



**CITY OF**  
**Anniston**  
**ALABAMA**

**EMPLOYEE  
NEWSLETTER**

**ANNISTON CITY HALL  
1129 NOBLE STREET**



*December*  
**2025**



CITY OF ANNISTON

*Employee  
Holiday Luncheon*

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THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

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AT 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

ANNISTON FIRE STATION #3  
TRAINING CENTER  
(5304 MCCLELLAN BLVD)





Anniston City Hall

will be

**CLOSED**

December 24 - 25, 2025

in observance of

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

AND

December 31, 2025

in observance of

New Year's Eve

# Well Wishes



As I prepare to retire on December 11, 2025, I want to take this opportunity to say Happy Holidays to each of you and your families. The past 25 years have overall been a pleasure working with so many great people. I will cherish the memories of navigating new hires through onboarding, benefits enrollment, marriages, birth of newborns, divorces and the challenges of the loss of loved ones. Best wishes and much success in your future endeavors. This year has been one of transition in leadership. I am hopeful that new perspectives, out of the box thinking and progressive leadership will move the City forward at a steady pace. Retirement isn't the end of the road, it is the beginning of the open highway.

I leave you with two quotes regarding public service.

“Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation.” (Margaret Chase Smith)

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

Thanks to each one of you for your contribution to the City of Anniston team. Have a wonderful and safe holiday season and amazing years ahead. For now, it’s time to stop living at work and start working at life.

Best regards,

**Bersheba Austin, PSHRA-CP, APPA-CP**  
Human Resources Director – City of Anniston

# DECEMBER Fun Facts

**Zodiac Signs: Sagittarius & Capricorn**

**Birthstone: Turquoise**

**Birth Flowers: Narcissus & Holly**

National Cat Lovers' Month

December 1 - National Cookie Cutter Day

December 2 - National Mutt Day

December 4 - National Cookie Day

December 8 - National Brownie Day

December 11 - Christmas Jumper Day

December 14 - National Alabama Day

December 15 - National Cupcake Day

December 19 - Ugly Christmas Sweater Day

December 23 - Christmas Movie Marathon Day

December 24 - Christmas Eve

December 25 - Christmas Day

December 28 - National Call A Friend Day

December 30 - National Bacon Day

December 31 - New Year's Eve

# HAPPY

# BIRTHDAY

Adam Homer  
Alexandra Campbell  
Allen Alexander  
April Jones  
Benjamin Brown  
Brett Lloyd  
Cameron Bearden  
Catherine Stanton  
Christopher Leach  
Derwin Perry  
Dylan Grubbs  
Eugenia Lockridge  
Frazier Burroughs  
Izak Bailey  
Jace Stewart  
Jackson Pugh  
Jacob Gann  
Jasmine Smith

Jeffrey Beason  
Jerry Fuller  
Justin Pope  
Kenneth Coppock  
Kimberly Davis  
Michael Yocum  
Nathan Jackson  
Renee Flournoy  
Rodney Lingerfelt  
Royce Anderson  
Sam Bean  
Samuel Mills  
Savannah Puckett  
Sean Jones  
Shelby Shiflett  
Timothy Kent  
Timothy Mote  
William Poole



# happy Anniversary

Dwight Pembrook 21 Years  
Nicholas Maguire 15 Years  
Rex Newton 12 Years  
Rhonda Pope 11 Years  
Stephen Hudson 10 Years  
Skyler Bass 8 Years  
David Arnett 6 Years  
Jackson Hodges 6 Years  
Jessica Leonard 6 Years  
Daniel Henry 6 Years  
Reed Hill 5 Years  
Trevekio Roberts 6 Years  
Blake Noah 4 Years  
Jackson Stubbs 4 Years  
Austin Hubbard 4 Years  
Keith Brown 3 Years

James Cullen 3 Years  
Matthew Martin 3 Years  
Lawrence Mercer 3 Years  
Kamlyn Thomas 3 Years  
Nikita Wood 3 Years  
William Graves 3 Years  
Evan Beadles 2 Years  
Elijah Jones 2 Years  
Timothy Mote 2 Years  
Alycia Smith 2 Years  
Derrick Taylor 2 Years  
Christian Jijon 1 Year  
Derrick Delaney 1 Year  
Gregory Frazier 1 Year  
Zachary Wallace 1 Year

