

1st Quarter 2021 (Jan 1 – Mar 31)

Issues and Programs for WJTC

Issues addressed:

Public Health
Public Safety
Consumer Awareness
Education
Crime

Regularly Scheduled Programs:

NBC 15 News – Daily local news programs

WPMI's daily newscasts give considerable time to issues that concern the communities of the South Alabama and Western Florida areas.

7pm –7:30

WJTC News at 7:00

M-F

Public Health

For Jan 1 – March 31 – WJTC featured daily reports about where and when you can acquire Corona virus vaccines.

1/25/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:56
Double Masking

SOME HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE WHEN IT COMES TO MASKS. White House COVID-19 adviser DOCTOR ANTHONY Fauci *NOW SAYING: LAYERING UP *LIKELY PROVIDES BETTER PROTECTION. ALABAMA STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS TELL NBC15'S JUSTIN MOORE there are some drawbacks to wearing multiple masks.

AS MORE CONTAGIOUS STRAINS OF THE CORONAVIRUS START TO SURFACE ACROSS THE COUNTRY --- SOME HEALTH LEADERS BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO START DOUBLING UP ON MASKS.

Dr. Karen Landers//Alabama deputy health officer
"people need to wear masks."

DEPUTY STATE HEALTH OFFICER DOCTOR KAREN LANDERS SAYSTHE N-95 IS GOLD STANDARD, IF FITTED APPROPRIATELY.
IF YOU CAN'T FIND ONE, STUDIES FOUND DOUBLING LAYERS OF FABRIC AND SURGICAL MASKS ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO FILTER THE VIRUS.
IN FACT DOCTOR LANDERS TESTED IT OUT.

Dr. Karen Landers
"And quite frankly it was difficult to keep it positioned on my face. it was shifting and bulging, and I think it's little more problematic than it sounds like."

DOCTORS AT VIRGINIA TECH FOUND THAT LAYERING TWO CLOTH MASKS WILL INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS FROM 50 PERCENT TO 75 PERCENT.
WEARING THREE LAYERS CAN BLOCK UP TO 90 PERCENT OF PARTICLES FROM THE VIRUS.
DOCTOR LANDERS SAYS THERE IS SOME DRAW BACKS TO DOUBLING MASKS.

Dr. Karen Landers
"i think when you start wearing double masks as of oppose to increasing the layers then i think that really is a bit more problematic in terms of keeping the mask positioned correctly."

INSTEAD SHE SUGGESTED WEARING HIGH THREAD COUNT COTTON MASKS WITH MATERIALLIKE A COFFEE FILTER INSIDE.

Dr. Karen Landers
"they use material such as coffee filters in between the layers. there is nothing wrong with that. and that just continues reduce the overall amount of virus a person breathes in even with the mask."
JUSTIN MOORE NBC 15 NEWS

1/26/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:01
Alert Baldwin

LAST NIGHT'S TORNADOES ARE A GOOD REMINDER TO ALL OF US HERE IN SOUTH ALABAMA-- TO BE ON ALERT WHEN SEVERE WEATHER IS IN THE AREA. THERE'S A WARNING SYSTEM IN PLACE THAT REQUIRES *YOU* TO TO BE PROACTIVE IN RECEIVING LIFE SAVING ALERTS.

IN BALDWIN COUNTY, OFFICIALS HAVE SPENT 60 THOUSAND DOLLARS IN GRANT MONEY TO GET THE SYSTEM UP AND RUNNING. WE'RE LEARNING TONIGHT: MORE PEOPLE NEED TO SIGN UP. NBC 15'S JAMES GORDON HAS A CLOSER LOOK AT "ALERT BALDWIN" -- AND WHY THIS LIFE SAVING APP ISN'T GETTING MUCH USE.

FIRST OF ALL THE SYSTEM IS LESS THAN A YEAR OLD AND SO FAR ONLY 9 THOUSAND PEOPLE HAVE SELF REGISTERED.. --- THAT, OFFICIALS SAY, NEEDS TO CHANGE. IT'S IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND -- YOUR SMART PHONE--AND IT'S YOUR LIFE LINE DURING SEVERE WEATHER...

Jenni guerry/ Baldwin county ema

"there are ways to use this system to geo fence on a map you could notify everyone that has a device within that geographic area,"

SO FAR THE SYSTEM IN BALDWIN COUNTY WHICH OPERATES WITH AN APP KNOWN AS "EVERBRIGE" IS TIED TO 58 THOUSAND LAND LINES BUT ONLY 9 THOUSAND CELL PHONE USERS HAVE SELF REGISTERED SO FAR.

