

Auditor's office arrests three in Jones County

Graham was arrested at the Beat 5 work barn in Jones County, and Barnes was arrested in Covington County. Moffett surrendered himself in Forrest County. The men were arraigned at the Jones County Courthouse in Laurel where bond amounts were set at \$15,000 for Graham and \$5,000 for both Barnes and Moffett. Law enforcement officers from the Jones, Forrest, and Covington County Sheriff's Offices assisted in the arrests.

"Taxpayer resources are supposed to be used for the benefit of the taxpayers as a whole, not for the personal benefit of a politician or a government employee. To use equipment owned by the taxpayers for your personal benefit is the same as stealing, and we take these crimes just as seriously as if someone stole from a bank," said Auditor White. "I'm thankful for the hard work of our investigators for putting a stop to this. Every government employee thinking about committing this kind of fraud should be on notice that we're watching."

If convicted, Graham faces up to 15 years, Barnes faces up to 5 years, and Moffett faces up to 15 years in prison. All persons arrested by the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

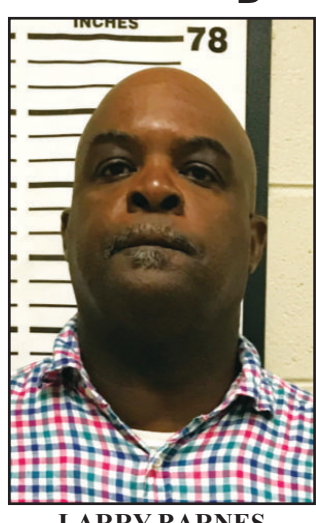
Suspected fraud can be reported to the Auditor's office online any time by clicking the red button at www.osa.ms.gov or via telephone during normal business hours at 1-(800)-321-1275.

Press Release

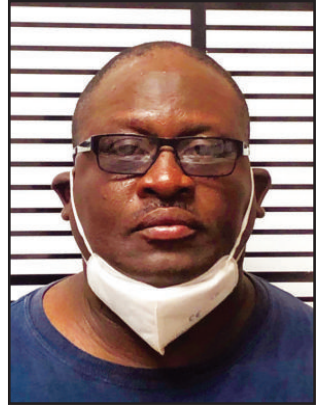
On Monday, July 20, Auditor Shad White announced special agents from his office arrested Jones County District 5 Road Foreman Roland Graham and Larry Barnes. Graham was indicted for fraud or embezzlement and conspiracy to defraud the state, and Barnes was indicted for conspiracy to defraud the state, by a grand jury assembled by District Attorney Anthony Buckley. Demand letters worth a total of \$14,442.18 were delivered at the time of the arrest. The total demand amount includes interest and the cost of the investigation.

Graham and Barnes allegedly entered into a private contract with private landowners to tear down and remove debris using county equipment and county employees. This act resulted in a direct financial loss to Jones County and a benefit, in the form of personal payment for the work, to Graham and Barnes.

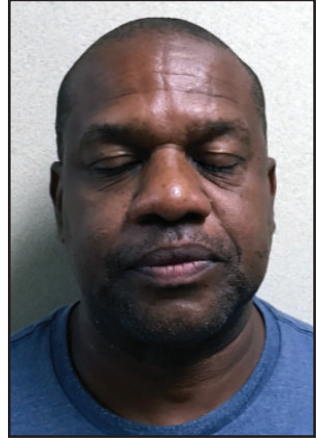
Special agents also arrested Esau Moffett after he was indicted for hindering prosecution. Moffett allegedly entered into a private contract with Graham and Barnes to tear down a private residence. During the investigation, Moffett intentionally provided false information to mislead the agents and then contacted Mr. Barnes to alert him that agents were attempting to identify and locate him.



LARRY BARNES



ROLAND GRAHAM



ESAU MOFFETT

Commissioner Andy Gipson says renovations to the Mississippi Coliseum completed ahead of schedule

Press Release

Mississippi Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Andy Gipson announced the completion of the multi-million dollar ren-

ovations due to COVID-19, the contractors were able to complete the job five months early. I want to once again thank the Mississippi Legislature for their support that

