

Photo: Governor Ivey signing Maritime Month proclamation with ACCS and maritime industry leaders

Statewide partnerships set sail with Gov. Ivey’s Maritime Month proclamation

Governor Kay Ivey proclaimed May 2025 as Maritime Month in Alabama during a proclamation signing at the State Capitol. Maritime Month will recognize Alabama’s role in the maritime industry as it relates to national defense and economic growth.

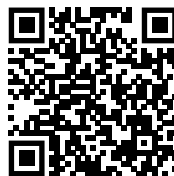
In attendance at the signing were leaders from Austal USA, Blakeley Boatworks, Birdon, Alabama Port Authority and the Maritime Industrial Base. Their collaboration with Alabama’s community and technical colleges will soon pave the way for major improvements in training programs that prepare workers for careers in submarine manufacturing and shipbuilding.

“The investments we’re making in the maritime industry will create a ripple effect— not only preparing students for the next wave of high-demand careers but also supporting our coastal communities at home and abroad,” said ACCS Chancellor Jimmy H. Baker. “We’re well-positioned to expand and support Alabama’s vital defense industries.”

As workforce development continues to be a top priority, the ACCS and its partners ensure Alabama is equipped with a skilled pipeline of maritime professionals, reinforcing the state’s standing as a national leader in advanced shipbuilding and maritime training.

According to the proclamation, the Port of Mobile plays a major role in global trade— connecting Alabama to the world by moving goods and services in and out of the state. The maritime industry brings in about \$2.8 billion to Alabama’s economy every year.

Read Maritime Month proclamation in full:



<https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2025/04/maritime-month/>



FROM CHANCELLOR JIMMY H. BAKER

Whether you’re a community leader seeking a better future for your constituents or a business in need of skilled talent, we provide the education and training to help you succeed. We are a driving force behind Alabama’s success.

That success builds stronger communities. Through education, service, and training, creating opportunities that lead to a more skilled workforce, higher wages, and thriving local economies. Strong communities make a strong Alabama, and by working with business and industry, we fuel economic growth that benefits everyone.

To our legislators, business leaders, and partners—THANK YOU! Your support makes this progress and opportunities possible for students, in every region of the state. Together, we’re building a stronger Alabama — one student, one community, and one industry at a time.

Empowerment Expo: A beacon of hope at Children’s of Alabama



Photo: Courtesy of Children’s of Alabama

Children’s of Alabama recently hosted its first Empowerment Expo, a collaborative event with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and several higher education institutions. The initiative aimed to highlight educational opportunities for young patients, providing hope and direction

as they navigate medical treatment and uncertainty.

“As we serve patients from all over the state, the ACCS stands out as a vital partner, representing not only individual schools but also the collective mission of fostering education and growth for all Alabamians,” said Melanie Bales, Sunshine School Coordinator at Children’s of Alabama.

The ACCS Innovation Center, along with Beville State, Calhoun, Jefferson State, Lawson State, and Wallace State community colleges, shared a range of resources – including Skills for Success courses, job certification programs, dual enrollment opportunities, and GED pathways – designed to help students overcome barriers and build a strong foundation for their future.

“Children’s of Alabama is the only health system in Alabama dedicated solely to the care and treatment of children. Exposure to these programs helps students visualize their future and set achievable goals. It’s crucial for them to know what’s available; otherwise, they can feel lost and overwhelmed,” Bales added.

The Sunshine School plays a critical role in maintaining academic continuity for pediatric patients. “Learning away from the classroom poses challenges like lack of socialization and motivation. We strive to lighten that load and ensure they’re still meeting core standards,” said teacher Sarah Robertson.

This collaborative event marked a powerful step in connecting care with opportunity.

Inside the body: Gadsden State opens the door to real anatomy learning

Gadsden State Community College offers a unique Human Gross Anatomy Lab—the only one of its kind within the Alabama Community College System—for students in the human anatomy and physiology course. The lab is in the new Science Building on the college’s East Broad Campus.

“The lab is known as the Cadaver Lab on our campus,” said Phillip Snider, an anatomy and physiology instructor and director of the lab. “It sets the standard for hands-on, real-world education in the sciences.”

The state-of-the-art laboratory accommodates four cadavers each year giving students an in-depth perspective on the human body that is critical for understanding both normal anatomy and the impact of disease. The lab provides an immersive environment where students



Photo: Gadsden State students participate in a hands-on learning experience in the cadaver lab

engage in dissection activities and explore pathophysiology concepts, such as disease, cancer and the cardiovascular system.

