Governor Kay Ivey’s Proclamation in honor of State employees

Thank you to the Department of Public Health

State Employee of the Year - Brett Gantt from Department of Finance
Proclamation

By the Governor of Alabama

WHEREAS, the state of Alabama is served by approximately 30,000 loyal and dedicated state employees in many essential areas, including supporting families, improving our schools, boosting public health, keeping our roads safe, protecting and preserving wildlife and our natural beauty, expanding economic development, and a host of other services that make Alabama a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family; and

WHEREAS, in the true spirit of public service, these employees represent Alabama with a commitment to the highest levels of ethics, performance, customer service, and efficiency; and

WHEREAS, state employees exhibit their dedication each and every day, and stand ready to render assistance with kindness and courage to their fellow Alabamians in times of need; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 public health emergency has impacted our state and nation, state employees have met the challenge by continuing to render essential services and support to fellow Alabamians to keep the State of Alabama running efficiently and effectively; and

WHEREAS, the state of Alabama is proud to recognize the men and women who make a difference in our daily lives and express appreciation this week and throughout the year;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kay Ivey, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim May 3-7, 2021, as

State Employee Recognition Week

in the state of Alabama.

Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City of Montgomery on the 29th day of April 2021.

Kay Ivey
Governor
Mr. Gantt is a Staff Accountant for the Alabama Department of Finance in the State Comptroller’s Office. In April 2020, the State of Alabama received $1.9 billion in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). The Legislature appropriated these funds to the Department of Finance. The Department of Finance evaluated their workforce and selected Mr. Gantt to manage the CRF office.

Mr. Gantt’s new workload brought on many responsibilities that affected everyone in the State. He managed the $1.9 billion of expenditures to ensure the funds were paid in accordance with the federal government’s ever-changing eligibility requirements, the legislature’s appropriated amounts, and within the guidance provided by the Finance Department. Mr. Gantt communicated and relayed this guidance to state agencies, cities, counties, hospitals, nursing homes, universities, the legislature, mayors, county commissioners, local government employees, presidents of universities, directors and chief fiscal officers of organizations, and other entities receiving these funds. As the CRF funds were also administered through a grant program, Mr. Gantt was required to purchase, design, test, and implement a new grant system used to provide grants to various entities throughout the State. As a result of this grant program, he had to communicate with small businesses, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and medical providers regarding their eligibility for receiving funds through the grant program.

Mr. Gantt dedicated his days, nights, and weekends to this project and continues to work on closing out the final payments of the CRF as he prepares for the next round of funding that is being provided by the American Rescue Plan. By taking the role of CRF manager, he manages the allocations to an additional 120 agencies, 418 municipalities, 117 hospitals, 40 higher education entities, and 40,000+ small businesses, non-profits, faith-based organizations, and medical providers. Kelly Butler, Finance Director, states, “he is one of the most committed individuals to make sure that the job is done regardless of his title, time, etc. His dedication to the State of Alabama and serving the public is phenomenal.” We cannot thank you enough for all you have done for the State of Alabama and congratulations on being selected as State Employee of the Year!
Ms. Judkins is a Group Travel Manager for the Alabama Tourism Department. Not only does Ms. Judkins excel at her job, but she has been a State employee for 35 years! Prior to her 25 years of service with the Tourism Department, she worked for the Governor’s Press Office and the Alabama Development Office. Currently, as a Group Travel Manager for the Tourism Department, Ms. Judkins is responsible for promoting and encouraging groups to travel to and through Alabama.

Lee Sentell, Director of the Alabama Tourism Department, states, “Rosemary exhibits a deep devotion to the State as an advocate and ambassador. Her leadership has inspired historic sites and local tourism entities across the State to craft immersive experiences, all of which has directly contributed to the success of the agency’s ability to attract visitors.”

While Ms. Judkins is a leader within the agency and state tourism industry, she is particularly known for her work on sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement. She is very active in impacting and advertising tourism efforts in Africatown, AL, which is famous for the Clotilda - the last-known slave ship in the U.S. In Montgomery, Ms. Judkins has mentored several well-known tour guides that regularly draw national and international press for their storytelling capabilities and in-depth tour experience. Their success is a direct reflection of Ms. Judkin’s guidance and investment in those around her. Congratulations Ms. Judkins for being selected as Runner Up for Employee of the Year!