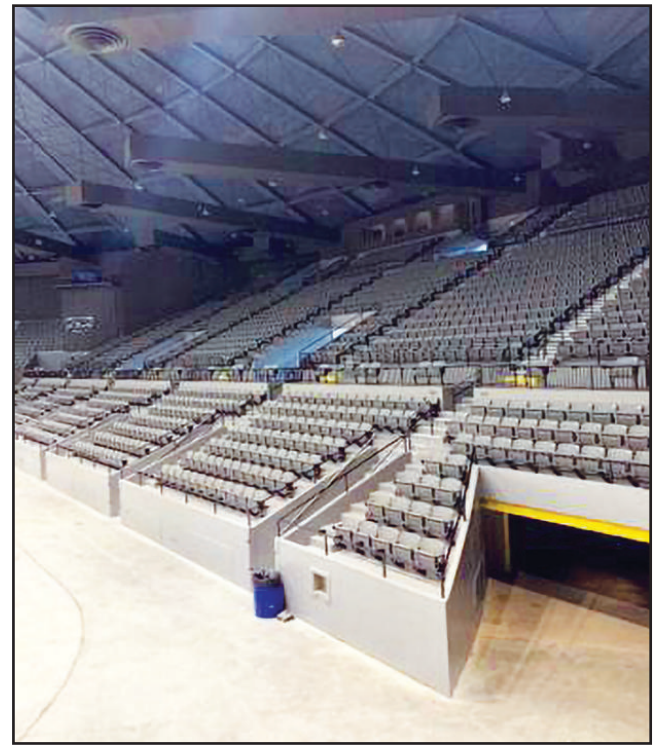
and Son, Inc. was the general contractor.

This investment in the Coliseum provides new and safe aesthetics, conveniences and amenities that will attract new business and groups to the Mississippi Fairgrounds. The Mississippi Coliseum is attached to the new Trade Mart, which will make both facilities more marketable for hosting a wide array of events.

"The safety and security of our guests is our top priority, and these repairs have been completed with that goal in mind," said Michael Lasseter, acting director of the Mississippi Fairgrounds Complex. "Now, we are looking forward to getting back to business and once again hosting some of the state's largest events, in a safe and engaging environment."

The Mississippi Legislature consolidated the Mississippi Fair Commission into the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce effective July 1, 2020. According to Commissioner Gipson, the Mississippi Fair Commission and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce have had a long, beneficial working relationship.

"We have worked so closely together that most in the public and many in state government didn't realize they have been separate agencies. I expect our strong mutual commitment to promoting agriculture, commerce and industry to continue as we move forward together," said Commissioner Andy Gipson. Visit www.mdac.ms.gov/bureaus-departments/state-fairgrounds/ for more information.



The Mississippi Coliseum is the hub for several activities and events that take place on the Fairgrounds every year. It's expansive arena floor of 25,449 square feet is complete with sound and lighting facilities and boasts of seating for 6,500 people at a time.

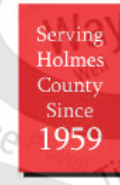
ovation project to the Mississippi Coliseum five months ahead of schedule.

"I am excited to announce the early completion of renovations to the Coliseum on the Mississippi State Fairgrounds," said Commerce Andy Gipson. "Initially, the renovation work was taking place in between scheduled events, but with event can-

made these renovations possible."

The \$2.2 million renovation began in October of 2019 and was to be completed in January of 2021. Renovations included repairing and painting the floors and walls, installing new seating, and adding handrails and reflectors. The floors were equipped with an abrasive, slip-resistant paint to prevent falls and reflectors were specifically placed for the lighting of walkways. Wier Boerner Allin Architecture designed the renovation project and Paul Jackson

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- July 30** - Rosemary Bailey, Wayne Ray, Timeion Butler, Pam Williams, Bryce Purvis, Max Tate
- August 3** - John W. Self, Brandon Cooper, Brendon Quon, Taylor Bishop, Brooks Hill, K'toni Miller, Zack Thornton, Justin Harrell, Matthew Boddu, Rebekah Patrick, Hanna Hood, Bill Sumrall, Irene Scott
- August 4** - Anna Edwards, Josh Killebrew, Jane Smith, Ronnie Chisholm, Isiah Irons, Lauch Buford, Guy Self, Lyndsey Hester, Mary Clayton Burrell, Ryan Cain, Mason Monty, Joan Padgett
- August 5** - Johnathan Jordan, Mike Meeks, Sammy Harrell, Miranda Taylor, Jack Wells, Jeremy Leopard, Paul G. Gilmore, Jr., Rosalind McChriston-Williams, Ella Edwards Benson, Rossie King
- July 31** - Bertha Williams, Mike McBride, Ran'Darius Butler, Avery Rucker, Mollie Rosen Dillenkoffer, Butch Pepper, Shannon Berry, Terrance Miller
- August 1** - Diana Tate, John Christopher Riley, Christina Farmer, Taryn Brown, Thelma Palmer, Cindy White, Caleb Cain, Pastor Ernest Wilson
- August 2** - Justin Kelly, Abbie Parkinson, Allie Park-inson, Georgia Watkins, Richard Barrett, Danny Holt, Vaughn Clutter, Dominique Green, Clarkie McDougald, Jeff Jackson, Jr., Doralyn Killebrew,