

Municipal leaders updated on key legislative issues

Ramsey, Naifeh discuss League's 2007 priorities

BY GAEL STAHL
Editor
and CAROLE GRAVES

Speaking to some 200 city officials from across the state, Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey and House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh discussed several pieces of legislation that affect municipalities during the Tennessee Municipal League Legislative Conference held in Nashville earlier this month. Both discussed pending legislation to delay implementation of the streamlined sales tax – one of TML's top priorities.

"I wouldn't be too concerned about streamlined sales tax at this time," Speaker Naifeh said, who was first on the agenda during the two-day conference. "Cities, the governor, and the legislature have studied and conferred on it. And due to delays at the federal level, implementation should be delayed until the right time."

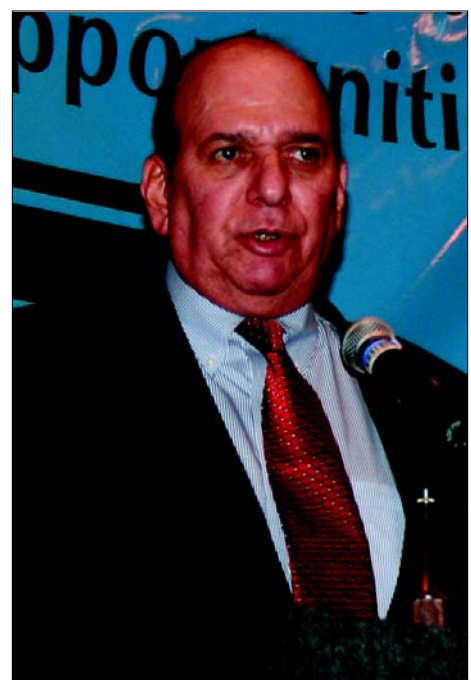
Naifeh also discussed the AT&T Cable Franchise Bill, referring to it as "the Lobbyist Employment Act of 2007" and one of TML's biggest issues. He reported that the bill has been assigned to the Commerce Committee, chaired by Rep. Charles Curtiss, the House sponsor of the bill. Naifeh said the two have discussed the proposed legislation and that he has also spoken to Rep. Ulysses Jones, chairman of State and Local Government committee, who is also interested in the bill.

"This bill is complex in nature," Naifeh said. "I'd like to bring the interested parties together and thrash out differences, but I don't know if that can happen."

On the topic of illegal immigration, Naifeh stressed that U.S. Congress should really be the one to address the issue. However, many in the See **SPEAKERS** on Page 7



Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey



House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh

Proposed senior property tax freeze significantly impacts local revenues

BY CAROLE GRAVES
TML Communications Director

A proposed property tax freeze for senior citizens will have significant financial impacts on local governments, and in all likelihood on its residents, according to projections by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.

After enactment of the senior tax freeze, a penny tax rate increase will no longer generate the same amount money prior to the tax freeze, and therefore will place a greater burden on all other property owners under the age of 65, including that young family who just qualified for their first home.

In November, Tennessee voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing for local governments to enact the property tax freeze. In order for the program to be implemented, legislation that defines eligibility limits for the freeze must first be adopted by the General Assembly.

Legislation currently being considered sets the maximum income limit for eligibility at \$50,000 or \$60,000 per year. SB 1 (Jackson) / HB 1 (Maddox) sets the income limit at \$60,000. SB 2 (Norris) / HB 1033 (Deberry, J.) sets the income limit at \$50,000.

According to 2000 census data, in every Tennessee county the median household income for seniors is well below the proposed eligibility levels. With the level set at \$50,000, somewhere between 64 percent (Williamson County) and 94 percent (Union) of seniors would qualify. In all but 13 counties, more than 80 percent of seniors would qualify. At \$60,000, only Williamson County would have less than 80 percent of seniors eligible. Seniors make up 20.7 percent of residential households in Tennessee. The percentage of senior households ranges from a high 32 percent in Cumberland to a low of 12.7 percent in Ruthersford.

During TML's recent Legislative Conference in Nashville, Tom Fleming, assistant to

the State Comptroller of the Treasury for Assessments, reported on the estimated impact on local governments and the potential administrative difficulties when implementing the program.

Fleming explained that the tax freeze is a local option for counties and municipalities by ordinance or resolution. Taxes are frozen as of:

- The date of adoption by the local government
- The tax year in which the taxpayer turns 65 years old, or
- The tax year in which taxpayers age 65 or over purchase their residence

Fleming said that the freeze will also affect reappraisals that will ultimately result in a static tax base that no longer grows during the reappraisal or indexing process. He explained that it is the tax amount that is frozen not the property values, assessments, or tax rates.

Fleming raised several issues to consider: What type and amount of qualification limits should be set (income, wealth, or some combination)?

- Can the income or wealth limit vary by county or municipality, or must it be a single limit statewide?
- Can taxes for special school districts be frozen?
- Once adopted locally, can the resolution or ordinance be modified or rescinded?
- For mixed-use property (residential/commercial, residential/greenbelt, etc.), what portion of the taxes are subject to the tax freeze?
- And who should administer the tax freeze program, including verifying income and determining eligibility?

"I don't have the answers to these questions, but these are issues that need to be considered," said Fleming.

TML's position

TML staff along with county representatives met with Sen. Mark Norris, the prime See **TAX FREEZE** on Page 9

Reinforcing Tennessee's ethics laws

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

During his talk on ethics regulations for city officials before the annual TML Legislative Conference, Bruce Androphy, executive director of the Tennessee Ethics Commission, reviewed The Comprehensive Governmental Ethics Reform Act of 2006 designed to strengthen Tennessee's ethics laws while the new Ethics Commission regulates lobbying and other activities.

"Ethics is really the small hot issue of today," Androphy said, stressing that Tennessee is no different from New York or any other body relative to ethics concerns.

"The public is tired of having government act in an unethical manner," he said. "The former experience has been one scandal after another, mostly from the private sector."