" we know that we are growing, and we want to have all the information available,"

EVERYTHING FROM RIP CURRENT WARNINGS TO STORM WARNINGS AND EVEN JAIL BREAKS LIKE THE ONE BACK IN NOVEMBER COULD BE PART OF THE ALERT. ANYONE WHO SELF REGISTERS GETS THE ALERTS.

ONCE YOU DOWNLOAD THE APP YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION CITY OR TOWN AND WHAT TYPE OF ALERT YOU WANT TO GET.

THE GOOD NEWS IS, EVEN IF YOU DON'T SIGN UP...AS LONG AS YOU HAVE DOWN LOADED THE APP, YOU WILL STILL RECEIVE AN ALERT IF YOU ARE CLOSE TO THE INCIDENT FOR EXAMPLE A HAZ MAT SPILL ON THE INTERSTATE.

"once a defined geographical area has been confirmed in system it will contact every device that comes into that radius of that geographic geo fence,"

YOU CAN ALSO TEXT " ALERT BALDWIN " (ONE WORD) TO 888-777 -- THE NUMBER ON YOUR SCREEN-- THIS WILL PROMPT YOU TO DOWNLOAD THE EVERBRIGE APP.

IN BALDWIN COUNTY JAMES GORDON NBC 15 NEWS.

2/24/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:38

Herd Immunity by May

TONIGHT -- ENCOURAGING NEWS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC --- ALABAMA COULD REACH HERD IMMUNITY FROM COVID-19 AS EARLY AS MAY.... THAT'S ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.... TODAY -- U-A-B SAID TO REACH HERD IMMUNITY 72-percent OF ALABAMA'S POPULATION-- 3.5 MILLION PEOPLE-- WILL NEED TO EITHER BE VACCINATED OR HAVE CONTRACTED THE VIRUS.

RESEARCHERS THINK THAT WILL HAPPEN BY MAY OR JUNE. NBC 15'S ANDREA RAMEY HAS THE STORY.

A U-A-B EPIDEMIOLOGIST SAYS THAT'S BASED ON VERY CONSERVATE VACCINE NUMBERS... AND NEW STUDIES THAT SHOW MORE OF US HAVE HAD THE VIRUS THAN TESTED POSITIVE.

This is a COVID-19 graphic showing an upward trend that actually means good news.... This UAB model projects enough people will have been vaccinated and there will have been enough asymptomatic covid-19 cases by May to achieve herd immunity from COVID-19.

Dr. Suzanne Judd/UAB Epidemiologist

If we scale up and those vaccines come online faster that just means we could reach herd immunity sooner.

UAB epidemiologist Dr. Suzanne Judd says the projection assumes that for every positive case, there are three other people who've had the virus and didn't get tested. Judd says some studies show that ratio could be as high as 10 to 1.

We've done similar tests at UAB and we see more like 5 to 1 on the tests we've done when we've looked at people's blood to see if they've developed antibodies. Roughly five individuals have antibodies that never had a positive test.

Dr. Karen Landers

I think if we look at everything in context, this is modeling and really all of the information has to fall in to place for us where we need to be

Assistant State Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers cautions that while the news is encouraging... it's still imperative we wear masks, social distance and get the vaccine in order to get the virus under control

When we do achieve herd immunity is that when we can expect the state to lift the health orders? Is that when we can expect that to happen? Well, of course we provide information to the governor's office and the governor makes decisions with her guidance related to health orders. I would certainly say we need to continue to stay the course with where we are at the moment until we see these numbers being very low and we have vaccine rates very high.

U-A-B SAYS THIS BIGGEST UNKNOWN VARIABLE IS HOW THIS VIRUS WILL MUTATE IN THE FUTURE AND HOW VACCINES AND OUR IMMUNITY RESPONDS.
IN MOBILE, ANDREA RAMEY NBC 15 NEWS.

3/19/20 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:46
Allergies and COVID

A HEALTH ALERT TONIGHT. ALLERGY SEASON IS UPON US-- YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.. A LOT OF SNIFFLES-- ITCHY eyes and NOSES. BUT IS IT JUST YOUR ALLEGIES OR IS IT COVID? NBC 15'S RACHAEL WILKERSON LETS US KNOW THE SYMPTOMS HEALTH OFFICALS YOU SHOULD PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO.

they do Greg, allergy season means pollen everywhere
just look at our news car, it's covered in it..