# UPCOMING EVENTS

# IN ANNISTON & SURROUNDING AREAS



Dec 1, 2025

Mon, 7:00 PM (CST)



Dec 7, 2025

Sun, 7:00 PM (CST)



Oxford Performing Arts Center

**Christmas in the Air**

100 E Choccolocco St, Oxford, AL, United States

Oxford Performing Arts Center

**Christmas with the Atlanta Pops Orchestra**

100 E Choccolocco St, Oxford, AL, United States

## CHRISTMAS AT THE MUSEUM FAMILY FUN NIGHT

*Friday December 5*  
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Anniston Museum of Natural History

### LITTLE EXPLORERS PRESCHOOL CLASS

*Tuesdays in September*  
10:30 am & 11:15 am

Anniston Museum of Natural History



Multiple Dates Event



Anniston Museums and Gardens

**Little Explorers Preschool Class**

ANNISTON MUSEUMS  
AND GARDENS



Dec 31, 2025

Wed, 8:00 PM - 12:30 AM (CST)



Anniston Museums and Gardens

**NYE Disco Ball Fundraiser**

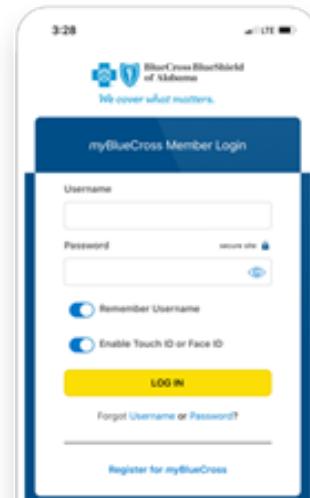


# REMINDERS



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Alabama

*We cover what matters.*



 Download on the  
**App Store**

 Get it on  
**Google play**

Please know that you can access your cards, claims, benefits/coverage information and other must have tools at [myBlueCross](#).

## FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM

Big thanks to everyone who participated in the Employee Spotlight! We're grateful for your time and effort in joining us for this, and we're excited to involve even more folks in the future. Thanks for doing a great job representing your departments and being such valuable members of the City of Anniston team.

*Thank  
you!*

**Bersheba Austin, HR Director**  
**LaKea Bailey, HR Generalist**  
**Emily Evans, HR Generalist**  
**Amanda East, HR Clerk**



# REMINDERS

# PAY DAY



Please log in to Kronos to review and update your direct deposit information before the end of each pay period to ensure there are no delays in receiving your pay.

Also, don't forget to review your pay statements every Wednesday to verify accuracy and catch any issues early.

Thank you!



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*Thank  
you!*

**Bersheba Austin, HR Director**

**LaKea Bailey, HR Generalist**

**Emily Evans, HR Generalist**

**Amanda East, HR Clerk**



# Healthcare Premium Increase

## Effective January 1, 2026

### Medical & Dental Employee Rates

#### 2026 HEALTH Insurance Premiums (24 deductions per year)

Tobacco User Rates		
Plan Type	Medical & Dental	Medical Only
Employee	\$113.59	\$110.78
Employee & Dependent	\$157.00	\$149.55
Employee & Spouse	\$199.48	\$193.87
Family	\$226.35	\$215.45

#### 2026 HEALTH Insurance Premiums (24 deductions per year)

Non-Tobacco User Rates		
Plan Type	Medical & Dental	Medical Only
Employee	\$103.59	\$100.78
Employee & Dependent	\$147.00	\$139.55
Employee & Spouse	\$189.48	\$183.87
Family	\$216.35	\$205.45

#### 2026 DENTAL Insurance Premiums (24 deductions per year)

Dental Only	
Employee	\$11.23
Employee & Dependent	\$29.81
Employee & Spouse	\$22.44
Family	\$43.57



## Measure Your Stress

The following scale, developed by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe<sup>1</sup>, is almost universally recognized as a tool to investigate the relationship between social readjustment, stress and susceptibility to illness.

