

# On the HUNT

Local trophy, new state resources

See page 9

January 8, 2020

The Choctaw

# SUN-ADVOCATE

Choctaw County's Award-Winning Community Newspaper

75¢

## Skelton trial set to begin Wednesday

By Dee Ann Campbell  
Sun-Advocate Publisher

BUTLER -- The trial of Brandon Skelton is set to be heard by Judge Gaines McCorquodale this Wednesday.

Skelton was charged with reckless murder in the death of Matthew Seward, who was killed in a car crash in October, 2014. Skelton was allegedly driving the vehicle at the time of the crash.

Skelton had entered a guilty plea to a lesser charge of reckless manslaughter in March of 2018 and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Following the sentencing, he asked the court to allow him to rescind the plea, citing the lack of information given to him about the sentence. In particular, he said that he had not been properly informed that he would not be eligible to receive 'correctional incentive time' (or 'good time') in order to potentially be released at an earlier date. Judge Robert Montgomery agreed with Skelton's arguments at that time and allowed him to rescind the plea.

Skelton has opted for a 'bench trial' instead of a trial by jury. The case is set for 9 a.m. on January 8.

## TORNADO RECAP

Local properties recovering after storm

■ Washington County listed with most tornado warnings in nation

By Dee Ann Campbell  
Sun-Advocate Publisher

BUTLER, CHATOM – Local residents whose homes were damaged by the tornado that hit Choctaw County on December 16 are now in the process of trying to recover, according to Choctaw Emergency Management Director Tyler Davidson.

"When it was all said and done, there were three residences that had damage," Davidson reported on Tuesday. "One did not have insurance, and the Red Cross has provided some assistance in a few ways."

Davidson said that one of the damaged homes was not a primary residence and the property owner has gained help from others in trying to recover from the storm.

The tornado, officially listed as an EF1 with winds of 110 mph, moved into the county along the state line near Clarke

See **TORNADO**, page 3

## Potential for severe storms this Saturday

By Dee Ann Campbell  
Sun-Advocate Publisher

BUTLER – Weather officials are predicting that the Choctaw County area could see severe weather during the upcoming weekend, and the probability for strong storms has increased.

According to Emergency Management Director Tyler Davidson, updated forecasts as of Tuesday are now showing that the probability of severe weather is now 30% and could continue to rise in the coming days.

"The timing and impact are still several days out," Davidson said. "It is setting up for some strong thunderstorms, and we

See **STORM**, page 4

## 2020 ELECTION



Randy Taylor

## Taylor seeking Choctaw County Commission District I seat

BUTLER -- Randy Taylor of Butler has announced that he will seek election as Choctaw County Commissioner for District 1.

In seeking the position on the Republican ticket, Taylor said that he will bring to the office a wide range of experience, commitment, and a heart for service to lead the county forward.

A 36-year resident of Choctaw County, Taylor moved to the county during his senior year of high school in 1983, after finishing United States Army boot camp. After graduation in 1984, he went on to complete Advanced Army Training in Ft. Leonard Wood, MO.

Taylor attended Mississippi State University in Starkville and continued his education in Meridian after taking a position with Blount International Construction. With Blount Industries, he worked construction on the #7 paper machine expansion in 1985. He then went to work at Cole & Terry, a wholesale grocer in Quitman, MS.

It was then that he first traveled the back roads of Choctaw County, selling groceries from Butler to Bladon Springs.

In 1986 he began a 29-year career at what was then James River Corp., working in several jobs within the mill until he became Team Leader in the Chemical Area in the Pulp Mill.

Taylor was activated in 1991 and served in Desert Storm with the First Infantry Division.

In 2015, he left GP and went to work for Mississippi Power at the Kemper County IGCC Project. His experiences there, he said, have given him insight and knowledge that will be valuable in his role as Commissioner.

"While at Kemper, I learned

See **TAYLOR**, page 6



"Alabama needs a senator who will wake up every day and say 'I'm for the people of Alabama. I'm not up here for any other reason.'"

-- Bradley Byrne

Candidate of U.S. Senate Bradley Byrne visited Choctaw General Hospital in Butler last Thursday. He is pictured with members of the nursing staff, Jody Lindsey, RN, and Russell Edmonds, RN. (Photo by Annie Hutchinson)

## Byrne visits Choctaw General

By Dee Ann Campbell  
Sun-Advocate Publisher

BUTLER – "I want to go to Washington and be the senator for and from the State of Alabama."

Rep. Bradley Byrne, one of seven candidates seeking the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate, visited Choctaw General Hospital in Butler last Thursday,

talking with staff members and visitors about his candidacy and his vision for the office, if elected. In an interview following the tour of the facility, Byrne talked candidly about some of the top issues affecting the state and nation and how he would handle those issues in the U.S. Senate. Included in the topics were infrastructure, healthcare and prescription drug costs, tar-

iffs and trade, and the House of Representative's recent impeachment of President Trump.

Standing in a building that was once a thriving Vanity Fair industry, Byrne talked about the devastating effect that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had on the country, the state, and the county.

"America was hurt – this building was hurt – by NAFTA," Byrne said. "But I think the current

agreement is good for the country."

Byrne said that the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) would provide much-needed benefits to the state, without the dire consequences that were brought about by NAFTA. In particular, the new agreement would help with the

See **BYRNE**, page 8

**PHILLIPS**  
Funeral Home  
Hwy. 17 • Gilbertown (251) 843-529  
Hwy. 17 • Millry (251) 846-6200  
Obituary Line (251) 843-5200

**Franklin Primary Health Center**  
Medical Care  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mon. - Thur  
Dr. Bernita Mims  
251-843-5537  
Dental Care  
Thursday - Friday  
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Dr. Alexander Coleman  
251-843-2152

**Hometown PHARMACY**  
69 W. Main Street Gilbertown, AL 36901  
(251) 843-2400 ~ Fax: (251) 843-2402  
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Closed: Saturday & Sunday

**CHOCTAW THERAPY SERVICES**  
For Your Out-Patient Physical Therapy  
Phone: (205) 459-7655 • Fax: (205) 459-7128  
1951 Riderwood Drive Butler, AL 36904