see what we had been working on.”

That work included replacing a dated, static 35-year-old display with a colorful, interactive and educational exhibit.

Guests can see a taxidermy sandhill crane and whooping crane, hear the bugling of cranes and tweeting of songbirds, create rubbings of leaves and climb through a log.

“With the exhibit, our goal was to tell our story, what we do at Wheeler and what visitors can do at Wheeler,” Young said.





“We hope it inspires visitors to explore the area and help conserve it.”

Centered around the seasons, the exhibit provides a glimpse into the wildlife visitors can see at Wheeler throughout the year, from ducks, geese and cranes in the winter to a white-tailed deer in the fall to a baby alligator, otter eating a sunfish and coyote perched on top of a cave in the summer to catfish, bass and the osprey’s nests on the electrical transmission towers in the spring.

“One of the things that I really love is that there are so many details. It is so much fun to try to look for everything. There is a screech owl in the oak tree, ladybugs on tree trunks and a copperhead snake on the ground,” Young said.

The refuge devoted a corner of the exhibit to the caves of Alabama.

“We have a lot of really rare cave critters in Alabama. With the cave, we wanted to show people things you and I will never see because we will never be in a cave like that. We have images of a spider you will only find in Cave Springs Cave in Morgan County, the translucent cavefish found only in the underground pools of Key Cave in Lauderdale County, the bats at Sauta Cave and salamanders,” Young said.

The walkway inside the exhibit space mimics the look of the boardwalks on the refuge’s trails.

While open to the public, the refuge, as of February, continued to work on the exhibit. Anticipated additions include a touch table with mussel shells, sweet gumballs, American lotus seedpods, feathers and turtle shells, examples of bird bands for different species and artifacts in the history section.



The exhibit’s history portion provides a look into the refuge’s past and present, starting with when Native Americans lived on the land, going through the Civil War, the eras of saltpeter mining and mussel harvesting, the building of the dam and the DDT contamination of Indian Creek in Triana. Items associated with those periods include Native American pottery, points and atlatls, a model of a cannonball found on the refuge and one of the refuge’s observation building’s first spotting scopes, which came from the U.S. Navy.

“We are very proud of this space,” Young said. “It stays true to nature. It feels very realistic and fits with what our mission and purpose are here.”

During the first month of reopening, the Visitors Center averaged between 300 and 600 visitors each day.

The renovations of the 10,000-square-foot Visitors Center also included creating a gift shop, adding floor-to-ceiling windows for bird watching and installing a larger screen in the auditorium for the 10-minute orientation film.

“It’s really fun to watch. You feel like you are right in there with the wildlife when you watch it,” Young said.

The work was part of a federally funded \$5.4 million project, which also included renovations to the observation building, a new outdoor classroom, a new 5.5-mile trail, new boardwalks on Flint Creek Nature Trail and a new 500-square-foot photography blind.

“People have really loved the photo blind. It provides an opportunity to view the birds without windows. In the winter, when the cranes are moving between



locations, it also provides a third place to potentially see them,” Young said.

The 35,000-acre refuge, which was created in 1938 as a result of the Tennessee Valley Authority’s construction of dams to control flooding from the Tennessee River and sees an average of 600,000 visitors a year, is one of north Alabama’s most popular destinations. The refuge is open March through October, Tuesdays-Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., and November through February, seven days a week, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

A birdwatcher’s paradise, the refuge, home to more than 300 species of birds, 115 fish species, 75 species of reptiles and amphibians, 47 mammal species, 38 species of freshwater mussels and 26 species of freshwater snails, also offers opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, hunting and boating.

Check out these trails.





The Truck Trail: Bordered by stately hickory and oak trees along the Tennessee River, the Truck Trail is accessible at the end of Old River Road Southeast. The path is accessible to hikers and bicyclists.

Atkeson Cypress Trail: The half-mile trail accessible at the Visitors Center snakes through a cypress swamp and wooded area.

Flint Creek Trail: With a canopy of maples, poplars, sweetgums, the 1½-mile Flint Creek Trail north of Alabama 67 offers a prime viewing spot for chipmunks, squirrels, woodpeckers, wrens, northern cardinals and warblers.

Dancy Bottom Trail: One of the most vibrant sections of the refuge appears along the Dancy Bottom Trail. Expect to see deer, squirrels and rabbits along the trail, which winds through a mixed pine and hardwood forest. Hikers can access the 2½-mile trail from Red Bank Road.

Hiking & Biking Trail: The 5.5-mile hiking and biking trail near the Visitors Center offers views of Gray Field and Flint Creek, a popular spot for the thousands of sandhill cranes that winter at Wheeler. When the trail splits at the 1.9-mile mark, go to the right to follow Dinsmore Slough, which is full of ducks and geese, or go to the left to follow Flint Creek.

White Springs Dike: The 7-mile White Springs Dike, sandwiched between the water and a wooded swamp, offers unobstructed views of the Tennessee River. The dike serves as a gathering place for thousands of ducks, red-tailed



hawks, northern harriers, ospreys and bald eagles. The trail is accessible on Alabama 20, just north of the U.S. 31 Tennessee River bridge. There is an alternate starting point at Arrowhead Landing.

Arrowhead Landing Road: A 4.8-mile road parallels the western shore of Limestone Bay. Thousands of snow geese and American white pelicans visit the bay daily. To access the trail, take the Mooresville exit to the stop sign. Turn right on old Highway 20 west and

turn left onto the gravel road at the boat ramp sign. Park in the small parking area on the left.

Blackwell Run Road: The 7.5-mile path winds through a swamp of cypress trees and beaver dams. Great blue heron, red-tailed hawks, deer, beaver and turtles are common sightings. Expect also to see butterflies. To access the trail, take County Line Road exit from I-565. Drive south for 5.5 miles. Look for Jolly B Road on the left and follow it for 1 mile to the gravel parking on the right.





Covering 112 acres, Huntsville Botanical Garden features an open-air butterfly house, a Biblical garden with plants mentioned in the Bible, perennial, aquatic, herb, vegetable and daylily gardens, dogwood trees and a nature trail with black tupelo, red maple, sycamore and sweetgum trees. Two of the garden's most popular events are the Scarecrow Trail in the fall and Galaxy of Lights in the winter.

HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Address: 4747 Bob Wallace Ave., Huntsville

Telephone: 256-830-4447

Website: hsvbg.org

Hours: April to September, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday

October to March, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Saturday; 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday

Admission: Fees charged

Learn about the history of human space exploration or visit the stars yourself in the INTUITIVE Planetarium, one of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center's newest features. The center also has interactive simulators, a Saturn V rocket and thousands of rocketry and space artifacts. A Smithsonian affiliate, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center is about a half-hour drive from Decatur and easy to find – just look for the rockets along Interstate 565. North Alabama has a rich history in space exploration. In Huntsville, Wernher von Braun and his team developed the Redstone Rocket, which put the first U.S. astronaut, Alan Shepard, into space. The center also hosts traveling exhibits.