"Especially in mobile the tricky thing is going to be what is covid and what is allergies at it really is hard to tell"

SARAH KAHALLEY WITH USA HEALTH SAYS LATELY, MORE AND MORE PATIENTS HAVE HAD MILD CASES OF COVID 19
CASES RESEMBLING SINUS ISSUES

sarah kahalley

so it's a lot less obvious and the patients are more surprised a lot of them came by chance which is where again the allergies can mask that and will just be walking around with what we think is just a pollen reaction but in reality we could be spreading covid again

DR. THOMASINA SHARP SAYS ALLERGY SEASON ALSO MAKES MORE PEOPLE TOUCH THEIR NOSE AND EYES

"Because they are itchy ya know so what ends up happening we can give ourselves covid

DURING FLU SEASON, CASES WERE SIGNIFICANTLY DOWN COMPARED TO LAST YEAR DR. SHARP SAYS MASKS PLAYED A ROLE IN THAT AND COULD HELP FOR ALLERGIES TOO

"the mask is also protective against the pollen especially if you have a filtered one"

KAHALLEY SAYS THERE ARE PLENTY OF RESOURCES FOR COVID 19 TESTING AND IT'S BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY

"always to be conservative at this point because we don't want to get into a situation where we are re surging because we were brushing everything off with allergies"

SHE SAYS SNEEZING CAN SPREAD COVID 19 SO CONTINUE TO WASH YOUR HANDS AND SOCIAL DISTANCE. REPORTING LIVE IN MOBILE RACHAEL WILKERSON NBC 15 NEWS

Public Safety

2/24/20 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:23
Aniah Blanchard Law

ALABAMA IS a STEP CLOSER TO SIGNING the Aniah Blanchard BILL INTO LAW. THIS BOND REFORM BILL PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE STATE HOUSE. IS NAMED AFTER the COLLEGE STUDENT WHO WAS ABDUCTED FROM AN AUBURN GAS STATION AND KILLED TWO YEARS AGO. THE MAN ACCUSED OF MURDERING HER WAS OUT ON BOND WHILE ALREADY FACING OTHER SERIOUS CHARGES. AS NBC15's JUSTIN MOOR REPORTS: THIS BILL-- IF PASSED BY THE SENATE-- COULD give CRIME VICTIM'S FAMILIES SOME PEACE OF MIND.

Trina Nicholson/ Langston's mother

"when the detectives walked in from the sheriff's department and said he was doa, i just really just, everything just kind of it was like i was in a matrix."

TRINA NICHOLSON SAYS she wakes up EACH DAY TO that NIGHTMARE. knowing HER son 19-YEAR OLD langston Nicholson WHO HAD A PROMISING FUTURE was gunned down in Semmes a year ago..

Trina Nicholson//langston's mother

"I am in a sorority I've never wanted to be in. i never signed up for it and i really don't want anyone else to join."

the Alabama state student WAS HOME for the weekend TO CELEBRATE MARDI GRAS when TWO SUSPECTS TRIED TO ROB HIM AND HIS FRIEND. ONE OF THE SUSPECTS FIRED A GUN STRIKING NICHOLSON IN HIS HEART. LEAVING HIM DEAD. Deputies say BOTH SUSPECTS WERE OUT ON BOND already FOR TWO ARMED HOME INVASION ROBBERIES NEAR USA's campus.

Trina Nicholson

"violent crimes if you will to also make a person eligible to deny a bond."

IN ALABAMA JUDGES ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO DENY BOND TO SUSPECTS WITH CAPITOL OFFENSES. LAWMAKERS ARE IN THE PROCESS OF OVERHAULING IT WITH THE ANIAH BLANCHARD BILL. THE BILL NAMED AFTER Another 19-YEAR OLD college student in alabama WHO WAS KIDNAPPED AND KILLED BY A MAN WHO WAS OUT ON BOND FOR OTHER SERIOUS CHARGES. IF PASSED it WOULD give judges the green light to revoke BONDS FOR VIOLENT crimes like RAPE, KIDNAPPING AND MURDER.

Sheriff Sam Cochran//Mobile County

"something very needed in the state of Alabama."

COCHRAN HAS BEEN A HUGE SUPPORTER OF THIS BILL. ALTHOUGH HE SAYS IT COULD STUFF AN OVERCROWDED JAIL SYSTEM EVEN MORE. IT'S A RISK HE'S WILLING TO TAKE.

Sheriff Sam Cochran

"i would rather see someone else to be let out on bond than these serious offenders arrested for violent offenses."

Trina Nicholson

"it will give families like mine a lot more protection."