Androphy outlined the Reform Act's three primary components:

- All government entities must enact a code of conduct by June 30, 2007. The ordinance restrictions apply to boards, commissions, and all other entities created or appointed by the municipality. The act requires local ethics standards to include two restrictions, rules setting limits on and/or providing systematic disclosure of gifts or other things of value received by officials and municipal employees that affect or appear to affect their professional judgment and rules requiring systematic disclosure by officials and employees of personal interests that could affect or appear to affect their professional standing. The act also affects entities created by interlocal agreement requiring the agreement to be amended to include ethical standards. The commission has no regimental control over the format of a city's code, however a model created by MTAS is readily available, and cities choosing to use it simply need to notify the commission of this in writing.
- Disclosure Statements – All local elected officials are required to file financial disclosure statements within 30 days of qualifying. These statements are considered public documents which will appear on the Ethics Commission website around mid-March.
- Registration with the commission no later than seven days after employing an outside lobbyist, and within 30 days of that registration, submitting a \$150 registration fee

See **ETHICS** on Page 2



Photos by Victoria South

A passenger train donated by Nashville & Eastern Railroad and operated by RTA Engineer Terry Bebout, slams into a stalled vehicle at 45 mph during a staged train-crash in Mt. Juliet. There have been numerous close calls and infractions at railway crossing intersections since the first day of operation of The Music City Star commuter rail project in Mt. Juliet. Many are a result of drivers attempting to navigate around railroad crossing arms or beat the train while the warning lights and signals are in operation.

Mock train crash used to improve community safety

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

Every two hours in the U.S., a vehicle or pedestrian is struck by a train. A significant number of victims do not live to talk about it. This reality hit home for more than 300 citizens cited for a variety of railroad crossing infractions in Mt. Juliet at a staged train-crash hosted in partnership with the Nashville Eastern Railroad (NERR), Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Transit Solution Group, Wilson Emergency Management Authority (WEMA), and city of Mt. Juliet, Mt. Juliet police, and Tennessee Operation Lifesaver.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) 2006 statistics show that from January to November, there were 327 crossing fatalities, 894 injuries and 2,640 crossing incidents nationwide. There were also 493 deaths attributed to trespassing.

Tennessee had a total of 61 highway-rail grade crossing collisions, eight fatalities and 17 injuries. Also, 13 deaths and six injuries were a result of trespassing.

"We want the community to understand the potential danger that exists at railroad crossings," said Jill Moody, State Coordinator

for Tennessee Operation Lifesaver.

"We want to make our personal 'impact' on the community so they will better understand they can make the difference on safety." Operation Lifesaver is a non-profit, international public program established to end collisions, deaths and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and on railroad rights-of-way.

Organization representatives are happy to bring materials and speak at schools and civic events.

With a wide-range of supporters, the Operation Lifesaver programs are backed by federal, state and local government agencies, highway safety organizations, law en-

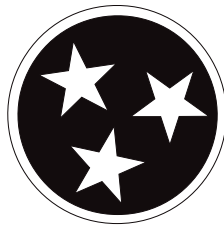
forcement, and the nation's railroads and their suppliers.

As police and WEMA officials placed three crash test dummies into a parked vehicle stretched across the tracks, several school buses loaded with court participants passed the See **CRASH** on Page 3



Rescue workers extricate three crash test dummies from a vehicle after it was struck by a passenger train during a mock exercise in Mt. Juliet. The filmed event will be used for educational purposes appearing on the city's cable channel.

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BY TISH WOMACK
TML Research Analyst

ALCOA

The city's FreedomFest celebration took two silver awards at the Kaleidoscope Awards at the Annual Southeast Festivals and Events Conference held on Feb. 19-21, in Nashville. One award was for Best Miscellaneous Printed Materials. The other was for Best Marketing Campaign.

BOLIVAR

Five historic buildings in the town square were heavily damaged or destroyed in a fire on March 1. The late 1800s and early 1900s era buildings were in the plan for revitalization using a pilot state program that directs 5.5 percent of the sales tax generated toward improvements to the court house squares in six cities. The city is committed to rebuilding the area.

CHATTANOOGA

Nearly \$1 million in federal grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will be used to serve the homeless population in the area.

CHATTANOOGA

A \$1.5 million state grant will assist in infrastructure for the Center for Advanced Manufacturing at the Enterprise South Industrial Park. The Center will support new and existing businesses with the aim of luring an automaker to the area.

CLEVELAND

Starplex Scientific, a Canadian pharmaceutical plastics company, announced it will locate a facility in Cleveland. First year employment will be 25 according to the announcement.

COFFEE COUNTY/ MANCHESTER

A referendum on increasing the local sales tax passed handily in late February, raising the tax to 9.75 percent. The measure was supported by 71.8 percent of the voters.

COLLEGEDALE, EAST RIDGE, RED BANK, SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, SODDY-DAISY

Collegedale City Manager Ted Rogers met with managers from East Ridge, Red Bank, Signal Mountain and Soddy-Daisy to pool efforts in attracting and keeping good employees by hiring a human resources management consultant, Ray Temple of the Temple Group. Temple will guide the five cities in developing job descriptions, performance evaluations, and pay scales for each city.

COLLEGEDALE

A newly-installed telephone system will pay for itself in about five months, according to the city manager. By changing carriers, the city nearly halved its monthly bill and lowered its long distance rate from 17 cents per minute to 4 cents.

COLUMBIA

The Tennessee Association of Utility Districts named Columbia as having the best tasting water in its Best Tasting Water Contest. The

water was judged by government officials, an environmental official and a Fayetteville radio station owner on clarity, taste, and smell.

CUMBERLAND, MORGAN, AND ROANE COUNTIES

Each of the three counties has committed up to \$2.5 million for the planned Tri-County Industrial Park Land Development. The land straddles the three counties.

