

years old, and some date back to the Depression. The county even has the oldest and third oldest active bridges in the state. "Now you're beginning to scare me," Edgill said with a chuckle.



David Edgill

However, in reality Edgill knows the status of bridges in Walker County is no laughing matter. He said the often discussed problem with Ripley Cutoff Bridge at Lost Creek is not unusual - and that it might cost as much as \$20 million to catch up with all the problem bridges of the county, even short, simple bridges.

In fact, if one were to add road repairs, the county would need an additional \$8 million - \$36.6 million if the county wanted to bring the roads to a standard to stand up more to commercial traffic, especially in Districts 2 and 3.

However, at least many of those roads are still open. Edgill points out some local bridges have been out for several years. Five bridges in the county are now closed, with only two - Myers Bridge and Pendley Creek Bridge - scheduled to open by fall, with the other three - Steel Road Bridge, Lost Creek Bridge and Ripley Cut-Off Bridge - left with no known completion date.

A total of 18 county bridges have a restricted load limit of 15 tons or less that still prevents school buses and emergency vehicles from gaining access. Discounting Myers and Pendley, that amounts to 21 out of 101 county bridges, or 21 percent, which are in no shape for those vehicles and which have no schedule for replacement.

That doesn't count the work needed for roads in the county, which could continue to

See BRIDGES, A11 ▶

For a large number of bridges within Walker County, the ability to escape the effects of age and wear is wearing dangerously thin. County officials fear that it might cost as much as \$20 million to catch up with all the problem bridges of the county - even short, simple bridges.



Daily Mountain Eagle - Ed Howell

County engineer: Some county bridges have been out for years

By ED HOWELL
Eagle News Editor

CARBON HILL - County Engineer David Edgill said bridges have become such an expensive proposition that many times county bridges have gone years without replacement or repairs after the state has recommended closure.

A prime example would be at Steel Bridge Road, where a simple 140-foot bridge was closed Jan. 18, 2001 (along with the Lost Creek Bridge on the Old Oakman-Parish Road on the same date). Weeds are now beginning to grow in the area, as a sign still blocks vehicle entrance.

Walking across the short bridge, one can see a beautiful, shaded stream area. The bridge at a glance doesn't look compli-



Daily Mountain Eagle - Ed Howell

County Engineer David Edgill looks at the Steel Road Bridge, which has been closed since 2001 and would cost \$700,000 to replace.

cated. "This one looks simple," Edgill notes. However, the price tag is not

simple, set currently at \$700,000. Edgill said large abutments and piers would be needed. See ENGINEER, A11 ▶

County BOE to host trainings for coaches, band directors

By RON HARRIS
Eagle Managing Editor

its assistance. Also assisting will be physicians from Walker Baptist Medical Center and athletic trainers from Rehab South.

Officials from the Alabama State

Coaches in all sports in both junior high and high schools in the county, as well as band directors, cheerleader sponsors and others who participate in



Communitarian leader dies at age of

Special to the Eagle

J. George Mitchell,

zens - an activity he welcomes.

"I'm a people person, want to hear from the folks in our county," Miller said sure that I will be there with a lot of people. I think our strengths and weaknesses are as I fit way through the next months. That is something I think will be very enjoy

A lifelong county resident and Oakman High educator, Miller was recently elected Saturday morning by a group of 20 local Democratic officials gathered in Walker County Courthouse. Miller replaces former chairman Trent McMiller who stepped down from post after announcing plans to seek a local next year.

"This is a new venture, but I'm excited about the opportunity," Miller said. "Walker County has been a place with a lot of people, and I think it is headed in the right direction for a positive future. We have a lot of good things going on right now. I think it is time to do my best as chairman by working as I possibly can." Praising the county, McCluskey, who has

See MILL