**Review the events listed below and place a check by any that have happened to you within the last 12 months.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a spouse	100	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in arguments w/significant other	35
<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce	72	<input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage or loan for major purchase	31
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital separation	65	<input type="checkbox"/> Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a close family member	63	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in responsibilities at work	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Menopause	60	<input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter leaving home	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Serious personal injury or illness	53	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with in-laws or children	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage	50	<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding personal achievement	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Fired at work	45	<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse begins/stops work outside home	26
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital reconciliation	40	<input type="checkbox"/> Revision of personal habits	24
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in health of family member	40	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with boss	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	40	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in work hours or conditions	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Gain of a new family member	39	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in residence	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Job change	38	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacation	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in financial status	37	<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a close friend	36	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor violation of the law	11

### Interpretation

Those who score a 200-250 during a one-year period have a 50 percent chance of developing an illness or experiencing a change in their health. With a score of 300 or more, chances increase to 80 percent.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the "Social Readjustment Rating Scale" by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe. This scale was first published in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*. 1967, vol. II p. 214.

**TOTAL POINTS**  
from both columns

- 0 - 149:** no significant problem
- 150 - 199:** mild stress;  
35% chance of future illness
- 200 - 299:** moderate stress;  
50% chance of future illness
- 300 and up:** major stress;  
80% chance of future illness



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Alabama**

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



Did you know that almost every system in your body can be damaged by stress? Here are some examples:



## Immune System

Chronic stress causes the body to release cortisol, a hormone which suppresses the immune system. This can lead to increased susceptibility to viral and bacterial infections, cancer and autoimmune diseases.

## Asthma

Stress can trigger changes in the lungs that lead to or worsen asthma.

## Sleep

Stress affects your sleep, primarily causing insomnia.

## Diabetes

In people with diabetes, stress can cause high blood sugar.

## Appetite Changes

Stress can cause erratic eating behaviors – either overeating or loss of appetite.

## Hypertension

Stress has been shown to lead to high blood pressure and an increase in cardiovascular disease.

## Headaches

Headaches are common for persons with acute or chronic stress.

## Ulcers

Ulcers have also been linked to chronic stress.

## Exercise

People under stress tend to exercise less due to a lack of energy.

## Anxiety & Depression

High levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, can cause anxiety and depression.

## Cholesterol

Elevated cholesterol has been linked to stress.





## Medicare Education Webinars

Join us for a free educational  
Medicare Webinar

### Why SmartConnect?

SmartConnect is an exclusive service for you and your family members to explore all that Medicare has to offer, including great benefits and potential savings.

This no-cost service is available 365 days a year with no obligation to enroll in a plan. You can move to Medicare at any time! Even if you are enrolled in group coverage, you can still explore and enroll in a Medicare plan with no penalty.

Here are a few ways SmartConnect's licensed insurance agents will help determine the right decision for your needs:

- Compare the costs of your current health care coverage to a variety of Medicare plans
- Answer all of your questions
- Help you transition to Medicare if you find a plan you like



Register for a webinar here:  
[smartconnectplan.com/webinar](http://smartconnectplan.com/webinar)

### Medicare Education Webinars

#### Medicare Week

- Medicare Enrollment and Secondary Coverage  
October 7th, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare While Working  
October 8th, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare 101  
October 9th, 2:00 p.m.
- Medicare 101  
October 10th, 10:00 a.m.
- Medicare 101  
October 11th, 10:00 a.m.

#### Future Webinars

- Medicare 101  
October 14th, 7:00 p.m.
- Medicare Enrollment and Secondary Coverage  
October 22nd, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare While Working  
October 31st, 10:00 a.m.
- Medicare 101  
November 7th, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare Enrollment and Secondary Coverage  
November 11th, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare While Working  
November 13th, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare 101  
November 19th, 12:00 p.m.
- Medicare 101  
December 3rd, 12:00 p.m.

