

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

BRANCH BANKING AND TRUST
COMPANY, etc.,

Plaintiff,

vs.

JO ROGERS HOOD,

Defendant.

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CA 17-0446-MJ-MU

ORDER

This cause is before the Court on the parties' Rule 26(f) report, filed January 24, 2018 (Doc. 10). Although the parties have not requested a conference with the Court before entry of the scheduling order (*id.* at 1), it is the undersigned's belief that bringing the parties and the Court together at this stage promotes efficiency in the litigation process, helps avoid discovery disputes, provides a clearer path to pretrial resolution and allows counsel to pose questions to the Court. See Fed.R.Civ.P. 16(b)(1)(B) (providing that a magistrate judge must issue a scheduling order "after consulting with the parties' attorneys . . . at a scheduling conference."). A scheduling conference is particularly appropriate in this case, which has landed on the undersigned's opt-out docket. (See Doc. 4.) Counsel for the parties will have the opportunity to confer with their clients before the scheduling conference and thereby be prepared to advise the courtroom deputy, before the undersigned takes the bench, whether there is a request

for reassignment or whether the parties consent to the undersigned conducting all proceedings in this case in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 636(c). (See *id.*)¹

In light of the foregoing, this action shall come on for a Rule 16(b) scheduling conference by telephone on **February 7, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.** To access the telephone conference, the parties' attorneys are to use the following numbers:

CALL IN 877-873-8018

ACCESS CODE 3291819

Conference participants are requested to abstain from using cell phones or the conference option on landline phones due to their propensity to disrupt the recording system.

DONE and ORDERED this the 24th day of January, 2018.

s/P. BRADLEY MURRAY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

¹ In addition, in light of the parties' clear statement that discovery in this matter will include electronically stored information (Doc. 10, at ¶ 12), counsel should be prepared to discuss whether this case would benefit from entry of a consent order governing confidential materials and discovery of ESI similar to that entered by United States Magistrate Judge William E. Cassady in *National Steel City, LLC v. Outokumpu Stainless USA, LLC*, CA 13-00272-KD-C, Doc. 39, Attachment A.