



# THE CANTON NEWS

Your Community. Your News. Your Paper • January 1, 2026 • Vol. 12, No. 1 • Canton, Mississippi

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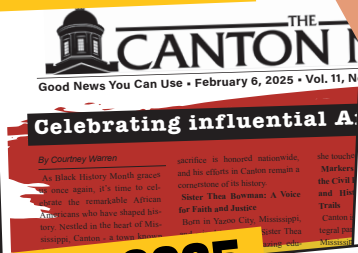
Canton News  
P.O. Box 1163, Canton, MS 39046

***The Canton News* is introducing a new slogan that reflects its continued commitment to local journalism and community connection.**

**JAN. 2025**



**FEB. 2025**



**MAR. 2025**



**APRIL 2025**



**MAY 2025**



**DEC. 2025**



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**JULY 2025**



**AUG. 2025**



**SEPT. 2025**



**OCT. 2025**



**NOV. 2025**



The longtime slogan, "The good news you can use," is being retired in favor of a new message: **"Your Community. Your News. Your Paper."**

The updated motto underscores the newspaper's role as a trusted source for local reporting, community stories and information that matters most to Canton residents. From City government and schools to churches, businesses and family milestones, *The Canton News* aims to tell the stories that shape daily life in the heart of our community.

Our mission has always been to serve the people of Canton. This new motto better reflects who we are and who we serve.

While the words have changed, the mission remains the same: to provide accurate, timely and community-centered journalism.

The new slogan will appear in print and digital editions moving forward.

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# Pendleton named Canton Elementary Parent of the Year



Special to The Canton News

By Courtney Warren

Canton Elementary School recently announced Ms. Leneisha Pendleton as the 2025–26 Parent of the Year. School officials say she is being honored for her outstanding dedication, support and involvement in the school community.

Ms. Pendleton serves as the president of Canton Elementary School’s PTO. Under her leadership, the PTO’s first fundraiser raised nearly \$10,000.

The school recognized her strong leadership, communication and organizational skills, which she uses to motivate families, manage meetings and support school events.

Ms. Pendleton is also a co-owner of Little Tots Learning Center in Canton. The center serves children and the community through events such as annual Autism Awareness programs, the first Autism Prom in 2025, and a Breast Cancer Awareness pumpkin project displayed at City Hall. The learning center also participates in the Canton High School Homecoming parade, winning multiple first-place float awards.

Ms. Pendleton is described as a dynamic parent who is loved by the entire CES family. School officials noted, “Your commitment makes a difference in the lives of our scholars and staff every day!”

# CHS Band wins Grand Championship at Battle of the Bands



Special to The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

The Canton High School (CHS) band, the CHS Baby Boom of the South, claimed the overall championship title at the annual Leake County High School Battle of the Bands on Saturday, earning three trophies for the evening.

The Baby Boom of the South secured first place in Division Two and was awarded the trophy for best drumline

before being named the grand champions of the competition.

Band director Mr. Muhammad received special recognition for his leadership and motivation, which school officials credit as instrumental in guiding the talented group.

“We are incredibly proud of our scholars and their dedication, discipline, and musical talent,” a school representative said. “Way to go, Tigers!”



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## THE CANTON NEWS

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# On the Shelf: The best books of 2025

By Courtney Warren

I absolutely love December! Not only is it Christmas season, but it's book awards! All over we get to see the best books of 2025.

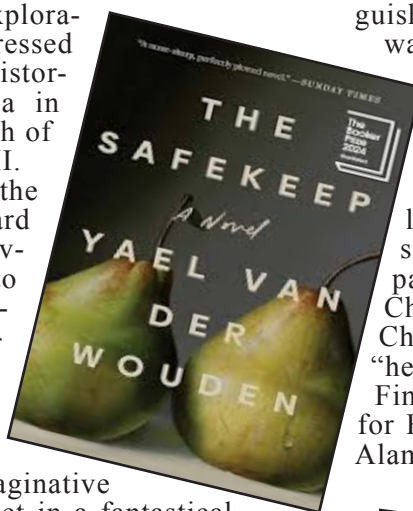
I tracked my own books this year, and my absolute favorite (yes I made a bracket and everything) was *Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. Here is a breakdown of the big winners of 2025. Add a few to your list!



