

DADDY...



Kathy Matheny | Special to The Herald

is all smiles while spending quality time with his daddy, Joe Ellington.

f fatherhood

the elation of 1-month-old Josie Doreen Gibbons' birth.

"Wow! A perfect little baby! Another girl! I was glad she was finally here," said Gibbons, 42.

Josie is the sixth addition to the family he shares with his wife, Dawn, in Flora.

But Gibbons said being the father of six is no walk in the park.

"We have to keep things as organized and on somewhat of a schedule as much as possible to keep things running smoothly," he said.

Gibbons said his older children — Joshua, 13, Julie, 12, Jessica, 6, Jill, 4, and Jenna, 2 — always lend a helping hand with Josie, such as fetching diapers, wipes, sippy cups and other essentials she might need throughout the day.

When asked about what it means to be a father, Gibbons said "to love and to be loved unconditionally.

"It means thinking about the choices you make and making sure you are set-

▶ **FATHERS** | Page 3A

County hires firm to help create jobs

BY LUCY WEBER
lweber@mcherald.com

Madison County officials have hired the government relations arm of a local law firm to help bring companies and jobs here.

Starting Oct. 1, the Board of Supervisors and the Madison County Economic Development Authority will split the \$6,000 a month fee to hire Ridgeland-based Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Canada PLLC.

"They will help us with economic development," County Administrator David Overby said.

While the firm's government relations section does provide lobbying services, Overby said the local work will be directed to identify companies and contacts that can recruit jobs for Madison County. The work will go beyond legislative contacts, he said. "It could be working with the governor's office, with Mississippi Development Authority and with Mississippi Department of Transportation," he said.

The county is in the midst of creating a strategic economic development plan that will be finished about the time the firm comes on board, Overby said. "We can use their expertise to put that feasibility study into practice," he said.

Sidney Allen, director of the government relations group for Butler, Snow, also is a member of the steering committee working on the strategic plan that is a partnership between public officials and private business leaders. "That plan will play a large part in what we do."

"While we do traditional lobbying, this (Madison County job) is geared more toward economic development," Allen said. "We will work more as a liaison between state officials and the county."

"I feel the experience Butler, Snow brings to the table can help us with expertise we don't have," Board of Supervisors President John Bell Crosby

▶ **COUNTY** | Page 3A

seeing people laugh doesn't mean they are laughing at you. "The real thing I want everybody to learn from my story is: 'Don't think somebody is making fun of you.'"

In the story, Bob the Elephant worries after he sees himself in the mirror. "Just one look and he knew he was U-G-L-Y," Alayna wrote. "Why he must have a hundred wrinkles. No! He must have had a million."

Bob then meets Frenchie, a

lion, who also has image issues. "And they all made peace and lived happily and Frenchie said - All things are made unique by God from the slightest to the biggest."

Frenchie came to life on the page because "I just thought of a mouse, and it came to me it could be French. You don't see them unless you're in France," Alayna said.

Alayna is writing other stories. There's the one about Pickle the Parrot, who worries

and Marty the Monkey, who meets Bohonkus the King. "This summer I want to write 10 stories," she said.

"I really have no clue where she gets these ideas," her mom said.

As Alayna works on her writings this summer, McCullough is looking to her daughter for inspiration. "I'm working on my dissertation," McCullough said. "Maybe she'll give me some pointers on writing."

County

Continued from page 1A

said. "We feel this will be a good partnership with the contacts they have."

Supervisors voted to hire the firm last week but to delay the starting date until Oct. 1, the beginning of the next budget year. "We felt it best to work it into the new fiscal year budget because the money's not in there for this year."

Crosby said.

Crosby said the money will be well spent. "It's a win-win situation for everybody involved, the county, the cities, Butler, Snow and the constituents in Madison County," he said.

Having former Gov. Haley Barbour as a member of the Butler, Snow firm will benefit Madison County, Crosby said. "Having Haley on board is

kind of like having a cherry on top of your ice cream," he said.

