

The Decatur Daily

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY SINCE 1912

RACK PRICE: 75¢

Thursday, April 20, 2023

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FORECAST

TODAY FRI SAT

 84°/57° 74°/51° 69°/48°
 Complete forecast, A2

SPORTS



Rebels' Muse leads 1A-4A boys All-Area team

Carson Muse averaged 20.1 points and 9.3 rebounds as a senior while helping West Morgan win the county tournament and advance to the Northwest Regional at Wallace State. He is The Decatur Daily Class 1A-4A All-Area boys player of the year. **C1**

ENTERTAINMENT



Austin High theater stages 'Mamma Mia!'

More than a hundred colorful costumes, energetic music made famous by ABBA and a cast of dozens will create a dazzling show at Austin High this week. **D1**

RIVERFRONT

Rental bikes rolling into Decatur

Three bike rental stations installed Wednesday in Decatur will serve those who don't have a bicycle, offer an exercise option and provide another way to explore the community, visitors and a downtown official said. **B1**

AREA DEATHS

Leona Collier, Decatur
 Leonard Key, Courtland
 Charles Thrasher, Hartselle
 Death notices, obits, **B2**

Abby.....D3	Horoscope.....D3
Business.....A6	Lotteries.....C3
Classified.....E1	Obituaries.....B2
Comics.....D2	Riverfront.....B1
Crossword.....D3	Sports.....C1
Editorials.....A4	Weather.....A2
Entertainment...D1	

Decatur, Alabama
 112th year, No. 39
 26 pages, 5 sections



FORUM ON DECATUR

Officials tout city transformation

Council president says changes will be evident by 2025

By Bayne Hughes
 Staff Writer

City Council President Jacob Ladner, at the halfway point of a five-year term, predicts Decatur "will look radically different" in 2025 when this council's term is over.

Ladner, along with Mayor



Ladner

250 people, answering questions posed by Wade Weaver, chairman of the chamber's Public Policy Agenda committee. The event was hosted by the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce.

The trio said their second-half

Tab Bowling and Councilman Kyle Pike, spoke Wednesday morning at the annual State of the City Forum attended by about

priorities are pushing for another Tennessee River bridge, getting the Sixth Avenue streetscape and Modaus Road Southwest widening projects started and beginning \$87 million in planned recreation projects.

The city will also be working with developer Patrick Lawler to start and complete a \$30 million mixed-used development west of Ingalls Harbor. The agreement, approved Monday by the City Council, includes \$5 million in incentives, plus land, from the city.

In 2021, the state Legislature mandated a one-time extension of the terms of elected municipal officials, to five years rather than four, in an effort to keep municipal elections from being in the same year as presidential elections.

Ladner, who is in his first term, said five years isn't as long as it appears given the slow pace of governmental operations, and he plans to "keep the foot on the gas" in the second half of this

SEE FORUM, A3

Out of this World



Marcus Patten and Sarah Smith rehearse a scene of the "The Rocket Men." The play was commissioned for the Alabama Center for the Arts. [PHOTOS BY JERONIMO NISA/DECATUR DAILY]

Athenian Players to tell story of German rocket team in world premiere of play

By Catherine Godbey
 Staff Writer

A trip to Huntsville's U.S. Space and Rocket Center, a desire by student actors to stage contemporary pieces and a friendship between a New York City playwright and an Athens State theater professor have led to the world premiere of "The Rocket Men" in downtown Decatur.

After six years, hundreds of hours of research and dozens of rehearsals, the lights will go up at the Alabama Center of the Arts for the first staging of the play Thursday night at 7 with additional shows Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

The story is one ingrained in the fabric of north Alabama. It tells of the German rocket scientists led by Werner von Braun, who fled Nazi Germany and settled in north Alabama to lead America in the space race.



Allyson Spell, left, and Chelsea Baker rehearse a scene of "The Rocket Men."

'The Rocket Men'

- **What:** World premiere of "The Rocket Men" by New York City playwright Crystal Skillman
- **When:** Today-Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m.
- **Where:** Alabama Center for the Arts, 133 Second Ave. N.E.
- **Tickets:** \$15 for general admission, \$10 for students, seniors, faculty and staff. For tickets, visit eventbrite.com.

"I think this is a story a lot of people don't know or only hear about in passing and don't dig into," said Hugh Long, director of the Athenian Players and associate professor of drama and English at Athens State. "It's

like an onion; when you start looking into it there are so many layers."

Those layers include the development of the V2 rocket at the World War II

SEE ROCKET, A3

SHOOTING

Dadeville suspects arrested

By Kim Chandler
 The Associated Press

DADEVILLE — Two teenagers and a 20-year-old man have been arrested and charged with reckless murder in connection with a shooting that killed four young people at a Sweet 16 birthday party in rural Alabama, investigators announced Wednesday.

Tallapoosa County District Attorney Mike Segrest said two teens — Tyreese "Ty Reik" McCullough, 17, and Travis McCullough, 16, both of Tuskegee — would be tried as adults. That's automatically required in Alabama for anyone 16 or older charged with murder.



Tyreese McCullough



Hill

Investigators said Wednesday that Wilson LaMar Hill Jr., 20, of Auburn, also was arrested on the same charge.

Sgt. Jeremy J. Burkett of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency announced the latest arrest but declined earlier to discuss specifics of how the shooting unfolded or a possible motive.

"We can't get into a motive right now, because that would be part of an ongoing investigation," Burkett said at a news conference earlier Wednesday. "We can't share that."

State law defines reckless murder as causing a death by acting with extreme indifference to human life and recklessly engaging in conduct which creates a grave risk of death to a person.

Segrest had said earlier that prosecutors would ask a judge to hold the teens without bail. A bond hearing must be held by Friday under Alabama law.

SEE SHOOTING, A5

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