Starting with adult fiction, The Booker Prize was awarded to David Szalay's novel, *Flesh*, a hypnotic story that follows the life of an emotionally detached man, providing a spare yet powerful picture of modern masculinity and the impact of lingering trauma. Percival Everett's *James* took home the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, earning praise as a brilliant, action-packed re-consideration of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* told from the enslaved character Jim's point of view, illustrating the absurdity of racial supremacy. For its emotional depth, Yael van der Wouden's debut novel, *The Safekeep*, won the Women's Prize for Fiction for its intimate and un-

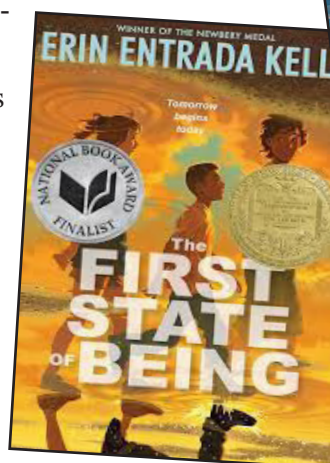
settling exploration of repressed desire and historical amnesia in the aftermath of World War II.

In fantasy, the Hugo Award for Best Novel went to Robert Jackson Bennett's *The Tainted Cup*, a brilliant and imaginative mystery set in a fantastical world where a detective must solve a terrifying locked-room murder by blending epic fantasy with a compelling whodunit structure.



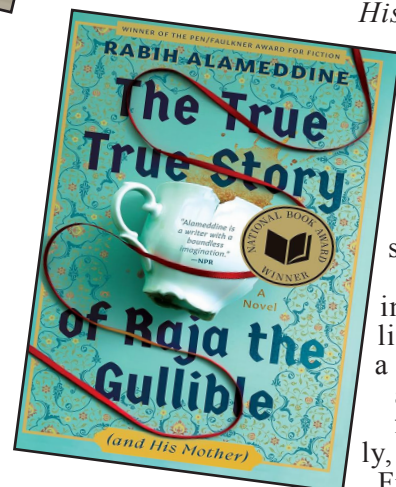
In the realm of children's literature, the American Library Association announced its most prestigious

awards. The John Newbery Medal for the most distinguished to children's literature was awarded to Erin Entrada Kelly for her novel, *The First State of Being*. This compelling speculative fiction story, set in 1999, follows a lonely boy who befriends a teenager who claims to be a time traveler from 200 years in the future, grounding its mind-bending concepts with real relationships and a major problem to solve. The Randolph Caldecott Medal for the most distin-

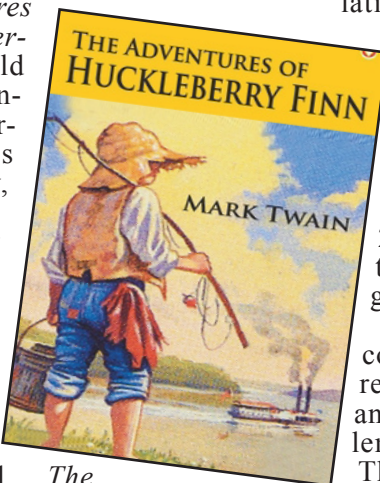
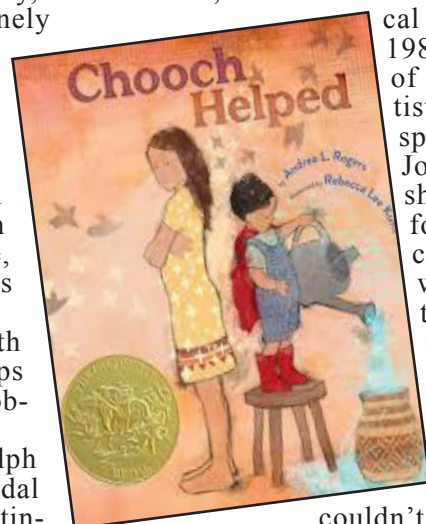
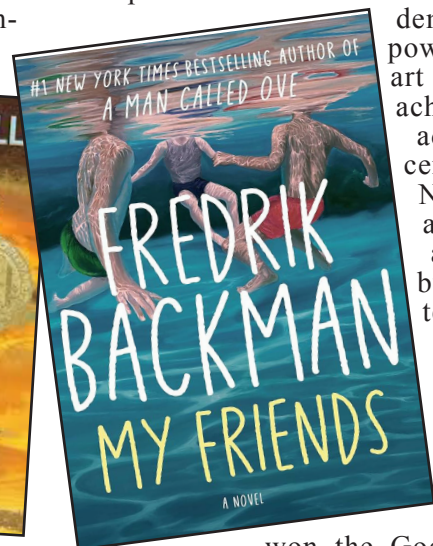


guished American picture book was awarded to Rebecca Lee Kunz (illustrator) and Andrea L. Rogers (author) for *Chooch Helped*. This warm, loving family story, featuring dynamic mixed-media illustrations, is told by an older sister who is struggling to be patient with her two-year-old Cherokee Nation little brother, Chooch, who always wants to "help."

