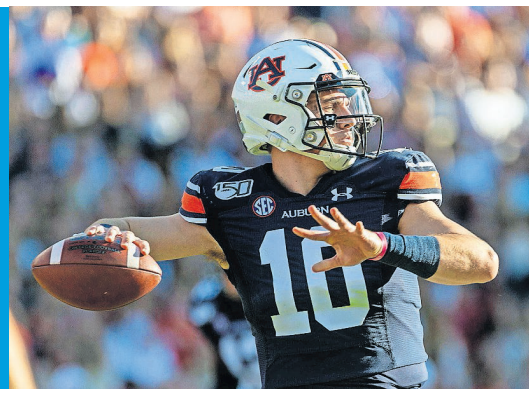




LOCAL | A3

## RETURN TO THE STAGE

CharACTers Theatrics will return to the stage Monday with "Decades in Revue," described as "a socially distanced musical celebration"



SPORTS | B1

## TIGERS STUMBLE

No. 15 Auburn dropped to 2-2 on the season with a surprising 30-22 loss at former defensive coordinator Will Muschamp and South Carolina

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### CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## A look at the last 3 counties in U.S. with no COVID-19 cases

By Jorge L. Ortiz  
USA TODAY

Nine months into a pandemic that shows no signs of relenting, it seems like the coronavirus has reached into every corner of the U.S.

Well, not quite, but it's close.

Three counties – technically two and a borough – remain as the lone holdouts, fighting off the virus and reporting no cases of COVID-19 so far. They are Esmeralda County in Nevada, Loving County in Texas and Skagway in Alaska, which uses the term

"boroughs" rather than "counties."

All three are remotely located and have fewer than 1,100 residents, undoubtedly key factors in allowing them to escape a scourge that has sickened 7.9 million Americans and killed more than 216,000.

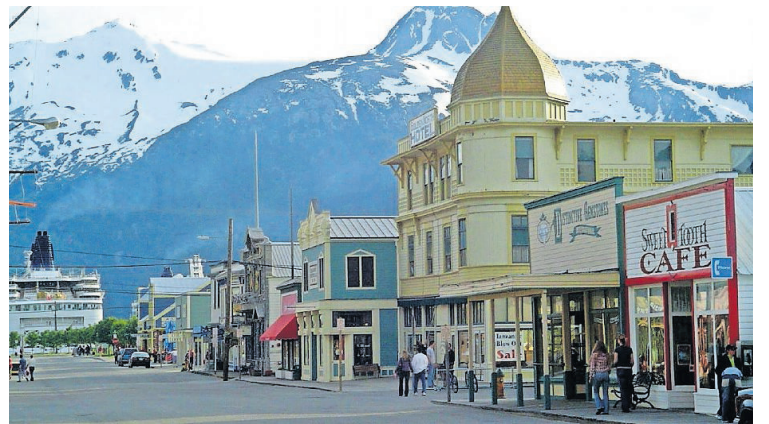
Esmeralda, with 826 residents over nearly 3,600 square miles, and Loving, with 169 residents spread over 677 square miles, have the smallest population per area of any counties in the contiguous U.S.

Skagway is more densely populated with 1,095 residents concentrated on 20

blocks, but the port hamlet on the southeastern panhandle of Alaska – near the northern edge of British Columbia – is surrounded by mountains and reachable mostly by air or water. Road travel into Canada has been restricted because of the pandemic.

When King County in Texas registered the first coronavirus infection among its approximately 280 inhabitants Tuesday, those three counties were left as the final pieces of unbroken resistance to the virus.

See VIRUS, A8



The former Gold Rush town of Skagway, Alaska, has been a regular stop on the cruise ship route for years but did not get those travelers this tourist season because of the pandemic. [MIKE COLVIN FROM MANCHESTER, UK/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS]

### ELECTION 2020

# Prepping for a large turnout at the polls

By Donna Thornton  
Gadsden Times  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Etowah County's elections officials met Wednesday to assign poll workers and inspectors for the county's polling places – one of the routine, behind-the-scenes things that must be done to prepare for an election.

In a presidential election year that's been anything but routine, Probate Judge Scott Hassell said a lot of planning and preparation has gone into making the polls operate efficiently with the large voter turnout that's expected, and with the concerns raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hassell said he wants voters to know what to expect, too – the potential for lines at the polls during peak voting times. He said he and fellow election officials Circuit Clerk Cassandra Johnson and Sheriff Jonathon Horton are doing all they can – as poll workers will, too – to make the process go smoothly.

"We're over-staffing polling places," Hassell said.

Still, when many people want to vote at the same time, there's going to be a line – possibly a long one.

See TURNOUT, A7



Election officials and other met Wednesday to approve poll workers for the 2020 vote. Etowah County Probate Judge Scott Hassell, Circuit Clerk Cassandra Johnson and Sheriff Jonathon Horton, as election officials, had to approve the list. Pictured from left: Hassell, Etowah County Republican Party Chairman Michael Barton, Horton, Johnson, ECSO Chief Deputy Mitchell Hill, and ECSO Chief of Administration Mike Powell. [DONNA THORNTON/THE GADSDEN TIMES]

### COMMENTARY

*Times will follow election story to its conclusion*



Greg Bailey

There's an election two weeks from Tuesday.

It's contentious; a check of our website or any other media outlet, or simply sticking your collective heads outside the door, will confirm that fact.

It's unprecedented; the United States has held three presidential elections during wartime – in 1812, 1864 (when the country literally was torn apart) and 1944, but there's never been one during a viral pandemic that has killed 218,000 (and counting) Americans.

It's been mobilizing; whether in person (and, ideally, socially distanced) or virtually, those who have passionate and often contrasting views of what this country has been, is now and should be moving forward are trying to persuade the electorate to follow their respective leads.

The Gadsden Times has been documenting the story, and will continue to do so through and after Nov. 3.

There are no contested local races this year – those were decided in the Republican primary – so our focus is on the presidential race between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden, and the state races spotlighted by the U.S. Senate clash between incumbent Democrat Doug Jones and Republican Tommy Tuberville (a familiar face from past sports sections, courtesy of his decade as Auburn's football coach).

My commitment to The

See BAILEY, A7

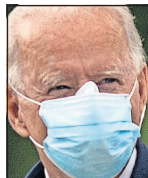
## Headwinds for Trump in bid to repeat Midwest victories

By Brian Slodysko and Jill Colvin  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump is making a late reelection pitch to voters Saturday in Michigan and Wisconsin, states in the Upper Midwest that were instrumental to his 2016 victory but may now be slipping from his grasp.



Trump



Biden

He's facing headwinds not only in national polling, which shows Democrat Joe Biden leading, but also in battleground surveys.

The Trump campaign has largely retreated from the TV advertising in the Midwest, shifting much of its money to Sun Belt states such as Florida, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia, as well as Pennsylvania.

Trump scheduled events in Muskegon, Michigan, and Janesville, Wisconsin, and stops Sunday in Nevada and Monday in Arizona as the Nov.

3 election nears.

The president continues to be dogged by his handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Wisconsin broke the record for new positive coronavirus cases on Friday – the third time that's happened in a week. The state also hit record highs for daily deaths and hospitalizations this past week.

See MIDWEST, A7

