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You are welcome to invade our space. Discover a surprise that is our reality. Cherokee County, Alabama: A get away, but not far away.

You just have to experience the spectacular views and winding trails in our backyard. The majestic Cherokee Rock Village, the grandeur of Little River Canyon National Preserve, the rapids on Terrapin Creek and the beauty of Weiss Lake. Then, you know what we know—this is a special and unique place.

Leave the major highway behind, and follow the Appalachian Highlands Byway through some of the untouched areas in Northeast Alabama. Whether you travel along Hwy 9 North, or Hwy 35 East, the roads will bring you through, and to, Cherokee County.

Guided by exceptional local leadership, our future growth is supported by a strong economic, cultural and industrial base. We are particularly proud of the partnership with our community college and health related facilities. A very reasonable tax structure has also proven to be financially energizing and enticing for business and industry.

The Cherokee Chamber of Commerce continues to provide on-going attention and assistance for all its current and potential members. It is our hope you will discover the many resources that deliver great incentives to work, play, and stay with us.

**Join us in setting the course toward progress.**

_Theresa Hulgan_
_Executive Director_
_Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce_

---

**The Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce**
_Cherokee County, Alabama_

gratefully recognizes

**Our Stakeholders**

* Alabama Power
* The Bluffs of Weiss
* Cherokee County Health & Rehabilitation
* Cherokee County Industrial Development
* Weiss Lake Improvement Association
* Advertisers, Contributors, Writers
* All Cherokee County & City Officials
* Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce sponsors & members

with special thanks to...

Dennis Trammell, Conrad Reed & Tracy Page
for their assistance with aerial photography

---

_set your course...come visit one of the most beautiful places in the Southeastern United States._

---

www.cherokee-chamber.org
We believe that offering our collective talents to work within a positive environment encourages thoughtful ideas and cooperative planning. The results promote enthusiastic support for the future growth of Cherokee County.

It is our privilege, as your elected officials, to be dedicated in using our good offices for the betterment of our community. It is our responsibility to serve Cherokee County with integrity, honor and fiscal responsibility for all.

www.cherokeecounty-al.gov
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Opening in 1987, Weiss Lake Realty & Appraisals has served the Weiss Lake community by having the pleasure of introducing many families to their new homes and business owners to their new office or retail space.

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Susan Hincy
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Jill Griffin
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Seated: Shanna Howell, Appraiser
Standing Left to Right:
Sherri Brashear, Owner/Broker;
Joe Brashear, Appraiser;
Top Step: Susan Hincy, Realtor;
Middle Step: Laura St. Clair, Realtor;
Bottom Step: Jill Griffin, Realtor

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www.weisslakerealty.com
BUILDING a Legacy

“Each day, our team is tasked with meeting the often competing needs of individuals, industries and organizations as we manage property around the lake. We work to meet these needs - guided by our license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission - by permitting shoreline structures as well as providing recreational lake access, striving to educate stakeholders about our lake management programs and promoting best management practices that help preserve and protect valuable shoreline resources.”

Dennis Trammell
Team Leader
Weiss Lake Shoreline Management
Alabama Power

Operating Weiss Dam for more than 50 years, Alabama Power’s involvement in Cherokee County goes well beyond the thousands of cubic feet of concrete taming the once wild Coosa River. Since construction on Weiss Dam began in 1958, Alabama Power has been ingrained in the Cherokee County community surrounding the 30,000-acre reservoir, expanding over more than 400 miles of shoreline. The company’s role in the community continues to grow as it works to strengthen Cherokee County further by engaging its communities, working to improve lake enjoyment, helping manage lake access and partnering with local groups to boost the county’s economy.

Community
Since Weiss Dam began operations in 1961, Alabama Power employees have been an active part of Cherokee County. From sitting on local boards, being an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and leading volunteer efforts, employees continue to give back to a community that has welcomed them with open arms and embraced Weiss Lake.

The Alabama Power Foundation, too, is a proud community partner. Working hand in hand with the Weiss Lake Improvement Association (WLIA) and local schools to provide Renew Our Rivers education grants, the Foundation is helping teach students about the importance of river ecosystems. Since the program began in 2004, the Foundation has partnered with teachers to impact thousands of students.

Environment
Along with helping teachers, Alabama Power takes an active role in helping the community make Weiss Lake a beautiful destination for visitors. In 2000, WLIA became one of the first partners in a budding Alabama Power program called Renew the Coosa. That program has grown across four states to become Renew Our Rivers and remove more than 13 million pounds of trash from Southeast waterways. Going strong after more than a decade, thousands of volunteers each year have removed around 200 tons of trash from Weiss Lake.
With boots on the ground, Alabama Power also works hand in hand with county officials concerned about improving water quality. Sitting down with county commissioners and state officials, the company offered the assistance of its Shoreline Management Team in helping identify issues that may impact the lake during the team's routine shoreline monitoring.

Looking toward the future, Cherokee County organizations and residents have played an enormous role in Alabama Power’s recent relicensing efforts for the Coosa River. Through public dialog and local partnerships, the company and the community were able to plan a number of improvements that will positively impact Weiss Lake for decades.

Managing the Shoreline

In 2006, Alabama Power expanded its presence on Weiss Lake by opening a full-time Shoreline Management office in Centre that has focused on two main tasks since – advising residents on how to improve their shoreline property according to Alabama Power’s shoreline management program and helping homeowners bring their existing structures in line with the company’s legacy structure permit program. Each year, Alabama Power’s shoreline management team assists hundreds of residents permits for new shoreline construction and legacy structures and works to maintain shoreline standards across the reservoir.

Along with permitting, the Alabama Power Shoreline Management Team helps provide residents and contractors with shoreline management practices that assist in conserving and protecting valuable shoreline resources. These practices – called best management practices or BMPs – help minimize erosion and stabilize shoreline, create fish and wildlife habitat, improve shoreline aesthetics and contribute to improved water quality.

Economy

A study commissioned by the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce found that Weiss Lake has become an economic driver for the region. For its part, Alabama Power partners with local and state organizations to help promote Weiss Lake as a fishing and recreation destination.

In 2002, WLIA and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) began an annual crappie stocking program that has continued for more than a decade. Working with ADCNR to determine the most beneficial methods for providing a stable spawning bed, Alabama Power holds water levels steady for two weeks each spring, as conditions allow, to help keep Weiss the “Crappie Capital of the World.”

Looking Forward

Proud of the efforts of its employees in Cherokee County, Alabama Power looks forward to continuing and expanding its efforts in the community. From volunteering to shoreline management to helping protect lake ecosystems, the efforts of the company and its employees are aimed at strengthening Cherokee County as the company and community continue their partnership for many years to come.
When John Hyatt first glimpsed a peek of Weiss Lake and the surrounding Piedmont Mountain Range through the thick underbrush of a North Alabama trail ride, his view of the surroundings and vision for the future would be forever changed.

Along with his wife Patsy, a vision was developed as they drove ATVs further up the mountain. John, an Atlanta businessman and Patsy, a college math instructor, were overwhelmed by the views that were surrounding them. As they maneuvered further, they discovered the mountain had amphitheater-like ridge lines, each rising 40 to 60 feet above the next lower ridge line—a perfect topography for maximizing the astounding views. The Hyatts never looked back and a short time later they began the acquisition of what would become 1200 acres of contiguous property, surrounded by the lake on both sides of the mountain.

While managing a growing CPA firm, John’s avocation had been the development and management of real estate. Even with that experience as a backdrop, it would take several more years of exploration and planning for this “home site investment” to become The Bluffs of Weiss—a place to share the Hyatt’s vision of the perfect lifestyle with others looking for an escape to an environment of clean air, no traffic, friendly neighbors and a much lower cost of living. Alabama’s inviting income and property tax structure (50% homestead and second-home exemption) turned out to be just a part of many cost of living benefits.

“"The real attraction for living at The Bluffs is the lifestyle transition which residents have been able to achieve. It’s a lifestyle that seems to support a healthier approach to living, as well as a devotion to building and strengthening relationships with family and friends.”

John Hyatt
Developer and Owner
The Bluffs of Weiss

View from the Hyatt’s porch
Like John and Patsy, everyone who is choosing that “next step” for their lives knows the importance of location considerations such as climate and proximity to family; airports; big-city services; quality healthcare; etc. Fortunately, they found Cherokee County to be located in the center of the ABC triangle, less than two hours from Atlanta, Birmingham and Chattanooga. A good local hospital is just a few miles from The Bluffs and Rome’s hospitals and clinics are just 25 miles away.

With Weiss Lake’s 30,000+ acres almost surrounding this stair-stepped mountain peninsula it wasn’t difficult for The Bluffs’ land planners to design every home site with both lake and mountain views. To make building easier, The Bluffs’ infrastructure provides every home site with completed drives, underground utilities, municipal water, common sewer and fiber optic cable for high speed internet. All home sites have Bermuda grass planted, both for aesthetic appeal as well as erosion control.

The Hyatt’s escape from suburbia has not been lonely. Most weekends, family, friends, grandchildren and their buddies enjoy The Bluffs’ amenities. These include a private fishing lake; hunting preserve; lakeside dock and picnic platform; Conference Cottage, with overnight facilities and a workout center; walking trails; etc. However, the amenity with the most universal appeal (for residents as well as guests) is the community garden and orchard located in a fertile piece of ground that has grown vegetables for well over 100 years.

Today, as they hike the mountain trails of their gated community the Hyatts and their neighbors still marvel at the views, supplemented by the sight of deer, turkey, hawks, quail and eagles which seem to appear almost on cue.

To visit The Bluffs, you’ll find it easily by taking Highway 68 at Cedar Bluff and turning left onto CR 44. After a delightful 2 miles of shoreline to enjoy, the road becomes CR 104. The entrance to The Bluffs is 300 yards on the right. www.thebluffsofweiss.com
CARING for Those who Cared for Us

"Cherokee County Health and Rehabilitation Center and Cherokee Village are more than healthcare facilities. Our residents and their families become our family. Our staff smiles, laughs, and even cries with our residents. Caring for those who cared for us is a calling that comes from the heart."

Cindy Cline
Administrator
Cherokee Health & Rehabilitation

Cherokee County Health and Rehabilitation Center is a non-profit skilled nursing facility, which has been providing care and support for our community since 1960. The Cherokee County Health Care Authority has been the visionary behind the facility expanding over the years to the complex it is now. The complex covers 26-acres, and provides employment to over 300 employees (making it one of the largest employers in the county). Our specialized professionals and state-of-the-art facility, provide a welcome solution for the individuals and families of Cherokee and all surrounding counties.

The vast levels of care provided within the walls of Cherokee County Health and Rehabilitation Center set it apart from all others. CCHRC has specialized and highly trained professionals that provide care on every level of short-term and long-term care.

The Rehab Center of Cherokee is a 16-bed short-term care/rehabilitation unit that provides advanced medical treatment. Built in 2005, the unit has been highly successful by offering a wide variety of rehabilitative services including physical, occupational, and speech therapy. The facility is equipped with a large gym as well as a separate entrance for convenience. The Rehab Center of Cherokee receives accolades for the care and their ability to prepare residents to return home to their normal every day routines.