Finally, the National Book Award for Fiction was claimed by Rabi Alameddine for *The True Story of Raja the Gullible* (and His Mother), a darkly comic saga spanning six decades in the life of a Lebanese family, while Fredrik Backman's *My Friends* won the Goodreads Choice Award for Fiction for its heartbreaking, humorous, and profoundly human exploration of the redemptive power of art and the ache of adolescence. Not that anyone asked, but I'll tell you about *Atmosphere*, anyway. It actually won the Goodreads Choice Award for Historical Fiction! It's set in the 1980s and is all about one of the first women scientists selected for NASA's space shuttle program, Joan Goodwin, and how she unexpectedly falls for a fellow astronaut candidate, Vanessa Ford, while they train. It's a total emotional roller-coaster, seriously thrilling, and also such a beautiful, tender love story amidst all the high-stakes astronaut drama—I literally couldn't put it down.

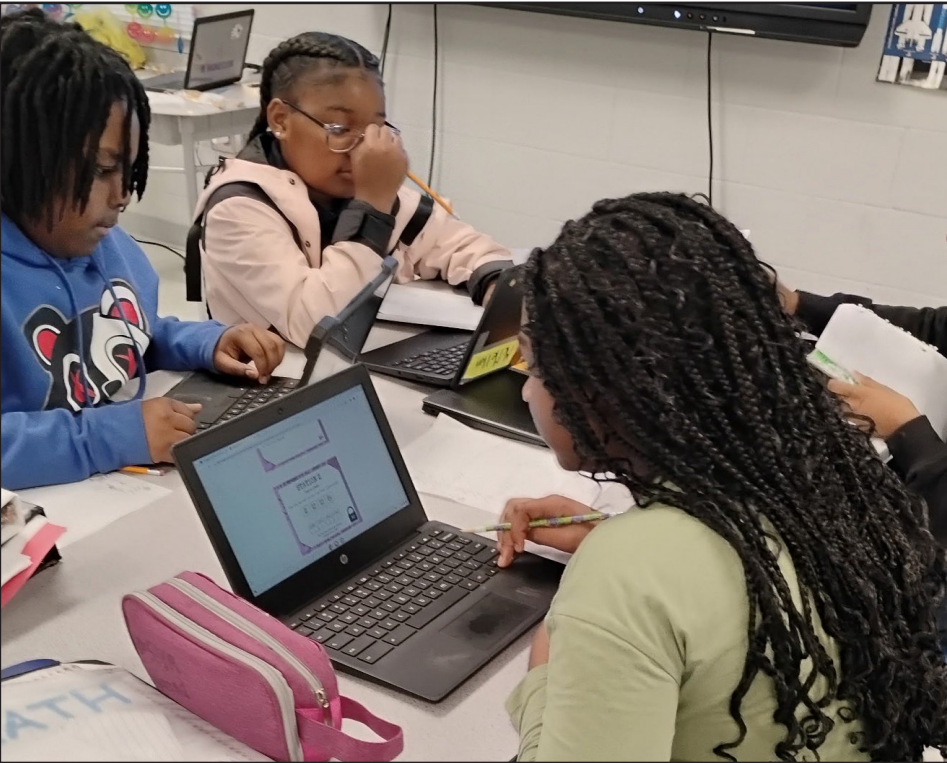


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# Fifth graders review properties of matter with escape room



Special to The Canton News

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Fifth-grade scientists in Ms. Mc-Mellon's class at Canton Elementary School recently reviewed the properties of matter by working together to complete a unique es-

cape room challenge. The students worked collaboratively to solve problems related to the concept, successfully utilizing an engaging, hands-on method to reinforce their learning.

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<b>CORN</b>	Pride of Illinois	<b>No. 2 Can 20c</b>
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<b>RICE</b>	Mahatma Long Grain	<b>2 Pounds 44c</b>

Photo courtesy of The Canton-Madison County Historical Society

Courtesy of The Canton-Madison County Historical Society

A look at a 1947 C. & C. Stores ad from the Canton area, showing a 3-pound can of Snowdrift shortening

for only \$1.29! This was the price of holiday baking essentials 78 years ago! What staples on this list are still on your grocery list today?

## Board of Education seeks high school sophomores as representatives

Special to The Canton News

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) is seeking applications from high school sophomores to serve as the new high school junior student representative on the SBE for the 2026-27 school year. The application deadline is January 30, 2026.

Now in its eighth year, the Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education program includes a high school junior and a high school senior who serve as non-voting

SBE members to share their viewpoints on policy decisions regarding Mississippi public schools.