U.S. SPACE & ROCKET CENTER

Address: 1 Tranquility Base, Huntsville

Telephone: 1-800-637-7223

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W.C. HANDY MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

W.C. Handy became famous in the music world for his compositions such as “Memphis Blues” and “St. Louis Blues” and as a band conductor and author. He is heralded as the “Father of the Blues.” But before his famous life, he was born in a small log cabin in Florence on Nov. 16, 1873. The museum in his honor houses a collection of memorabilia, including his famous trumpet and his personal piano, as well as personal papers and original sheet music.

W.C. HANDY MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

Address: 620 W. College St., Florence

Telephone: 256-275-3128

Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday

Admission: Fee charged



IVY GREEN

The site of the birthplace of Helen Keller features the home and grounds, including the famous pump where teacher Annie Sullivan showed a young Keller how to spell w-a-t-e-r in sign language. That single lesson opened the outside world to the child. For two weeks in the summer, Ivy Green serves as the backdrop to productions of “The Miracle Worker,” a play about Keller and Sullivan.

IVY GREEN

Address: 300 N. Commons St. W., Tuscumbia

Telephone: 256-383-4066

Website: helenkellerbirthplace.org

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Saturday

Admission: Fee charged



This is the opportunity to experience the work of Frank Lloyd Wright from inside the walls of one of the homes he designed. The 1,540-square-foot home is the only Wright-designed building in Alabama. It was created in a Usonian style that incorporates organic simplicity by bringing in the outdoors.



ATTRACTIONS

THE ROSENBAUM HOUSE

Address: 601 Riverview Drive, Florence

Telephone: 256-718-5050

Website: wrightinalabama.com

Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday; 1-4 p.m., Sunday

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FESTIVAL OF THE CRANES

The bugling of more than 10,000 cranes attracts visitors to the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge Center every winter. To celebrate the sandhill cranes and endangered whooping cranes that winter at Wheeler, refuge supporters created Festival of the Cranes, which typically takes place the second weekend in January. The festival features music, art, nature walks, birds of prey shows and more. More than 5,000 people attend the free festival, which takes place at the refuge and in downtown Decatur at the Princess Theatre, Carnegie Visual Arts Center, Alabama Center for the Arts and Decatur Public Library each year. fws.gov/refuge/wheeler. Admission is free.





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CARNEGIE CARNIVAL

FESTIVALS



The Carnegie Carnival – Decatur’s Mardi Gras celebration – brings parades, festival royalty, costumed canines, kids’ activities and art to downtown. It’s held the Saturday before Fat Tuesday, which will be March 1 in 2025.

The all-day event features a children’s parade, dog parade, half-marathon and 5K run, bluegrass music and an art creation

station. The celebration culminates in the evening with the main parade that includes floats and revelers dressed as pirates, flappers, sirens and more. Admission is free.

In the weeks leading up to the parade, look for unique events, such as a drag queen bingo, mystery dinners, trivia nights and more. carnegiecarnival.org.

DAIKIN FESTIVAL

With happi coats, traditional music, kimonos, taiko drummers and yakisoba – a popular Japanese street food – the Daikin Festival celebrates Japanese culture. Described as a gift to the community, the festival provides guests with free admission, free food, free music, free happi coats and a fireworks display. Expect to hear performances by the Daikin taiko drums, have your name written in Japanese and eat food ranging from yakisoba to jambalaya to barbecue sandwiches. The festival typically takes place in May.



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3RD FRIDAY

Classic cars, musicians, line dancers, a mechanical bull and artists descend on downtown Decatur every third Friday of the month, from April to October. Started in 2009 as a way to attract people to downtown, the 3rd Friday street festival brings in hundreds of visitors every month. Admission is free.

ALABAMA JUBILEE

FESTIVALS



Dozens of hot-air balloons take to the air above Decatur during the Alabama Jubilee Hot-Air Balloon Classic on the Saturday and Sunday of Memorial Day weekend.

The free two-day festival features a Hare and Hound Race, key grab, balloon glow, tethered rides, antique tractor display, car show, arts and crafts, live music, and fireworks. The balloons plan to take to the sky for the 47th annual festival on May 25-26 this year. Admission is free.





MULTICULTURAL INDIAN FESTIVAL

Hear music and stories, see pottery and prehistoric artifacts and participate in games and dances from the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Seminole tribes at the annual Multicultural Indian Festival at Oakville Indian Mounds in Lawrence County.

The Southeastern Native American culture will come to life at the living history encampment, which will feature weaving, cooking, flint-knapping, blacksmithing, hide tanning, basket making and more. Drum groups and flute players will lead performers in traditional dances. Children can participate in necklace making, atlatl throwing and stickball.

The festival, which takes place in May at 1219 County Road 187 in Danville, typically attracts 10,000 people. Admission is free with a fee for parking. Bring cash for wagon rides, canoe rides and face painting. oakvilleindianmounds.com



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS FESTIVAL

A new festival to downtown Decatur, the third annual Dia de los Muertos event will take place in early November. The inaugural festival, held in 2022, attracted about 3,500 people to Decatur's Second Avenue Northeast.



FESTIVALS



The brightly colored event featured community altars with candles, spirit animals called alebrijes, marigolds and skulls, an exhibit with art created by elementary, middle and high school students, food trucks, music and face painting.





SPIRIT OF AMERICA

Community leaders started the Spirit of America Festival in 1967 in an attempt to overcome the bitter feelings generated by the Vietnam War, and the July 4 event continues as a way to let Morgan County express its patriotism. Much of the community turns out for the annual fireworks program that lights up the sky above Point Mallard Park and is reflected by the waters of the Tennessee River. Admission is free.



DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

More than 1,000 paddlers propelling 46-foot-long dragon-headed boats compete in the annual Dragon Boat Festival at Point Mallard Park. The event, which raises

money for the Decatur Morgan Hospital Foundation, attracts teams from area high schools, gyms, churches and businesses.

An opening ceremony kicks off the

races and features the dotting of the dragon's eye and a performance by the Daikin drummers. The races typically take place the second Saturday in May. Admission for spectators is free.

RIVER CLAY FINE ARTS FESTIVAL

Named for the material used to construct some of Decatur's oldest structures, the River Clay Fine Arts Festival features more than 70 sculptors, painters, photographers, jewelers and carvers creating art from wood, fiber, clay, oil, glass and stone.

Along with artists, the two-day festival held on Decatur's City Hall lawn showcases music, children's activities, student art exhibits and artist demonstrations. The festival typically takes place in late October. Riverclay.org. Admission charged.



OTHER CELEBRATIONS AND FESTIVALS

Enjoy a festival that coincides with your visit, and plan return trips to savor even more special events.