Honorable Mention: Keith Walker
Alabama Public Library Service

Mr. Walker is an Administrative Support Assistant II with the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS). As he is usually the first friendly face you see when you enter the APLS office, he will graciously welcome you and direct you to where you need to go. Mr. Walker has been a proven and valuable asset to APLS for 10 years! During this past year with the challenges of COVID-19, Mr. Walker met those challenges by continuing to be in the office, even when others were able to work from home. His dedication is commendable. Mr. Walker coordinates the State Combined Campaign for APLS and they exceed their goal every year, due to Mr. Walker’s efforts. Mr. Walker represents the best of APLS with his dedication, service, and perseverance. Thank you for all your hard work!
STATE OF ALABAMA
EMPLOYEES NIGHT!

THURSDAY, JULY 1 AT 6:35PM
VS. MISSISSIPPI BRAVES W/ TANK TOP GIVEAWAY TO THE FIRST 1,000 FANS 15 & OLDER
PRES. BY ALFA INSURANCE

ENJOY THE GAME WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS & THE BISCUITS!

ALL TICKETS MUST BE ORDERED BY MONDAY, JUNE 28TH
to receive discount.
[$7 LAWN SEAT // $9 RESERVED SEAT]

MAIL TO: MONTGOMERY BISCUITS | ATTN: STATE EMPLOYEE NIGHT | 200 COOSA ST. MONTGOMERY, AL 36104
OR EMAIL TO: CWALKER@BISCUITSBASEBALL.COM | PHONE: 334-323-0387 | FAX: 334-323-2225

CONTACT NAME:________________________________________
ADDRESS:________________________________________________________________________
CITY: __________________________ STATE: __________________________ ZIP: ________________
PHONE NUMBER: ___________________ EMAIL ADDRESS: __________________________________
NUMBER OF TICKETS FOR JULY 1st: _________ X $7 _________ X $9 _________ = TOTAL: _____________
CREDIT CARD #: _______________________
EXP: ___________________ VER # __________________________
CHECK #: ____________________________________________
Mr. Thornton is the General Services Supervisor for the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC). The ABC parking lot had gone without maintenance and signage for quite some time. Vendors and visitors would often resort to circling the parking lot several times for a parking space or having to park on the curb, in the grass, or active loading zones. Mr. Thornton recognized this issue and in an extraordinary manner found a solution to fix the parking lot.

Mr. Thornton identified a multifaceted solution to resolve the parking situation. First, he contacted the landlord to engage them in resurfacing the parking lot. He then contacted the Alabama Department of Transportation to get the specifications for the parking lot. Then, with the knowledge of the state bidding process, he evaluated and identified the most cost-effective, quality-yielding vendor.

In the next phase, Mr. Thornton developed a plan to adjust the parking area from parking spaces that were slanted to straight, so that the parking area could accommodate more employees and visitors. Mr. Thornton worked weekends to ensure the parking lot was in accordance with ABC’s needs and requirements. He even identified a Parking Lot Committee to ensure representative input. As committee chair, he scheduled meetings; provided progress reports; assigned committee responsibilities; and recommended adjustments for parking assignments. Under his leadership, a time-phased approach was evident, communicated, and widely accepted. The impact of Mr. Thornton’s leadership resulted in ample and safe parking considerations being afforded to all agency divisions; employees with special needs; and our agency loading and unloading operations.

You will never hear Mr. Thornton say, “it’s not my job.” He and his team continuously get called on when something goes wrong and they stand ready to assist. Additionally, under Mr. Thornton’s leadership, ABC has been lauded with another perfect property inventory audit for the second year in a row. Mr. Thornton is a positive, impactful leader with a joyful disposition and is always ready to serve. Thank you for all your hard work!

Ms. Ferraz is the Executive Secretary at the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC). While many at ABC’s central office performed telework, Ms. Ferraz maintained a constant presence in the Administrative Division. Ms. Ferraz took on additional responsibilities that would not normally belong to her.

Notably exceptional, Ms. Ferraz acted swiftly to protect the safety and wellness of essential employees working on-site. Without hesitation, she directed that the central office doors be locked to control building accessibility. Further, she coordinated with ABC’s security personnel to initiate body temperature screenings for everyone entering the premises. The impact of her immediate implementation of these workplace controls resulted in eased reservations, minimized potential COVID-19 exposures, and improved monitoring of the social footprint in the building.

Recently, in the effort to transition back to normal operations, Ms. Ferraz initiated collaboration with ABC’s leadership team to develop a deliberate action plan. Being a permanent presence in the office during the stay-at-home orders, Ms. Ferraz played an intricate role in the planning, as she monitored central office operations; facilitated dialogue for areas of concern; and has often been a sole source for information exchange in division operations.