The current SBE junior representative, Michelle Xie of Oak Grove High School, will serve as the senior representative in 2026-27. Through a competitive process, the SBE will appoint a new junior representative to serve a two-year term starting July 1, 2026.

The top ten semi-finalists among applicants, including the junior representative appointed and an alternate

representative, automatically get to serve on the State Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. There were thirty students who were eligible applicants for the 2025-26 junior representative position.

The SBE adopted policy in 2018 outlining criteria for adding student representatives to the State Board. Student representatives are responsible for attending monthly SBE meetings and any standing committees or subcommittees to which they are assigned. They are excused from school to attend SBE meetings as official school

business, and they also work as liaisons for their peers to SBE.

The application packet must be mailed and postmarked by January 30, 2026, and a video component of the application must be uploaded that day by 5 p.m. To access the application, visit [MDEK12.org/mbe/Student-Representatives-Of-The-Mississippi-State-Board-Of-Education/](https://mdek12.org/mbe/Student-Representatives-Of-The-Mississippi-State-Board-Of-Education/).

For more information, contact Sherry Bombich at 601-359-9714 or by email to [SBombich@mdek12.org](mailto:SBombich@mdek12.org).



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# Letter from the Editor: A Look Back and a Look Ahead

By Courtney Warren

A brand new year has arrived, and I am so excited to see what 2026 brings for all Cantonians. As I look back and reflect on the year 2025, I am filled with gratitude, an inspiration that shaped the design for our front page this year. Canton is full of so many special people, and what a blessing it is to be a part of it all!

Growing up in Georgia and then moving here for college, I never imagined I would end up in tiny little Canton. I grew up in a large town, so spending time in the small towns all over Mississippi was something new to me. Walking into the football stadium at Canton Academy and thinking I was only going to meet a few people was a joke—I was introduced to everyone! And what a wonderful introduction it was.

I have loved writing every feature story, taking photos, and exploring what makes Canton special. Looking back at 2025, we had the privilege of highlighting countless community milestones throughout the year, as featured in *The Canton News* archives:

- **(Jan - Mar):** We celebrated our community's heritage with coverage of the vibrant 2025 Canton Black History Parade and shared stories from the Canton Hometown Market, kicking off the year on a high note.
- **(Apr - Jun):** We cheered on our students as the Canton High School Tiger Tycoons received a financial literacy grant, and we covered the excitement of the bi-annual Canton



Special to The Canton News

Flea Market Arts & Crafts Show and the popular Ladies' Night Out on the Square.

- **(Jul - Sep):** We highlighted the Canton Young Filmmakers Workshop, which fostered the talents of our young creatives, and shared the inspiring story of a 90-year-old Cantonian who credited their long life to

faith and joy.

- **(Oct - Dec):** We celebrated victory as the Canton Panthers athletic teams claimed the 2A MAIS state title, and we showcased the magic of the Canton Christmas Festival, also known as the "City of Lights."

I give a huge thank you to Canton Tourism. It is a wealth of information

and history. If you haven't stopped by, you absolutely must go introduce yourself.

As we move forward into 2026, I am excited to see what the new year brings. I can't wait to see what interesting people we will feature, what students we will celebrate, and how our businesses will flourish.

## BAPS temple celebrates 25th anniversary in Jackson



All photos Special to The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

The BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir celebrated its 25th anniversary in Jackson, Mississippi, on Saturday, November 22, 2025. The celebration was inspired by the current BAPS spiritual leader, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj.

The event was attended by BAPS Saints and several state and local officials, including:

- Mississippi State Auditor Shad White
  - Jackson City's Former Mayor Harvey Johnson
  - Canton Police Chief Otha Brown
- Chief Otha Brown also represented and participated on behalf of Canton Mayor Timothy C. Taylor. Mayor Taylor recognized the importance of cultural diversity, religious freedom and interfaith understanding, noting that

these values enrich society.

The BAPS temple in Jackson offers a spiritual space for hundreds of families, providing worship, fellowship, communal meals, and educational and youth activities to encourage lives of integrity and character.

The temple embodies the words of His Holiness Pramukh Swaminaraj, "In the joy of others lies our own," through various community outreach

efforts. These efforts include health fairs, blood donation drives, food drives, walkathons and disaster relief work.

The celebration was organized by Temple Coordinator Mr. Rakesh Patel and outreach coordinators Mr. Nayan Mehta and Mr. Jignesh Patel. The organizing team expressed gratitude to Mayor Taylor, Chief Brown and the City of Canton.



## Canton NTHS chapter excels at state conference

By Courtney Warren

Canton Career Center student Alexandria Lockett was named the Canton Career Center National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) Chapter Outstanding Student of the Year at the recent NTHS State Conference.

