By the time this Business Advocate is published, whether there will be a special legislative session to revisit unfinished business from the 2017 regular session might be known.

President Donald Trump released broad outlines of his infrastructure plan and the sooner Alabama can prepare to take advantage of federal dollars the better.

Governor Kay Ivey attended the President’s infrastructure summit and pledged support for Alabama infrastructure efforts. If she calls a special legislative session this year it could include an answer to prison overcrowding that loomed over the session that ended May 19.

This would be the opportune time to reintroduce infrastructure investment legislation. Several Southeast states have successfully increased their investment in roads and
bridges that could help them out-compete Alabama for jobs.

The broad-based Alliance for Alabama’s Infrastructure is in its second year of advocating for renewed infrastructure investment and will continue to work to highlight Alabama’s needs. Rebuilding and reinvesting in our infrastructure will mean construction jobs, attract investment, and create permanent jobs.

During the session, Governor Robert Bentley resigned and Lt. Gov. Ivey was sworn in as Alabama’s 54th governor. Suspended Chief Justice Roy Moore also resigned and Governor Ivey named Associate Justice Lyn Stuart as chief justice of Alabama. She then appointed Montgomery attorney William Sellers as Associate Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court.

Governor Ivey signed the $6.4 billion Education Trust Fund budget that was good for the business community’s goal of building a skilled future workforce, and the $1.8 billion General Fund Budget that funds Medicaid with one-time money from the BP settlement.

The House and Senate redrew districts after the 2012 legislative plan was ruled unconstitutional. But the Legislature could not quite advance a prison construction bill.

Because of that, there is growing speculation of the need for a special session.

We addressed issues important to Alabama’s business community and the BCA’s political arm, Progress PAC, began preparing for the 2018 election cycle that will include support for pro-business candidates and incumbents.

Retired Gen. David Petraeus, a former CIA director, will be the BCA’s 2017 Chairman’s Dinner speaker at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel on Sept. 20. Investors in the BCA’s Carrying the Flag for Business campaign will have the opportunity to hear his account of a lifetime spent protecting the United States.

The BCA’s Carrying the Flag for Business campaign is our way to defend, recruit, and defeat candidates based on whether they put the private sector first.

The Senate Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development Committee deserves praise for correctly defeating the Mandatory Unitary Combined Reporting bill that we have been opposing for years.
MUCR is nothing more than an arbitrary tax increase that would expand the bureaucracy and authority of the Alabama Department of Revenue.

Reacting to a misguided 2015 National Labor Relations Board ruling, the BCA and other business groups championed the franchisee protection bill that adds state-level protections for Alabama franchisees and franchisors.

Governor Ivey signed the historic building renovation tax credit renewal bill that we began supporting last year. It extends the expired tax credit for rehabilitation of historic urban and rural buildings.

We educated Alabama lawmakers on the financial impact of forcing small businesses that offer medical insurance to cover autism spectrum disorder treatment that will directly affect the ability of employers to provide health insurance to employees. Governor Ivey signed the bill that passed without legislators knowing its cost. It takes effect Oct. 1.

The bill denies inclusion for children on Medicaid, children of public employees and public education, until after the 2018 elections.

In May, a Jefferson County circuit judge ruled against two provisions of the Alabama Workers’ Compensation Act but stayed his order until corrective action can be taken. The ruling endangers our economic development efforts and threatens litigation against Alabama’s job creators. Our legal and policy teams are evaluating this ruling and its impact.

We will continue to seek an update to the Alabama Accountability Act in order to encourage continued support for tax credits to benefit moderate-income families and help ensure they don’t lose scholarships.

The Alabama Jobs Act was renewed through 2020. This will allow any mega-project to take advantage of the credit and allow Alabama to gain jobs and her citizens wealth-building by continuing to offer incentives to businesses.

During the session, we applauded the White House’s plan for comprehensive tax reform that would end most deductions, double the standard deduction, kill the inheritance death tax, and simplify the system into three tax brackets, including 15 percent for corporations.

The BCA as a business organization advocates for its members and our team of BCA staff and volunteers remain steadfast and focused on our agenda even against emotional odds. TBADV
From leading the surge in Iraq as a General in the U.S. Army, to serving as Director of the CIA, David H. Petraeus has distinguished himself as one of the most prominent U.S. military figures of the post-9/11 era. On September 20th, investors in the “carrying the flag for business” campaign will have the opportunity to hear him give his account of a lifetime spent protecting the United States of America and our way of life.