Fiddlers Convention: Nicknamed the “Granddaddy of Midsouth Fiddlers Conventions,” the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention attracts more than 15,000 music lovers and 200 musicians from 30 states to Athens State University every year. The three-day convention with competitions in buck dance, banjo, fiddle and old-time singing, culminates with a “fiddle off” between the junior, intermediate and senior division fiddle winners. This year’s celebration is scheduled for Oct. 2-5. Tvoftc.org. Admission charged.

Athens Storytelling Festival: Weaving together folk legends, tall tales and exaggerated truths, award-winning tellers entertain audiences from across north Alabama during the Athens Storytelling Festival. Along with the professional storytellers and musicians, the festival, held in Athens in October, features a competition for amateur storytellers. Athensstorytellingfestival.com. Admission charged.

Kiddie Carnival: A staple of summertime in Athens, the Kiddie Carnival features rides, from a roller coaster



to swings to a Ferris wheel, and games for children. Open Thursday-Saturday during the summer, proceeds from the 50-cent per ride event go to the Athens Lions Club outreach programs. e-clubhouse.org/sites/athensal.

Juneteenth: With parades, picnics and parties, communities in north Alabama celebrate Juneteenth, which recognizes the day in 1865 when 250,000 slaves in Texas learned of their freedom – two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation became law. The events typically include games, foods, fireworks, music and a parade in Decatur and music and art in Athens.

Hartselle Depot Days: A tribute to the railroad industry, Hartselle Depot Days, with music, a truck and motorcycle show, arts, crafts and games, attracts more than 19,000 people to downtown Hartselle every September. hartsellechamber.com. Admission is free.

Eva Frontier Days: A down-home celebration, complete with greased pig-catching, frog jumping and pig-calling skills, highlights the Eva Frontier Days in Eva every year. The weeklong community celebration in September includes a parade, antique tractors, car show, crafts, baking contest, hayride, community singing and music. Admission is free.



Holiday parades: More than a dozen parades, including one on the water, bring the Christmas spirit to Morgan, Lawrence and Limestone counties every year. The parades in Decatur, Hartselle, Priceville, Athens, Courtland, Moulton, Trinity, Mount Hope, Elkmont, Hatton, Ardmore, Hillsboro and Town Creek feature marching bands, floats, Santa and more. In the Parade of Lights, boats adorned with Christmas lights and decorations float down the Tennessee River between Riverwalk Marina and Rhodes Ferry Park in Decatur.

Tinsel trails: Expect to see trees topped with glittered bows, a Santa hat, Mardi Gras mask and angels and decorated with sunflowers, magnolia leaves, pine cones, race medals and “Caution Buried Electric” tape at Decatur’s Enchanted Forest at Founders Park. Other tinsel trails are held in Hartselle, Eva, Moulton, Athens, Ardmore and Huntsville. Most trails stay open from early to mid-December to early January.

Historic Decatur Christmas Tour of Homes: Every December, residents in the historic Decatur neighborhoods of Albany and Old Decatur open their homes to visitors. The Historic Decatur Christmas Tour of Homes typically features six to eight homes, several churches, public spaces and more. decaturchristmastour.com. Admission charged.

Helen Keller Festival: The weeklong festival scheduled in June celebrates the life and accomplishments of Helen Keller. The festival includes music, runs, a car and truck show, golf tournaments, arts and crafts, parade and performances of “The Miracle Worker.” The festival takes place at Spring Park and other parts of Tusculumbia, Keller’s birthplace. helenkellerfestival.com.

W.C. Handy Music Festival: The 10-day music extravaganza in July honors W.C. Handy, Father of the Blues. Bands come from all over to perform in every nook and cranny in Florence. wchandymusicfestival.com.

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Office hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Joe Wheeler Electric Membership Corp.

The utility provides electricity to areas of Morgan County not served by Decatur Utilities or Hartselle Utilities. Offices are at 25700 Alabama 24 in Trinity and at 700 Sparkman St. N. in Hartselle.

For new service, call 256-552-2300.

Office hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

SET UP GARBAGE SERVICE

City of Decatur

For questions about garbage service, to obtain carts or to initiate service at a

newly built house, call 256-341-4740. For questions about recycling, call 256-341-4770.

City of Hartselle

Call Public Works to set up an account at 256-773-2643.

Morgan County

Morgan County Environmental Services handles garbage pickup and recycling outside of Decatur and Hartselle. Billing is handled by Joe Wheeler EMC. Call 256-773-3887 to set up garbage service.

Office hours: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Thursday

The Environmental Services office is at 1316 Industrial Drive S.E., Hartselle 35640.

REGISTER TO VOTE

Go to alabamavotes.gov to register online. You may also request a registration form by calling 256-351-4660 or visit the Board of Registrars' office at the Morgan County Courthouse at 302 Lee St. N.E. in Decatur.

BUY AN AUTOMOBILE TAG

Morgan County License Commissioner offices

Telephone: 256-351-4770

Main office: Morgan County Courthouse, 302 Lee St. N.E., second floor. Hours, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Hartselle satellite office: 560 Shull Road N.E. Hours, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

East Morgan County: Morgan County Service Center East, 62 Guyer Cove Road, Somerville. Hours, 6 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday-Thursday.

What you need: Two pieces of mail with name and Morgan County address, copy of last vehicle registration, proof of insurance in paper form (for scanning purposes), driver's license.

OBTAIN A NEW DRIVER'S LICENSE

Renewals or transfers within Alabama can be handled at the License Commissioner's office. If transferring from out of state, motorists will need to go to an Alabama Law Enforcement Agency driver's license office. Bring current driver's license, birth certificate or passport and a Social Security card.

The driver's license office is at the Morgan County Courthouse, 302 Lee St. N.E., Decatur, first floor.

Hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Telephone: 256-351-4665.

REGISTER FOR SCHOOL

Decatur City Schools

Call 256-580-4346 to schedule an appointment at the Central Office building at 212 Fourth Ave. S.E. Bring student's birth certificate, proof of address, an Alabama Immunization Form or a Certificate of Exemption, and a state issued photo ID for a parent or guardian. A Social Security card for the student is recommended but not required.

Custody papers are required if the parent is divorced or if they are not listed on the student's birth certificate and transcript papers from previous schools, if they are available. dcs.edu.

Hartselle City Schools

Go to the Central Office, 305 College St. N.E. For registration and required documents for pre-K and kindergarten, visit hartselletigers.org. Students going into kindergarten will have to go to the central office to take an assessment. 256-773-5419

Morgan County Schools

New and returning students enroll online, morgank12.org. 256-309-2100.



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EXPLORE HISTORY OF DECATUR

Confederate forces for Decatur, a key transportation point. Walkers on the tour will pass by three structures – the Old State Bank, Burlerson House and Dancy-Polk House – that were built before the Civil War and still stand.

