

METROSTATE

Triple murderer denied
parole for eighth time / 4B

Tuesday
July 20, 2004

B

Community news 3B
Obituaries 5B
Weather 6B

al.com www.al.com/birminghamnews

THE DIGEST



Chris Osborne

Osborne listed fair after amputation

Birmingham television reporter Chris Osborne has been upgraded to fair condition after a motorcycle wreck last week.

Doctors at UAB Hospital on Saturday amputated Osborne's left leg just above his knee.

"Chris is the type of person who accepts challenges and meets them head on," said ABC 33/40 News Director Garry Kelly. "That's exactly his mindset with this. He's made up his mind he's going to move forward."

Osborne joined the ABC 33/40 staff in 1996 as a photographer. He later switched to on-air reporting.

The accident happened just before midnight Thursday at Arkadelphia Road and Eighth Court West. Police haven't released details of the wreck.

The Osborne family has asked for blood donations instead of flowers. Station officials said there has been an outpouring of community support.

Kelly said Osborne told him Sunday night, "Man, there's been enough praying over this bed that the next three or four people in here are going to be in good shape."

Carol Robinson

Hoover reports record revenues

A strengthening economy and record sales tax collections have boosted Hoover's

Judge rejects Jeffco tobacco tax

Ruling affects 7 cities; hearing on revenues set for Aug. 5

By ROBERT K. GORDON
News staff writer

A Jefferson County judge ruled Monday a tobacco tax collected by seven Jefferson County cities is unconstitutional and that any revenue collected was done so illegally.

The ruling affects Bessemer, Hoover, Trussville, Homewood, Hueytown, Vestavia Hills and Mountain Brook.

Circuit Judge Dan King ruled that any money collected should be paid to the Bessemer Division Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

A hearing is set for Aug. 5 to determine what will become of the money. King had ordered when the suit was filed in September and February that all revenue be kept in escrow.

Bessemer has collected about

\$166,000, Mountain Brook \$9,100 and Homewood less than \$10,000 since Jan. 1; Trussville has collected \$68,880 since its tax took effect Oct. 1, according to officials in those cities. Amounts for the other cities were not immediately available.

Lawyers for Jefferson County have asked that the money go to Cooper Green Hospital to treat indigent residents who suffer from tobacco-related illnesses.

The tax was 10 cents per pack of cigarettes, pack of cigars and can of snuff.

The ruling stemmed from a lawsuit filed by state Sen. E.B. McClain, D-Brighton, and the Alabama Wholesale Distributors Association. Efforts to reach McClain were unsuccessful.

The lawsuit claimed that a 1947 state law repealed all taxes levied by Jefferson County cities on tobacco and prevents them from enacting any other taxes on tobacco products. The law bars Jefferson County cities from collecting tobacco

► See Tobacco, Page 5B

Making music is summer fun



Rec centers get funding for another year

By BARNETT WRIGHT
News staff writer

The Birmingham Housing Authority on Monday voted to spend \$284,000 to keep open 13 community centers in public housing communities through the next fiscal year.

Partners in Neighborhood Growth, the program that runs the public housing community centers, notified city officials that PING was prepared to close seven centers earlier this month because of city budget cuts. Mayor Bernard Kincaid ordered that all 13 centers be closed.

The centers closed briefly, but reopened last week after the City Council voted to spend \$180,000 to keep the centers open through August.

Birmingham provides funding for PING, and the Birmingham Housing Authority provides the buildings. The city cut PING's budget 42 percent, from \$684,000 last year to \$400,000 this year.

The BHA voted Monday to make up the difference through the next fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2005.

"It was the right thing to do for the residents of our housing community and those city residents who receive services from PING," said Bert Orum, BHA commissioner.

Ralph Ruggs, executive director of the BHA, said the authority now will begin to look at

► See Centers, Page 4B

THE STUDY OF
TOBACCO AND SOCIETY