JM NBC 15 NEWS

2/25/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:38

Spring Break

ON THE EVE OF SPRING BREAK-- COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE DOING AWAY WITH A DEDICATED WEEK FOR SPRING BREAK - -BASICALLY CANCELING THE TIME-OFF FOR STUDENTS. IT'S ALL DUE TO COVID-19 AND THE PANDEMIC. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR GULF SHORES AND ORANGE BEACH? NBC 15'S JAMES GORDON explains.

Grant Brown City of Gulf Shores

For 2021 the resolution dates are March the 8th through April the 9th. That's deemed the Spring Break season where alcohol is not allowed on the beach,"

Banning alcohol on the beach during Spring Break is a concept that's worked well for the city.

The ban has been enacted every Spring Break since 2015.

Sot Nats-

"As soon as the beaches opened last year it was a mad rush down here we lost a little bit on the front end but that demand stayed high throughout until Sally hit,"

– Before during and after the pandemic the families and the college students still came to the area.

Today bookings for vacation rentals are up 15% over previous years.

James Tankersley Meyer Vacation Rentals

A lot of people are working virtually now and a lot of schools are doing virtually now so whether it's college kids or families you know demand is showing pretty high. We are actually tracking above than we have in the last couple of years so I think a lot of people are taking advantage the virtual setting and doing class on the beach,"

Businesses on the beach are stocked up and ready to go after a downturn for nearly a year.

Everyone is gearing up to get busy again. Shane Trenton has worked the past four spring breaks and The past four summers.

Shane Trenton server

"it's a grind 50 -60 hour weeks you know you work when you can as long as you can and as much as you can,"

James Gordon nbc 15 news

3/26/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:48

Timbercreek Cut

A SAFETY ALERT TONIGHT-- SPEEDING IN A daphne NEIGHBORHOOD! RESIDENTS SAY BECAUSE OF CONSTRUCTION ON HIGHWAY 31-- TIMBERCREEK BOULEVARD HAS BECOME A POPULAR SHORTCUT TO HIGHWAY 181. EVEN WITHOUT THAT SHIFT IN TRAFFIC-- NEIGHBORS HAVE FOUND THEIR OWN STREET IS A SAFETY HAZARD. N-B-C 15'S ASHLEY KNIGHT SPOKE TO TIMBER CREEK RESIDENTS ABOUT THE DANGER OUTSIDE THEIR FRONT DOOR.

"Folks here in Timber Creek say speeding is a major problem here, some tell me they've seen these mailboxes taken out more than once."

Laura Davis

We've seen them taken out maybe five or six times in the 20 years we've been here."

Wayne Davis

Cars come up these curves, maybe they're fooling with their phone and they don't catch it good enough, they go right into the grass on the people's yards."

Ash: Monday's accident involving two women accused of hitting a jogger in the Daphne neighborhood and driving off has a lot of people on edge, especially in an area where so many like to get outside.

"It's scary for us because we love to walk!"

Steve Kauffman has lived here 25 years, says construction on 31 has only made it worse.

Steve Kauffman

"People will shortcut between 31 and 181 and that's added to the traffic there and usually those people are in a hurry to get somewhere so they don't obey the speed limit."

A neighbor also told me she saw two pickups blow through at 55 miles an hour today and has complained repeatedly about drag racing going on Friday and Saturday nights.

ASHLEY KNIGHT

"Residents tell me they have gone to the city about speed bumps, but the city tells them it'll cause too many problems for fire and police response within the neighborhood. In Timber Creek, Ashley Knight NBC 15 News."

Consumer Awareness

2/8/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:01

Terminix Lawsuit

TONIGHT -- NBC 15 NEWS IS GETTING RESULTS.... AND GETTING MONEY BACK TO ALABAMA CONSUMERS WHO FACED MASSIVE RATE HIKEs. WE TOLD YOU LATE LAST YEAR HOW OFFICIALS CREDITED NBC 15'S ANDREA RAMEY'S REPORTING WITH PROMPTING THE STATE'S LARGEST EVER CONSUMER SETTLEMENT OF \$60 MILLION DOLLARS WITH TERMINIX. AS SHE EXPLAINS: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS IN TOWN TODAY OUTLINING THE DETAILS OF SETTLEMENT.

PAYMENTS TO MANY CURRENT CUSTOMERS WILL BE AUTOMATIC.... BUT FORMER CUSTOMERS WILL HAVE TO FILE A CLAIM... AND TONIGHT SOME ATTORNEYS SAY THAT MAY NOT BE THE BEST OPTION.

NBC 15 News exposed the rate hikes Terminix customers were grappling with in 2019.