When it comes to long-term care, CCHRC continues to be able to provide the best care with unique units such as the 34-bed secure Alzheimer's Unit. The unit was designed specifically for those individuals in the early to mid-stages of Alzheimer's and/or dementia. Every detail from the color of the walls to the 28-foot vaulted ceilings, circular floor design, and shadow boxes were carefully chosen to provide a safe and stimulating environment. The staff is carefully selected and specially trained to care for individuals with memory problems.

Cherokee County Health and Rehabilitation Center also offers excellence in long-term nursing care for our residents who need medical, rehabilitative, restorative, and/or respite care. Each resident receives physician-guided care from the expertise of our Medical Director, Dr. Byron Nelson. CCHRC also has an On-Site Nurse Practitioner, as well as Registered Nurse Supervision around the clock. Our Activities Department offers a wide variety of activities from the popular bingo and Beauty Shop to Cruising, Fishing, Senior Prom and even Wii tournaments (to name a few). They encourage families to participate and even host meals for Residents and their families during the holidays. Meals are planned by a Registered Dietician and prepared based on individual dietary needs. CCHRC takes pride in offering the environment and care individuals require for their desires, needs and lifestyle as a resident. The residents and their families are encouraged to participate in care starting at the time of admission. Freedom of choice and promoting quality life, are some of the leading factors that drive and inspire the staff of CCHRC.
Our long-term care options include a Private Room wing built in 2011, as well as a number of other private rooms and our spacious semi-private rooms. Whatever you desire for long-term care, you will find it at CCHRC.

In addition to being certified for Medicaid and Medicare admissions, CCHRC also works with families with Private Insurances. Often times, families are overwhelmed with the transition and financial guidelines set in place by Medicaid and insurance companies. During this transitional time, our team of Benefits Specialists is here to ease the burden of that process. They are extremely knowledgeable regarding the enrollment process with Medicaid and offer step-by-step assistance to families and sponsors. Having received recognition for their knowledge from even the state Medicaid office, the facility has the utmost confidence in their financial team to resolve any and all concerns one may have.

CCHRC also realizes that financial issues are not the only concern sponsor’s may face. Our Social Services department supports both residents and families with resources for emotional and personal needs. A chaplain is also available to provide residents, families, and staff opportunities for comfort and support during difficult times or even to celebrate life’s accomplishments. CCHRC also recognized that an Alzheimer’s diagnosis not only affects the diagnosed individual but it has a great impact on the lives of their family and loved ones. With that in mind, CCHRC offers an Alzheimer’s Support Group that offers compassion and the ability to share your experiences with others that face similar obstacles. The Alzheimer’s Support Group, led by Margaret Eubanks, is a nationwide leader in the National Alzheimer’s Association. In the last 3 years, our local Support Group has raised over $25,000.00 for the National Alzheimer’s Association. These funds go toward research for Alzheimer’s disease.

In addition to offering assistance to families and the community, CCHRC believes in offering special benefits for the employees. Kidz-Care Daycare is a daycare provided on campus for employee use. Employees are able to have peace of mind that their children are being cared for nearby. One main perk is that employees also receive a discounted price. “It is a wonderful asset for the facility employees and I am so happy that we are able to offer such a great thing” says Administrator Cindy Cline.

The complex also is home to Cherokee Village Assisted Living, a 52-bed facility that offers both, Assisted Living and Specialty Care Assisted Living. Our Assisted Living is perfect for individuals who need some assistance with daily activities, and our Specialty Care is ideal for those needing more than average assistance with their daily routine. Cherokee Village offers personalized assistance, supportive services and compassionate care in a professionally managed, carefully designed community setting. It is the main focus of Cherokee Village and its staff to make certain that each resident remains as independent as possible while receiving the assistance they need. With so much to offer, it is clear why Cherokee Village is widely known. With daily activities consisting of exercise, cruising, gardening, singing, and much more, Cherokee Village keeps the resident’s physical, mental and social well-being as top priorities.

CCHRC and Cherokee Village are more than healthcare. Cindy Cline says, “Our residents and their families become our family. Staff smiles, laughs, and even cries with our residents. Caring for those who cared for us is a calling that comes from the heart.”

www.cchrc.net
A Natural ADVANTAGE

“The work of the Cherokee County Industrial Development Authority lies in the continued mission of promoting growth and encouraging new business development in Cherokee County. The constant remains in drawing the attention of new industry, expansion and the possibility of economic projects. The goal is to help create and sustain employment opportunities for the betterment and good of the community as a whole.”

LUANNE HAYES
Executive Director
Cherokee County
Industrial Development Authority

Cherokee County has what the Industrial Development Authority is pleased to refer to as a “natural advantage.” It derives from being located at the foothills of the sprawling Appalachian Mountains, yet allowing only just a short drive to Birmingham, Huntsville, Atlanta and Chattanooga.

The work of the Cherokee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) lies in the continued mission of promoting growth and encouraging new business development in Cherokee County. The constant remains in drawing the attention of new industry, expansion and the possibility of economic projects. The goal is to help create and sustain employment opportunities for the betterment and good of the community as a whole.

The IDA is a non-profit association and is guided by eleven volunteers and one full-time director. With those natural advantages of location, environment and climate, business incentives are plentiful to offer existing and future industries.

Business Attraction

In addition to the moderate climate, there are excellent tax incentives for qualified new and expanding businesses. These incentives can provide up to $2,500 per permanent employee in tax credits that may be applied to a company’s income tax liability. Funding and assistance programs are accessible for many, and new and expanding businesses can appreciate the business boosts that may come in the form of state grants and loan programs or from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

There is a growing workforce of more than 60,000 employees in Cherokee County and surrounding area. More than half of these work-ready employees are considered underemployed and currently looking for advancement—willing to train for better opportunities.

Educated Workforce

Cherokee County workforce development and the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce work together conscientiously so that recruitment programs may be readily available for the local workforce. Also beneficial, Gadsden State Community College has become a vibrant educational resource, conveniently located within the heart of Centre. Customized workforce training programs are offered as part of the curriculum.
The Bevill Center for Advanced Manufacturing Technology has many programs on advanced manufacturing such as blueprint reading, computer-aided design and robotics. AIDT, a statewide program that provides training assistance to new industries, has much to offer applicants.

At the Cherokee County Career and Technology Center, students are pleased to find leadership development courses, pre-employment screening and training available as well as other significant programs designed so that high school students may have a jumpstart on chosen career paths. The center offers programs such as carpentry, automotive service technology and health care science technology.

Companies offering technical careers are one of the largest employers in Cherokee County. The largest employer is manufacturing, followed by retail and health care.

Land Available

With building sites and acreage bountiful in Cherokee County, the Centre Industry Park and the Leesburg Industry Park hold attraction for their availability. Currently, 76 acres are available, all zoned for the sole purpose of industry development...conveniently located for easy access to and from major roads and interstate arteries.

The draw to Cherokee County is indeed a natural one. The advantage of location, climate, workforce and talent is ample. And, the list of attributes is long. With the record of lower crime rates, lower property rates, the recreational resources of Weiss Lake, educational facilities, and the hospitality of its citizenry, the Cherokee County Industrial Development Authority has much to talk about…and to offer new business and industry as a natural option.

Benefits of Locating in Cherokee County, Alabama

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<th>Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Great Tax Incentives</td>
<td>Qualifying new and expanding businesses may benefit from more tax incentives in Cherokee County due to the county’s designation as an Enterprise Zone. This program allows for lower thresholds income tax incentives and provides up to $2,500 per permanent employee in tax credit to be applied to a company’s income tax liability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Funding and Assistance Programs</td>
<td>New and expanding businesses in Cherokee County may qualify for assistance through statewide grant and loan programs, as well as TVA programs. Companies may qualify for loans with lower rates, and grants are available to county and local municipalities to help prepare sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available, Hardworking Workforce</td>
<td>Cherokee County and its surrounding region have more than 60,000 available workers with over 40,000 of those workers identified as being underemployed workers who are looking for better jobs. The majority of these underemployed workers are willing to train for a new or better job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Workforce Programs and Nearby Schools</td>
<td>Businesses located in Cherokee County have access to quality workforce development and recruitment programs. Many of these programs are developed from feedback from area industries and are offered both on campus and on-site at the company’s location. Additionally, the county is near many 2-year and 4-year schools, including Gadsden State Community College Cherokee, which is located in Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Location &amp; Demographics</td>
<td>Cherokee County is located in Northeast Alabama, sharing a border with Georgia. The county’s location puts it two hours or less from Atlanta, Birmingham, Chattanooga, and Huntsville and less than seven hours from ports in Charleston (SC), Savannah (GA), Jacksonville (FL), and Mobile (AL).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Economic Benefits</td>
<td>Cherokee County residents enjoy the benefits of lower costs of living, lower crime rates, affordable housing, and family-friendly communities. They enjoy a naturally beautiful environment that includes the opportunity for incredible mountain top or lake views from their homes. They enjoy all of this, while still having close access to big city amenities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Crime Rates</td>
<td>Due to the smaller size of its communities, Cherokee County has a lower crime rate as compared to large metropolitan areas. Statistics for Cherokee County’s crime rates can be found at the FBI Crime Data website and, for more information, visit the Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Housing Costs</td>
<td>Cherokee County offers a wide variety of housing options ranging from condominiums and town homes to luxury houses on the lake. Housing options and pricing differs between each city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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“Our mission is to maintain, protect and enhance the quality of Weiss Lake and its fisheries—for today’s generation, and future generations, to enjoy.”

Carolyn Landrem
President
Weiss Lake Improvement Association

Considered to be an element that is critical to sustaining life on Earth, water is also the key ingredient to the good life enjoyed by residents and visitors to Cherokee County Alabama. The mighty Coosa River has traversed through Cherokee County, well, since documented explorations. However, a little more than half a century ago Alabama Power erected its huge concrete dam outside Leesburg, thus creating Weiss Lake—fed not only by the Coosa, but the Chattooga and Little Rivers.

The organization of Weiss Lake Improvement Association (WLIA) has taken a leading role in protecting the resource, which is the lifeblood of Cherokee County. Carolyn Landrem, president of the WLIA says the lake is critical to the economy of Cherokee County because it draws fisherman from all over the U.S., and approximately 450,000 people visit the lake each year. Over the last five decades, the lake has become the number two economic driver of the county. Tourism and other lake activities rank only behind agriculture in terms of its economic contribution. The Alabama Department of Conservation has reported that more out of state fishing licenses are sold in Cherokee County than any county in the state.

“We depend on the fishermen—and they depend on the quality of water. The higher quality and quantity of fish they catch determines how often they come back, and how long they stay,” says Landrem.
Centre Mayor, Tony Wilkie believes that the WLIA has been a major player in the effort to maintain a “clean, full and well-stocked lake.” The City of Centre is one of some 300 members of the organization since it was created as a committee of the Chamber of Commerce in 1997. Many different fish populate the lake, such as both black and white crappie, large and small mouth bass, spotted bass and striped bass. WLIA concerned about fish population partnered with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to develop a re-stocking program for Crappie.