Today as ABC continuously transitions its operations, she remains engaged and provides considerations for not only employees assigned to the central office, but to board members, visitors, and store employees. Ms. Ferraz is a consummate voice for employees that feel they are voiceless. Over this past year, her assumption of unique tasks as outlined, coupled with her discerning spirit, have positively impacted the agency by increasing ABC employee understanding that distance will keep us together. Thank you Ms. Ferraz for all your hard work this past year!
Ms. Powell is a Senior Accountant at the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Due to unexpected retirements and resignations of several EMA Chief Financial Officers over the last couple of years, Ms. Powell has taken on several additional roles and responsibilities. 2020 was a historic year in Alabama disaster history. Last year slammed Alabama with 10% of all of our Presidential Major Disaster Declarations since 1961 and produced the worst individual assistance disaster in Alabama history.

Ms. Powell stepped up when EMA needed her most to provide needed leadership in their finance section. She handles all her added responsibilities with integrity and enthusiasm. She is an eager learner, quick to grasp and interpret new information, and always willing to go above and beyond what is required in her job description. She is professional, pleasant to work with, and is driven to succeed and help her peers and subordinates succeed.

Ms. Powell exudes all the characteristics of an exemplary state employee. Thank you for all your hard work this past year!

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Ms. Hicks is a Biologist Aide for the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Baldwin County. Her primary functions include coordination and implementation of education programs, community outreach and communications, and exhibit development and maintenance.

While the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the ability to host in-person events and field trips, Ms. Hicks saw opportunities to make improvements in the educational programs and exhibits at 5 Rivers and developed virtual programming to better reach students in the classroom.

In the last year, Ms. Hicks made many improvements to 5 Rivers. She developed an interpretive pollinator garden. She researched specific plants to attract birds and butterflies, installed garden plots, and developed unique signage throughout the gardens to educate visitors on the importance of providing a variety of plants in the landscape. She also developed an information kiosk at Bartram Landing to provide visitors with basic rules of use for a kayak launch and pointers on where to go and what to see in the area. Ms. Hicks also made many exhibit improvements and they are on display throughout the Apalachee Exhibit Hall.

A major project she worked on last year was the conversion of the “Just One Tree” exhibit to tell the story of the native Longleaf Pine habitat that once dominated the southeast and is currently a key restoration focus on many of Alabama’s public lands. Lastly, Ms. Hicks developed a video production and virtual field trip material highlighting the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta’s Bottle Creek Native American site. The video was served online and adopted into the elementary curriculum by the Mobile County Public School system.

Beyond her tangible accomplishments, Ms. Hicks’ greatest assets are her personality and work ethic. She is service-oriented and sees herself as a part of a team in everything she does. She is always one of the first to arrive and never leaves work behind for others to do. She is a leader and key part of 5 Rivers’ success. Thank you for all you do!
The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges to everyone in the year 2020, and for employees in the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) the scope and duration of the challenges have been unparalleled as they worked to protect the health of all Alabamians. Employees stepped up to do whatever was needed to help fight the pandemic. Their concerted efforts have helped mitigate the effects of the largest outbreak of a single disease in more than a century.

Events surrounding the novel virus unfolded rapidly as employees first recognized the implications of the emerging global crisis and began preparing for what became an exponential growth in infections. Dedicated professionals joined with other partners to develop and implement strategies to combat the highly communicable and deadly virus.

As the pandemic progressed, ADPH worked in close cooperation with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, the Alabama National Guard, and the Alabama Forestry Commission to form a Unified Command to address the needs of Alabama residents. Through this cooperative effort, including support from the Governor’s Office and other state agencies, resources were used to purchase, house, and distribute personal protective equipment, pharmaceuticals, and face masks across the state to enable the healthcare system to remain operational.

Staff from a variety of work classifications transitioned to duties associated with the pandemic while maintaining the integrity of their programs. They volunteered and were reassigned to assist with COVID-19 pandemic responses, including the COVID-19 information call center and email teams. Many employees worked seven days a week, some for as long as 14 hours a day, from mid-March through December.