Trail of Tears Walking Tour: On this tour, a visitor can stand on the banks of the Tennessee River and imagine what it felt like for Native Americans to come ashore in Decatur during their forced removal by the U.S. government. They were brought to Decatur in 1837-38 by steamboat from East Tennessee and boarded trains here to continue their journey westward.

Walking Tour of Historic Decatur: This tour allows walkers to view the exterior of homes, churches and an old library built in the 19th and early 20th centuries. See an English cottage style house, a clapboard Victorian cottage and homes built in the Second Empire and Colonial Revival styles.

Three walking tours allow visitors to learn about Decatur's historic structures and the city's roles in the Civil War and Trail of Tears. Download brochures at visitdecaturl.org (click on Things to do, Trails and Historic Walking Tours) or pick up printed brochures at the Old State Bank, 925 Bank St., or

Decatur Morgan County Tourism's office, 350 Market St. N.E..

Civil War "Battle for Decatur" walking tour: The self-guided stroll includes 11 historic markers and covers about 13 blocks. The tour traces the four-day clash in 1864 between Union and

Where: Lawrence County

Cost: Free in most areas, \$3 per car at Brushy Lake and Sipsy recreation areas; \$5 for camping.

An outdoor playground for nature enthusiasts, Bankhead National Forest covers 181,230 acres in Lawrence, Winston and Franklin counties, offering trails to hike, waterfalls to visit, caves to explore and creeks to paddle.

"Sometimes you've just got to stop and look up. We are here to appreciate this beautiful place," said Janice Barrett with Wild Alabama, an environmental conservation organization. "There are so many special things to see."

If hiking with children, Barrett recommended visiting the 2-mile round-trip wheelchair-accessible Brushy Lake trail, which winds beneath the bluffs and serves as a prime spot for bird-watching, and Caney Creek Falls, a 2-mile round-trip that ends at a waterfall.



Also check out the Sipsy Picnic Area. Developed as a recreation area by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, the half-mile Sipsy Trail winds along the lake and in and out of coves with waterfalls.

During the summer, Wild Alabama leads family-friendly hikes on Wednesdays.

For more trail recommendations, visit the Wild Alabama office, 552 Lawrence St., Moulton. wildsouth.org.

Where: Decatur and Athens

Cost: Free

Throughout north Alabama, trails exist for bicycle lovers to go on two-wheel adventures. Explore the trails at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Bankhead National Forest, the Dr. Bill Sims Bike Trail and Richard Martin Rails-to-Trails.

The 12-mile Bill Sims Bike Trail's main path runs from Point Mallard Park to Rhodes Ferry Park and then through downtown Decatur to Wilson Morgan Park using dedicated walking/biking paths and side streets. The route's length can vary, depending on where the trail is accessed at Point Mallard, and includes scenic views of the Tennessee River. For more information and a map, go to www.visitdecatur.org/outdoors and look for the link to Hiking and Biking.

A popular family-friendly spot for bikers and horseback riders, the 11-mile

GO FOR A RIDE



OUTDOORS

Richard Martin Rails-to-Trails, visitathensal.com/richard-martin-trail.html, connects Piney Chapel to Veto in Limestone County and features covered bridges, a refurbished railcar, waterways, wetlands and a Civil War battle site. The relatively flat trail accommodates strollers and wheelchairs.

The Swan Creek Greenway Trail at Athens Sportsplex features views of a covered bridge and creeks.

For those without a bike, Decatur has three bike rental stations at Point Mallard Water Park, Second Avenue Southeast and Gordon Drive, and Rhodes Ferry Park. Fee is \$2 per hour.



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SCAN ME

WONDERS OF THE WATER

Where: Morgan, Limestone, Lawrence and Walker counties

Cost: Free

Explore the natural wonders of north Alabama with adventures along the area's rivers, creeks and streams.

In Morgan County, the 20-mile Flint Creek trail serves as a prime spot for kayaking and canoeing. The trail winds from Alabama 36 near Hartselle to Point Mallard Park and crosses through parts of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. The trail is accessible at Alabama 36 near Hartselle, Vaughn Bridge Launch 5 miles from the start of the trail, U.S. 31 Boat Launch across from the WaterWorks Center for Environmental Education, Osprey Point Landing at Alabama 67 and Hickory Hill Boat Launch with access from Hickory Hill Road off Alabama 67.

In Limestone County, Limestone Bay, accessible off Arrowhead Landing Ramp in Mooresville, offers views of birds, including geese and the occasional bald eagle, and deer in the late fall. Also explore the Alabama portion of the Elk River, which winds 22 miles from Veto, Tennessee, at the state line to Elk River Mills Road in Athens. For uninterrupted views of the tree line, paddle the 10-mile section from Veto to Easter Ferry Road.

Other recommendations include the Tennessee River from Lake Guntersville to Wheeler Lake, Sipsey River and Brushy Creek in Bankhead Forest, the Sipsey Fork River in Walker County and the Flint River in Madison County.



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Where: Lawrence County and Madison County

Cost: Free

Make sure to bring a camera to capture the beauty of north Alabama's waterfalls.

In Lawrence County's Sipsey Wilderness, head to Turkey Foot Falls, which is a 30-minute walk from the Sipsey River picnic ground. Turkey Foot Creek, which runs through a sandstone canyon, empties into the Sipsey Fork. After seeing Turkey Foot Falls, head west to 15-foot Kinlock Falls in the Bankhead National Forest. northalabama.org/trails/waterfalls.

In Madison County, visit Bethel Springs Nature Preserve on the Land Trust of North Alabama. The preserve's Carpenter Trail, Falling Sink Trail and Mill Trail create a 1.3-mile round-trip to the waterfall. landtrustnal.org/properties/bethel-spring-preserve.

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Lodging facilities in Decatur and Morgan County include:

Best Western River City
Beltline Road at 1305 Front Ave., Decatur
256-301-1388
bestwestern.com

Comfort Inn
3239 Point Mallard Parkway, Priceville
256-274-4957
choicehotels.com

Courtyard by Marriott
1209 Courtyard Circle S.W., Decatur
256-355-4446
marriott.com

Doubletree by Hilton Riverfront
1101 Sixth Ave. N.E., Decatur
256-355-3150
hilton.com

Fairfield by Marriott
103 Second Ave. S.E.
256-274-9040
marriott.com

Hampton Inn
2041 Beltline Road S.W., Decatur
256-355-5888
hampton.com

Holiday Inn Express & Suites
2407 Beltline Road, Decatur
256-822-2800
ihg.com

Home2 Suites by Hilton
807 Island Way N.W., Decatur
256-822-1030
home2suites.com

Quail Creek Golf Resort
233 Quail Creek Drive, Hartselle
256-784-5033
quailcreek.com

Quality Inn
2120 Jameson Place S.W., Decatur
256-355-2229
choicehotels.com

Residence Inn by Marriott
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(256) 280-2666
marriott.com

Super 8 Motel
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256-642-7125
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TIME TO EAT

RESTAURANT GUIDE

Please note that restaurant hours of operation are subject to change.