\*All times are listed in CST



# IT'S FAST AND EASY TO CHOOSE A PROVIDER

## With Our Online Provider Directory

With our vision insurance, you have access to advanced vision technology at many independent and retail providers, including popular national chains and regional favorites, as well as online retailers. That way, you receive vision care and services when and where it's convenient for you.

- ① Go to [MutualofOmaha.com/vision](http://MutualofOmaha.com/vision)
- ② In the **Extensive Network** section, click on the [Locate a Provider](#) link.
- ③ Enter a **ZIP code** or click on [Use My Location](#) to see providers in your area.



If you have questions or need additional assistance during business hours, contact our service team at **(833) 279-4358**.



Download the EyeMed Members app on your iphone, ipad or android to view benefit information and id card.



Underwritten by  
United of Omaha Life Insurance Company  
A Mutual of Omaha Company



## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - EAP

# When life's a little much, reach out and get in touch.

Let's be real: life can be tough. When your responsibilities start to feel overwhelming and showing up each day with a smile on your face seems difficult, it's important to reach out for help. You can lean on your free and confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support.

### We've got your back.

A free benefit from your workplace, the EAP can help you or anyone in your household:

- Be more present and productive at work
- Receive support when you don't feel like yourself
- Get help with responsibilities that are distracting or stressful
- Grow personal and career skills
- Be a caring, loving friend or family member
- Receive care after a traumatic event or diagnosis
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Improve and inspire daily life

### We're here for you, always.

Life happens, regardless of the day or time. That's why we make ourselves available 24/7, even on holidays. So whenever you need to reach out, we're here for you.



**Support Line**  
Call anytime  
800-624-5544



**Mobile app**  
Search for New  
Directions EAP



**Web**  
Visit [eap.ndbh.com](http://eap.ndbh.com)  
for resources

### SERVICES

- ☒ **Counseling**
- ☒ **Consultation on**
  - Finances
  - Legal needs
  - Managing employees
  - Life
- ☒ **Crisis support**
- ☒ **Coaching**
- ☒ **Adult and child care resources**
- ☒ **Personal and professional training**
- ☒ **Digital behavioral health tools**

**eap.ndbh.com**  
**800-624-5544**

**Services are free and your employer will not know you reached out.**  
Flip this sheet over to see some common reasons people use EAP.

# Million Dollar Mac & Cheese

## Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- Kosher salt
- 1 lb. cavatappi
- 12 Tbsp. unsalted butter divided
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups whole milk
- 1 (12-oz.) can evaporated milk
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. fontina, shredded
- 8 oz. French Raclette, shredded
- 3 oz. Pecorino Romano, finely shredded
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- Gold leaf, for serving (optional)



## Directions:

**Step 1:** Arrange a rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°. Grease a 13" x 9" baking dish with cooking spray.

**Step 2:** In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta, stirring occasionally and checking 2 minutes before recommended time on package directions, until just al dente. Drain.

**Step 3:** Meanwhile, in another large pot over medium heat, melt 8 Tbsp. butter. Whisk in flour and cook, stirring constantly, until paste is bubbling across bottom of pot and just a shade darker in color, 30 seconds to 1 minute.

**Step 4:** Whisk in whole milk and evaporated milk and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened and bubbling, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk in mustard; season with pepper.

**Step 5:** Remove pot from heat and add fontina, French Raclette, and Pecorino Romano. Using a rubber spatula, fold in cheese until melted and sauce is smooth. (Return pot to low heat if necessary to finish melting.) Season with salt, if needed. Fold in pasta.

**Step 6:** In a wide skillet over medium-low heat, melt remaining 4 Tbsp. butter. Add panko; season with 1/4 tsp. salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until bread crumbs are golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes.

**Step 7:** Pour pasta mixture into prepared dish. Top with crispy panko.

**Step 8:** Bake mac & cheese, uncovered, until warmed through and crispy on top, 25 to 30 minutes. Top with gold leaf (if using).



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Pay Period Ending  
December 25, 2025 will  
have a payroll check  
date of January 2, 2026

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