FRANKLIN

Franklin has been advised that it will receive an undetermined amount of federal Community Development Block Grant monies that the city officials believe will total about \$250,000.

HENDERSONVILLE

New turnout gear will be purchased by the Hendersonville Fire Department using a \$129,000 federal homeland security grant. The city will add 10 percent matching funds

HUNTINGDON

The city was honored with a 2007 Governor's Awards in the Arts in the Arts Leadership Awards category. The award recognizes Huntingdon's leadership in the building of the Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center.

JOHNSON CITY

Johnson City's firefighters will go through a health screening program that includes a complete physical, hearing and vision tests, a pulmonary function test, and a blood glucose test. The program, to be completed over a several-month period, coincides with a citywide health and wellness program.

KINGSPORT

Residential and commercial investment growth in 2006 jumped 24 percent over 2005 to a 13-year high of \$88.5 million, according to Assistant City Manager Jeff Fleming.

KINGSPORT

Cartamundi Inc., a game and collectible cards company, announced it will close shop in May and leave about 100 employees without jobs. It is consolidating its U.S. operations in Dallas, Texas.

MARYVILLE

The Maryville Fire Department is upgrading its workforce capabilities by including licensed paramedics/firefighters. Four paramedics, one per fire truck, will go out to accidents, fires and other types of emergencies.

MEIGS COUNTY

Construction of Rarity Communities' Chickamauga Shores, a \$500,000 million private community project, is expected to have a significant impact on the county's revenue stream. Meigs is one of the smallest and poorest counties in the state.

MEMPHIS

A \$750,000 FastTrack Infrastructure Development Program grant from the state will help Illinois Central Railroad Co. relocate its jet fuel lines, water, and electric lines in its

switching yard. The job will mean employment for nearly 500 people.

MEMPHIS

A sniffer device, developed by Oak Ridge National Laboratory, will be used by Memphis to ferret out chemical or radiation incidents, accidental or intentional. Memphis is one of the first cities in the nation to deploy the mobile sensor.

MURFREESBORO

The police department has invested in the Gang Relational Intelligence Program system software to help officers track suspected gang members. The system provides a database where officers program relevant information about people suspected of gang activity.

NASHVILLE

Violent crime dropped in 2006 to the lowest level in 16 years, according to Metro police. However, two crime categories - burglaries and robberies have increased.

NOLENSVILLE

The town has a new Web site - www.nolensvilletn.gov - that features government information.

OAK RIDGE

The Secret City Festival, held in June, was honored at the International Festival & Events Association with its Bronze Kaleidoscope Award for Best Event Within an Event, a World War II re-enactment with more than 200 WW II re-enactors representing the U.S., England, and Germany.

PIPERTON

The city has purchased a pre-owned medical unit in excellent condition for \$30,000 that will be used to transport medical equipment to emergency scenes. A new truck would have cost \$100,000, according to Fire Chief Reed Bullock.

SOUTH PITTSBURG

With Mohawk Industries, a spinning yarn company, closing its plant in April idling 160 workers, the city and county began scouting for a replacement. There is an unnamed company interested, which would employ about 100 workers.

SULLIVAN COUNTY

A new industrial park may be in the works following the approval of the purchase of 222 acres of land by the Networks Sullivan Partnership. The county would be responsible for 51 percent of the purchase while Kingsport would be responsible for 31 percent, Bristol 17 percent and Bluff City would pay 1 percent. Each partner would share in the revenue from sale of land and taxes.

WEST TENNESSEE

A multi-state emergency disaster drill, will be held June 19-21 to test preparedness. Tennessee Emergency Management Agency will join officials from 21 West Tennessee counties as well as people from Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri from along the New Madrid fault line for the drill.



PEOPLE



BY TISH WOMACK

Huntingdon Mayor **Dale R. Kelley** is serving as a state director on the Association of Tennessee Valley Governments board of directors. He will serve a three-year term as a representative for West Tennessee.



Kelley

Piperton has tapped **Ronnie Billings** to be acting police chief. He replaces **Carl Hendricks**.

Graysville has a new town recorder, **Kathy Defur**, who was sworn in March 6.

Calhoun city officials appointed **Chuck Pope** city attorney effective April 1 for a six-month period.

Knoxville Mayor **Bill Haslam** announced he will run for a second term.



Haslam

Springfield's new fire station, expected to be opened in April, will be named in honor of Fire Chief **David Greer** who has been chief since 1972.

Decatur has hired **Laura Smith** town recorder. She replaces **Carrie Davis** who resigned.

Red Bank Mayor **Howard Cotter** announced he will be resigning effective April 1. He is moving out of the city. Vice Mayor **Joe Glasscock** will serve as mayor until the November 2008 election.

Former Columbia Vice Mayor

Bruce Androphy discusses Tennessee's ethics laws

ETHICS from Page 1

per lobbyist retained. Municipal employees who perform in-house lobbying duties are exempt from registration or fees, however some governments choose to go beyond the law and pay the fee anyway.

"Local officials have a great compliance rate," said Androphy citing a submission of 5,750 disclosure forms out of a possible 6,000 received by his office.

While the Tennessee Ethics Commission is not a policing agency, according to Androphy, warning letters and a possible \$25 per day fine could be levied toward individuals failing to file disclosure statements.

"This is not something we can force anyone to do. We can't hold anyone against their will and force them to be ethical," Androphy said. However, according to the MTAS municipal code of ethics model, members of a municipal governing body could be subject to ouster if a municipality fails to adopt a code of ethics ordinance.

"Ouster proceedings would not be instigated by the Ethics Commission," stressed Dennis Huffer, MTAS Legal Consultant and writer of the MTAS model ethics code.

"The citizens of the community

Norman R. Carpenter died at age 88 on Feb. 26. He served as vice mayor from 1982 to 1994.

Former Chattanooga Mayor **Robert K. Walker** died at age 81 on March 1. He was mayor from 1971 to 1975 and was credited with being the architect of annexations that doubled the size of Chattanooga.