\$43,000 dollars... Many said they simply couldn't afford it...

Ngai Mingo/Terminix customer

On one house it was \$300 \$400 a year and they increased it to \$1350

Steve Marshall/Alabama Attorney General

Terminix's actions violated several provisions of the Alabama Deceptive Trade Practices Act...

As a result -- the company will be issuing automatic refunds to current customers who overpaid... Former customers can file a claim and receive a one-time \$650 payment or be compensated for paying more to switch pest control companies. Entering into the settlement, the AG's office says, won't prohibit you from seeking damages in the future if you discover termite damage.

There will be no bar to a private cause of action should you wish to sue.

Attorneys who've been fighting pest control companies for not fixing damage or treating homes say you may get more pursuing a claim yourself.

Bill Eiland/Attorney

You absolutely could get a lot more money if you pursue this with a lawyer than you can with this settlement

Whatever you decide -- be sure you fully understand the terms before ever signing anything....Absolutely as a consumer you need to get advice before you enter into anything.

ABOUT 30-THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THE STATE MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAYOUTS.. TERMINIX SAYS IT'S NOT ADMITTING ANY WRONGDOING IN THIS SETTLEMENT... TO SEE THE COMPANY'S FULL STATMENT AND FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN FILE A CLAIM -- HEAD TO OUR WEBSITE MY NBC 15 DOT.COM

Education

1/7/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:13

Fairhope HS Security

A SAFETY ALERT TONIGHT. TEACHERS AND STAFF AT FAIRHOPE HIGH SCHOOL ARE NOW TRAINED TO MAKE THE SCHOOL A LOT SAFER. A NEW ALERT SYSTEM WAS INSTALLED AT THE SCHOOL AND COULD BE A TREND SETTER FOR OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE FUTURE.

NBC 15'S JAMES GORDON HAS MORE ON THIS NEW STATE OF THE ART SYSTEM..

THE COST TO OPERATE THE ALERT SYSTEM ? --- 12 THOUSAND DOLLARS A YEAR... AND THE HIGH SCHOOL HAS A FIVE YEAR CONTRACT.

FROM THE FRONT OFFICE TO THE CLASSROOMS TEACHERS AND STAFF AT FAIRHOPE HIGH SCHOOL ARE NOW EMPOWERED LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

nats...

EACH EMPLOYEE NOW CARRIES THE NEWEST CRISIS ALERT SYSTEM --- A PUSH BUTTON CARD -- KNOWN AS CENTEGIX

Jon cardwell - FHS principal

"it makes you feel safer that you have a way to protect instead of running to the office and finding the principal,"

PRINCIPAL JON CARDWELL SAYS THE SYSTEM WAS PURCHASED WITH MONEY FROM THE NEW 3MIL PROPERTY TAX FOR FAIRHOPE SCHOOLS.

NOW -- IN ADDITION TO CAMERAS WATCHING - THE NEW CENTEGIX SYSTEM EMPOWERS TEACHERS AND STAFF WITH A PUSH OF A BUTTON.

... A PUSH THAT SENDS AN ALERT TO THE CELL PHONES OF THOSE WHO NEED TO KNOW.

....AND IN THE EVENT OF AN EXTREME SITUATION LIKE AN ACTIVE SHOOTER -- THE ALERT SYSTEM GOES EVEN FURTHER.

FOR EXAMPLE

Cardwell

" my custodian who is cutting grass sees something he doesn't like he can take the school into lockdown by a simple press of a button signals our teachers to bolt in their classrooms and run, hide , fight,"

SIMULTANOUSLY THE DEVICE IMMEDIATELY WILL SEND A SIGNAL TO SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS ON CAMPUS AND POLICE OFF CAMPUS.

paul stroud - FHS teacher

"What this allows us to do is hit the button three times and take control of the situation because help is coming,"

PAUL STROUD --- A TEACHER FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS SAYS IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY ----- THIS DEVICE IS A TIME AS WELL AS A LIFE SAVER.

stroud

" you find a kid in the bathroom and he's unconscious what do you do with that? Do I leave the kid? Do I get the cell phone out and hope i have coverage?

So now I can hit this three times stay with this kid and i know the nurse is coming,"

FAIRHOPE HIGH SCHOOL IS THE PILOT SCHOOL FOR THIS NEW SYSTEM. OTHER SCHOOLS MAY GET IT AS WELL.

1/26/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:41

AC School Buses

WITHIN A MATTER OF MONTHS TEMPERATUREs WILL again be soaring-- and a lot of MOBILE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL BE FEELING THE HEAT. NBC15'S JUSTIN MOORE IS

HERE TO EXPLAIN WHAT the MOBILE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS DOING ABOUT BUSES WITH NO AIR.

