**Bingo operators to open a Midfield hall**

By TORRANCE NORMS

News staff writer

At least three bingo operators have expressed an interest in opening in Midfield, with the first set to open by Easter, Mayor Gary Richardson said last week. A bingo hall operated by Israel Development Corporation is planning to open no later than Easter weekend in the Woodfield Square Shopping Center, said representative Calvin Biggers. Recent moves by state Attorney General Troy King to assume command of Gov. Bob Riley’s Task Force on Illegal Gambling allowed hall operators some security to open, he said.

At least 11 e-bingo halls have already opened or re-opened in the Bessemer Cutoff since March 12, but the bingo halls remained closed through last week in the city of Bessemer, where there is a dispute over whether the city has a valid bingo ordinance.

Besides the Israel Development group, two other operators are showing interest in opening in other areas in the city, Richardson said. One group wants to open in the Midfield Plaza Shopping Center.

**TOWN HALL MEETING**

- **When:** 6 p.m. Thursday
- **Where:** Bessemer Community Center
- **Topics:** Bingo, economic development, finance issues

“People are fed up with the new council,” Richardson said. “They want to see change, they want to see something done.”

A bingo hall meeting will be held Thursday night at the Midfield Community Center at 6 p.m. to discuss bingo in Midfield, as well as economic development and finance issues.

Midfield, which passed a new electronic bingo ordinance in December, became the latest city to allow the game. Last week the state House of Representatives recommended levying the fee charges on bingo operators to help businesses with bingo hall operators from $250,000 to $250 million annually.

The change may make cities more competitive, although data on how much the tax is expected to raise.

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**Vigilant about Village Creek**

Woodruff gives tenacious technical advice on fixing flooding

By ANNIE RISS

News staff writer

While most people depend on engineers to solve the problem of flooding on Village Creek, civil engineer Richard S. Woodruff, 97, still at work, being tenacious in the ongoing problem.

Woodruff, a longtime Mountain Brook resident who is technical director of the Village Creek Society, has been reading about flooding on Village Creek for the past 50 years.

“I have an interest in the Village Creek,” he said.

His curiosity, and his background with Alabama Power Company in hydrology — the study of water and its movement — led to his eventual involvement with the Village Creek Society.

Woodruff said, “I feel I wanted to help this city do something about the flooding.”

In his years of studying its waters, Woodruff said he’s traveled its length and crossed every bridge over the creek.

Three measures would prevent flooding in Ensley, he said: replacing the Avenue J bridge over Village Creek, relocating the creek 3 feet up the creek and replacing the sewer pipe that runs alongside the bridge and building a dam to retain water.

Woodruff drew plans for a new bridge and the city has applied for $4.8 million in federal funding to relocate the sewer pipe.

Woodruff has also worked with Birmingham City and Alabama Department of Transportation on plans for a greenway trail along the creek between Avenue J and Avenue W. These plans also call for a park in Ensley with an outdoor classroom and other amenities, such as a picnic area.

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**Bessemer City Schools**

New superintendent says he’s closely watching budget

By ANITA DEBRO

News staff writer

Benjamin E. Foster has been selected Bessemer City Schools Superintendent. The new superintendent is expected to debate next year’s education budget this week.

A budget approved by a house committee last week would spend $5.5 billion for education through the next fiscal year.

Foster said he continues to be concerned about how state funding will affect staffing.

“Some have said that we’re going to have to reduce our teaching staff,” he said.

Foster told school board members last week that the state could lose about $20 billion in revenue.

The state would lose about $20 billion in revenue.

Foster said he will continue to work closely with the state budgetary process.

He said he’s been working on the state budgetary process.

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**POLICE BLTTERS**

List of felony incidents / 2W

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**ADVERTISERS’ PAGE**

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