Former U.S. Congressman **William R. Anderson** died Feb 25, at age 85.

He was elected to four terms in the U.S. House to represent Tennessee Congressional District 6. He also was captain of the Nautilus when it made

the historic trip under the ice to the North Pole going from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, in 1958.

Tennessee Justice Center, Inc. Executive Director **Gordon Bonnyman** was honored by the Southern Trial Lawyers with its prestigious *War Horse Award* in recognition of work for the sick, elderly and indigent in Tennessee.



Anderson



Bonnyman

Kingsport Police Patrolman **Dale Farmer** has been nominated by a Kingsport citizen for the 2007 All-Star First Responder Award for the second year running. The award, sponsored by the "America's Most Wanted" and Sprint Nextel, honors first responders who go beyond the call of duty and will be given to the nominee with the most votes in the eight-week contest.



Androphy

could instigate proceedings and might work through the city attorney or approach the district attorney to investigate. Since cities already have major ethics provisions on the books, the main impact of state law regulating ethics codes is more transparency and more ethical conduct. For example, many cities already have an ethics code that prohibits city officials and employees from accepting gifts. The prohibition is not about acceptance of gifts, however, but bribery; the ordinance is about the giving and acceptance of gifts of any value to influence governmental decisions."

"So much of this is self-policing," Androphy agreed. "If someone wants to take a bribe, all the laws in the world are not going to stop them."

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Mock train crash serves as stark reminder to use caution

CRASH from Page 1
scene headed for the fenced in viewing area.

"We hope this makes an impression on all who have been cited and they will be deterred from doing this again," said Moody.

At the signal, the commuter train began its rapid journey accelerating at an average rate of 40-45 mph before slamming into the stalled vehicle, which rolled several times on impact before coming to rest in a deep ravine.

Rescue workers utilized the Jaws of Life to extricate the dummies, covering one with a sheet as a fatality, as participants rushed to the edge of the fence to obtain a better view.

"Even though it isn't a real incident, the adrenaline really kicks in," said one witness. Others watching were amazed at the damage and vowed to think twice in the future before attempting to drive around crossing arms or beat the train.

"This staged crash event should be a stark reminder for every motorist to exercise caution at all railroad crossings," said Moody. "The safest and best practice at highway-rail grade crossings is to always expect a train on any track, at any time, in any direction."

Track safety facts and tips:

- Trains cannot stop quickly. A

freight train moving at 55 miles per hour can take a mile or more to stop. An 8-car passenger train traveling at 79 mph takes a mile.

- Nearly 50 percent of vehicle/train collisions occur at crossings with active warning devices (bells, lights, gates).
- Trains do not follow set schedules. Always expect a train!
- Never drive around lowered gates – It's illegal and deadly.
- Do not get trapped at a red light or in traffic on a track. Proceed through the crossing only if you're sure you can clear the entire track.
- The majority of grade crossing crashes happen when trains are traveling less than 30 mph.
- School buses and commercial buses in most states are required to stop at every highway-grade crossing.
- Crossbuck signs found at highway-rail intersections are yield signs. You are legally required to yield the right-of-way to trains.

If your vehicle stalls at the highway-rail intersection, get everyone out and far away from the tracks immediately. Then, call 911 and report an emergency situation.

Stop at flashing red lights on crossbuck signs. A train is approaching. Make sure all tracks are clear before crossing.



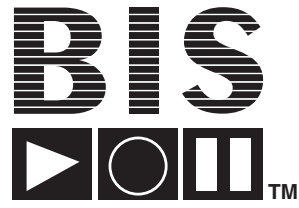
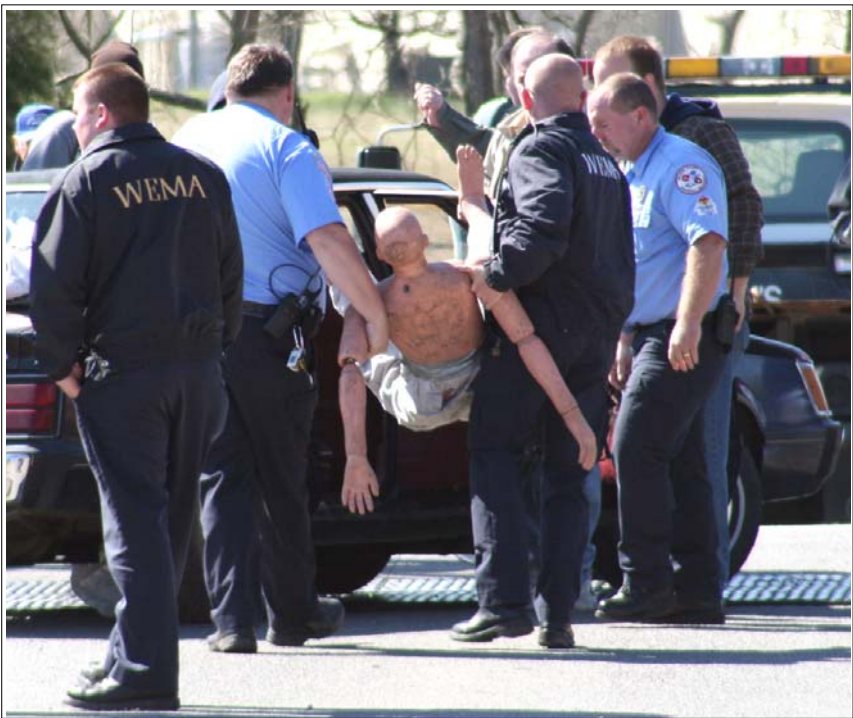
Photos by Victoria South

More than 300 spectators cited for railway crossing infractions gather to view a mock train-car crash.



Pictured above, individuals cited for various railroad crossing infractions in Mt. Juliet arrive by school bus to witness a staged train-car crash, receiving credit toward a court mandated highway safety class.