A crucial logistical task to help save lives was the assembly and delivery of COVID-19 test kits. Warehouse assembly teams were quickly formed with volunteers who included administrative support assistants, nurses, administrators, and others who brought a diverse set of skills, knowledge, and experience. Nearly a dozen steps were needed to finish their mission to assemble and deliver these test kits. These dedicated public servants took pride that in a single day, the assembly line finished 4,000 kits for transport by the Alabama National Guard. Team members returned on many other occasions as shipments arrived and as thousands of more kits were assembled and shipped.

From the outset of the pandemic, and as the volume of testing increased, Bureau of Clinical Laboratories employees were on the front lines where they received, tested, and reported the results of specimens seven days a week. Their work continued uninterrupted in the heat of summer and while the Central Laboratory was in the process of relocating to a new facility.

Much was unknown initially, and epidemiologists analyzed COVID-19 data which was used to inform decision making. Their work enabled data to be made available to the public visually through a live, public-facing interactive dashboard.

Employees at county health departments promoted testing and answered numerous phone inquiries. Staff arranged drive-through sample collection sites which involved securing locations, placing cones for traffic flow, pitching tents, setting up tables for record-keeping, and securing staff to take specimens in full protective gear. While many employees worked behind the scenes, testing clinics were often held outdoors and in inclement weather.

Corey Kirkland, Administrator of the Southeastern Public Health District, said he couldn’t be happier with the effort district and county employees have shown and who have provided great service and professionalism during the pandemic. He said, “They came in early, worked through the heat, and left work late many days. That same effort was multiplied many times over when we started giving vaccines in January.”

Small county health departments with limited numbers of staff pulled together as the only COVID-19 vaccine providers and delivered thousands of doses to their citizens, Kirkland said.

In reflecting on the past 14 months, Kyle Odom, Assistant District Administrator for the Southeast Public Health District, described how intense yet rewarding the pandemic has been for everyone. He said, “Looking back, I am not sure how we were able to accomplish all that we have since the beginning of the pandemic; however, I do know that it would not have been possible without the continued support that we all provided to one another throughout the department. Along with all of the other Alabamians across the state, we too were suffering from the loss of loved ones and the constant worry of our friends and family members who were personally being affected by the virus.”

Coordination and cooperation were essential, Odom said. “For months we worked closely with local elected officials, community organizations, state agencies, and municipalities to coordinate and provide COVID-19 testing throughout the district. At times it was not uncommon to test 300-plus individuals in as little as four hours. Throughout those long and hectic days, and even now as we slowly revert to some degree of normalcy, I often speak to our long-time employees who tell me that they have never experienced the level of teamwork and camaraderies amongst their fellow coworkers as they have while responding to this public health emergency. Regardless of the position or classification, it was an “all for one” push each and every day to set up and provide the needed services to our communities.”

Odom explained that on most days, environmentalists, clerks, nutritionists, social workers, district-level directors, and administrators worked at testing sites to pre-screen symptomatic persons who needed to be tested, direct traffic, and assist the clerical staff with
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completing the necessary forms while performing the data entry process which was extremely important with the execution of the testing and notification process.

“I also do not want to leave out our nurses and nurse practitioners who wrapped themselves in ice packs before donning the full-body Tyvek PPE suits in 95-plus degree temperatures while standing on hot asphalt to collect specimens,” Odom said.

Statewide, nurses and disease intervention specialists investigated COVID-19 positive cases and assisted with contact tracing activities. Without the addition of staff, the number of notifiable diseases investigated by ADPH increased from 3,615 cases in 2019 to an astounding 370,718 cases in 2020. Staff monitored and responded to long-term care facilities and school outbreaks, conducted death investigations, and provided quarantine orders and guidance to the public and healthcare partners.

Public health environmentalists took on a community support role by ensuring food service safety for take-out and temporary nutrition sites for children and issuing emergency closure orders for COVID-19 violations. As understanding of COVID-19 evolved, critical public health guidance and resources were provided to the public via the news media, social media channels, posters, brochures, and flyers.

As vaccines were developed and authorized late in 2020, ADPH employees spearheaded the effort to ensure equitable vaccine distribution to those most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, including healthcare workers, the elderly, and the underserved. Although public health employees were sometimes criticized for situations beyond their control, members of the public who dealt with them often wrote social media posts and letters praising the very helpful service and special attention they received.

COVID-19 vaccinations have been open to all age-eligible wishing to be vaccinated. Cases, hospitalizations, and deaths from the virus are declining and vaccination levels are increasing. New ways of providing vaccines to the community are being explored. Even though there have been extraordinary challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic has helped highlight ADPH employees’ dedication and commitment to their patients and clients in furtherance of their mission to promote, protect, and improve Alabama’s health.

