

**TimesDaily****Folsom to seek funding  
for Jesse Owens park**

By Dana Beyerle

*Montgomery Bureau*

MONTGOMERY — Gov. Jim Folsom said Monday he would try to help Lawrence County officials with their plans to complete a park honoring four-time Olympic gold medalist Jesse Owens in time for the 1996 Atlanta games.

Folsom said he would attend next month's Appalachian Regional Commission meeting in Washington and would try to help the park committee with an ARC grant of \$75,000.

The \$550,000 park is in Owens' home town of Oakville about six miles east of Moulton and is about one-fourth finished. Funding has come from grants and private sources but more is needed.

"We see a good potential for it not only for the area but also the state," said Jesse Owens Memorial Park Board member James Pinion. He said the board has a \$5,000 grant from an Alabama Council for the Arts but needs a lot more money to

commission a statue of Owens, which would cost \$80,000.

The park board has applied to the ARC for the grant.

Pinion, the Lawrence County agent/coordinator for the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service at Auburn University, said the park would like to have the statue, a museum and a replica of Owens' home built before the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. A major Olympic event, the soccer matches, will be in Birmingham, just 90 miles from Oakville.

"We figure this will bring in tourists," Pinion said.

The statue would contain a "Gold Medallion" court that would explain the four track events Owens won at the 1936 Berlin games.

Owens was a track star at Ohio State University when he made Olympic history.

Later, the park board would like to build a track and hold track events at the 17.5-acre park, Pinion said.

The park contains a basketball court and a tennis court. A softball field is under construction.