From 2008 to 2011, Madison County hired a local lobbyist who worked at the federal level on its behalf at the rate of \$75,000 annually. In 2009, the county added a second local lobbying firm for an additional \$75,000 that year. Those lobbying funds also were shared between the supervisors and MCEDA.

weeks old, I read him *Urethi Eggs and Ham*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and I made up my own story for him, too," Ellington said. "The other night when I was telling him stories, I could see him holding his head up and looking at the pages as I read."

Reading children's stories isn't the only change for Ellington since his son's birth.

Leisure activities like watching television to tune into his favorite shows have been exchanged for the baby's schedule.

His son, Ellington says, is well worth the changes.

"I like being spending time with him, and I think over time it's more important to spend time with him, especially as he's growing up," Ellington said.

Watkins, 29, shares Ellington's sentiment on the life-changing journey of having a newborn.

"He has to be fed every two to three hours," Watkins said of 2-week-old Aden Dar-

Parents Michael and Dawn Gibbons of Flora recently welcomed their sixth child, daughter Josie Doreen, born May 7. Their other children are Julie, 12; Jessica, 6; Jill, 4; Jenna, 2, and Joshua, 13.

Some help to my wife, especially when I'm off work."

He and his wife, Lakisha, "change diapers and take shifts," he said.

"We're just a team; we do it together," says Watkins, of Canton.

Although the couple has two other daughters — Asya, 12, and Adriana, 15, — this is their first time raising a newborn together.

The experience has shown Watkins the importance of being in baby Aden's life.

"It just makes a lot of difference," he said. "It makes me feel good that I can be of

some help to my wife, especially when I'm off work."

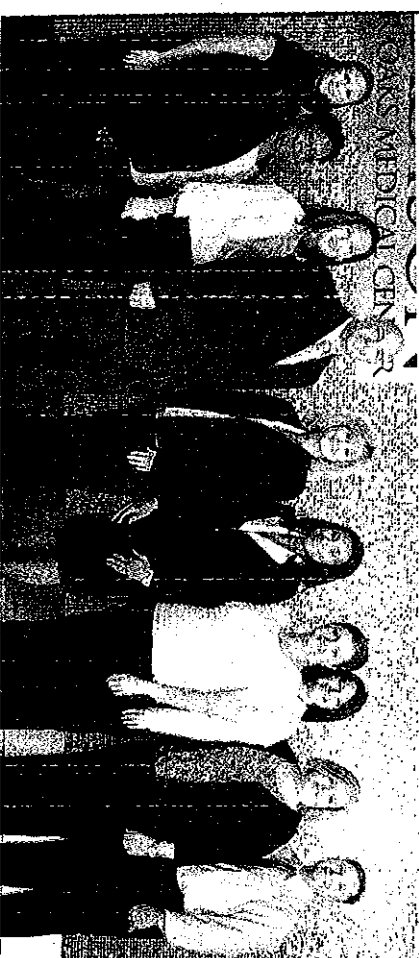
Aden's name means "the little fire that loves so dearly with a righteous flame." Ironically, his father is a firefighter.

Aden's "little fire" is one he was happily prepared for, Watkins said.

"I was quite confident, and as long as he was born healthy, that was my main concern."

In addition to their newborn, the three fathers all have common plans for Father's Day: firing up the grill and preparing a good meal for their families to enjoy.

IT TAKES THE BEST PEOPLE TO MAKE THE BEST HOSPITAL.



ST. JOSEPH'S MEDICAL CENTER

GET A REWARDS

BOOST



Join the Club and Get an Instant Surge of Energy.

1. New Members Get \$5 Just For Signing Up!
2. Plus, You'll Get a FREE Gift Based on Your First Day of Play — the more you play, the better your gift!

With all these Perks and Free Stuff, you too will have a six-million-dollar smile!

Royal Caribbean® Cruises
Las Vegas Resort Lodging