Each year, fishermen enjoy a crappie rodeo sponsored by the WLIA and local businesses. It is designed to emphasize the fun of fishing, welcoming back fishermen and introduce newcomers to Weiss Lake. Tagged fish are released into the lake, which, when caught, award merchandise and hefty cash prizes up to $1,000. This event runs February 15 to May 15 each year.

As important as the fishery is to the lake, water quality issues have also been important to the leadership of the WLIA. The group participates in the Alabama Water Watch program, which enlists, then trains citizen volunteers to conduct water quality testing on a monthly basis.

**Stakeholder**

WLIA conducts several education events during the year to promote conservation and water quality. These events include a water festival for all fourth grade students, rain barrel workshops, and Renew Our Rivers. Hundreds of volunteers participate in the ROR project, which includes students from County Schools, to remove litter from the lakeshore and roadways.

WLIA works with local, state and federal agencies on quantity and quality water issues. Weiss stands beautifully ready to accommodate the boater, fisherman and water enthusiast year round. WLIA works to promote good stewardship of our land and water resources.

*As important as the fishery is to the lake, water quality issues have also been important...*

[www.weisslakeimprovementassociation.org](http://www.weisslakeimprovementassociation.org)
Steamboats on the Coosa

It was the fourth of July 1845. The first steamboat to ply the waters of the Coosa River arrived from Cincinnati. A man named Squire Bogan, from Cedar Bluff, painted USM Coosa onto the sides of the engine house. He was one of the only educated men in the town. Coosa was steamed down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. Then through the Gulf of Mexico, up the Mobile and Coosa Rivers, finally settling in Wetumpka.

The route from Rome, Georgia to Gadsden and Greensport, Alabama was vital, and it was the path taken by USM Coosa. Mail, freight and passengers were frequently transported between these towns, stopping throughout Cherokee County.

In 1849 the Coosa River Steamboat Company bought the USM Coosa. Rome became the center of steamboat construction for the Coosa River. In 1855 a well-known riverboat captain, Francis Marion Coulter of Freedom, Pennsylvania, came to town. Under his direction more than a dozen steamboats would ply the Coosa waterways. One of the most famous of his steamers was The Magnolia.

Steamers in Alabama were critical to the economic development of antebellum Alabama. There were few adequate roads, so the abundant rivers in Alabama provided the perfect route to transport goods across the state. The cotton-based economy flourished.

More than 40 steamers traveled the waterways of the Coosa River in the years before the Civil War.

“As the first steamboat of soldiers left Cherokee County, Alabama in 1861 the whole countryside turned out to see them off to the war. It had come at last—the War Between the States.” Nellie Jane Watt of Cedar Bluff wrote this about her mother, Emma Chastillette (Williamson) Watt, in a series of stories for the Cherokee County Herald. Watt was just a little girl as she watched her two brothers and five uncles head off to war.

During the Civil War the waterways provided logistical support for both the Confederacy and Union, as did the railroads. By 1860 there were more than 30,000 miles of railroad tracks in America.

The railway gained even more popularity after the war because it was fast and reliable. Competition from the railroads after the Civil War and the invention of automobiles in the twentieth century eventually led to the end of the Steamboat era. But after dominating for decades, the steamboat had permanently left its mark on American history.


When Cotton Was King in Cherokee County

Steamboat Alabama loads cotton bales on the Coosa.
The next time you have a day with nothing special planned to do, you can make it special without a lot of effort. Hop in your vehicle and visit history in a day by touring the historic sites of Cherokee County. Many of these venues are passed every day without realizing just what importance they hold in the history of this great area of northeast Alabama.

Cherokee Historical Museum

The Cherokee County Historical Museum is located on Main Street in downtown Centre. It holds a wealth of artifacts and displays that help visitors to understand significant facts in the evolution of today’s Cherokee County and the lives and lifestyles of early residents depicted in displays of old local newspapers, shotguns, wagons, Indian artifacts, doll collections, celebrity memorabilia, housewares, telephones, photographs and railroad artifacts. Also on display is a collection of Folk Art of the region.

Cornwell Furnace located near Cedar Bluff served an important role in the making of cannons for the South during the Civil War.
Furnaces, Forts and Cherokee Indians
Cornwall Furnace is located on 1200 County Road 251 in Cedar Bluff. The Cornwall Furnace Park is owned and operated by the Parks and Recreation Board of Cherokee County. Built by the Noble brothers of nearby Rome, Georgia, this cold blast furnace supplied their foundry with the iron needed to manufacture cannons. Their factory was responsible for supplying the cannons to the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. Today it stands quietly in a beautiful park, a reminder of this part of American history.

Located on Cherokee County Road 48 approximately 2.6 miles off Highway 273 is the Round Mountain Furnace site. Erected by Moses Stroup in 1853, the furnace also supplied iron for cannons and equipment used by Confederate forces. Unlike Cornwall, today only the bronze marker designating the location as a National Register site is present where the furnace once stood.

Barry Springs is located in the northern part of Cherokee County and is named after Richard Barry who settled there around 1838. There is a large spring at the site that feeds into Mill Creek which runs through the property. When the removal of the Cherokee Indians began in April 1838, United States troops built three removal forts in Alabama. Fort Payne was built in Dekalb County. The other two forts were built in Cherokee County. Fort Lovell is thought to have been located near Cedar Bluff at present day Williamson Island. Fort Likens was established at Barry Springs in northern Cherokee County. The fort would have been constructed in early April, 1838 and is believed to have consisted of a large circular structure built of chestnut logs surrounding the stockade. In recent years archeological excavation has uncovered artifacts related to this era in history at the Fort Likens site.

All Cherokee Indians including men, women and children living in the area surrounding the fort would have been rounded up and held there until they were sent to Fort Payne. There are few remaining records relating to Fort Likens, 64 to 72 soldiers would have likely manned Fort Likens and they would have slept in tents. In October 1838, the Cherokees housed at Fort Payne set out on their long march to Oklahoma that became known as the Trail of Tears. Nothing remains of Fort Likens but the spring is visible from County Road 99. The site is on private property and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Please respect the property owner’s rights and do not traverse without permission.

Start your journey into history at the Cherokee Historical Museum located in downtown Centre.

When General Nathan Bedford Forrest Visited Cherokee County
A stone obelisk constructed on the site where U.S. Col. Abel Streight’s surrender to Confederate States General Nathan Bedford Forrest stands roadside on Highway 9, between Cedar Bluff and the Alabama/Georgia state line.

Streight’s Raid took place from April 19 to May 3, 1863, in northern Alabama. It was led by Col. Abel D. Streight, whose goal was to destroy parts of the Western and Atlantic railroad and the supply houses in Rome, Georgia, which were supplying the Confederate Army of Tennessee. The raid was poorly supplied and planned, and ended with the defeat and capture of Streight and his men at Cedar Bluff, Alabama by Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Streight was additionally hindered by locals throughout his march, while pursued by Forrest, who had the advantage of home territory and the sympathy and aid of the local populace, most famously Emma Sansom.
Historic Homes

The Major Chisholm Daniel House is listed in the Alabama Register for its military history and its architectural significance. Major Chisholm Daniel built it around 1835 after his family moved here from North Carolina. It is considered to be the oldest existing home in Cherokee County.

The Daniels were some of the earliest white settlers in the area. According to a letter written by Major Daniel’s nephew, the family purchased the land from the Cherokee Indians. The house is a dogtrot log cabin. The dogtrot was enclosed and weatherboards were added on the exterior at a later date. Major Daniel served in the War of 1812. The structure serves as an excellent example of a mid-19th century house and retains much of its original physical features and historic character.

This house may have served as the headquarters of Confederate General John Bell Hood in 1864. It is still owned by the Daniel family. The house is located near Little River on Highway 273.

Historic Final Resting Places

Garrett Cemetery: This is the first cemetery in Cherokee County listed on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register, which features 313 cemeteries statewide. It lies on the banks of the Coosa River off College Street in Centre, Alabama.

Garrett Cemetery is a beautiful resting place of many prominent early settlers. Most notably, Chief Pathkiller is buried here. Pathkiller was the last of the principle chiefs for the Cherokee Nation who followed traditional Cherokee culture. After Pathkiller, the Cherokee began assimilating into Euro/American culture. He also fought under Col. Gideon Morgan in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and was honored for his service to the American military.

Pathkiller was a successful farmer, plantation owner and ferry operator.

Moshat Cemetery: Moshat Cemetery is also known as Laney Cemetery. It is located on County Road 83 (approximately 3.8 miles from the intersection of U.S. Hwy 411 and U.S. Hwy 9.) Moshat Cemetery is approximately 1/8 mile on the left across from Moshat Baptist Church.

George J. Edgens, Serg Co. D 1st South Carolina Infantry of the Confederate States of America Army is buried here. He is thought to have fired the first shot at Fort Sumter S.C. in the Civil War.

Pratt Cemetery: This cemetery is a public park in Centre. On the west edge of town, on the north side of CR 265/ Old Hwy 411.

John Jonathan Pratt, who invented what is believed to be the first typewriter, resided in Centre until the eruption of the Civil War preventing financing for his machine known as the pterotype. He moved to England where he secured the patent. Pratt died in 1905 and is buried at Pratt Cemetery.
Tracing History

If you would enjoy a day spent in family history, there are two resources in Cherokee County that may be of assistance in area genealogical research.

The Cherokee County Public Library has an excellent Genealogy Department with many resources. The Cherokee County Historical Museum has many of the county’s old records stored upstairs, however, you must be a member of the museum to access those records. The Cherokee County Public Library’s genealogy department has a wide-ranging reputation for its extensive collection. During each of the past five years, residents of more than three dozen states have done research in the library’s genealogy department.

The genealogy department’s collection includes census records for many states dating to the 1840’s, copies of the Heritage books (genealogical resources) for all 67 Alabama counties, bound copies of Cherokee County newspapers from the past 75 years, microfilmed copies of many earlier newspapers, hundreds of family histories and published records from northeast Alabama and northwest Georgia and vertical files with thousands of brochures, photographs, newspaper clippings, event programs, early maps and school histories.

The library is open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and from 8:00 a.m. until noon on Saturdays. A small park (Morrison Memorial—named for the donor of the land for the library) is located across the street from the front of library and has picnic tables and pavilions often used by library patrons and other area residents and visitors.

For more information on the history of Northeastern Alabama and its people contact:
Cherokee County Public Library, 310 Mary Street, Centre, AL 35960, www.cheaharegionallibrary.org
Cherokee County Historical Museum, 101 East Main St., Centre, AL 35960, www.museumatcentre.com
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Agriculture
with a 21st Century Twist

While Weiss Lake is the most visible generator of the county’s economy, agriculture, a traditional economic sector, continues to play a vital role in Cherokee County. It is increasingly, however, oriented toward the service industry that now powers much of the economy of the southeastern U.S.

Two large wholesale greenhouses/nurseries, Bama Green and Dixie Green, provide products to businesses and organizations across the Southeast. From its three acres of heated greenhouses, family-owned and operated Bama Green supplies independent retail garden centers with a variety of plant products.

