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Florence, Ala. | Monday, March 19, 2012

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## Around the state

### Montgomery Advertiser on the Alabama Board of Education:

The Alabama Board of Education has run through five different people at the head of the state's two-year college system since 2006, so perhaps the problem isn't with the chancellors but with the state school board.

The board essentially pushed Chancellor Freida Hill out the door March 7 (she technically resigned), with an agreement that pays her about \$230,000 of the public's money to go away quietly. Hill was hired in December 2009. She was previously commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia.

Since Roy Johnson was removed from office in 2006 as a result of a corruption scandal in the system, there have been two chancellors, two acting chancellors and two interim chancellors.

That's no way to run a railroad, as the saying goes, and it is certainly no way to run a system of two-year colleges.

It's difficult for the public to know exactly why Hill was pushed out. The public complaints against her were vague, and she had supporters on the board.

Five of the nine board members recently said they didn't think Hill should remain as chancellor. In an evaluation made public recently, several board members criticized Hill's leadership style, saying she didn't communicate well with the board or the media and had a poor relationship with K-12 education. But there were few specific examples of problems. ...

The inability to find able and stable leadership for the two-year college system is the responsibility of the State Board of Education, and all of this turnover reflects on the board. That's something board members should keep forefront in their minds as they contemplate the future of the office.

### The Huntsville Times on the closing of state psychiatric hospitals:

Plans to close three of the state's four largest psychiatric hospitals may indeed be inevitable and the best way to approach a 25 percent cut in the budget of the state Department of Mental Health.

But advocates for the mentally ill who support the expansion of treatment and care for patients in their own communities are justifiably concerned that the state's political leaders will fall short of providing enough money to do the job right. ...

To deal with her department's expected loss of revenue, Commissioner Zelia Baugh in February announced that it would lay off about 950 employees and close North Alabama Regional Hospital in Decatur, Greil Memorial Hospital

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UPDATE 07:19AM



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in Montgomery and Searcy Hospital in Mount Vernon by Sept. 30. The Taylor Hardin Medical Secure Facility in Tuscaloosa would close next spring.

To continue care for these hospitals' patients, the department would expand care provided by group homes and other local options. ...

There is good reason for concern, given Alabama's history of inhumane treatment of the mentally ill in state hospitals. ...

Alabama's treatment of the mentally ill is vastly improved, but those gains could be undercut by the fiscal calamity threatening to wreck the Mental Health Department and other state agencies.



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- Cheese dips
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- Snack cakes

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**Events Calendar**

**Monday, Mar 19, 2012**

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MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
19	20	21	22	23	24	25

**The Sanctuary Artists: The Art of Nature**

Tennessee Valley Museum of Art  
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

**Muscular Dystrophy Association**

Kennedy Douglass Center-The Arts

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