A BUS RIDE HOME CAN BE BRUTAL FOR HUNDREDS OF MOBILE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WHEN IT'S HOT OUTSIDE.

THAT'S BECAUSE NEARLY 80 PERCENT OF the 750 BUSES at M-C-P-S-S DON'T HAVE A-C.

Rena Philips//Director of Communication, MCPSS

"Anything you can do to add comfort for the students is great."

RENA PHILIPS WITH M-C-P-S-S SAYS THE DISTRICT JUST PURCHASED 29 NEW PROPANE SCHOOL BUSES EQUIPTED WITH AIR.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WAS ABLE TO BARE THE COST USING A GRANT AND ANNUAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDS FROM THE STATE.

Rena Philips

"we're obviously always bound to what money we have to spend."

A SCHOOL BUS TYPICALLY COST BETWEEN 80 TO 95 THOUSAND DOLLARS.

REPLACING THE REMAINDER OF MOBILE COUNTY'S FLEET WOULD COST ANYWHERE FROM 48 to 57 MILLION DOLLARS.

Philips

"have you all requested for more because you do have a lot of buses without air? the state sets the amount."

IN 2019 WE REPORTED ON PARENTS CONCERNS ABOUT MOBILE COUNTY NOT HAVING ENOUGH BUSES WITH AIR.

ONE PARENT EVEN CLAIMED THE BUS RIDE HOME DEHYDRATED HER CHILD.

MOBILE already had 120 SPECIAL EDUCATION BUSES WITH AIR CONDITIONING. BRING THE FLEET UP TO 149 BUSES WITH A-C with a little more than 600 buses left to replace.

Rena Philips

"Are you all working on getting more buses? every year we get an allocation and we do fleet renewal with that allocation."

JM NBC 15 NEWS

3/19/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:24

New Distancing Guidelines

THE C-D-C'S LATEST GUIDELINES COULD HELP GET KIDS BACK TO SCHOOL SOONER.

THE HEALTH AGENCY SAYS 3 FEET OF DISTANCING --IS ALRIGHT FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS. NATIONAL CORRESPONDIENT ANGELA BROWN LETS US KNOW WHY SOME EXPERTS BELIEVE IT WILL BE SAFE FOR YOUR KIDS.

THIS WOULD BE A MAJOR SHIFT IN THE CLASSROOM STUDENTS GOING FROM 6 TO 3 FEET. ONE STUDY SUGGESTS MAY BE JUST AS SAFE. CDC CONSIDERS NEW GUIDELINES/3 FEET CLASSROOM SOCIAL DISTANCING.

(ANGELA TRACK)

FIRST DAY BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER MONTHS OF VIRTUAL LEARNING NOT SURE WHO'S MORE EXCITED.. THE KIDS WITH THEIR HOMEMADE SIGNS OR THEIR MOM

MARGERY SMELKINSON/KIDS FINALLY BACK IN SCHOOL

I was incredibly happy it was a great first step

MARGERY IS BOTH A MOTHER OF 4 AND AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE DOCTOR.
SHE HAS NO PROBLEM WITH HER CHILDREN SITTING 3 FEET AWAY FROM OTHER STUDENTS
MARGERY SMELKINSON/KIDS FINALLY BACK IN SCHOOL

The 6 foot distancing rule is quite outdated because it doesn't really take into account how effectively masks work

THE CDC MAY MOVE TO RECOMMEND 3 FEET DISTANCING IN SCHOOL AFTER REVIEWING STUDIES INCLUDING ONE CONDUCTED BY CLINICAL INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCHERS COMPARED THE INFECTION RATE IN CLASSROOMS WHERE STUDENTS WERE THREE OR SIX FEET APART -- WEARING MASKING AND FOUND SIMILAR RATES OF INFECTION.

CDC DIRECTOR ROCHELL WALENSKY EXAMINED THAT STUDY...

Dr. Rochelle Walensky

There was a study out of CID from Massachusetts in a place where there was about a hundred percent masks wearing that, um, three feet and six feet yielded at the same amount of infections. And so that was the first study we had seen that, that looked at three feet versus six feet indeed,
(ANGELA TRACK)

BUT TEACHERS UNIONS ARE ALREADY PUSHING BACK THE MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION SAID THE GOVERNOR AND THE EDUCATION COMMISSIONER FAIL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT MANY CLASSROOMS CANNOT ACCOMMODATE ALL STUDENTS EVEN AT THREE FEET, LET ALONE SIX.