Dixie Green, which is also family owned and operated, has some 500,000 square feet of indoor growing space and about 265,000 square feet of outside growing space covering approximately 12 acres. Dixie Green supplies other wholesale greenhouses, as well as
individual garden centers, schools, clubs and parks across the Southeast. Co-owner Hank Richardson began Dixie Green, Inc., in 1974 with one greenhouse and a camper shell on a pickup truck. Today, his poinsettias brighten the holidays at Disney World. “Our plants are sold regionally to large chain stores,” Richardson says. “We’ve been selling to Disney World for about 20 years. Poinsettias grown down in Florida don’t hold up as well as what we can produce up here. Disney tries to buy local, and we’re one of the very few out-of-state vendors.”

Don’t, however, discount the importance of a long time agricultural staple like cotton. Although only one gin, Cherokee Gin and Cotton Company, operates in the northeast Alabama area of Cherokee, Etowah and Calhoun counties, 2012 was a record year for cotton production, according to co-owner Richard Lindsey. Lindsey is a third-generation Cherokee County cotton grower and ginner. The cotton was produced on approximately 24,000 acres, mostly in Cherokee County, but with some of the acreage in the adjoining counties of Etowah, DeKalb, and Calhoun in Alabama as well as a small amount in Floyd County, Georgia. Cherokee Gin is primarily owned by the George Jordan family and the Lindsey family.
Residents and visitors to Cherokee County have a wide range of available activities: holiday and musical events, festivals, water sports, parks, athletic events and historic sites.

FESTIVALS & Attractions

CHEROKEE COUNTY CHRISTMAS PARADE—CENTRE
The annual holiday parade, a community tradition since 1958, follows a route along Main Street in downtown Centre, generally at 10:00 a.m. on the first Saturday in December. The parade entries include floats by schools, churches, clubs, businesses; hundreds of horses and many horse and mule-drawn wagons; marching bands; service organizations; elected officials; antique automobiles and tractors; Scouts; cheerleaders and athletic teams' members; fire and rescue trucks; and Santa and helpers throwing candy to youngsters along the parade route. Spectators may line the street at any point along the parade route—and there are valuable cash prizes for the winning floats.

CHRISTMAS TOUR OF HOMES—CEDAR BLUFF
The tour is held on the first Sunday afternoon in December and features four to five homes/businesses decorated in holiday style. The tour is sponsored by the Women's Club of Weiss Lake. A small admission charged benefits the club's service projects.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTING IN THE PARK—CEDAR BLUFF
Activities for children and adults begin in mid-afternoon with the grand finale coming with the lighting of the park's decorations at dark. This much anticipated event is generally held on the first Saturday in December and is sponsored by the Twentieth Century Club.

CHEROKEE COUNTY EASTER EGG HUNT—CEDAR BLUFF
The hunt for colorful Easter eggs is held annually at Cedar Bluff Town Park from 1:30 pm—“until” on the Saturday before Easter and is an afternoon filled with music, entertainment and prizes. The egg hunt is sponsored by the Twentieth Century Club and is for children through third grade.
HALLOWEEN IN THE PARK—CEDAR BLUFF TOWN PARK
This “frightful” evening begins at dusk. Those who “dare” to attend will enjoy entertainment, prizes, games and refreshments. The event is open to all Cherokee County youngsters and is sponsored by the Cedar Bluff Police Department and the Twentieth Century Club.

CENTRE FALL FESTIVAL
The festival is held on the first Saturday in October each year along Main Street in downtown Centre from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Vendors offer a variety of food, games for children and arts and crafts. In addition, the fall festival parade features floats, walking units, horses, wagons, antique autos and tractors and fire department trucks.

LIBERTY DAY IN CEDAR BLUFF
This annual summer extravaganza is held each year on the last Saturday before the fourth of July at the town park (under the water tower) in Cedar Bluff from 9:00 a.m. through the 9:00 p.m. fireworks show which is conducted over Weiss Lake. The fireworks show is one of the largest in the state and draws more than 15,000 viewers along the roadway, the lake shores and in parks. Hundreds of spectators travel by boat to view the colorful fireworks. Booths in the park feature art, crafts, food, games, puppet shows, musical entertainment, clothing and items for the home and garden.

LEESBURG DAY
A unique early fall event, Leesburg Day is generally held the first or second Saturday after Labor Day in September in and around the town pavilion. Vendors offer an array of food, games, arts and crafts, clothing and decorator items. There is also an antique tractor and auto show and a motorcycle exhibit. The highlight of the day is the crowning of Mrs. Leesburg—the town’s oldest lady—who has not already won the honor.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS
AVENUE OF FLAGS
On each patriotic holiday, more than 400 large American flags are displayed in the median along U.S. Highway 411 from Leesburg to Centre. Each flag has been donated in memory of an area military veteran. At the base of each flag is a marker listing the name and era of service for the honored veteran. The Avenue of Flags is a project of the Spirit of Cherokee organization. The flags have been displayed since 1978.

CHURCHES
More than 100 churches are located in Cherokee County. Many of the churches were established in the 1830s and 1840s.

BED & BREAKFAST / LODGING
THE SECRET B & B
Perched atop Lookout Mountain lies The Secret Bed & Breakfast Lodge. From the lodge enjoy a spectacular view by day and enchanting view by night. With the 180-degree panoramic view of the foothills, valleys, and beautiful Weiss Lake below, your visit will be one to remember.

CHESTNUT BAY
Chesnut Bay offers just what you are looking for in vacation and weekend getaway value. Whether you are ready for a great fishing trip, boating, a family vacation, or just a convenient and quiet weekend away, Chesnut Bay Resort offers resort amenities you expect, in a quiet lakeside community.
A community that appreciates the arts and their artists truly enjoys a greater quality of life. Works of art serve to enrich the populace by evoking pleasure or emotion, presenting beauty or spurring thought and discussion among the people who witness it.

Cherokee County Alabama is fortunate to have several individuals whose works in the visual arts are outstanding and recognized by more than just the residents who live within the locality’s borders.

The mediums range from pen and ink to acrylics and oils and even, hand-blown glass.

Cloud Farrow

Local artist Cloud Farrow’s handiwork is spread all over Cherokee County and to many, many points beyond, with customers from Savannah, Ga., through the Carolinas, Tennessee and Alabama and even Canada.

A series of his drawings of circuit judges dating back to the 1800s adorns the walls in the courtroom at the county courthouse and young artists-in-training learn the art of pencil sketching from Farrow in classes instructed by this busy artist at the public library in Centre.

A Birmingham native who retired to Weiss Lake in 2003, he persistently waves off praise, insisting that his detailed, almost life-like pencil sketches are mere “doodles.”

With retirement under way and a new home in Sand Rock, Farrow was at a loss for what he might do for extra income. He prayed for guidance. His wife’s suggested that he sell some of his pictures, but Farrow simply did not believe his style would sell.

“But I knew that when God closes one door, he will open another,” he said. “When a Canadian couple, passing through the area, saw my pictures displayed at the café in Sand Rock and bought several of them, I was fired up.”

The pair chose a print of Cobia’s Mill and a print of a tree at Cherokee Rock Village.

He has drawn pictures “ever since I could remember” and had no idea that people would buy any of his art. Now, years later, the Lord’s answer to his prayer has opened doors into a new world that is bringing him acclaim for his drawings of historical subjects.
The genial artist does his work from photographs. Although Farrow prefers pen and ink drawings, he also works in watercolor, graphite pencil, color pencil, charcoal or whatever his client prefers.

Farrow realized that children of his area were not getting art lessons and collaborated with Cherokee County Public Library to begin a beginner’s art class for ages 8 to 14 that at times include adults who come to sit-in on a class.

Farrow teaches the linear and value aspects of drawing. Some of the students even use acrylic and oils. According to Farrow, “some students are very talented; some can’t draw but just want to learn; we have a great time together.” The classes are free.

Farrow is a member of the Cherokee County Historical Society, The Cherokee County Council for the Arts and the Mentone Area Art Council.

**Cal Breed**

Cal Breed’s parents were an artist and an engineer, and he has spent his artistic life trying to blend those two talents into his own. He works to combine the creative with the mechanical, the expressive with the critical.

In 1994, he began to venture into the world of glass. He spent months as an apprentice to Cam Langley, one of the South’s very few hot-glass artists. He became entranced by the medium of glass and the process by which it is made. As he developed his skills, Breed studied with a variety of glass masters from around the U.S., working to develop as a designer and craftsman.

Breed built glass-making equipment and today designs his glass lines - Studio Series and Signature Series - in his own Orbix Hot Glass studio. All of his designs pay close attention to proportion, color, purity and form and each is crafted with specific intention to the details innate to glass. The Studio Designs use simple overlapping techniques to create optical distortions, and highlight contrasts of rich and vague color. The Signature Designs, mainly defined by multiple transparent incalmo bands, employ color gradients and optical density to express breathtaking arrangements. Both are truly beautiful examples of the glass blowers art.

His beautiful works have been featured in *Southern Living, Food & Wine, InStyle* and *O Magazine*. He was a nominee for The Martha Stewart Audience Choice Award in 2013.

Cal and his wife, Christy, operate Orbix Hot Glass Studio & Gallery from a small structure nestled on 26 acres near the border of the Little River Canyon National Preserve on County Road 275. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am until 4 pm.

*One would truly be remiss if mention was not made of two significant figures in the arts in Cherokee County who live today through their works of art.*

**Myrtice West**

Myrtice Snead West (1923-2010) is among the category of artists who are best described as self-taught. Like others who are included within this category, West came from an economically underprivileged background and thus had little chance for a formal education in the arts. Her work, and that of artists like her, is generally called by confusing and often misused terms such as “folk,” “primitive,” “visionary,” and “outsider” art. Myrtice West is among the best known of these artists.
In the 1980s, West began showing some of her art in a local festival in Rome, GA. She offered her “memory” paintings, which were based on her experiences on the farm, the great tragedies that shaped her life and the scenery of rural Alabama for sale. She also displayed her Revelation paintings in the hope that the messages about good versus evil in them would inspire others. A businesswoman from Anniston took slides of the Revelation paintings and sent them to the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA), where gallery manager Miriam Fowler viewed them. Fowler was preparing for an exhibition of “outsider” artists at the Alabama Artists Gallery in 1991 and approached Myrtice about participating in the upcoming exhibition and catalogue, Outsider Artists of Alabama, published by ASCA. Four of the Revelation paintings were included in the exhibition and the catalogue. As a result of the exhibition, several Alabama dealers began to show an interest in West’s work.

Her “Revelation” and “Daniel” series of works, have been chronicled in the book “Wonders to Behold: The Visionary Art of Myrtice West.” In her art, she tries to spread the gospel. Unlike friend and fellow “outsider artist,” Howard Finster, she pretty much sticks closely to biblical themes, drawing from literal interpretations of end-time events such as the rapture of the church, the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the great tribulation.

West passed away on April 12, 2010, at her home in Centre. In her lifetime, Myrtice Snead West, with little education has, with words and pictures, reached out to encourage and inspire.

Fred Leath

Fred Leath, a Cedar Bluff native, was the son of Bill and Pauline Burkhalter Leath. His love of painting began when an aunt gave him a dime with which he purchased a box of water colors. With money scarce in his family, he used the paints on cardboard, pieces of wood or “anything he deemed usable to paint on.”

