

“The Evolution of E.M.S.”

It has often been said that the one constant in life is change – few things remain the same for very long. Henry County faces most of the same challenges as other rural counties around the state: road resurfacing, the ever changing world of law enforcement, a multi-million dollar jail renovation, hiring and retaining good employees...the list goes on. One area that has gotten quite a bit of study for the past several months has been E.M.S. (Emergency Medical Services.)

I served two terms on the Abbeville city council and one term as mayor from 1976 to 1988. Back then most small towns relied exclusively on volunteers to respond to ambulance calls. Some names will be familiar – others may not. Names like: Ralph and Mary George, Bob Will, Elaine Culp, Eddie Dodd, Vince and Ryan Feggins, Dan Blalock (and, later, his son, Dan, Jr.), Linda Lott, Ruth Morgan, Tommy Murphy, Joey Jones, Corbitt Benton, Jimmy Hudspeth – just to name a few. (I apologize for those names I may have left off.) These were men and women who saw a need and met it. Their only ‘compensation’ was a Christmas potluck supper (maybe a steak in a good year.) I can remember Eddie Dodd and others leaving work or getting out of bed late at night to answer a call. Times have changed. Most cities have now incurred the added expense of a paid EMS staff. They are still underpaid – they continue to be heroes who answer emergency calls. To help the cities, the Henry County Commission voted in January to offer assistance to both Abbeville and Headland. They will continue to answer calls not only within their city limits but wherever help is needed. The County will contract with both to provide \$12,000.00 per month to each city for the remainder of this fiscal year. This should help make it possible to staff a minimum of two rescue vehicles with highly trained personnel at all times in both locations. The Commission hopes to be in position to do even more and will reassess in next year’s budget. Join me in offering our thanks to all those who serve us in time of emergencies.

Thirty Day Review:

- Probate activity for December: five wills probated, four administrations, four guardianships, three final settlements, 16 miscellaneous hearings and 10 marriage certificates recorded
- Jan. 5 – Met with JMR+H regarding jail renovations
- Jan. 9 – Met with the Boys and Girls Club scholarship committee
- Jan. 10 – Henry County Commission meetings (followed by a work session)
- Jan. 11 – Met with other Henry/Houston County officials at the Dothan Chamber office
- Jan. 12 – ‘Swearing-In’ of Sheriff Eric Blankenship, Circuit Judge Chris Richardson and District Attorney Russ Goodman
- Jan. 16 – M. L. King/R. E. Lee Day (federal holiday)
- Jan. 17 – Henry County Youth Leadership ‘Health Care Day’
- Jan. 18 – Met to discuss renovation of streets on each side of the courthouse
- Jan. 20 – ‘Swearing-In’ of Abbeville Postmaster Scot Williams
- Jan. 23/25 – Alabama Probate Judges Winter conference in Florence
- Jan. 26 – Henry Co. Economic Development Authority re-organization meeting (Ravenwood)
- Jan. 27 – Wiregrass Forum Breakfast – Ozark (Dr. Steve Stokes and Dwight Gamble, speakers)
- Jan. 31 – Met with new leadership of the Henry County Sheriff’s office
- Feb. 1 – Exit conference to review audit of the Henry County Commission
- Feb. 2 – Joined Judge Peterson to take A.C.A. students on a tour of the courthouse

Dates to Remember:

- **If your last name begins with 'B', February is your tag renewal month. This can be done in the Herndon Building from 8:00 to 4:00 every day or in the Headland City Hall from 9:00 to 3:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Remember to bring your proof of insurance and driver's license.**
- **Feb. 8 – A.C.C.A. board meeting – Montgomery**
- **Feb. 9 – A.C.C.A. district meeting – Troy (elected officials and department heads)**
- **Feb. 10 – Meet with Judge Peterson and state judicial officials regarding courthouse upgrades**
- **Feb. 15 – February Commission Admin meeting - (Herndon Bldg. – 10:30 – (NOTE CHANGE))**
- **Feb. 16 – Panelist at Alabama Community College Diversity Conference – Clanton**
- **Feb. 20 – President's Day (federal holiday)**
- **Feb. 21 – February Commission meeting – Annex courtroom – 10:30 – (NOTE CHANGE)**