Lockett received the chapter's highest individual honor for her outstanding achievement, dedication and commitment to the ideals of the National Technical Honor Society. Each chapter chooses its own recipient for this prestigious award.

The Canton Career Center NTHS chapter officers also represented their school during the Awards Night at the conference, which was held in Brandon. The officers, whose theme for the event was "Lighting the Way," are:

- President - Nelly Rosales
- Vice President - Alexandria Lockett
- Treasurer - Henser Vicente
- Social Media Officer - Madisyn Brim

- Secretary - Zihomara Lopez Felix

In addition to the officer recognition, the chapter also honored two members with the Senior Spotlight Award:

- Arianna Williams and Keiston Fleming received the award for outstanding



Special to The Canton News

achievement, dedication and commitment to the NTHS ideals.

The awards were part of the two-day NTHS State Conference, which focused on real-world readiness. Career Center scholars participated in hands-on activities and workshops aimed at

preparing them for life beyond high school, including building résumés and sharpening job application skills.

School officials praised the group's performance and recognized their success with an emphatic "Awesome job, Tigers!"

## Historical Society hosts Open House at Canton's Old Jail

By Courtney Warren

The Canton-Madison County Historical Society held its annual Christmas Open House at the historic Old Jail in December, welcoming families and visitors to celebrate the holiday season in the community space.

The event, titled "Christmas at the Old Jail," took place over three days at the jail, located at 234 East Fulton Street.

The Historical Society warmly invited the public to see the building lit up for the holiday, enjoy light refreshments, and meet new friends. Visitors were encouraged to stop by while in town seeing the Christmas lights on the Canton Square.

The Old Madison County Jail is recognized as one of the best-preserved 19th-century penal facilities still existing in Mississippi. The two-story brick structure was erected between 1870 and 1871 and is significant as an example of post-Civil War architecture.



Photo courtesy of Canton-Madison County Historical Society

The building has an interesting contrast, with the front section designed as a residential space for the jailer and his family, and the ominous cell block located to the rear.

The jail served the county for 99

years, operating until 1969. It was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Today, the building serves as the headquarters for the Canton-Madison County Historical Society.

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# NTHS state conference emphasizes real-world readiness



Special to The Canton News

By Courtney Warren

Canton Career Center scholars participated in the recent National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) State Conference, which concluded following two days of impactful activities and workshops. The conference, themed “Lighting

the Way,” focuses on career and technical students’ leadership and future paths. The theme uses candle-lighting ceremonies to symbolize guiding students toward success in CTE fields. Scholars participated in various hands-on activities and workshops focused on real-world readiness. Key topics included:

- Building strong résumés, with a workshop titled “Turn Obstacles Into Opportunities with Your Resume” led by Justin Wilcher (ECCC).
  - Sharpening job application skills in the workshop “Get Hired: Application Tips That Work”.
  - Working through a life-beyond-high-school simulation booklet.
  - A workshop titled “Real World Challenge” led by Kimberly Usry.
  - A workshop titled “Survivor Island” led by a State Officer.
- Students gained valuable knowledge, practical tools and confidence to take their next steps. School officials called it a successful conference for the Tigers.



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## Waters named ASA executive director

*Special to The Canton News*

The American Subcontractors Association of Mississippi (ASA of MS) recently announced that Joel Waters has been hired as their new Executive Director.

Waters is the former Executive Director of the Mississippi Concrete Association, serving from 2016 to 2025, and has been instrumental in their growth and success. Prior to 2016, Waters was Executive Director of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of MS.

Waters has also previously been an active board member of Build MS and instrumental in the growth of that organization, along with several ASA members on that Board.

Waters brings vast experience in

the Mississippi Association community and has strong ties to the Subcontractor sector and knows how to operate in the Association space.

Cody Curry, 2025-2026 ASA of MS Chairman states, "ASA of MS is proud to welcome someone of Joel Waters' work history, character and work ethic as our new Executive Director, to continue the successful growth of ASA of MS well into the future."

Waters is a 1984 graduate of University of Southern Mississippi, where he was a member of the USM baseball

team.

Waters and his wife Susan have been married for 43 years and reside in Madison. They have three married children and five grandchildren.



*Joel Waters*

*Special to The Canton News*

## G.A. Carmichael Leadership Visits Yazoo Expansion Site



*Special to The Canton News*

*Special to The Canton News*

Leaders from G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center visited the organization's planned Yazoo site today to meet with contractors and tour the facility.

Dr. James L. Coleman Jr., Mr. Edwards, Mr. Banks and Mrs. Cuello participated in the walkthrough as construction planning continues.