In his youth, people began to notice and purchase Leath’s work and he began to win awards at local art shows, but at the age of 19, he tragically lost his right hand in an accident at Goodyear in Gadsden where he worked.

His friends wondered if his painting career would continue. Not too long afterward, Leath began to paint with his left hand.

“He was one of the most interesting people I ever met,” says his niece and greatest fan, Shelia Green. “He was always laughing, always had a smile on his face.” And noting the tragic accident with his arm, “nothing ever stopped him,” she said.

Green said he loved painting flower scenes and old home places, working mostly with water colors and pen and ink. Mr. Leath passed away in 2006, leaving a legacy of beautiful works by which to remember him.

In August of 2013, a private collection exhibit of Leath’s works, many that had never been seen by the public, was held in Centre’s Ethel Morrison Park to honor the artist and recognize his talent and contribution to the arts in Cherokee County.
If music is an international language, Cherokee County musicians’ first language has roots in the Church.

Ronnie Kisor and Friends have been playing together for about six years. Individually, the band has more experience than any of the guys want to own up to.

In addition to Kisor, who calls Leesburg home nowadays, the band includes Jimmie Moon, Larry Sanford, Doug Ford, David Ashley and Barton Perry. The group’s roots can be traced back to efforts in bluegrass picking, to modern country and good ol’ rock and roll.

Kisor started out by taking piano lessons as a child, then taught himself how to play guitar while he was in high school.

“I’ll play wherever anybody asks us to play,” Kisor said. His own personal preference is any kind of acoustic session. Kisor and his wife have created the Listen Inn, a small venue Kisor opened in the fall of 2012, which holds 75-80 fans on the Chesnut Bypass in Centre. It was created to give singers and songwriters an outlet for their talents. I’ve always loved writing,” Kisor said. Fans in Cherokee County and northeast Alabama have always enjoyed listening.

The Mobleys: Father and daughter duo of Ashley Matthews Mobley and Raymond Matthews are still gospel musicians who recently released an album entitled, Come Home. The album is now available on iTunes. Raymond Matthews believes song writing to be an exercise in therapy. Songs on the album were written out of exasperation, as Matthews was not clear what the Lord was saying to him. Others were written during times of what he has called “immeasurable joy.”

Leah Seawright grew up in the north end of the county and graduated from Sand Rock High School. She grew up in a family of musicians and like so many Southern musicians, got her start in the industry recording gospel music. “I grew up singing in church and anywhere anybody would listen, Seawright said. After recording two gospel albums, Surrender and Because of My Faith, Seawright made the jump to the country genre and hasn’t looked back.

Her first country album, Country Girl 101 was released in 2005. She wrote 13 of the 14 cuts on the album herself. She was back in the studio in 2012 producing her second album, which was self-titled six-pack of songs. She is writing songs for her third country album. “I got the bug early on and started writing songs as a teenager,” Seawright said.

Seawright has created her own unique vocal style which producer Jeremy Stovall has called “tough but tender.” NASCAR icon Richard Petty and current driver A.J. Almendinger joined Seawright on the video for her song, On the Backroads. She has performed on stage with major country stars including Charlie Daniels, Luke Bryan and Darius Rucker. Former Alabama drummer Mark Herndon even played on Seawright’s debut album.

Seawright has also had the opportunity to expand her career into television after Quail Unlimited and Trophy Quest asked her to host a series of family oriented hunting shows for Fox Sports South.
Richard Peek gets up in the mornings and heads to the office just like everybody else, only his office is on his boat.

Peek has been fishing professionally since graduating from Auburn in 2009. But even in college he knew he wanted to fish full time. His freshman year of college he started Auburn University Bass Sports Club with several of his friends. The club fishes in four of the qualifying events each semester.

“It’s living the dream, every kid wants to grow up fishing everyday,” he said as he started up the engine.

Peek competes in FLW Bass Fishing Tournaments. He has won three tournaments and finished in the top ten, 16 times.

“Tossing his Bass back into the water before he heads home for the evening, Peek said with a laugh that he tells people if he were not a professional fisherman he would be a race car driver.

“It’s living the dream, every kid wants to grow up fishing everyday.”
**Weiss Lake** is known predominantly for its crappie and bass fishing. But that image is changing because of several men, and a trend they are hoping catches on, fly fishing on Weiss, especially for carp.

“Very few people fly fish here, but it’s really good for fly fishing, especially in the cooler months,” says Pete Elkins, an avid fly fisherman and guide at the Chattokee Lodge.

Elkins is an Army veteran who now spends every chance he can on the water. When he was in high school he would build fly rods out of old material from Old Herter’s rods.

He says Weiss Lake is full of crappie and bass fishermen, but they are missing out on a challenging and untapped resource.

“Right now, carp is the hot thing for fly fishermen across the country,” Elkins says. “I think as more people fly fish they’ll realize, here is this big fish, that’s willing to take a fly, and is bigger than anything else they’ll ever catch. It’s right in their backyard.”

They are challenging to catch and hard to fool. You must know exactly where to cast your line.

Carp are challenging to catch and hard to fool.

They like to call it, putting the fly on the dinner plate. Accurate casting is the key factor in carp fishing.

Carp is not the only fish they are after with a fly rod; Weiss is full of Striped, Large Mouth and Spotted Bass, Rainbow Trout, and of course, Crappies.
In late summer, breezes on Weiss Lake shaped the sails of the adventurous when sailors gathered from across Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee to compete in the 2013 Weiss Lake Regatta in Leesburg. Delighted spectators on the shores around the lake scrambled to gain the best views of the 28 boats sailing in the annual two-day invitational regatta, happy to enjoy the friendly competition of Catalina 22 crafts and Cruisers.

The first Weiss Lake Regatta was held in 1983, sponsored by the city of Centre. The Rome Sailing Club took over in 1985 and has claimed sponsorship of the event for more than 25 years.

Sailors in the Weiss Lake Regatta will tell you that the Rome Sailing Club event is a highlight of the sailing season.

Currently the club has 68 members, and hail from across the southeast—including Nashville, Birmingham and Atlanta. The club is now based in Leesburg, Alabama, where they claim three docks with 50 deep-water slips. The club holds several events on Weiss Lake each year, and members emphasize that the goal of the club is to encourage and promote sailing... and Weiss is the place.

The club holds an active membership in both the United States Sailing Association and the Dixie Inland Yacht Racing Association.

In 2014, The Rome Sailing Club has announced it will host the Regional Championships, an event you won’t want to miss...as a sailor or spectator. If you are interested in participating, or just want specifics, please contact the Chamber of Commerce or visit The Rome Sailing Club of Leesburg, Alabama, online.
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1845 - USM Coosa is the first steamboat on the Coosa River

1867 - $3,000 is budgeted to survey the Alabama Coosa corridor. They wanted to make it navigable for steamboat traffic.

1890s - Capt. William Patrick Lay organizes Coosa-Alabama Improvement Association to encourage the federal government to open the Coosa for navigation from Mobile to Gadsden.

1890s - Three concrete and steel locks were strategically placed in the Coosa River to help with navigation.

1906 - Lay incorporated Alabama Power Company

1912 - Lay sold Alabama Power

1913 - Alabama Power hired Fernand C. Weiss. (Weiss Lake would be named for him years later.)

1933 - President Roosevelt’s “New Deal” program funds Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Helps provide navigation, flood control and economic development.

1950

1958 - Alabama Power finally convinced congress to remove federal restrictions on the construction of dams along the upper Coosa River.

November 12, 1953 - Alabama Power filed the development plan of the Coosa River.

June 1954 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower granted permission for Alabama Power to proceed to the next step.

A Timeline for WEISS Lake

Pre 1900: Riverboats, steamboats, non-powered barges, rafts, and small individual water crafts made great use of the Coosa River System. For the most part, the river was navigable from near Calhoun, GA (Oostanaula River), near Cartersville, GA (Etowah), through Cherokee County, Gadsden, and as far south as Greensport, Alabama below Gadsden. There, rapids made passage difficult if not impossible. If at flood stage, some steamboats could and did make it through the Greensport rapids when the water was uniquely at high level. Navigation from below Greensport to Wetumpka was a ‘rocky road’ at best.

Ferry boats were plentiful for cross-river navigation for buggies, wagons, livestock, and people. These were mostly flat raftlike ‘homemade’ barges pulled usually by hand from a rope attached to the barge and the opposite shore. Operators also utilized the current of the river itself with the rope assemblage helping guide the raft across at an angle. In the absence of bridges, these rugged little ‘ferries’ made it possible to get to town, to the store, the cotton gin, to church or school. Most of these ceased operations by the mid 1960’s—many much earlier than that.

As early as the 1870’s, there were dreams of making the river navigable from Rome (a busy city) to Wetumpka—the gateway to Montgomery. Most of these efforts simply failed due to financing (or lack of it) and disputes over who did what and who paid and how. In the absence of highways, bridges, etc. the river was an attractive option to transport timber, cotton, farm products, livestock, grains and the many products grown along the riverbed’s rich soil for nearly 400 miles of shoreline. In addition, there was the prospect of steel, iron, coke, coal and the products in connection with the steel mills or iron foundries in the area.

America’s entry into The Great War (WWI) gave impetus to complete the navigation project as part of the war effort here in America. Around 1890, three concrete and steel locks had been completed at strategic spots on the navigable part of the river. Three more were finished and put into service by 1918, including one on the outskirts of Rome at Mayo’s Bar. That device, though unworkable, is still in the river but the small dam involved has been opened. In the past two or three years serious studies were conducted by Romans to reinstitute that
lock to allow for small craft from Rome to make it into Weiss Lake. These efforts failed, and the project has been abandoned.

The Depression of the 1929–1934 era brought Roosevelt’s “New Deal” program to bring power to the south through government funded TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority). Many arguments were aired between those who saw that as a Democrat Socialistic movement, while others saw the Alabama Power Company’s efforts as Private Investment. That argument continued for years, through World War II, and brought about a number of changes, agreements, and processes right up through the 1950’s, including promises that if allowed to build privately, APC must sell much of their generated power to TVA. It was part of the contract that the Weiss Lake dam power would be funneled to the TVA circuit, even though it was generated in Cherokee County (which is not served by TVA). The elaborate planning necessary to come together on these points was instrumental in slowing down building the Leesburg dam. It took some 17 years before the ruling of the Supreme Court on a major factor in the case based on the 1936 decision was cleared and building began in 1953.

April 26, 1958: Actual groundbreaking for the dam at Leesburg takes place. A few weeks earlier, Fernand C. Weiss had retired after leading APC in the construction of many of the dams and locks, and now the task of building in Cherokee County would fall to his aides and engineers so well trained by him. In honor of his lifetime of service to the utility, the dam and its impoundment lake would be named Weiss Lake.

September 1957, the Federal Power Commission removed the last obstacle from the reels of red tape necessary to build a dam.

June 1958, contracts were let to build the dam and the reservoir. It would end up costing over $35,000,000 dollars to complete.

July 1958, work begins to clear the more than 30,000 acres to be covered by the huge lake: moving or dismantling homes, businesses and even removing bodies from cemeteries.

June 1961, date set to go ‘on line’ with generation and transmission of energy.