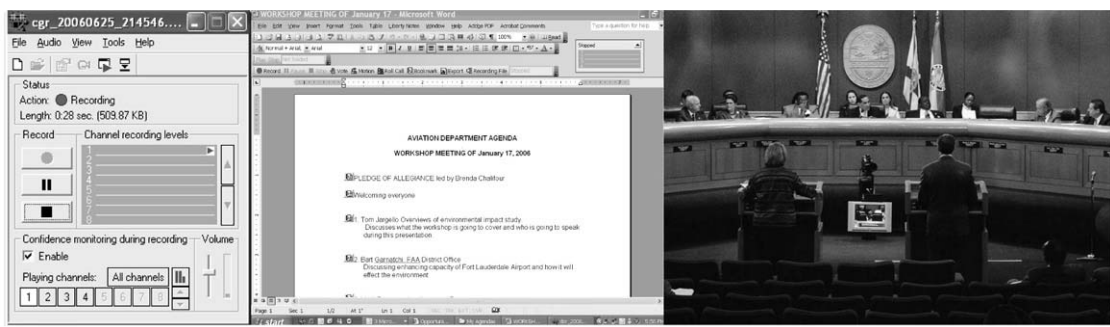
At left, fire and EMT personnel load three crash test dummies into a stalled vehicle along the railroad tracks in Mt. Juliet.



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Municipal leaders attend TML 2007 Legislative Conference



Carolyn Denton, Fayetteville alderperson, and Gwen Shelton, Fayetteville mayor



W.C. "Bubba" Pleasant, Bartlett alderman; Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, and Bobby Simmons, Bartlett alderman



David Gordon, Covington mayor, and Webb Banks, Brownsville mayor



Jeff Brighton, Bristol city manager, and Dennis Phillips, Kingsport mayor



Tommy Green, Alamo mayor and TML vice president, and Tommy Bragg, Murfreesboro mayor and TML president



Jay Johnson, Franklin city administrator, Eddie Ford, Farragut mayor, and Dot LaMarche, Farragut alderperson



TML Board Members: Johnny Dodd, Jackson councilmember, and Charles Farmer, Jackson mayor



TML Board Members: Royce Davenport, McMinnville mayor, John Proffitt, Athens mayor, and Don Mull, Alcoa mayor

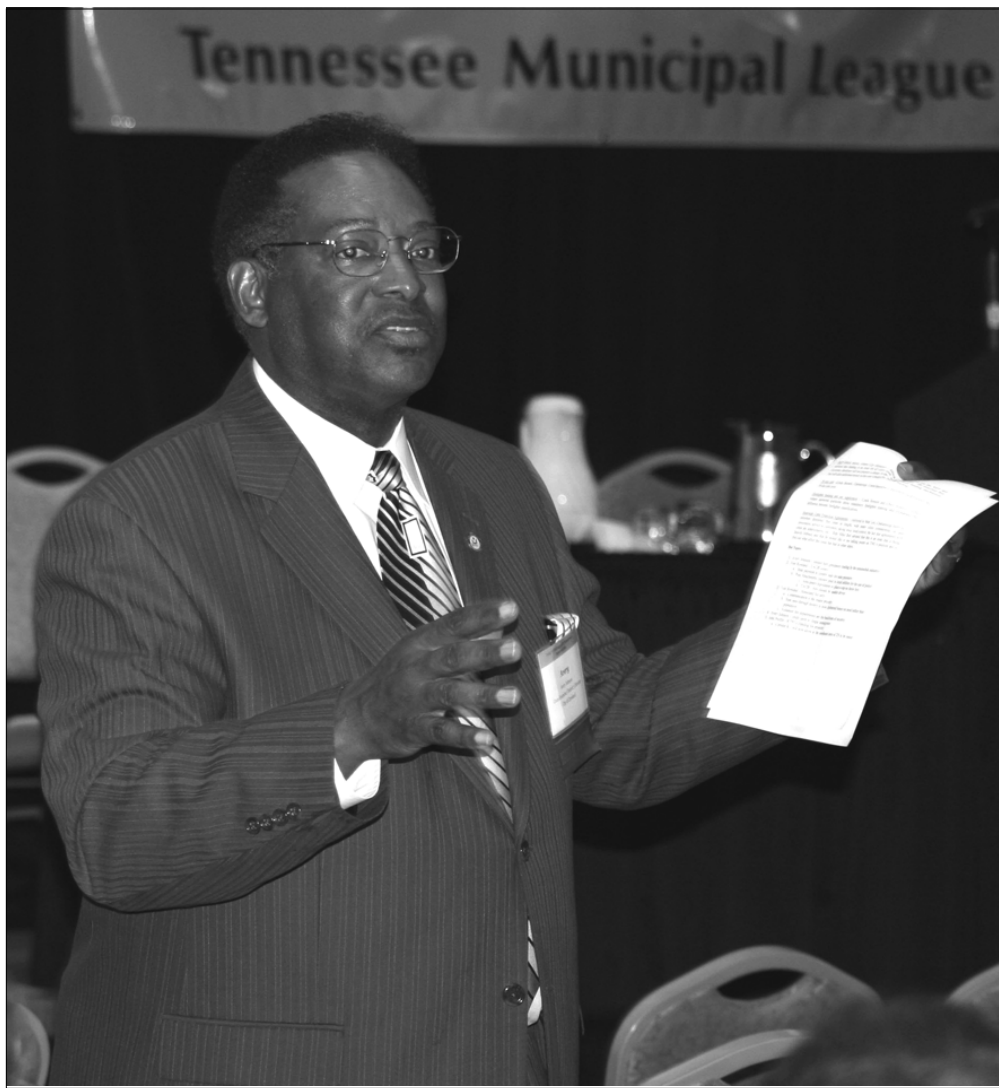


TML Board Members: John "Duke" Franklin, Chattanooga councilmember, and Bill Purcell, Nashville mayor



Sharon Goldsworthy, Germantown mayor

Focus on Today's Challenges as Tomorrow's Opportunities



Avery Johnson, Cleveland councilmember and TML District 3 Director



Warren Nevad, MTAS management consultant, Gail Fowler, Cookeville administrative assistant; and Jean Davis, Cookeville vice mayor and TML board member



David Skiles, Soddy-Daisy city commissioner; Sara Burris, Soddy-Daisy city recorder; and Janice Cagle, Soddy-Daisy city manager



Carl Holder, Paris city manager; Don Thorton, Union City city manager; and Roger Campbell, Maryville assistant city manager



Ron Sharp, Gatlinburg city attorney, and Doug Bishop, Sevierville city administrator.