The project reflects the vision and leadership of the organization's CEO and highlights the collaboration of the G.A. Carmichael team. Officials said they are encouraged by the progress and confirmed the project remains on schedule.

Additional updates on the development will be shared as work continues.



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Canton officially glowed this holiday season! We want to send a huge THANK YOU to Canton Tourism and Canton Municipal Utilities (CMU) for their incredible hard work in setting up the magic of the Canton Christmas Festival, also known as the "City of Lights."

And a massive shout-out to all the dedicated volunteers whose hands made these stunning displays possible! Your commitment lit up our community and brought holiday joy to all who visited the Square throughout the season.

If you missed it, make sure to plan your trip next December—it's the best show in Mississippi!



All photos Special to The Canton News

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# City of Canton Mayor’s Office honors Judge Kemesha Mumford

By Courtney Warren

Mayor William “Tim” C. Taylor and the City of Canton Board of Aldermen officially honored Judge Kemesha Mumford this week, recognizing her twelve-year tenure as a Municipal Court Judge.

The ceremony, held at City Hall, served as a formal “thank you” to Judge Mumford as she prepares to transition from the municipal bench to the Mississippi State Senate. During the presentation, Mayor Taylor praised Mumford’s “outstanding public service, dedication, and leadership,” which have left a lasting impact on the local judiciary.

The formal proclamation highlights several key milestones of her career:

- **Decade of Service:** Judge Mumford faithfully served the citizens of Canton as a Municipal Court Judge for 12 years.
- **Judicial Integrity:** The city recognized her for upholding the

rule of law with “integrity, honor, professionalism, and compassion” throughout her time on the bench.

- **Community Impact:** Her leadership is credited with strengthening public confidence in the municipal court system and reflecting a deep dedication to equity and justice.

The honor follows Mumford’s recent election to represent Mississippi Senate District 26. As a Canton native, her move to the State Capitol is seen as a significant milestone for the community she has served since 2013.

“The City of Canton takes great pride in her accomplishments and is confident that she will continue to serve with distinction in the Mississippi State Senate,” the proclamation stated.

Mayor Taylor and the City Clerk, Dr. Chastity Anderson, joined in extending the city’s best wishes for her new role in the legislature.



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Prepare for the Cold: NWS cold weather safety tips for Canton residents

Special to The Canton News

A familiar, rhythmic clicking sound As January approaches, typically bringing with it the coldest temperatures of the year, Canton residents are urged to prepare for potential cold snaps. The National Weather Service (NWS) provides essential safety tips, especially for vulnerable populations and pets, to help the community stay safe and warm.

Historically, January is the coldest month in Canton. Average daily high temperatures hover around 57°F, but lows typically drop to about 38°F. Overnight temperatures can, on occasion, fall well below freezing, posing risks to people, pets and property.

Build Your Winter Home Emergency Kit

The NWS recommends having a three-day supply of essential items to prepare for potential power loss or being unable to leave your home:

- Water: At least one gallon per person, per day.
- Food: Non-perishable food that requires no cooking, such as canned goods and energy bars. Include a non-electric can opener if

necessary.

- Warmth: One blanket or sleeping bag per person, and an extra change of warm clothing.
- Light/Communication: A flashlight with extra batteries, and a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio.
- Medical: A first aid kit and any essential prescription medicines.
- Other Needs: Items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members, and cash.

Key Safety Tips for Everyone

The NWS emphasizes taking precautions to avoid hypothermia and protect your home:

- Layer Up: Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one heavy layer. Cover your head with a hat, and wear mittens instead of gloves for better warmth.
- Stay Indoors: Limit time outdoors during the coldest periods.
- Check Pipes: To prevent freezing, insulate exposed pipes, disconnect outdoor hoses, and open cabinet doors under sinks to allow warm air to reach the plumbing.
- Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poi-

soning: Never use a gas oven to heat your home. Ensure fireplaces, wood stoves, and portable heaters are properly vented. Never run a generator inside a home, garage, or even near windows.

- Check Detectors: Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Special Tips for the Elderly and Vulnerable

Older adults are among the most susceptible to extreme cold and are at higher risk of developing hypothermia, which can happen when the body's temperature drops below 95°F.

- Stay Connected: Check on elderly family members, friends, and neighbors frequently. Ensure they have adequate heat and necessary supplies.
- Dress Warmly Indoors: Encourage them to wear layers of clothing and a hat, even inside, to retain body heat.
- Stay Dry: Wet clothing should be removed immediately to prevent a dangerous drop in body temperature.
- Maintain Heat: Keep the thermostat set no lower than 55°F to help

prevent pipes from freezing and maintain a safe indoor temperature. Protecting Your Pets

Even with a natural coat, pets are vulnerable to freezing temperatures and should be kept safe and warm.