TIME TO EAT

ASIAN

Canton House

Where: 609 14th St. S.E.,
Decatur, 256-350-8868,
ezordernow.com/cantonhouse

Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tuesday-
Thursday and Sunday; 10:30 a.m. -
9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday

The oldest authentic Asian restaurant in Decatur, Canton House has been family owned and operated since 1995. The menu offers everything from its Hawaiian Five “O” specialty dish to staples like Sweet and Sour Pork or Chicken and General Tso’s Chicken. The lunch buffet starts at 10:30 a.m., and the dinner buffet begins at 3:30 p.m. You’ll love the generous portions with takeout meals.

Sushi: Sumo

Where: 1313 Point Mallard Pkwy.
S.E., Decatur, 256-686-3027,
sushisumodecatur.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Tuesday-
Sunday

Chef Jae Lee serves fresh, homemade sushi at the family-owned restaurant, which opened in 2021. The menu features poke bowls, rice bowls, salads, ramen and 36 sushi rolls, including the Caterpillar with crab meat, fresh water eel, cucumber and avocado, the Angry Tail with spicy tuna, cucumber, yellowtail and jalapeno, and Scream with shrimp tempura, avocado, cucumber,

spicy crab meat, spicy tuna, deep fried jalapeno and cream cheese.

PIZZA/ITALIAN

Alfonso’s Pizza & Italian Restaurant

Where: 725 Beltline Road S.W.,
Suite E, Decatur, 256-350-0211;
thelalfonsospizza.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Monday-
Thursday, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Friday
and Saturday

Alfonso’s has been a family-owned restaurant since 1977 with three



generations having been a part of it. Alfonso's is best known for its brick oven pizzas with the thin, crispy crust with freshly made dough and sauces. Other options on the menu include shrimp alfredo, spaghetti bake and many more things to choose from.

Francesco's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria

Where: 2613 U.S. 31 S., Decatur, 256-584-6770; francescositalianrestaurant.org

Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. Sunday

Francesco's is an Italian restaurant and pizzeria located in southern Decatur. On their menu, you'll find classic Italian dishes such as fettuccini, lasagna or calzones. All of the dishes are made to order with fresh ingredients. Try their famous pinwheels.

Mellow Mushroom

Where: 202 E. Moulton St., Decatur, 256-355-5161, mellowmushroom.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.



A cornerstone of Decatur's downtown restaurant scene since opening in 2013, Mellow Mushroom has a natural feel with its wood décor inside and covered patio outside. The eatery with a "River City" theme specializes in stone-baked pizzas and has gluten-free and vegan options. The menu also has munchies, calzones, salads, hoagies and burgers. People interested in an alcoholic beverage can try Mellow's "Liquid Karma Cocktails" or one of 36 draft beers.

Milson's Pizzeria

Where: 303 Beltline Place S.W., Decatur, 256-696-0490, milsonspizza.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sunday-Monday, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday

Opened in 2023, the pizzeria provides a buffet, specialty pizzas, dessert pizzas, spaghetti, wings and more.

Pizza Ed

Where: 305 Main St. W., Hartselle, 256-502-9959; pizzaedhartselle.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Sunday

Pizza Ed offers New York style, brick oven pizza in the heart of downtown Hartselle. In addition to fresh-made pizza, you can find a variety of offerings, such as fettuccini alfredo, lasagna, calzones, strombolis, salads and more. You might even like to try a slice of lemoncello mascarpone cake for dessert.

Mozaa Pizza

Where: 202 South Jefferson St., Athens, 256-230-3832; facebook.com/Mozaa2019

Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., Wednesday-Monday

The pizzeria in downtown Athens serves up a variety of pies from macaroni and cheese and Texas taco to spinach alfredo and Buffalo chicken ranch.

The Village Pizza

Where: 15728 East Limestone Road, Athens, 256-232-3388; thevillagepizza.org

Hours: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday, 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Sunday

This restaurant has been creating handmade pizzas since 1989. You can find pizzas, pasta, wings and more in this family-friendly and locally loved pizzeria.

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MEXICAN

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Where: 2504 U.S. 31, Decatur, 256-353-6727

*Hours: 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and Sunday,
11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday*

Opened in 1985, this decorative Mexican restaurant on U.S. 31 offers traditional cuisine including margaritas. An authentic Mexican atmosphere adds to the dining experience. The restaurant offers dine-in, takeout and delivery service. It has family seating up front and long tables in the back that can accommodate teams and other large groups.

Don Alejo Mexican Restaurant

*Where: 800 U.S. 31 S.W., Suite D., Hartselle,
256-778-3325;
don-alejo-mexican-restaurant.business.site*

*Hours: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. -
10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday*

Don Alejo Mexican Restaurant is a family-owned restaurant offering classic Mexican cuisine in a welcoming environment. You'll find many things to choose from on their menu, from fajitas and chimichangas to flaming cheese. Try their xango for dessert – fried cheesecake with ice cream, and be sure to stop in for "Taco Tuesday."

El Portal Mexican Restaurant

*Where: 1901 U.S. 31 S.W., Hartselle, 256-751-1159;
facebook.com/ElPortalDairyQueen*

and 1315 U.S. 31 N.W., Hartselle, 256-751-2962

*Hours: 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. -
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cookmuseum.naturestable.com

TIME TO EAT

El Portal has two locations to choose from. At their locations you will find lots of variety on their menus, from fish tacos to a "Speedy Gonzales." You will also find a vegetarian section and kids portion of the menu.

La Monarca International Food

Where: 2528 Spring Ave. S.W., Decatur, 256-686-4447

Hours: 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Daily

La Monarca is a restaurant tucked in the back of a Mexican market. Locals and visitors alike come in to get what they consider authentic Mexican foods like Diablo shrimp, an agua fresca – or you'll even find grilled cactus.

Las Vias Mexican Grill

Where: 1000 Beltline Road S.W., Suite Q, Decatur, 256-552-7772

*Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sunday, 10:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.*



Monday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday

2224 Sixth Ave., S.E., Decatur; 256-686-3344

*Hours: 10 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Sunday-Thursday, 10 a.m. -*

*10 p.m. Friday and Saturday;
lasviasmexicangrill.com*

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Tio Juan Mexican Grill

1318 Sixth Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-306-9992

Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday through Monday. Closed Tuesday

Tio Juan offers typical Mexican fare with tacos, enchiladas, nachos, salads. Its specialties include steak quesadilla, shrimp fajitas and lunch combinations. Margaritas, mixed drinks and Mexican beer are among the beverages.