August 2013, flying over Weiss Lake dam near Leesburg

2013
Weiss Dam provides 87,750 kilowatts of electric generating capacity. It is ranked ninth among Alabama Power’s 14 hydroelectric generating facilities. Lake levels are regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers

1997: The Weiss Lake Improvement Association was created as a committee of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce

July 5, 1961
Weiss began generating power. Its reservoir dams about 5,273 sq. miles.

1959 - Fernand C. Weiss died. He is buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Birmingham.

2013

April 1, 1958 - Fernand C. Weiss, a chief engineer of Alabama Power, steps down. The board of directors names Weiss Lake after him as a way to keep him on the project.

April 26, 1958
Ceremony celebrating the $30 million dam. Alabama Gov. Jim Folsom and a crowd of 10,000 gathered for the ceremony.

July 13, 1958 - Construction on Weiss Lake began. Weiss was the first dam built as part of the Alabama Power Company construction program.
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**Yellow Creek**

The first kayak and canoe stretch of Yellow Creek in Cherokee County is 1 mile long and classified as a class IV-V+ section by American Whitewater. Out of state whitewater rafters and kayakers might find the rivers here more demanding, so better not forget that the rivers in this state are less manageable. This is one of a small number of paddling stretches in this river system.

At Yellow Creek during the long summer days highs are in the 80’s. Summer nighttime lows plunge down to the 60’s. Highs during the wintertime are commonly in the 40’s; overnight lows in the 20’s for Yellow Creek. Yellow Creek gets a large amount of water. Through March this area sees the most rain, and October meanwhile is the driest month.

**Terrapin Creek**

Over 50 feet wide with 14 miles of floatable water, Terrapin Creek is a Class I - II recreational stream that provides an excellent family friendly canoeing and kayaking experience. Fly fishing is also popular along the creek. Outfitters include Terrapin Outdoor Center and Redneck Yacht Club.

Terrapin Creek flows from the Talladega National Forest in Cleburne County through Calhoun and then into Cherokee County. It is an excellent float fishing stream in its lower reaches from County Road 8 bridge, ¾ of a mile west of Hwy 9 north of Piedmont, AL, to the County Road 71 bridge before the creek empties into the old Coosa River channel. This stretch can be broken up into several floats to include from County Road 8 down to the bridge at Hwy 9 at Ellisville (USGS water discharge near Ellisville). From Ellisville, it is a nice float down to the County Road 175 bridge to take out.
The Alabama State Parks operate and maintain 22 parks that encompass approximately 48,000 acres of land and water. Mountainous Desoto State Park is nestled atop beautiful Lookout Mountain in scenic Northeast Alabama, north of Cherokee County. Cheaha State Park in neighboring Cleburne County is filled with hiking trails, mountain bike trails, a lake for swimming and fishing an observation tower at the highest point in Alabama. The park is also completely surrounded by the Talladega National Forest. Cherokee County is criss-crossed by scenic land, water and abundant wildlife.

Alabama's Birding Trails
The eight Alabama Birding Trails, when all have been completed, will unify existing and potential birding sites into a state-wide trail system covering all of the state's eight geographic regions. Cherokee is part of the Appalachian Highlands birding trail and is home to four of the most beautiful sites on it.

Cherokee Rock Village is one of the best places in the state to see soaring birds of prey. Most soaring raptors that are sighted in Alabama, such as bald eagles and American kestrels, can be spotted from this location at various points during the year. At Little River Canyon Mouth Park, the trees along the river are filled with birds during migration and in dry weather, when a wide variety of birds come to the river to drink. At Weiss Lake Overlook, scan the water and the skies above for water birds in particular, including gulls, herons, pelicans, egrets, sandpipers, ducks and loons. The Centre-Piedmont-Cherokee County Airport property is the best location in the area to see a variety of grassland birds.

The state of Alabama declared the year 2014 as the Year of the Park, a year to celebrate the beauty and grandeur of its state parks.
Appalachian Highlands Scenic Byway

This 80-mile byway traverses an area of diverse beauty from the deepest canyon east of the Mississippi to the highest point in Alabama through Cleburne, Calhoun, Cherokee and DeKalb counties and the great natural beauty of the Appalachian Mountains for a backdrop. It runs from Lookout Mountain in the north to the highest peak in Alabama at Cheaha Mountain. Along the route are Little River Canyon, Weiss Lake, Cornwall Furnace, the Chief Ladiga Trail, the Talladega Scenic Byway and Cheaha State Park.

The Appalachian Highlands Scenic Byway runs south from Interstate 59 at Fort Payne over the summit of Lookout Mountain, and then south to cross Interstate 20 at Heflin, continuing on to Cheaha Mountain (the highest point in Alabama) with its southern terminus at the Talladega Scenic Drive. The byway winds through the Little River Canyon National Preserve, Dagger Mountain Wilderness, Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge and Cheaha Wilderness. Much of the route is within the Talladega National Forest.

Alabama Scenic River Trail

The Alabama Scenic River Trail (ASRT) is the longest recreational water trail in any single state in the United States—631 miles across the state by water. It is one of only a handful of National Water Trails, having received this official designation in July 2012.

The ASRT begins at the Alabama/Georgia state line, where the Coosa River enters Alabama northeast of Cedar Bluff in Cherokee County at Weiss Lake and ends 631 miles later at Fort Morgan at the Gulf of Mexico with something for both the day paddler and the long-distance trekker.

The first 22-mile stretch of the trail begins at Weiss Lake Dam and extends to Neely Henry Lake. It is a beautiful, narrow and winding passage for the most experienced canoeists. There are many easy stretches with well-maintained campsites for canoers and kayakers. Most of the ASRT is on wide, slow moving rivers, however, and is widely used by power boaters.

Much of the ASRT follows commercial navigable waterways. Therefore, long distance trips on the trail may require navigating around or going through large locks and dams, so many boaters opt for day trips on limited sections. Alabama Power Company has, however, designed portages around all of its dams on the Alabama River.
The many public parks in Cherokee County provide residents with ample opportunities for recreation and quality family time as well as a venue for team sports and activities.

CENTRE CITY PARK. This public park is located on Park Street between Cedar Bluff Road and Alabama Highway 9, a short distance off the U.S. 411 Chesnut By-Pass. Visitors can enjoy a pavilion, playground for children, tennis courts, walking track, picnic areas and a swimming pool, which is open during the summer months.

ED YARBROUGH RECREATION PARK-CENTRE. Named for the late mayor of Centre, this park, located on Alabama Highway 9 South (Piedmont Highway) near the intersection of County Road 71, is less than one mile from U.S. 411. It contains a walking track, baseball fields and soccer fields.

CEDAR BLUFF TOWN PARK. Cedar Bluff residents enjoy a playground for children, large and small pavilions, a gazebo and a walking track. The park is the location of Christmas in the Park events and summer’s end concerts.

LEESBURG PARK. Those who live in the Leesburg area can take advantage of baseball/softball fields, a walking track, children’s playground and pavilions.

LEESBURG LANDING. Like to camp? Leesburg Landing is a popular local campground with RV parking and hook-ups, a primitive walking track through the adjacent wood and walking track along the lake shore—a perfect setting for recreation three seasons of the year.

LEESBURG CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUND. The playground is located on Lokey Street just past the Leesburg Fire Department Building.

GAYLESVILLE WALKING TRACK. Many Gaylesville area residents take their exercise on the track along Oak Street near Gaylesville School.

SAND ROCK TOWN PARK. This public park, with a walking track, children’s playground and assembly grounds, is adjacent to town hall property and across Sand Rock Avenue from Sand Rock School.
LITTLE RIVER NATIONAL PRESERVE.
The deepest gorge east of the Mississippi River forms almost half of the border between Cherokee and DeKalb counties in northeast Alabama. For thousands of years, the canyon has been cut by the flow of the Little River, which is the only river in the world whose entire course flows atop a mountain. A canyon-rim road of almost 15 miles takes visitors from Little River Falls to the Little River Canyon Preserve’s picnic area. A National Park, the park service office is located just across the Cherokee/DeKalb border in the “greenest building in the state”—the Little River Canyon Center—where nature, art and music events are held throughout the year. A hiking trail connects the center to the Little River Falls lookout station.

LITTLE RIVER FALLS. The falls are located along Alabama Highway 35 at the Cherokee/DeKalb county line. A boardwalk runs from the parking lot to the viewing sites.
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Cherokee Medical Center (CMC) is a full-service, 60-bed hospital located in Centre. The hospital, which is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, has served Cherokee County families since its opening in 1957 as a publicly owned facility. Then, for a number of years, it was affiliated with Baptist Health Systems.

Since 2006, the hospital has been operated by Community Health Systems and located at its current campus. Community Health Systems operates 135 hospitals in 29 states, focusing on non-urban markets.

The hospital offers a wide range of services including 24-hour emergency service, an intensive care unit, medical/surgical care; a swing-bed unit, home care and hospice services, general surgery, gastroenterology, and urology. Other services include diagnostic imaging, including x-ray, CT, MRI, ultrasound, and nuclear medicine, mammography and rehabilitation including physical, occupational and speech therapy. CMC also offers respiratory care and diagnostic laboratory services.
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In a recent news story, Birmingham’s WVTM-TV estimated that by 2015, the state of Alabama will be losing 15-25% of its nurses as thousands approach retirement age.

The continuing need for nurses in the northeast Alabama area was the major reason for the establishment of a branch campus of Gadsden State Community College in Cherokee County (GS-C) in 2008. The licensed practical nursing program was among the first of the college’s programs to open its doors to students that year and is now the largest program on the GS-C campus.

Gadsden State’s curriculum offers the associate of science degree in registered nursing (on its main campus in Gadsden) as well as a certificate program in practical nursing and enrolls students ranging in age from recent high school graduates to older adults pursuing second careers. Additional study tracks available at the college allow licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and paramedics to transition into the registered nursing field.

Gadsden State also offers academic pathways to students wishing to continue their nursing education by partnering with baccalaureate and master’s nursing programs, according to Dr. Susan K. Tucker, nursing education program director.
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A serene waterway oasis positioned between Gadsden, Alabama and Rome, Georgia, just off Alabama Highway 9, Cedar Bluff boasts a breathtaking view of Weiss Lake. Waters flowing from the Coosa, Little and Chattooga Rivers converge to form one of the largest freshwater lakes east of the Mississippi River. The town, originally named “Jefferson” was founded on the site of the former Indian village in 1832.

Steeped in southern pride and tradition, the town is centrally located between Chattanooga, Atlanta, Birmingham and Huntsville. Located only minutes from Little River Canyon, The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, and plentiful shopping, the rustic community is an ideal vacation spot. This community features abundant fishing, camping sites and parking for recreational vehicles that are available year round for activities.

Small town hospitality provides something for everyone. In addition to excellent fishing and camping facilities, Cedar Bluff has acquired several waterfront condominiums and developments. The Overlook, Sunset Shores and The Bluffs dot the 450 miles of shoreline. Country-style restaurants serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. Alcohol sales were permitted in 2005.

The town’s population of 1500 full-time residents, enjoys outstanding schools and exciting sports programs all situated in a comfortable home town atmosphere. The community park and recreation center are gathering places for parties, events and meetings. The low-crime rate and affordable cost of living makes the town a desirable place to live.