- Bring Pets Indoors: Keep your pets inside as much as possible, especially at night or when temperatures drop below freezing.
- Provide Shelter: If animals must be outside for short periods, ensure they have access to a dry, draft-free, appropriately sized shelter with clean, dry bedding.
- Food and Water: Ensure food and water are accessible and do not freeze. Dehydration is a major risk in cold weather.
- Wipe Paws: Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach after walks in sleet or ice, as they can ingest salt or harmful chemicals while licking their paws.



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# MCBL hosts Annual Legislative Breakfast, outlines 2026 priorities



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The Madison County Business League & Foundation (MCBL&F) Government Affairs Committee hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast on Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025, at the Embassy Suites in Ridgeland. The event served as a formal forum to honor the Madison County Legislative delegation and to facilitate dialogue between the business community and state lawmakers ahead of the upcoming session. During the program, Government Affairs Committee Chair Phil Buffington officially announced the Mad-

ison County legislative priorities for 2026. These priorities focus on fostering economic growth, enhancing local infrastructure, and supporting workforce development initiatives throughout the county. The gathering brought together key stakeholders, including local elected officials and business executives, to discuss the legislative landscape and the impact of state policy on the regional economy. The MCBL&F serves as the private sector economic development arm for Madison County, representing a diverse membership dedicated to the county's long-term prosperity.

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ingredients

- 2 cups whole milk from Kylie Melons Market
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar (adjust to taste)
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- A pinch of salt
- Optional: Whipped cream or marshmallows for topping

instructions

1. Whisk Dry Goods: In a small saucepan, whisk together the cocoa powder, sugar, and salt. Adding a tiny splash of the milk to create a smooth paste first will prevent clumps.
2. Heat Gently: Pour in the remaining Kylie Melons Market whole milk. Set the burner to medium-low heat.
3. Stir Constantly: Whisk frequently to ensure the chocolate integrates and the milk doesn't scald. Heat until the cocoa is steaming but not boiling.
4. Final Touch: Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla extract.
5. Serve: Pour into your favorite heavy mugs. Top with a generous dollop of whipped cream or a handful of marshmallows.

ON THE TABLE

The Warren Family's  
"Sunset Cocoa"

Special to The Canton News

By Courtney Warren

As the frost begins to settle on the windowpanes and the evening sun dips earlier behind the horizon, the kitchen at the Warren household undergoes a seasonal transformation. The teakettle is sidelined, and the heavy-bottomed saucepan takes center stage.

For this family of three, the true herald of the cold season isn't the first snowfall or the arrival of heavy coats—it is the smell of simmering cocoa and the distinct red-and-white label of a gallon of whole milk from Kylie Melons Market.

"It's our sunset ritual," says Berit Warren, who has perfected the ratio of chocolate to creaminess over a decade of chilly winters. "The kids come in with pink cheeks and cold hands, and they know that as soon as their boots are off, the 'liquid gold' is hitting the stove."

The secret isn't in a fancy brand of cocoa powder, but in the quality of the dairy. By using farm-fresh whole milk from Kylie Melons Market, the beverage achieves a velvety thickness that powdered mixes simply cannot replicate. It's a slow-down moment in a high-speed world—a sweet, steaming comfort that tastes like home.



MadCAAP's B.A.S.E. Camp blends holiday spirit with creative learning



All photos Special to The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

Children at Madison Countians Allied Against Poverty (Mad-CAAP) B.A.S.E. Camp spent the week preparing for the holidays by creating Christmas ornaments and snow globes to decorate the program's tree. The crafting session was made possible by a do-

nation of art supplies. In addition to the decorations, students used fruit, cheese, pretzels, "pigs in a blanket," and candy to construct an edible nativity scene. The B.A.S.E. Camp program is an after-school initiative for elementary school students focusing on bodily, academic, spiritual, and emotional fitness.

For 37 years, MadCAAP has expanded its reach to meet immediate needs and foster hope in Madison County. The organization currently serves approximately 2,800 registered families living below the federal poverty level. Clients receive assistance through a wide range of initia-

tives, including a food pantry, the Helping Hands Garden, the Clothing Closet, and housing repair and emergency assistance programs. MadCAAP also hosts New Attitudes educational classes; completion of 12 class hours allows parents to participate in the "Back to School" and "Holiday Adopt a Child" programs.

MCEDA Visionary Leadership Award given to Prado



Special to The Canton News

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Superintendent Dwight Luckett Sr. and the Canton Public School District Board of Trustees recognized the district's security department during the

December board meeting for its commitment to student and staff safety. The board and superintendent expressed gratitude for the department's diligence and efforts to maintain a secure environment across the district.