DELIS/BREAKFAST/ LUNCH

Eatin' in the Attic

Where: 117 Main St. W., Hartselle, 256-502-9017

Hours: 11 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday; 11 a.m. -

8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday; eatintheattic.com

At Eatin' in the Attic, you'll find wraps, tacos, burgers and sandwiches, including The Attic, Fried Green Tomato BLT or Jam Ham and Cheese.

Caddo Cafeteria

Where: 6091 County Road 434, Trinity

Hours: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 4-8 p.m., Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Sunday

A classic meat-and-three, Caddo Cafeteria provides eaters with a variety of options, including meatloaf, hamburger steak, pork roast, green beans, black-eyed peas, steamed cabbage, sweet potatoes and cakes and pies. Caddo's white cream corn was named to Alabama Tourism's "100 Dishes to Eat Before You Die."



Dot's Soulfood

Where: 18152 Alabama 20, Hillsboro, 256-637-8002

Hours: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sunday

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serving station and around the restaurant. The family-run cafeteria-style establishment serves up home-cooked Southern food. Don't miss out on the fried chicken. The menu for the meat-and-two (or three depending on how hungry you are) includes macaroni and cheese, dressing, salmon patties, meatloaf, catfish, purple hull peas, butter beans, fried okra and more.

Carl's Deli

Where: 3151 Alabama 67, Somerville, 256-606-3465

Hours: 5 a.m. - 2 p.m. Monday - Saturday

Stop on in for an early morning breakfast of country ham and biscuits, or order pancakes and sausage at Carl's Deli in Somerville. They also offer daily lunch specials and classics like burgers or grilled ham and cheese sandwiches.

Let's Do Lunch

Where: 435 Holly St. N.E., Decatur, 256-340-1317; letsdolunchdecatour.com

Hours: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Friday

Just as the name indicates, this is a great place to stop in for a tasty lunch. Everything is made fresh and has no preservatives or additives. Try their turkey bacon berry wrap or strawberry pretzel salad. This restaurant was featured in Alabama Tourism's "100 Dishes to Eat Before You Die."

Nature's Table Café

Where: 133 Fourth Ave. N.E., Decatur - inside the Cook Museum, 256-898-6301; cookmuseum.naturestable.com

Hours: 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Saturday

Nature's Table, located inside the Cook Museum, offers a blend of traditional and new foods with fresh ingredients. You'll find Acai bowls, smoothies, sandwiches, protein bowls and more.

Wildwood Deli

Where: 113 W. Market St., Athens, 256-206-9384

Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Monday - Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Saturday; facebook.com/theWildwoodDeli

Here you can enjoy fresh, made-to-order deli fare and gourmet salads as well as Southern favorites like a pimento cheese sandwich with homemade soup. Wildwood Deli is located just a stone's throw from the Limestone County Courthouse.

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(9 p.m. at U.S. 31 S. and Beltline
locations) Friday and Saturday

Chick-fil-A offers all things chicken – from sandwiches and tenders to fresh-made salads. There are two locations in Decatur as well as a location in Athens. You might also like to stop in for a frosted lemonade. The lemonade is made fresh each day.

Firehouse Subs

Where: 2812 Spring Ave. S.W.,
256-340-8600

Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m., daily

The restaurant serves up a variety of hot and cold sandwiches and salads.

The Freight House

Where: 200 Railroad St. S.W.,
Hartselle, 256-773-4600;
freighthousehartselle.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Sun-
day-Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Thursday-Saturday

The Freight House is located in the historic, 1915 L&N railroad freight depot and offers classic Southern cooking at its finest. You will find classics from hand-cut prime rib to slow-cooked pinto beans. Enjoy

a great meal, followed by a slice of their famous strawberry cake, as you watch the trains roll by right outside the windows.

JW Steakhouse

Where: 45 Marco Drive,
Priceville, 256-355-5560;
jwsteakhouse.com

Hours: 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. Wednesday
and Thursday, 4 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Friday and Saturday

JW Steakhouse is conveniently located just off of Interstate 65 in the Priceville area. JW Steakhouse offers hand-cut, aged steaks, homemade cheesecake and much more. They have a new bar with a wide selection of beers and wines. They offer catering and event hosting, as well as monthly wine tasting events.

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When it comes to barbecue, allegiances in Alabama run deep. Meat eaters proudly declare their loyalty forged over dozens – and for some, hundreds – of plates of stuffed potatoes, pork nachos and chicken with white sauce.

No matter whether you prefer white or red sauce, chicken or ribs, sweet or spicy seasonings or barbecue on top of salads or baked potatoes, options abound.

Big Bob Gibson BBQ

In 1925, 6-foot-4-inch, 300-pound Bob Gibson started serving slow-roasted barbecue with a tangy white sauce from his backyard. The restaurant's featured white sauce helped put Decatur on the barbecue map nationally. Big Bob's awards include American Royal International's Invitational Grand Champion, Memphis in May's Grand Champion and the National Barbecue Association's first place for white sauce. bigbobgibson.com

1715 Sixth Ave. S.E., Decatur, 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., daily, the drive-thru remains open until 8:30 p.m. 256-350-6969

2520 Danville Road S.W., Decatur, 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday to Saturday, the drive-thru remains open until 8:30 p.m., 256-350-0404

B.B. Perrin's

Located on Holly Street Northeast, B.B. Perrin's is a popular spot for the sports-watching barbecue eater. The menu includes rib gumbo, barbecue chicken, hickory-smoked ribs and barbecue pork nachos. The sports bar opened in 1988. bbperrins.com

608 Holly St. N.E., Decatur, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Friday-Saturday, 256-355-1045

Whitt's Barbecue

On Labor Day 1966, Floyd and Laura Whitt opened the doors to a barbecue joint on a dirt road in Limestone County. With locations in Decatur, Athens, Moulton and Ardmore, Whitt's Barbecue has become a mainstay in north Alabama, known for its hickory smoke and vinegar-based sauce. whittsbbqoriginal.com





2532 Spring Ave. S.W., Decatur, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday, 256-350-2748

918 Sixth Ave. S.E., Decatur, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Tuesday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Thursday-Saturday, 256-351-6294

Other locations in Moulton and Athens.