BUT IF THREE FEET IS ADOPTED BY SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT COULD OPEN THE DOOR FOR EXPANDING IN-PERSON LEARNING WITH MORE STUDENT IN THE CLASSROOM POSSIBLY PAVING THE WAY FOR MARGERY KIDS TO GO TO SCHOOL MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY..
MARGERY SMELKINSON/KIDS FINALLY BACK IN SCHOOL

They have really held onto the 6 feet distancing rule keeping kids locked out of the classrooms and is keeping kids hybrid format of learning not going five days a week.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDS JUST ONE METER, OR ROUGHLY 3.3 FEET. AND OTHER STATES HAVE ALREADY SWITCHED TO THREE FEET SOCIAL DISTANCING, WITH MASKS
IN WASHINGTON, ANGELA BROWN

Crime

1/12/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:56

Overstreet Caught

NEW INFORMATION TONIGHT.. A MAN CONSIDERED MOBILE'S MOST WANTED FUGITIVE-- ACCUSED OF A VIOLENT CHRISTMAS DAY RAPE-- IS NOW IN JAIL. 50-YEAR-OLD TODD OVERSTREET HAD BEEN ON THE RUN FOR WEEKS - UNTIL HE WAS CAPTURED THIS MORNING.. AS NBC 15'S ANDREA RAMEY EXPLAINS: HIS WAS AN INTENSE MANHUNT THAT IMPACTED MULTIPLE NEIGHBORHOODS IN WEST MOBILE..

Please flu drones, used thermal cameras, K9s, went door to door in some neighborhoods looking for Overstreet.

Last night police urged people in Hoffman Estates off Cottage Hill to stay locked inside their homes. Today police were back out in full force in a neighborhood near Mobile Christian school. That school was in lockdown for nearly 2 hours police swept the building to ensure he was not inside. Please say at one point Overstreet used a disguise a blonde wig and blanket to allude police. Ultimately, police Spotted him walking on Cody Road shortly before 11 today and arrested him. As officers lead him in handcuffs to the

patrol car to take him to Metro Jail shortly before 5, I asked Overstreet about the accusation he sexually assaulted a woman.

Perpwalk

"I think it would've happened by now if I were going to do something like that." "Don't do drugs"

Battiste

what was it that made him Mobile's most wanted? The fact that he went into someone's home and cause them harm and caused injury to them. Obviously, stuff can be replaced. People's lives cannot. The fact he showed he did not have a problem confronting individuals or people made him a more aggressive criminal for us. So we wanted to make sure we took him into custody.

Overstreet face is 13 charges related to this crime spree police say. And could face more charges out of Mississippi. Reporting live in Mobile tonight Andrea Ramey NBC 15 news.

AR NBC 15 NEWS

1/29/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 2:15

Cyber Crimes

THIS PAST WEEK THREE MEN HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN BALDWIN COUNTY IN THREE SEPARATE CHILD PORN CASES...

SOME OF THE INVESTIGATIONS WERE SPEARHEADED BY THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERALS OFFICE.. OTHERS BY LOCAL INVESTIGATORS DIGGING INTO THE DARK WORLD OF PORN BY USING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY.

NBC 15'S JAMES GORDON JOINS TALKED WITH ONE THOSE INVESTIGATORS TODAY.

MOST LARGE POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND SHERIFF'S OFFICES HAVE TRAINED OFFICERS ON THE TASK FORCE WHICH IS SPONSORED BY THE FBI.

THEY AND MANY OTHERS ARE ALWAYS WATCHING.

THESE ARE THE FACES OF THE MOST RECENT CASES IN BALDWIN COUNTY INVOLVING THE POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY... AT LEAST THREE HIGH PROFILE CASES IN THE SPAN OF ONE WEEK.

THE MOST RECENT -- WAYNE FILLINGIM -- THE BAND DIRECTOR AT FAIRHOPE HIGH SCHOOL. IT'S THIS CASE AND OTHERS LIKE IT THAT CATCH INVESTIGATOR'S ATTENTION.

sgt. rob lindell/ baldwin county sheriff's office

"we have been contacted from agencies as far away as california in reference to children who are subject to abuse or had contact through the internet that they are wanting to identify who the person is. the child in these images,"

SGT ROB LINDELL IS ONE OF FOUR INVESTIGATORS TRAINED AND ASSIGNED TO THE FBI SPONSORED INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN TASK FORCE.