Rick Emmett, Knoxville urban growth manager; Tommy Litton, Trenton mayor; and Allen Barker, Humboldt mayor



Greg McClain, Maryville city manager, and Bill Hammon, Alcoa assistant city manager



Juanita McPherson, John McPherson, Lakesite commissioner, and Tommy Pedigo, Sparta mayor and TML District 4 director

At right, Charles Beal, McKenzie city recorder, and Walter Winchester, McKenzie mayor





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Ramsey, Naifeh address city officials and their issues

SPEAKERS from Page 1

state legislature think they have the solution and want to do something about it. He acknowledged that there is a significant problem with illegal immigrants not paying taxes. But he also recognizes that many businesses rely on immigrants for their workforce.

"I think there needs to be a verification process for workers to be here legally. I'm afraid of what will happen to a lot of landscape businesses or farmers if you take a lot of illegal immigrants out of Tennessee. They won't be able to operate," Naifeh said.

Ramsey, who addressed TML's membership for the first time as lieu-

tenant governor and speaker of the Senate, discussed six issues, starting with the state-shared taxes that were cut a few years ago. "We fought like crazy in the General Assembly and got them back," he said. "From here on out you should be protected from running the state government on the back of local government."

On the topic of streamlined sales tax, he said that it is a hard issue. But many of the stakeholders who really believed in it are pulling back. "I wasn't one of them," he said. "It's a huge change in the way we collect taxes and share them."

On the cable franchising bill, he assured local governments they

will have a voice as to what's best for them before the bill goes through. "You are a powerful group," he said. "You call us on a daily basis, and that's in your favor."

Other favorable comments came on the issue of collective bargaining.

"While I don't believe in collective bargaining for public employees, I have a little bit of a soft spot in my heart for the firefighters of Tennessee," Ramsey said. "At the same time, they don't need collective bargaining. Possibly, we'll be able to do a few things to help them out this year including helping them increase their training and the stipend they get. But collective bargaining is not the way to solve this."

STATE BRIEFS

**BY TISH WOMACK
TML Research Analyst**

For the first time ever, automobiles surpassed cotton as Tennessee's top export according to data from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Tennessee ranked 15th in the nation with \$22 billion in exports, a 15 percent rise in 2006.

Current teacher attrition in Tennessee, after five years of teaching, is running close to 50 percent. A lack of a uniform state induction program for new teachers is the cause according to a report by the Office of the Comptroller.

Keep Tennessee Beautiful is gearing up for the Great American Cleanup that runs from March 1 through May 31. All 95 counties are encouraged to participate this year. For information on how to participate, visit www.KTNB.org.

Wal-Mart announced it will do-

nate\$100,000 to the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation in support of the Imagination Library programs. In 2005, Wal-Mart and SAM'S Clubs gave \$6.2 million in cash and in-kind contributions to local causes and organizations in Tennessee communities.

Interstate 181, running from the Virginia/Tennessee border north of Kingsport to the North Carolina/Tennessee border has been renamed I-26. New signs with new exit numbers were posted in March.

The At Home Tennessee magazine featured Tennessee's Main Street program in its February issue.

The Division of Forestry of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture will accept applications for grants through April 13 for eligible recipients including local governments, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Infor-

mation packets are available by calling Bruce Webster at 615-837-5436 or bruce.webster@state.tn.us.

The Tennessee Advisory Commission for Intergovernmental Relations has released a report entitled, "Low Growth/High Pressure: An Examination of Possible Causes for Fiscal Pressure in Six Low Growth Tennessee Counties. It is available on TACIR's website at www.state.tn.us/tacir/publications.htm.

Tennessee has been ranked 7th in the nation in child care regulation by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Policies and regulations were reviewed in determining the rankings in the Association's report "We Can Do Better."

Gov. Phil Bredesen announced a \$425,500 Heritage Conservation Trust Fund grant to assist Historic Rugby, Inc. with the purchase of 186 acres from Bowater.

Keep Tennessee Beautiful 2007 winners

The Keep Tennessee Beautiful and the Tennessee Department of Transportation 2007 Biennial State Conference was held in Nashville last month honoring 33 outstanding winners with grant checks totaling \$40,000 for their efforts to improve their community's appearance through public education programs.

Among the winners were the following cities and the category in which each was honored:

Public Education: Government:

Memphis City Beautiful Commission/CSI; Media: Memphis City Beautiful Commission/Cleaner Memphis Starts With You; Schools K-8: Memphis City Beautiful Commission/CU, PU,FU; Schools 9-12: Memphis City Beautiful Commission/S.H.IN.E., and South Memphis Cleanups.

Leadership: Bartlett in Bloom (second place).

Public Participation: Most Improved: Morristown/Hamblen

KAB (second place); Most Innovative: Memphis City Beautiful Commission, and Morristown/Hamblen KAB (second place); Most Comprehensive: Keep Knoxville Beautiful
TN Keep America Beautiful Affiliates by population category:
35,000 and Under: Keep Bristol Beautiful
50,000 and Under: Keep Kingsport Beautiful
85,000 and Above: Keep Knoxville Beautiful



TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

Let us know the particulars about your most important festivals at least six weeks in advance of the event. E-mail Tish Womack at twomack@TML1.org or fax to 615-255-4752.