306 BBQ

Friends and backyard pitmasters Justin Burgreen, Whiney Skipworth and Lee Noah opened 306 BBQ in August 2011. The Athens joint is known for barbecue turkey, brisket and sides, specifically the squash casserole. 306bbq.com



23101 U.S. 72, Athens, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday, 256-444-2306

Smokey C's BBQ and Wings

Armed with backyard experience, Decatur brothers Cory and Casey Culver opened the restaurant in July 2008. In 2015 and 2016, Smokey C's white sauce placed first at the National Barbecue Association's Conference. Try out the signature pork loin or BBQ Tater Bowl. smokeycsbbq.com

3075 Alabama 20, Decatur, 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, 256-353-7787

Chief and Snoogie's Hickory Pit BBQ

Opened in August 2011, the restaurant on Alabama 24 in Trinity created a committed following with its chicken stew, chili, BBQ nachos and ribs. chiefandsnoogiebbq.com

23419 Alabama 24, Trinity, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., Sunday

Greenbrier Bar-B-Que

A mainstay for barbecue seekers in Limestone County, Greenbrier Bar-B-Que opened on Alabama 20 in 1961. Along with the classic barbecue fare, the golden-brown hush puppies bring in hungry diners. oldgreenbrier.com

27028 Old Alabama 20, Madison, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 256-351-1800

LawLer's BBQ

Expect hand-pulled meats with a hint of hickory at this barbecue joint with locations in Decatur and Athens. Other highlights on the menu include stuffed potatoes, barbecue salads and smokey macaroni and cheese. lawlersbarbecue.com

725 Beltline Road S.W., Decatur, 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 256-822-1006

1506 U.S. 72 E., Athens, 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 256-233-1818

Holy Smoke BBQ

The small, family-owned barbecue restaurant is best known for smoked chicken wings and barbecued ribs.

900 U.S. 31 N.W., Hartselle, 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday, 256-751-2000

Pigskin All Sports BBQ

The Hartselle-based restaurant offers a variety of barbecue plates, sandwiches, melts and fried pies.

400 Nance Ford Road, S.W., Hartselle, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday, 256-754-5053

Scrugg's BBQ

Local patrons declare that the family-owned barbecue joint located near the Tennessee River have the best brisket on the planet. Also check out the fried catfish and stuffed taters. facebook.com/fscrugg

1315 Alabama 20, Decatur, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday-Friday, occasionally open 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 256-351-7937

Nash Bar-B-Que

When neighbors smelled the chickens the Nash family was barbecuing on the front porch of their Hillsboro home, Nash Bar-B-Que was born. The menu includes chicken, ribs, pork sandwiches, fish and wings. nashbbq.com

104 12th Ave. N.W., Decatur, 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday-Saturday, 256-341-0370

1019 County Road 439, Hillsboro, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday, 256-637-8243

Moe's Original BBQ

Moe's three Morgan County locations offer pulled pork, stuffed potatoes, ribs and Southern-fried catfish.

202 Moulton St. E., Decatur, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Monday-Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 1 a.m., Thursday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Sunday, 256-686-4112

3524 Deere Road, Priceville, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., Sunday, 256-686-1462

200 Main St. W., Hartselle, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Monday-Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 11 p.m., Thursday, 11 a.m. - midnight, Friday-Saturday, 256-502-8092





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Libby's Catfish & Diner

Where: 1401 Alabama 67 S.,
Priceville, 256-353-9767

Hours: 5:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Monday-Saturday

If you have a craving for catfish, that is what Libby's is best known for. But in addition to catfish and seafood with homemade tartar sauce, you can also find steaks, burgers and a variety of country style breakfast sandwiches.

Mr. Henry's Neighborhood Restaurant

Where: 701 Nance Ford Road S.W.,
Hartselle, 256-773-8101

Hours: 6 a.m. - 2 p.m. Sunday-
Friday, 6 a.m. - 11 a.m. Saturday

Mr. Henry's is a beloved restaurant in Hartselle, offering home-style cooking such as ribeye steaks or meatloaf sandwiches and daily specials. With

their early hours, it is a favorite go-to location for a hearty breakfast as well.

Oh! Bryan's Family Steak House

Where: 727 Main St. W., Hartselle,
256-773-8788; ohbryans.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Friday and Saturday

Oh! Bryan's Family Steak House offers hand-cut, flame-broiled steaks cooked to order. You'll also find a salad bar with over 30 items to choose from. Come find out why this restaurant is so beloved, with the iced tea glass that never runs empty.

Ramona J's Restaurant

Where: 1212 U.S. 31 S., Athens,
256-444-4005; ramonajs.com

Hours: 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday-
Friday

22728 Pepper Road, Athens,
256-444-1150

Hours: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday-
Friday

Ramona J's Restaurant offers "good food to go," with a great variety and all made to order at two Athens locations. Whether you choose a Caribbean Jerk Cheese Steak Burger or a catfish with wings, you're going to love every bit of it. And don't forget the candy bacon deviled eggs or pound cake for dessert.

Ro's Grille

Where: 126 N. Jefferson St., Athens,
256-230-2716; rosgrille.com

Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. -
3 p.m. and 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. Friday
and Saturday, 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Sunday

Ro's Grille is a casual restaurant featuring a twist on traditional grilled foods.

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You'll find Caribbean chicken, ribeye, Cajun salmon, 9-ounce burgers and more to choose from. The restaurant also offers daily specials. Ro's Grille has a second location near the Publix in Athens.

The Old Cookstove

Where: 89 Reeder Road, Danville, 256-462-1151

Hours: 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. Thursday,
11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday

This off-the-beaten-path restaurant is a rustic little gem nestled in the countryside of Danville. The Old Cookstove is known for hosting a "Seafood Friday" and serving homemade dishes just like your grandma used to make. Take a drive in the country, enjoy the scenery and stop in for a meal of comfort foods like country fried steak or pot roast and maybe some peach cobbler with homemade ice cream.

BAR AND GRILL

Bank Street Grill

Where: 719 Bank St., Decatur, 256-686-2006;
bankstreetgrillal.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Friday, 5-10 p.m., Saturday

At Bank Street Grill, you can enjoy hand-cut filet mignon and freshly ground Angus burgers. Or maybe you would prefer unique starters like bacon-wrapped quail breast, or buffalo fried okra and fried green tomatoes.

Brick Deli

Where: 112 E. Moulton St., Decatur, 256-355-8318;
brickdeli.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. - midnight Friday and Saturday

The Brick Deli offers a selection of original sandwiches like the Father Guido or 5 Finger Banjo Picker. You'll also find live music and a full-service bar with 25 beers on tap. Prior to 9 p.m. it is a very family-friendly environment.

Crossroads Steak & Grill

Where: 5828 Alabama 36 W., Danville, 256-751-2722

Hours: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Sunday

Crossroads Steak & Grill is a family-owned restaurant offering local favorites like fried catfish, shrimp and of course steak. This cozy restaurant does not accept "plastic," so bring cash and enjoy a great meal.

COFFEE HOUSE

Warehouse Coffee

Where: 315 Main St. W., Hartselle, 256-227-8220

Hours: 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday

Warehouse Coffee is an inviting coffee shop located in the heart of Hartselle. You can find classic coffee shop breakfast and lunch offerings like muffins or sausage balls as well as lunch items to fill you up. Of course, specialty coffee drinks are a must, or even an ice cream milkshake. Warehouse offers free Wi-Fi and plenty of space to relax, enjoy your coffee and recharge - with plenty of outlets available for your devices, too.