The following members of the security department were honored:

- Chief Robert L. Jackson
- Officer Ray Luckett
- Officer Georgia Fortner
- Officer Christina Kelly
- Officer Sherry Black
- Officer Darico Johns
- Officer Cedric Shavers



# What Really Affects Your Credit Score?

*Special to The Canton News*

Your credit score is like your financial report card, and it can make a big difference when you're applying for loans, getting an apartment, or even job hunting. But what actually affects your score?

## The Big Five

1. **Payment History (35%):** This one's huge. Pay your bills on time, every time. Even one missed payment can leave a mark.

2. **Credit Utilization (30%):** This is the amount of credit you're using compared to what you're allowed. Keep balances below 30% of your credit limit,

lower is even better.

3. **Length of Credit History (15%):** Older accounts show lenders you've got experience. Don't close your oldest credit cards unless you have to.

4. **New Credit (10%):** Opening several accounts in a short time? That can ding your score. Be strategic.

5. **Credit Mix (10%):** A healthy mix (like credit cards, student loans, and auto loans) shows you can handle different types of credit responsibly.

## Your Credit-Smart Checklist

- Pay on time, every time.
- Keep those balances low.
- Don't go credit-card-happy.

- Mix it up, but only when it makes sense.



Understanding your credit score is the first step to mastering it. And if you're not sure where to start? Let's talk. We're here to help you build strong credit habits—no judgment, just support. Learn more or connect with us at [veritasfcu.org](http://veritasfcu.org).

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## A photograph of two students sitting on a polished floor in a room decorated for Christmas. The student on the left, a girl with blonde hair wearing a white sweatshirt with 'CENTRAL' on it and a patterned headband, is looking down at a large sheet of paper she is holding. The student on the right, a girl with brown hair in a black t-shirt, is also looking down at a sheet of paper. The background is filled with Christmas decorations, including two large, brightly lit Christmas trees, numerous red and green balloons, and several wrapped gifts. The scene is festive and brightly lit.

Students had been studying their lines and participating in dress rehearsals leading up to the events.

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# CA senior Tillie Oglesbee wins DAR Scholarship Essay Award



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Canton Academy senior Tillie Oglesbee was recently awarded the DAR Scholarship Essay Award for the school.

Her essay was submitted for the national American History Essay Contest, which this year focused on the theme: “Our American heritage and our responsibility for preserving it.”

Oglesbee’s essay was recognized for its creativity, understanding and pride in the theme.

She was honored with a plaque and a monetary award, which were presented by Regent Betsy Sligh of the Doak’s Treaty Chapter and essay coordinator Lynda Flynn.

School officials expressed pride in Oglesbee’s accomplishment, stating, “We are so proud of you, Tillie!”

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# Canton Board of Aldermen tackles infrastructure and public safety

*Special to The Canton News*

The Canton Board of Aldermen convened for two regular meetings in December 2025 to address a range of municipal priorities, from drainage improvements to landfill expansions and holiday observances. Mayor Tim C. Taylor presided over the sessions held at Canton City Hall on Dec. 2 and Dec. 16, where city leaders moved forward on several multi-million dollar projects.

During the Dec. 2 meeting, the board focused heavily on public works and city planning. Members approved the final pay request and contract close-out documents for the City of Canton Drainage Improvements Project, certifying the final completion of the work performed by R&C Services. The

board also reviewed and conditioned a site plan for a Yates Construction Company staging yard and a conditional use exception for a youth baseball and softball training center on Highway 51 South. In preparation for the coming year, officials formally adopted the City of Canton's 2026 holiday calendar and discussed the 2026-2027 fire protection service contract with the Madison County Fire Protection District.



*Special to The Canton News*

The mid-month session on Dec. 16 saw significant movement on landfill operations and city infrastructure. The board considered a resolution to authorize a \$13 million loan from the Mississippi Development Bank for Subtitle D landfill expansion and solid waste improvements. Related landfill actions included the approval of an equipment rental agreement for a waste handling dozer and a payment to Think Creative Intelligence for garbage

collection decals. Public safety also remained a priority, as the board accepted a \$196,500 check from the Madison County Board of Supervisors specifically to restore and modernize the city's tornado warning system.

Additional municipal business included the approval of \$30,000 for roof repairs at the Multipurpose Complex and authorizing the advertisement of the city's upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration scheduled for Jan. 19, 2026. The board also navigated complex local policy by considering a resolution to opt out of the Safe Solicitation Act, a move recently mirrored by several other Mississippi municipalities. Both meetings concluded with executive sessions to discuss personnel matters, prospective litigation, and the potential purchase or sale of land.



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