March 10-June 9: "Smoky Mountain Springfest" in Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg and Sevierville features special events, local craft shows and more. Contact: 800-568-4748 for more information.

March 31-May 13: "Between Fences," a traveling Smithsonian exhibit exploring the diverse historical, regional and social traditions expressed in land use and space organization, at the Lewis county Museum in Hohenwald. Fee: students, \$1, adults, \$4. Contact: apeery@mlec.net.



March 10-14: National League of Cities Congressional City Conference, Washington, D.C.

March 20: Tennessee Department of Revenue new business workshop, 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at 1321 Murfreesboro Road, Nashville. Register online at www.tennessee.gov/revenue/bustaxworkshops.

April 11-13: TMPA Annual Conference, DoubleTree Hotel, Memphis, TN. For more information or to receive a registration form, contact Richard Stokes at Richard.Stokes@tennessee.edu



**BY TISH WOMACK
TML Research Analyst**

The U.S. Postal Service announced it is considering a "forever" stamp when it raises its first-class postage to \$0.41. The stamp would be good for future postage increases as an amount would not be printed on the face.

A report issued by the federal General Accounting Office indicated the cleanup of contamination from leaking underground storage tanks nationwide would cost at least \$12 billion.

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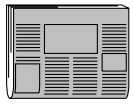
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CITY ENGINEER

LAKELAND. The city of Lakeland is seeking qualified applicants for the position of city engineer who will report directly to the city manager. Duties include providing professional engineering advice and assistance on the city's infrastructure systems, traffic, buildings, and equipment for public facilities and grounds. The position oversees planning, design and construction of city facilities and infrastructure including subdivision inspections and erosion control as well as making presentations before boards and commissions and day-to-day contact with the public. A Professional Engineering license is required as well as experience in municipal subdivisions, drainage and inspection, and oversight of public infrastructure construction. Supervisory experience is preferred. The person hired must possess excellent communication, interpersonal, and public relations skills. Salary range: \$67,000-\$102,000 DOQ/E. See www.lakelandtn.gov for additional information. Send resume to: City of Lakeland, 10001 Highway 70, Lakeland, TN 38002. Fax: 901-867-2063; E-mail: cityhall@lakelandtn.org.

CITY MANAGER

COLUMBIA. The city of Columbia, population 35,000+ and growing, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of city manager. The position reports to a seven-member city council. The city has an annual budget of approximately \$59 million, a Class IV wastewater plant, sanitation department, police, fire, parks and recreation among the 13 departments with a total of 400 employees. The ideal applicant will have a bachelor's degree in public administration, business, or related field plus 10 years of city management experience; a master's degree is considered a plus. Applicant needs experience in budgeting, control of revenues and expenditures, and management of complex departments with multiple functions. Experience in legislative issues, economic development, redevelopment and planning are high priorities. The position requires a leader, a manager, a team player with strong communication skills and other skills of a professional city manager. Salary: DOE plus excellent benefits. Send resume to: Personnel, City of Columbia, and 707 N. Main Street, Columbia, TN 38401. Phone: 931-380-2700; Fax: 931-381-7722; e-mail: kcollier@columbiatn.com. EOE.

CITY MANAGER

MOUNT PLEASANT. The city of Mount Pleasant, population 5,000 plus, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of city manager who reports to a five member board of mayor and commissioners for the administration of all city services and departments, including, but not limited to, finance and administration, public works, budgeting, code enforcement, sanitation, streets, industrial development, recreation, planning and zoning, personnel, water and wastewater, and general management of the city's gas system. The ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree in public administration, business, or related field, plus five years experience in city management. Experience in budgeting, control of revenues and expenditures, management of multiple departments, legislative issues, economic development, wastewater operations and planning are high priorities. The city has an annual budget in excess of \$9 million and 63 employees. Salary: DOE plus excellent benefits. Send resume to: City Manager Search Committee, City of Mt. Pleasant, P.O. Box 426, Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474. Phone: 931-379-7717; Fax: 931-379-5418. Deadline: April 15. EOE.

ENGINEER/PROJECT MANAGER

CLARKSVILLE. The city of Clarksville is seeking a staff level engineer/project manager to assist in the maintenance and improvement of the physical infrastructure of the city's water, sewer, and gas systems. Responsibilities include performing engineering design and construction management of municipal utility projects. The successful applicant will also perform engineering studies and prepare reports, perform engineering analysis and computer modeling of water, sewer and gas systems, review developer's plans, perform project management functions for contracts performed by outside consultants and contractors working for the city, and be available for public requests for information and complaints. A bachelor's degree in engineering from an accredited college, preferably with an E.I. certificate, or the ability to obtain within six months is necessary. Send resume to: Ruth McPherson, Clarksville Montgomery County Career Center, 350 Pageant Lane, Suite 406, Clarksville, TN 37040. Phone: 931-648-5530; Fax: 931-648-5564; e-mail: Ruth.McPherson@state.tn.us.

FINANCE COMMISSIONER

LEBANON. The city of Lebanon is seeking applicants for the position of commissioner of finance with responsibilities for planning, directing and coordinating the fiscal management and administration of the city. Duties also include continuous review and analysis of fiscal operation, needs and resources; directing collection of taxes, license fees; managing issue and sale of bonds; directing payroll accounting, purchasing, and meter reader departments; and, serving as city treasurer and city recorder. A bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with a major in accounting or finance is required; experience in municipal government financial administration is highly desired. Salary range: \$60,000 to \$80,000, DOQ. Send resume to: Personnel Department, City of Lebanon, 200 Castle Heights Avenue N, Lebanon, TN 37087. Phone: 615-443-2809; Fax: 615-443-2844; e-mail: ltc@lebanontn.org. Deadline: April 30.