High Point Market

Where: 307 Second Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-822-2027,
highpointdeatur.com



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Hours: 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday

Located in downtown Decatur, High Point Market offers a relaxed space with exposed brick walls and wood floors. The market's baristas serve a variety of drinks, including coffees, lattes, mochas and teas. Also found at the market are frozen dinners, hot sauces, relishes, popsicles and bagged coffee made by Decatur roasters Shine-On Coffee.

Java Jaay Cafe

Where: 1713 Sixth Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-351-8555

Hours: 6 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. Saturday

The coffee shop next to Big Bob Gibson on Sixth Avenue offers an intimate atmosphere to enjoy a variety of hot and cold drinks. Specialty mochas include the heath bar, almond joy and milky way.

Crossroads Coffee

Where: 460 Alabama 67, Priceville; facebook.com/crossroadscoffee-company

Hours: 5:30 a.m. - 6 p.m., Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m., Sunday

For those in a hurry, stop by this drive-thru coffee stand in Priceville. The shop serves coffees, teas, espressos, fruit energy drinks and specialty creations.

SWEETS

Tess' Place

Where: 324 Second Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-686-1601

Hours: (Winter) noon - 5 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, noon - 8 p.m. Thursday - Saturday; (Summer) noon - 8 p.m. Tuesday - Thursday; noon - 9 p.m. Friday - Saturday

Opened in 2022 by husband-and-wife Michael and Dede Quarry, Tess' Place — named after the couple's French bulldog Tess — offers a sweet escape with a variety of ice cream flavors. Along with the ice cream — available in a cone or a cup — the ice cream parlor serves gourmet sodas, shaved ice and ice cream floats.

Morgan Price Candy Company

Where: 1735 Sixth Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-350-2992; morganpricecandy.com

Hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Saturday



The candy company that started in 1987 as a mail-order business is known for its pralines, toffee and chocolate creations. The toffee was listed in Alabama Tourism's "100 Dishes to Eat Before You Die."

Oliwia's Shave Ice

Where: 115 Railroad St. S.W., Hartselle, 256-309-1044; facebook.com/oliwiasshaveice/

Hours: 2:30 - 8 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday, 12 - 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday

At this sweet destination, visitors can select from dozens of shave ice flavors.

CRAFT BREWERY

Cross-Eyed Owl

Where: 105 First Ave. N.E., Decatur, 256-274-9002; www.facebook.com/xoebrewing



Hours: 4 p.m. - 9 p.m., Tuesday - Thursday, 4 p.m. - 11 p.m., Friday, 11 a.m. - 11 p.m., Saturday, noon - 6 p.m., Sunday

Decatur's only craft brewery, Cross-Eyed Owl offers more than a dozen beers on tap, including a porter, lagers and ales, and craft sodas. Keep an eye out for special events at the brewery, including food trucks, trivia nights, concerts and more.

Old Black Bear Brewing

Where: 311 South Marion St., Athens, 256-472-2010; oldblackbear.com/athens

Hours: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Sunday

The Athens distillery opened in September 2023 and features 10 beers on tap. The site also houses a restaurant

that serves up hamburgers, pastas, sandwiches, tacos and more.

UPSCALE CASUAL

The Railyard

Where: 209 Second Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-580-5707; www.facebook.com/therailyarddecatur/

Hours: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tuesday - Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Thursday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. Friday, and 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Saturday

The Railyard offers a seasonally changing menu of "farm-to-fork" comfort foods that highlight locally grown and harvested ingredients, in addition to their selection of craft beers and seasonal libations. The restaurant is located downstairs from the Second



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Avenue Southeast entrance and can also be accessed from parking lot level off of First Avenue Southeast.

Simp McGhee's

Where: 725 Bank St. N.E., Decatur, 256-353-6284; simpmcghees.com

Hours: 5 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 5 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Saturday

Located on historic Bank Street, Simp McGhee's serves up a variety of Cajun offerings such as crawfish egg rolls, crab Florentine, lobster ravioli and Rhodes Ferry duck. If the weather is nice, you can take advantage of their pet-friendly outdoor seating as well.

609 Social

Where: 609 Bank St. N.E., Decatur, 256-938-8350; 609socialmarket.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Sunday-Tuesday, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., Wednesday-Saturday

Opened in February 2024, 609 Social Market & Provisions is an urban market



serving up plates of seafood, pizza, pasta, hamburgers and more.

MEDITERRANEAN

Josie's Mediterranean Café

Where: 109 Second Ave. N.E., Decatur, 256-822-2229

Hours: 4 p.m. - 10 p.m. Wednesday, 4 p.m. - 11 p.m. Thursday, 4 p.m. - 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sunday

Located right in downtown Decatur, Josie's has classic Mediterranean dishes, such as paella, steak marsala or flatbreads. They offer daily specials made from fresh, seasonal ingredients. Of course, in addition to a delicious meal, you can also choose from their wines, cocktails and tapas.

SPECIALTY

C.F. Penn Hamburgers

Where: 214 Sixth Ave. S.E., Decatur, 256-274-9358

Hours: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. (or until they run out) Monday-Saturday

C.F. Penn Hamburgers is an iconic restaurant that touts deep-fried burgers that even the king loved. Yes, that king — Elvis Presley. C.F. Penn Hamburgers has been featured on Food Network. They've been serving up burgers since 1927. Try their famous Slugburger.

Downtown Dawgs

Where: 1820 Sixth Ave. S.E., Suite C, Decatur, 256-345-3796; downtown-dawgsdecatur.com

Hours: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday

Everyone loves a classic hot dog and Downtown Dawgs takes them to a whole new level. From the Cool Rancher with nacho cheese and crushed cool ranch chips to the Mac Daddy with Mac-and-cheese, there's something for everyone to choose from.

Freddy's Frozen Custard

Where: 2804 Spring Ave., Decatur, 256-686-0746

Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Friday-Saturday

Freddy's is an American fast-casual restaurant chain based in Wichita, Kansas. The Freddy's menu features steakburgers, beef hot dogs and chicken sandwiches. The famous frozen custard comes with a variety of specialty sundaes and mixtures of fruits, candy, cookies and nuts.

Just Wing It

Where: 1123 Somerville Road, Decatur, 256-686-2032

Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday

After three years as a food truck, Just Wing It opened in its brick-and-mortar site in November 2023. The menu features wings, hamburgers, sausage dogs, barbecue and Brunswick stew.

Whataburger

Where: 1621 Beltline Road S.W., Decatur, 256-274-8258; whataburger.com

Hours: 24 hours a day

A popular fast-food eatery, which opened in spring of 2021, features burgers, chicken and fish sandwiches, salads, fries and shakes. Breakfast is served from 11 p.m. to 11 a.m.



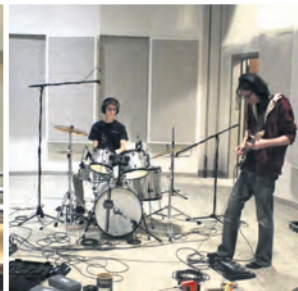
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