...AND IN NEARLY EVERY CASE ITS THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS LIKE GOOGLE, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER THAT FLAG SUSPICIOUS UNDERAGE DOWNLOADSAND SOMETIMES ALL IT TAKES IS ONE IMAGE.

THE END GOAL ISNT ALWAYS CATCHING THE PERSON WHO DOWNLOADS THE IMAGES -- ITS TO TRACK DOWN THOSE WHO PRODUCE THE IMAGES AND IN SOME CASES FIND AND SAVE A MISSING OR EXPLOITED CHILD.

lindell

"in any of these potential tips you could have the possibility of a live victim in an environment where they are subject to abuse. One of the big keys when we work on a case is identifying is there a local victim that could be subjected to this? we don't want to wait around on something like that,"

IN BALDWIN COUNTY INVESTIGATORS HAVE A CRIME LAB WITH ALL THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY.

THEY WOULDN'T LET US SEE IT -- THEY TOLD US IT NOTHING LIKE WHAT YOU SEE ON T.V.'S CSI -- BUT IT DOES THE JOB.

2/26/21 NBC 15 News at 7PM (WJTC) trt: 1:57
Repeat Offenders

WE ARE LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE MAN DEPUTIES ARRESTED FOR STEALING Catalytic Converters FROM MOBILE COUNTY SCHOOL BUSES. RECORDS SHOW ROY BARNHILL HAS BEEN LOCKED UP AT MOBILE METRO 66 times. A SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATOR TELLS NBC15'S JUSTIN MOORE THERE -- NEEDS TO BE NEW LEGISLATION FOR CAREER CRIMINALS. THERE IS ALREADY SOME LEGISLATION IN THE WORKS BUT SOME IN LAW ENFORCEMENT SAY IT'S NOT ENOUGH.

Captain Paul Burch/Mobile County Sheriff's Office

"we have to spend resources to go find the same people repeatedly. it's frustrating for the citizens who are constantly victimized."

A Frustration Shared BY MANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS LIKE CAPTAIN PAUL BURCH WITH MOBILE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

Captain Paul Burch

"if you are a repeat offender then are you really entitled to a bond? because you're a danger to the public."

BURCH SAYS MANY OF THE PEOPLE HE KEEPS ARRESTING ARE CARRER CRIMINALS. EARLIER THIS WEEK ROY BARNHILL WAS ARRESTED FOR STEALING METAL PARTS FROM SCHOOL BUSES IN MOBILE COUNTY. JAIL DOCUMENTS SHOW HE HAS BEEN ARRESTED 66 TIMES. DATING ALL THE WAY BACK TO 1995.

Captain Paul Burch

"all we can do is put them in jail. Not up to us to keep them in jail."

Ashley Rich/Mobile County District Attorney

"it's up to the judge ultimately to decide rather or not he gets out on bond."

MOBILE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ASHLEY RICH SAYS IT'S HER JOB TO MAKE SURE THE JUDGES ARE AWARE OF THE LENGTHY CRIMINAL HISTORY OF REPEAT OFFENDERS.

Ashley Rich

"we see that the community the number of breaking and entering in certain areas across town goes down tremendously when we are able to hold certain offenders."

THE STATE SENATE IS ALREADY LOOKING AT THE ANIAH BLANCHARD BILL WHICH WOULD GIVE JUDGES THE POWER TO REVOKE BOND FOR REPEAT FELONY OFFENDERS WHO COMMIT CRIMES LIKE RAPE, KIDNAPPING AND MURDER. BURCH SAYS IT MIGHT BE TIME FOR STATE LAWMAKERS TO LOOK AT TIGHTENING THE hinges ON THE REVOLVING DOOR FOR PETTY CRIME REPEAT OFFENDERS AS WELL.

JUST TO BE TOTALLY TRANSPARENT... WE HAVE TO POINT OUT THESE ARE JUST ARRESTS...
NOT ALL RESULTED IN CONVICTIONS--
IN MOBILE JM NBC 15 NEWS

WJTC reporters and anchors volunteered for the following:

- Special Charity Work/Community Projects
- WJTC gives coverage and free advertising to Operation Reconnect to military veterans which helps them and their families vacation together.

Appearances:

Alan Sealls visited the following to speak about weather and broadcasting:

Jan 22	Central Christian School, Robertsdale, 5 th grade via Zoom	25 kids
Feb 17	Gulf Shores Middle School, 6 th grade via Zoom	80 kids
Mar 3	St. Ignatius School, 3 rd grade, Mobile, via Zoom	30 kids
Mar 26	AMS Ask Me Anything guest Early Career Leadership Board, via Zoom	30 people