“Cadaver labs provide students with the opportunity to study the human body in a way that no textbook or computer simulation can replicate,” Snider said. “The hands-on experience of dissecting real human tissue is indispensable in cultivating the next generation

of healthcare professionals.”

The cadavers used in the lab come from the University of South Alabama in Mobile. The cadavers spend one year at Gadsden State. Once the cadavers are no longer used for educational purposes, they are cremated and returned to their families. Students in the human anatomy and physiology course also hold a memorial service for the cadavers to honor their contributions to their education and training.

Live Locally Alabama

A quality-of-life campaign led by the municipal leaders of Alabama

*By: Greg Cochran,
ALM Executive Director*

The Alabama League of Municipalities recently launched a quality-of-life campaign entitled Live Locally Alabama! The goal of this initiative is to encourage civic engagement, instill community pride and highlight the crucial role municipal government plays in the daily lives of Alabama's citizens.

Alabama is made up of 465 cities and towns of various sizes, each with their own strengths and challenges. This initiative was developed to enhance the well-being of our communities by focusing on essential aspects such as public safety, infrastructure improvements, economic investment, education, workforce development, supporting local businesses and the

many cultural and recreational activities available in the beautiful state we call sweet home Alabama. The campaign aims to provide strategic marketing resources to municipalities to help them improve how they showcase their uniqueness and discuss challenges and opportunities with the public.

I want to encourage all citizens to get engaged with your community and to support Live Locally Alabama. It is as simple as shopping locally at mom-and-pop stores, eating locally at your favorite restaurants, learning locally by taking your kids to a museum nearby and playing locally at a park. Attend a council meeting, engage with community initiatives and improvement projects and follow your community's social media pages to stay up-to-date with their latest activities and plans.

This is a collaborative effort and your insight and participation in local government is invaluable as municipal leaders strive to tailor improvements to best meet the needs of their communities. Together we can continue to make Alabama an incredible state to live in and create a robust future for generations to thrive.

Learn more at almonline.org/LiveLocallyAlabama.

WORK LOCALLY

SHOP LOCALLY

PLAY LOCALLY

SERVE LOCALLY

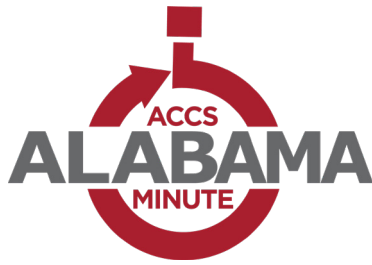


Encourage civic
engagement, locally!



Visit almonline.org/LiveLocallyAlabama or
scan the QR code for more information





Alabama Community College System
135 S Union St
Montgomery, AL 36130

SCAN QR CODE



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ACCS COMMUNICATIONS
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The ACCS Innovation Center is turning skills into job offers



Photo: Kylie Copeland (left) and Abby Hardin (right), high school seniors at Huntsville City Schools

At the ACCS Innovation Center, education is more than instruction—it's a launchpad to lifelong opportunity. Through hands-on, industry-informed courses like Skills for Success, students are gaining more than knowledge; they're building futures.

Just ask Abbie Hardin, a senior at Huntsville High School, who took the Skills for Success bill dozier and asphalt roller course while exploring her career options. Not only

did she discover her passion—she secured a job offer before even graduating.

Then there's Jack Cox, a senior at Grissom High School, who didn't just learn heavy equipment operation—he grew into a leader. "Since taking the course, I've noticed that my communication skills have already improved. I used to dislike the idea of

being a leader, but after communicating with other operators and helping to coordinate safety between them, it really does feel good."

Kylie Copeland, another senior at Grissom, said: "It has given me the building blocks of what to expect for a real-world job. We are treated just as if we are working for a company, and it gives us expectations to meet and goals to reach further for—to work our way up in the industry by giving us a head start."

Carolyn Wade, a Career Coach with Huntsville City Schools, sums it up best: "The two biggest changes I see across the board with all the students is confidence and communication."

This is what workforce-ready education looks like. All three students now have job offers after taking a Skills for Success course through Calhoun Community College. The ACCS Innovation Center isn't just preparing students—it's fueling Alabama's workforce, one opportunity at a time.

