

**REGION**  
**Not just for the greens**  
 Golf carts become a new status symbol for Oxford residents. **1B**



**BUSINESS**  
**Popping up everywhere**  
 Why is the Oxford area attracting so many different hotel chains? **1D**



**SPORTS**  
**Tigers, Tide differ in SEC**  
 After Auburn's hard loss to Georgia, Alabama able to down Tennessee. **1C**

**WORLD/NATION**  
**Reporter to anti-U.S. spy?**  
 Former congressional aide accused of working with Iraqis. **3A**

# The Anniston Star

CMYK

Friday, March 12, 2004

A home-owned newspaper

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## At least 192 killed in blasts



Peter Dejong/Associated Press

Rescue workers remove victims at the Atocha train station following a blast there. Explosions rocked three train stations Thursday in Madrid.

## 1,400 injured by terrorist bombs on trains in Madrid

**BY MAR ROMAN**  
 Associated Press

**MADRID, Spain** — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession Thursday, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400. Spain at first blamed Basque separatists but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spanish history.

Panicked rush-hour commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Train cars

were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

"March 11, 2004, now holds its place in the history of infamy," Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said.

The bombing came three days ahead of Spain's general election on Sunday. A major campaign issue was how to deal with ETA, the Basque militant group that is seeking greater autonomy.

Campaigning for the election was called off and three days of mourning were declared.

The bombings occurred exactly 2 1/2 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist

attacks in the United States, and was Europe's worst since the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

The attacks also reawakened terrorism fears among investors. Stocks fell in London and in New York, where the Dow Jones industrial average dropped nearly 170 points. On Friday, Tokyo stocks opened sharply lower.

The 10 backpack bombs exploded in a 15-minute span, starting about 7:39 a.m., on trains along nine miles of commuter line from Santa Eugenia to the Atocha terminal, a bustling hub for subway, commuter and long-distance trains

**INSIDE**

After blasts, panicked passengers ran everywhere — including darkened tunnels.

In a country with homegrown terror, investigators struggle to sort out attack.

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## Jacksonville elections heat up — already

**BY BEN CUNNINGHAM**  
 Star Staff Writer

**JACKSONVILLE** — After 12 years of relative stability, city leadership in Jacksonville is set for a shake-up this summer.

Winter's chill hardly has left the air, but campaign season already is warming up, with candidates stepping forward early for an election year in which the mayor's office and two of the five council seats likely will not have incumbents.

Mayor Jerry Smith, who has served in that position since 1998, has said he won't seek re-election. Jacksonville businessman Bill Owens is running, and current Councilman Johnny Smith and former mayoral candidate Buford "Pete" Brooks each have said they're considering running.

The qualifying period for candidates begins July 6 and ends July 20. The election is Aug. 24.

If Johnny Smith runs for mayor, his council seat and that of Evelyn Douthit will be open — the first time in at least eight years so many seats have no incumbent can-

Please see **JACKSONVILLE** | Page 4A

## \$10.3 billion needed to cover cost of care for state employees

**BY AMY SIECKMANN**  
 Star Capitol Correspondent

**MONTGOMERY** — Over the next 25 to 30 years, Alabama taxpayers will have to come up with \$10.3 billion to help cover the health insurance costs of retired state employees and teachers.

The administration had estimated earlier this year that the state would need about \$7.5 billion to cover those costs. But a recent study concluded that, even assuming health care growth is cut in half in the next five years, the actual total will be much higher.

That means that either \$10.3 billion will have to be found — through increased contributions and/or reduced benefits to state employees and teachers — or the state will have to find some tax dollars to meet the cost.

If Alabama did not find the money, it would have to default on its payments to its health care provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and that would mean BCBS could deny claims payments.

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Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Earl Stewart, right, firing boss for the controlled burn on Cheaha Mountain, describes the plan to keep the fires under control.

## ONE HOT JOB



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Leigh Agan's image is distorted by the intense heat from a fire she started along the Scenic Highway on Cheaha Mountain during a U.S. Forest Service controlled burn.