As other ADPH employees have expressed, Odom said, “I am very honored to be part of such a dedicated, selfless, and respected team that has risen to the occasion when called to duty. Although it has been a continuous uphill climb, I know that we would do it all over again if needed (but we are going to say that very quietly)!”

We cannot thank ADPH enough for everything they have done for the State during this unprecedented time! Thank you to ADPH for submitting this article!
Ms. Moncrief is an Administrative Support Assistant II at the Secretary of State’s Office (SOS). She has diligently served the people of Alabama for the last five years and has accomplished a great deal of impressive feats in her decade of servitude.

A staff member of the SOS’s Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) Department, which equates to half of the Business Services Division, Ms. Moncrief stands as UCC’s Assistant Supervisor. In the absence of the UCC Head Supervisor, she confidently and effectively takes charge of the department and oversees the staff’s daily operations to ensure that all needs of the people are met. She is also responsible for data entry, validating, and scanning all of the UCC documents that come into the office, training other employees on various tasks, and answering incoming calls, amongst various other responsibilities as assigned.

Not only does Ms. Moncrief exhibit excellent leadership and workmanship prowess, but she also possesses a positive nature and genuine interest in learning new skills. She is always looking for new opportunities to learn and improve her work ethic, and she stands as an excellent example to the rest of the Secretary of State staff. Thank you for all your hard work, Ms. Moncrief!

Ms. Lowe is a Revenue Examiner III with the Alabama Department of Revenue. Ms. Lowe reaches the pinnacle of her job expectations in both quality and quantity every day. Her quantity of audits performed are double what is expected, which contributes to the success of the Special Audit and Compliance Section (SAC). All of her audits are done with precision accuracy. Once Ms. Lowe does an audit, everyone knows it is correct when it goes out to the taxpayer. This is due to her previous experience gained in the Examinations Unit, combined with the knowledge she has acquired since joining the SAC.

Ms. Lowe’s greatest strength is her communication skills. Her superior knowledge base combined with her pleasant demeanor makes her a valued team member. Numerous taxpayers have asked to speak with Ms. Lowe’s supervisor to explain their pleasant experience dealing with Ms. Lowe during the audit process. The same can be said with Ms. Lowe’s relationship with other sections within the Revenue Department. For example, Ms. Lowe’s supervisor has received multiple kudos from the Legal Division for the quality of her file summaries and her quick responses to attorney questions.

Ms. Lowe is the ultimate team player. She has always been willing to talk to taxpayers on the phone during her scheduled lunch hour if the taxpayer volume is high. She does this without being asked to do so. Ms. Lowe is always available to help fellow team members in SAC when they have questions about tax law or office procedures.

Ms. Lowe’s supervisor describes her as “that rare jewel that can be found in state government. Her priority is to consistently exceed standards in her work and doing so with a servant’s heart.” Thank you for all you do Ms. Lowe!
State of Alabama Employees NIGHT
Celebrate with a Day of Fun and Baseball!
Thursday, June 3rd vs. Chattanooga Lookouts
Gates Open at 5:00pm | 6:35pm First Pitch

Important Information
Tickets can be purchased for $17.50 with the special link, all seated together, with a group welcome announcement.

Parking: $6 Advance or $10 at Entrance. Your digital ticket can be scanned at the Main Pepsi Gate on your device.

Promotion: Happy Hour drink special 5-7

Entry
No outside food or beverages allowed to be carried into Toyota Field.
Clear Bag Policy. Masks to be worn when not eating & drinking. Cashless Transactions. Metal Detectors upon entry.

For any questions or to book your own group please contact Cory Ausderau with The Rocket City Trash Pandas at 256-325-1549 or E-Mail causderau@trashpandasbaseball.com

Tickets can be purchased by clicking here
We would like to say a big thank you to Commissioner Blankenship and Deputy Commissioner Poolos from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for providing an ice cream truck for DCNR, State Personnel, and the Governor’s Office!

Employees’ Suggestion Incentive Program Reminder

Don’t forget to submit your cost-saving ideas to the Employees’ Suggestion Incentive Board for the opportunity to earn a CASH AWARD up to $5,000! You can find the rules and submission form on the State Personnel Department website, www.personnel.alabama.gov, under the “Employees” button, then “Online Option.”

Please remember that your completed submission form must include approval from your appointing authority in order for the suggestion to be considered for an award.