The town’s annual event “Liberty Day” is held on Saturday before the 4th of July. Thousands convene at the yearly celebration which features street vendors, crafts, rides, car and motorcycle shows, as well as an array of exciting entertainment, concluding with the most dazzling pyrotechnics presentation in Alabama that is visible for miles.

The Annual 4th of July fireworks display on the shores of Weiss Lake are a popular summer event.
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Centre

If you make a list of some of America’s greatest small towns, one name stands out at the top.

Centre, Alabama, ranks highly on the long list of great southern towns. It is one that respects its history, seeks to continuing to improve and works to prepare for the future growth.

The town sits geographically in the middle of an outstanding county. In a land that was once largely populated by Native Americans, many enriching legacies were passed down through generations, such as an abiding love and appreciation for the land and its rivers.

When settled around 1840, the Post Office was dubbed the town “Center,” which, in time, was changed in spelling to Centre in honor of a family from England who were original settlers.

After construction of Weiss Lake in 1960’s, and the dam in nearby, the county seat of Centre proved the be the excellent draw for new homeowners, businesses, tourists and invited growth. Recreational attractions became the norm, with new roads and highways and lake living taking the spotlight. Yet, with all the attention, Centre has always kept its charm.

Schools, colleges, new businesses, arts and entertainment have found a comfortable home in Centre. The heart of Cherokee County.

If you love hunting for treasures, rummage through one of dozens of antique stores and shops filled with memorabilia, furniture and collectible pieces before you stop for a leisurely lunch break at one of our superb restaurants. You’ll also find the latest in chic fashion right downtown before you take off again—to discover what more surprising things await you in Centre.
The festival held in October each year, along Main Street in downtown Centre, features vendors offering a variety of food, games and arts and crafts. In addition, the fall festival parade features floats, walking units, horses, wagons, antique autos and tractors and fire department trucks.
As you move around Cherokee County in one of Alabama’s most beautiful sections, you generate a special feeling when you find yourself in the community of Gaylesville.

Tucked in the northeastern section, hugging the peaceful Chattooga river, at the very foundation of a run of small mountains and ridges that lead northeast to the great Appalachian chain, bordering on the beauty of the lake itself, Gaylesville holds a special fascination for all who live or visit here.

It is a small ‘community’, with no idea of becoming a ‘city’, but quite happy with its status as one of Alabama’s oldest communities.

Actually named for a Cherokee Indian Chief “Gayle,” it proudly shows off its colors of great heritage. For history lovers, Gaylesville holds a very special place where some important events of the War Between the States took place. Don’t be surprised to ride down a peaceful country road and come upon a gracious, charming bona-fide southern mansion. There are several that add to the history of Gaylesville, and each has its own story-to-tell. Not only do the homes speak for the people, the people will quickly speak to tell you what makes the homes historically significant.

One of the largest ‘captures’ during the Civil War took place on a farm near Gaylesville, and a foundry turned out enough munitions to attract the attention of a northern raiding party that came all the way from the Mississippi River in an attempt to shut it down. *(They did not succeed, at least, not at first.)*

So in addition to a wonderful population (small, but vital) Gaylesville offers an insight into the early lives of the Cherokee Indians, and the settlers that came and began making contributions.

Today, Gaylesville serves as the heartbeat of a great county, and a delightful place to visit or even find your own ‘southern mansion’ where you can sit in a rocking chair on the front porch and gaze out on the landscape of a really special part of America.
Humming with thriving businesses in both size and diversity, Leesburg is an important industrial arm of Cherokee County. Major employers call Leesburg home, such as KTH manufacturing, producing metal components for the automotive industry. The Leesburg Yarn Mill, into cotton processing, was established in 1987 and employees approximately 250 people. Another employer is PEMCO, which was founded in 1911. PEMCO is a leading producer of porcelain enamel and specialty frit based products for household appliances and a range of industrial, metallurgical and glass applications to meet global demand.

Local businesses and companies such as retail, automotive, financial institutions, healthcare and personal services enjoy expansions and growth opportunities afforded by the agreeable climate and accommodating workforce.

The Parks and Recreation Department operates three parks, two of which include developed playgrounds. Lighted softball fields for a cool summer night ballgame as well as walking tracks and tennis courts. You’ll also find public boat launches, three public fishing piers, numerous nature trails, great camping and 24 recreational vehicle sites.

Leesburg presents environmental advantages as well as spectacular views at the Little River Canyon National Preserve or Yellow Creek Falls are on the must see list.

With a great lake at the doorsteps, the grandeur of the scenery and the graciousness of its welcoming people everywhere around, you’ll find Leesburg totally irresistible.

Yellow Creek Falls near Leesburg

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Sand Rock

Nesting atop Lookout Mountain is the pretty, progressive hilltop community of Sand Rock. Compared to surrounding areas, the town of Sand Rock is relatively young, becoming incorporated in 1988. The Sand Rock community, however, has a rich history dating back to the early 1800s.

Sand Rock doesn’t have a post office (but it does have a zip code), nor does it have a supermarket, clothing shop, or hardware store. It does have a school, which began as a log cabin and is now a modern multi-building complex. Church buildings also stand as a testimony to the community’s strong faith, along with a friendliness that has characterized this area since the day Sand Rock was named by Grandfather Brindley.

Sand Rock began when two brothers were traveling the old Indian trail from the Carolinas to Mississippi. One of the brothers was Euclid V. Brindley’s grandfather. He liked the top of Lookout Mountain, on the trail between Leesburg and Collinsville, where the two brothers stopped to rest beside a spring. One of the brothers moved on, but Grandfather Brindley stayed. The exact date the two brothers stopped on Lookout Mountain is not recorded. But, according to local historians, the Brindley who stayed to rear a family here looked at the huge sand rocks, crumbled some between his fingers, and exclaimed, “Sand Rock.” The man who was Grandfather Brindley had a son named P. K. Brindley, who became a circuit rider for the Methodist church. P. K. Brindley’s son was Euclid V. Brindley, who lived in the picturesque ancestral home. He owned a proud possession which was a land grant signed by President James K. Polk.

As other settlers came to the mountain, there was a need for a school. A one-room log cabin on the H. S. Stowe farm was the first school. It was about a quarter of a mile from today’s Sand Rock School. As more settlers came, a need arose for a larger two-teacher school. Around 1895, the school was moved to a more central location and became a two-room school. In about 1916, another room was added to the building and a third teacher employed. Through the efforts of the parents who volunteered labor and materials for a school building, a new structure was erected in 1922. Much of the lumber was cut from farms of the parents and donated. The school eventually became a junior high. In 1929-30, the sophomore class was added; in 1930-31, the junior class; and in 1931-32, the senior class was added. The Sand Rock community has grown, of course, and now the school is one of the county’s largest.

Home construction has blossomed along the southern and eastern brows of Lookout Mountain. Dozens of long-time and new residents are taking advantage of the scenic views of mountain rocks, beautiful foliage, and the ever-popular Weiss Lake. Countless homeowners appreciate the privacy and quiet provided by the wooded mountain locations. Loyalty to the community and to their families is noted among...
the younger citizens. Many leave home for college or occupational training, but return to Sand Rock. Several families report three generations currently living in Sand Rock. A few even note four generations.

Sand Rock residents take pride in their community – their schools, churches, recreational facilities, and volunteer fire department. Church activities are important to the people of Sand Rock. There is a cooperative spirit among all of Sand Rock’s churches, sharing in community events, school events, and worship services.

A popular site for genealogists is Sand Rock’s community cemetery, situated along Sand Rock Avenue and Cemetery Road just north of the school. Many of the graves date to the mid-19th century. The earliest graves are located in the middle of the cemetery. There are no dates on the large stones which cover the oldest graves. The grave of Sarah Beck almost always gets the attention of the cemetery’s visitors. According to her marker, Mrs. Beck was 108 when she died – having been born in 1774 and living until 1882. (Some residents claim that their clean, crisp mountain air probably contributed to Mrs. Beck’s long life.)

Sand Rock – an appropriate name for a community whose citizens exhibit caring neighborliness, strong faith, support of joint ventures, a concern for family, and a strong work ethic. A frequent visitor and long-time observer describes it aptly: “The people there are solid as a rock!”

Cherokee Rock Village: A Cut Above

Along Lookout Mountain high above Leesburg and west of Sand Rock is a massive outcropping of boulders believed to have been of religious importance to Native Americans. In fact, the site lies along an old Indian trail that later became a route for white settlers. The trail was also used by both Northern and Southern troops during the Civil War and is known as Lookout Mountain Trail.

The area has been popular with rock climbers since the early 1970s, even before there was road into the area. Now officially a park, it is operated by the county parks and recreation board, and is a popular destination for Cherokee County residents and visitors, who, for decades, called it “Little Rock City.”

Its narrow canyons are cut among high cliffs, with natural arches, caves and huge freestanding sandstone island-like boulders rising above a maze of passages and overhangs. Its most notable features are the house-sized sandstone boulders and stone formations up to 200 feet high that date back 300 million years. One outcropping closely resembles a cluster of homes, thus the name “rock village.”

The park provides spectacular views of the valley along U.S. Highway 411 and of Weiss Lake. On clear days, park visitors can see a breathtaking expanse stretching from Gadsden, Alabama, to Rome, Georgia, and to the south more than 25 miles.

It is now one of the Southeast’s most popular rock climbing venues. It has also become popular with competitors of remote-controlled crawlers. Several regional and national crawler tournaments have brought participants from 25 U.S. states and seven foreign countries. On almost any day, climbers from numerous states and other nations are scaling the vertical rock walls in the park. There are rock faces and routes for every level of climber from novice to expert. The rock-climbing scenes in the 2006 film Failure to Launch starring Matthew McConaughey and Sarah Jessica Parker were filmed here.

The park is not just for rock climbing, however. Avid hikers can take advantage of the many trails among and around the park’s boulders, botany enthusiasts search for specimens of rare plants that have been discovered here, while geologists and archeologists have found and are finding fossils within the park.

Both tent and RV camping sites are available in the park. Future plans call for an observation deck accessible for the physically-challenged, new RV and camping areas, an amphitheater, a children’s playground, a large fireplace at one end of the existing pavilion and additional trails.

Rock climbers from around the world enjoy the challenges of Sand Rock’s sheer vertical rock formations.
Good food is often hard to find when traveling or visiting a new community, but that problem doesn’t exist in Cherokee County. Taste, selection and variety reign.

If mouth-watering “southern home-style” is what you crave, you don’t have to go far. Several area eateries give Grandma’s recipes their own flavor with entrees such as Southern Fried Chicken or Country Fried Steak and Gravy teamed up with items offered from a bounty of fresh side dishes that will make your head spin. During growing season, the vegetables may have just been picked from area gardens that morning. Make sure you save some space for dessert because they usually are just as fresh and wonderful. Menus of freshly prepared take home family size entrees and accompaniments as well as catering services are available from several locations throughout the county.

Barbecue recipes in the south are guarded like the gold in Fort Knox and passed down from generation to generation. Cherokee County is fortunate enough to have some of the best in the region. Smoky and sweet with just the right touch of “tangy,” and served up in generous portions with a choice of hot and fresh fries or crispy onion rings and of course, barbecue’s best friend, cole slaw complete the picture of delicious.