Prescribed burns have gone through 16,000 acres of forest since October

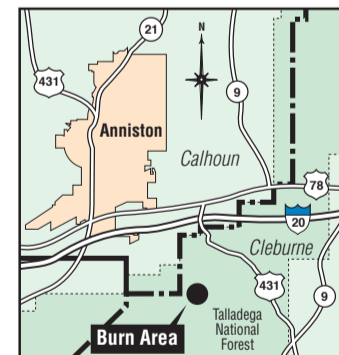
**BY CHARLOTTE TUBBS**  
 Star Staff Writer

**ABEL** — Strings of fire snake through the woods like an unraveled spool of yarn.

They devour crisp leaves, pinecones and honeysuckle, growing stronger and brighter by the second.

Within a few hours, hundreds of acres are blazing and charred, all taking place as planned.

U.S. Forest Service teams burned 2,500 acres across the Talladega National Forest this week, bringing the total number of acres burned since October to 16,000. The controlled fires, known as prescribed burns, are used to reduce underbrush and reinvigorate



David Bone/The Anniston Star

forests. Prescribed burns decrease the chances of wildfires and allow larger trees, such as the longleaf pine, to flourish, according to Forest Service officials.

Thursday, Forest crews burned 795 acres west of the intersection of Cleburne County Road 24 and the Talladega Scenic Highway, also known as Alabama 281, in addition to 486 acres southeast of Munford.

Smaller burns could continue through this weekend and the month, depending on weather conditions. One may take place north of Coleman Lake Recreation Area,

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## Incinerator PCBs tests are set for weekend

EPA officials will be in town to monitor redo

**BY NATHAN SOLHEIM**  
 Assistant Metro Editor

The Army's chemical weapons incinerator will redo parts of critical tests on the incinerator's ability to remove PCBs from its stack emissions this weekend.

Environmental regulators asked for the repeat tests after the incinerator failed by narrow margins parts the original tests, taken back in November.

Several officials with the Environmental Protection Agency will monitor this weekend's tests but will not be available for questions from the press.

Officials said the observers will monitor the tests and help in the investigation to determine the source of PCBs.

"(The Army) needs to meet the standard," said Maria Doa, of the EPA. "We want to work with them so they meet the standard. We want to cooperate with them and to make sure the problems are resolved and thus, they meet the standard."

The incinerator's deactivation furnace, which burns M-55 rocket parts and small amounts of agent, will be tested again for three days starting Sunday. Two preliminary runs are scheduled for Saturday.

Results from the tests will be evaluated by the EPA under the Toxic Substances Control Act, or TSCA, which regulates chemicals such as PCBs. PCBs are present in shipping and firing tubes for M-55 rockets, amounting to less than 1 percent of the overall composition, officials said.

The EPA also asked incinerator officials to study potential sources of PCBs other than the tubes, which could include air, natural gas or gaskets. Officials have been able to rule out some sources,

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+ Anniston, Alabama

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**WEATHER**



Courtney Lance, 2nd grade, Trinity Christian Academy

**MOSTLY SUNNY**  
**HIGH: 61**  
**LOW: 32**

**OBITUARIES**

Infant William Dawson Baker, Oxford  
 Willie Mae Ballard, Ashland  
 Leonard Eugene Brittain, Jacksonville  
 Leonard A. Crawford, Goodwater  
 Mary M. Corby, Talladega

Linda Faye Hamilton, Anniston  
 Hollis Hawkins, Anniston  
 Lovell Jackson, Anniston  
 Retired Navy Rear Adm. William Harold "Tag" Livingston, Texas  
 Annie Mae Madden, Pell City  
 Arlenda Marbury, Anniston  
 Murphy "Turk" Pearson,

Lincoln  
 Ommie Nora Bell Smith, Roanoke  
 Willie Cleve Tanner, Talladega  
 Lizzie Keith Turner, Talladega  
 Eugene Gilbert Williamson, Ashland

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