The local lunchtime experience is always better when fresh, healthy and tasty choices are offered an available choice. Great sandwiches or burgers, freshly prepared salads, hot and appetizing soups and tempting desserts are available in restaurants and diners throughout our community and always served up with a friendly smile.

If your craving is pizza, there is ample choice. If something big, grilled and beefy is what is desired, there is a place with choices that just might fill the bill. Choices abound throughout the county.

The selection and the variety are there. Check out the directory that follows. You only have to decide which of these wonderful Cherokee County eateries is the right choice for your current craving.
Check Out These Great Eateries!

Huddle House
1580 West Main Street
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927-3992

Lanny’s
1490 West Main Street
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927-2400

Mountain Parkway Grill
85 Overlook Street
Sand Rock, AL 35983
(256) 523-5555

Pat’s Perfections
1820 East Bypass
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927-4060

Royal Waffle King
101 Piedmont Highway
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927-6555

Sageberry Catering & Restaurant
1235 County Road 162
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 475-3398

Speedy’s at the Lake
4865 AL Highway 68
Cedar Bluff, AL 35959
(256) 779-3100

Tony’s Pizza & Subs
3812 AL Hwy 9
Cedar Bluff, AL 35959
(256) 557-8651

Tony’s Steak Barn
804 Alexis Road
Centre, AL
(256) 927-2844

Two Sisters Hearty Habit Café
101 West Main Street
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927-4335

Wiseguys
750 Cedar Bluff Road
Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927-3331

The Mural at Pat’s Perfections
Civic organizations play an important role in the life of any community. Without them, there would be fewer programs for people throughout the community, including children and senior adults. Members of Cherokee County’s civic organizations serve their fellow citizens and the area’s communities throughout the year. The clubs welcome new members. Contact information for the clubs’ officers may be obtained from the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce at 256.927.8455.

CENTRE LIONS CLUB. Chartered in 1938, the Lions Club has a long history of service to the community. The club meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Lanny’s Restaurant at noon. Major local projects include eyeglasses for students and adults in need, vision screenings, “adoption” of ten children each Christmas, Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes, local scouting programs, Cedar Bluff Liberty Day, Leesburg Day and the Centre Fall Festival. Through its annual fundraisers, the club awards five scholarships to outstanding high school seniors each year, sponsors a youth leadership forum and provides opportunities for children with diabetes to attend a special camp.

CENTRE ROTARY CLUB. Chartered in 1976, Rotary Club members meet each Monday at noon in the community room of First Southern State Bank in Centre. The club’s local projects include scholarships for outstanding high school seniors, as well as on-going support for the SO-COOL Day Camp for more than 125 students each summer.

KIWANIS CLUB OF CHEROKEE COUNTY. Kiwanians meet the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at noon in the Chamber of Commerce meeting room on the campus of Gadsden State-Cherokee. The group’s main project focus is to support local children by providing school supplies and field trip funding assistance, sponsoring special events for students and awarding multiple scholarships to deserving high school seniors. The Kiwanis Club has been active in the community since 2004.

CEDAR BLUFF CIVITAN CLUB. The Civitan group meets the third Monday at 6:00 p.m. at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Cedar Bluff. The club’s local projects include scholarships, Toys for Tots and meals for needy families at...
Thanksgiving and Christmas. For several years, club members have been delivering *Meals on Wheels* to home bound area residents. The Centre Civitan Club recently merged with the Cedar Bluff Club, which was established in 2001.

**TWILIGHT CLUB.** Founded in 1950, the Twilight Club is a service club for women. It meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Projects include a scholarship for an outstanding graduating senior at Cherokee County High School, “adoption” of a needy family at Christmas and the maintenance of a mile in the Adopt-A-Mile program.

**CHEROKEE COUNTY CONNECTIONS CLUB.** One of the area's newest organizations, the Connections Club was begun in 2010. A majority of membership consists of women who have moved into the county, although any local female resident is welcome to join the organization. The group meets at noon on the second Monday of each month in the Chamber of Commerce meeting room on the campus of Gadsden State–Cherokee. Projects have included collecting needed items for the local nursing home and donations to the Cherokee Humane Society, assistance with a camp for diabetic children, and the local Family Care Center. Sub-groups (interest groups) of the organization include a book club, an adventures team, which travels to interesting locations in northern Alabama, a motion picture review club, a “lunch bunch” and a cards party (bridge and several other card games).

**TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB—CEDAR BLUFF.** The Twentieth Century club is another service club for women. It meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Cedar Bluff Community Center. Projects include the annual Cherokee County Children's Easter Egg Hunt, assistance with the Halloween in the Park party at Cedar Bluff Park and coordination of Christmas in the Park (Cedar Bluff Town Park), as well as donations to area educational institutions.

**WOMEN'S CLUB OF WEISS LAKE.** Comprised of women from all parts of Cherokee County, the group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Its projects include donations to all of the county's elementary school libraries to buy books for needy children, scholarships, the annual Christmas Tour of Homes, the Little Free library program and sponsorship of educational programs for parents and teachers.

**CHEROKEE COUNTY HOME-MAKERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS CLUBS.** These organizations are comprised of several community clubs which sponsor service projects in their own areas of the county and offer educational programs at meetings.
Cherokee County Services

POLICE AND FIRE
For all emergencies calls ........................................... 911
Sheriff Department ........................................... 256-927-3365

County Offices
Animal Control ........................................... 256-927-3653
Board of Education ........................................... 256-927-3362
Circuit Clerk ........................................... 256-927-3340
Circuit Court ........................................... 256-927-0500
Commission ........................................... 256-927-3668
Criminal & District ........................................... 256-927-3637
District Attorney ........................................... 256-927-5577
District Court ........................................... 256-927-3682
E911 Office ........................................... 256-927-3911
Extension Office ........................................... 256-927-3250
Forestry Commission ........................................... 256-927-3163
Highway Department ........................................... 256-927-5573
Humane Society ........................................... 256-779-7159
Nutrition Program ........................................... 256-927-8432
Probate Judge ........................................... 256-927-3363
Public Library ........................................... 256-927-5838
Public Transportation ........................................... 256-927-7472
Revenue Commission ........................................... 256-927-5527
Tag & License ........................................... 256-927-3654

US Post Offices
Cedar Bluff ........................................... 256-779-6568
Centre ........................................... 256-927-5660
Gaylesville ........................................... 256-422-3161
Leesburg ........................................... 256-526-8076
Spring Garden ........................................... 256-447-7227

Municipal Government
Cedar Bluff Town Hall ........................................... 256-779-7284
Centre City Hall ........................................... 256-927-5222
Gaylesville Town Office ........................................... 256-422-3923
Leesburg Town Hall ........................................... 256-526-8890
Sand Rock Town Hall ........................................... 256-523-5898

Health Services
Cherokee Medical Center ........................................... 256-927-5531
Health Department ........................................... 256-927-3132
CED Mental Health Center ........................................... 256-927-3601
Department of Human Resources ........................................... 256-927-1440
Family Resource Center ........................................... 256-927-7890

Newspaper
Cherokee Herald ........................................... 256-927-5037
The POST ........................................... 256-927-4476

Radio
WEIS Radio ........................................... 256-927-5152

Utilities
Cherokee Electric Coop ........................................... 256-927-5524
Cherokee County Water & Sewer ........................................... 256-927-8348
DC Natural Gas ........................................... 256-927-5925
TDS Telephone ........................................... 877-837-8372
Cherokee County Schools

The Cherokee County School System strives to provide all students with multiple quality educational opportunities designed to prepare them for success in an ever-changing society.

Cedar Bluff
3655 Old Hwy 9
Cedar Bluff, AL 35959
Principal: Bobby Mintz
Phone: (256) 779 – 6211
Grades: K-12
Students: 600+

Career and Technology Center
600 Bay Springs Road
Centre, AL 35960
Principal: Brett Keasler
Phone: (256) 927 – 5351
Grades: 8-12
Students: 600+

Centre Elementary
725 East Main St
Centre, AL 35960
Principal: Brian Johnson
Phone: (256) 927 – 3302
Grades: K-4
Students: 600+

Centre Middle
1920 East Main St
Centre, AL 35960
Principal: Marcia Sewell
Phone: (256) 927 – 5656
Grades: 5-8
Students: 500+

Cherokee County High
910 Warrior Dr
Centre, AL 35960
Principal: Seth Neyman
Phone: (256) 927 – 3625
Grades: 9-12
Students: 450+

Cherokee County Schools Board Central Office
130 East Main Street, Centre, AL 35960
(256) 927 – 3362

Gaylesville
760 Trojan Way
Gaylesville, AL 35973
Principal: Scott Hays
Phone: (256) 422 – 3401
Grades: K-12
Students: 400+

Sand Rock
1950 Sand Rock Ave
Sand Rock, AL 35983
Principal: Ben East
Phone: (256) 523 – 3564
Grades: K-12
Students: 950+

Spring Garden
2430 County Road 29
Spring Garden, AL 36275
Principal: Mike Welsh
Phone: (256) 447 – 7045
Grades: K-12
Students: 600+

Fort McClellan Credit Union
LIVE, WORK, ATTEND SCHOOL in CHEROKEE COUNTY? BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!
500 Cedar Bluff Road (across from CVS)
256-927-4203
Centre, Alabama
The landscape of Cherokee County, Alabama, is astonishing at ground level; however, flying at 2,500 feet offers you a totally unique perspective of both land and water that so enhances the lives of those who live here; visit and share it with us.
Looking west toward Lookout Mountain
Gadsden State - Community College
Cherokee campus
## Directory of ADVERTISERS

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**CHEROKEE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
801 CEDAR BLUFF ROAD, BLDG A  
CENTRE, AL 35960  
(256)927-8455  
email: info@cherokeechamber.org  
website: www.cherokeechamber.org
Welcome Home.

We look forward to the opportunity to introduce you to one of the nicest places to live in the southeast! It is here you will find your real estate investment a value beyond measure.

You'll find that every agent at Cedar Bluff Real Estate is not only experienced and knowledgeable, but also knows how important it is to hear your needs and understand your wishes.

We deliver just that—the very best in customer service. After all, we are your neighbors, too!

With a fabulous lake, the best in property value, it's time for you to discover Cherokee County. We look forward to helping you with all your real estate needs and in setting your course for a great lifestyle.

We’re all about You!

Cedar Bluff Real Estate
3770 Al Highway 9 Suite B · Cedar Bluff, AL 35959-5098 · 256.779.7264 · www.sellweisslake.com
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Broker / Owner
256-996-3445
Seniors Real Estate Specialist
Accredited Buyers Representative

Tim Marton
Sales Associate
256-706-9039

George Fox
Sales Associate
256-523-8721

Tyrone Miller
Sales Associate
256-997-6093

If you have never been to Cherokee County, Alabama, this is your personal invitation. We promise that you will be astounded by the hospitality as well as the unique and beautiful scenery you will encounter from the moment you arrive. Come and find out why we call it “Alabama the Beautiful.”

4 Sunflower Court Centre, Alabama 35960 Office: 256-927-3445 www.bartleyrealtyllc.com