PLANNER

COOKEVILLE. The city of Cookeville is seeking qualified applicants for the position of planner whose responsibilities include providing staff support to planning commission, board of zoning appeals and historic zoning commission; reviewing subdivision plats and site plans for compliance with applicable city codes; assisting director in development of comprehensive long range plans; assisting with development, coordination, and implementation of strategic plans; collecting data; completing research; attending city council, planning commission, board of appeals, and historic zoning commission meetings as required; and performing other duties as assigned. A bachelor's degree in planning or related field, driver's license, and progressively responsible experience in city or regional planning or related field of which some must have been in an administrative or consultative capacity are required. Salary: begins at \$35,329. Send application to: HR Department, City of Cookeville, P.O. Box 998, Cookeville, TN 38503-0998; E-mail: jobs@cookeville-tn.org. Deadline: April 5.

POLICE CHIEF

TULLAHOMA. The city of Tullahoma, population 17,994, is seeking applicants for the position of police chief. Responsibilities include planning, managing, and directing the activities of the police department; preparing and monitoring the annual budget; and maintaining department accreditation. Applicants should have experience in crime prevention strategies, community policing, and demonstrated experience in law enforcement management. A bachelor's degree in criminal justice, public administration, or related field is required. Certification as a law enforcement officer in Tennessee is required, or the ability to attain certification. This is a full-time exempt position with benefits. Starting salary range: \$50,545-\$61,000. Send resume with cover letter to: City of Tullahoma, Attn: Human Resources, P.O. Box 807, Tullahoma, TN 37388. E-mail: cbrice@tullahomatan.com. Position open until filled. EOE.

POLICE OFFICER

ARDMORE. The city of Ardmore is accepting applications for a Lt. Captain or Assistant Chief police officer, depending on qualifications and experience. The successful candidate should have leadership capabilities with a minimum of five years of experience and be certified. Salary: DOE and rank. Required application is available at the Ardmore Tenn. and Ala. city halls. For more information call: 931-427-2124. Deadline: April 2. EOE.

STAFF ENGINEER

BRENTWOOD. The city of Brentwood is seeking qualified candidates for the position of staff engineer whose duties will include reviewing residential and commercial site plans to insure compliance with city regulations; assisting with storm water management/enforcement; performing site inspections for compliance with approved plans; and other related duties as assigned. A bachelor's degree in civil engineering, or related fields, is required with two years of engineering in public works or related field. A valid Tennessee PE license, or the ability to obtain it within two years, is required. The successful candidate must be knowledgeable of all aspects of civil engineering including grading, storm drainage design, detention, storm water programs, and roadway design. Starting salary range: \$50,000-\$55,000 DOE/Q. Apply to: HR, City of Brentwood, P.O. Box 788, Brentwood, TN 37024-0788. E-mail: hr@brentwood-tn.org. Open until filled. EOE.

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TML vendors presented ACEC awards for Engineering Excellence

Prestigious engineering awards were presented to Tennessee Municipal League's service providers by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Tennessee (ACEC) at a gala presentation held in Nashville at the Hilton Nashville Downtown.

ACEC of Tennessee sponsors the annual Engineering Excellence Awards competition to turn the spotlight on the important contributions that Tennessee engineering firms make to the health, safety and quality of life of the people in Tennessee, the nation and throughout the world.

Top honors were awarded to Memphis firm EnSafe Inc. receiving the 2007 Grand Award for Engineering Excellence for work on a Cold War legacy site environmental cleanup in Baku, Azerbaijan, followed by an Honor Award in the small projects category for its in-situ lagoon closure in Napoleon, Ohio.

Receiving 2007 honor awards for Engineering Excellence:

ARCADIS, Chattanooga, in the water & wastewater category for its work on the Whites Creek Performance-Based Infiltration/Inflow Reduction in Nashville, a project for Metro Nashville Water Services. This project has also won *Trenchless Technology* magazine's 2006 Rehabilitation Project of the Year award.

CDM, Nashville won in the water resources category for the Dry Branch Stormwater Detention project in Franklin, completed for the city of Franklin.

"Our judges were very impressed by the quality of all the entries this year," said David Harrell, PE, co-chair of the *Engineering Excellence Awards* program, and vice president at engineering firm Vaughn and Melton, Knoxville. The *Engineering Excellence Awards* judges were T.K. Davis, design director, Nashville Civic Design Center; Wain Gaskins, PE, director, division of Engineering, Memphis; Dr. Fort Gwinn, professor/chair of Engineering Mechanics Department; Lipscomb University; Dr. Bridget Jones, executive director, Cumberland Region Tomorrow; Dr. Siripong Malasri, professor of Civil Engineering and The Douglass J. Thomas Chair in Engineering, Christian Brothers University; Kimberly McClurkin, Education Coordinator/Engineering Division, Department of Public Works, City of Chattanooga; and Vicki Simms, Executive Director, City of Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce.

Other TML service provider entrants of municipal projects receiving merit attention were: Askew Hargraves Harcourt and Associates, Inc., for the Munford Centennial Park; Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc., for the Gatlinburg Underground Utility/Streetscape Phase IV; C2HM Hill & Gresham Smith &



In less than two years, EnSafe Inc. cleaned up massive, decades-old oil contamination in the former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, demonstrating advanced western remediation technologies and project management approaches that the emerging democracy can apply to similar Cold War-legacy sites.



Whites Creek had concrete and vitrified clay sewer pipes dating from the 1960s and 70s that were deteriorating, leaking, and failing. Inflow and infiltration were exceeding pipeline and pumping station capacity. Overflows of untreated sewage were seeping into the environment. ARCADIS and Reynolds Inliner relined more than 17 miles of sewer and an impressive 41 percent overall inflow and infiltration reduction was achieved. This project has also won *Trenchless Technology* magazine's 2006 Rehabilitation Project of the Year award.



CDM identified an area in the Spencer Creek Watershed that would benefit from regional detention. CDM designed the facility to alleviate flooding problems in residential areas including a retirement community and provide reduction in sedimentation, nutrients, and other water quality pollutants. CDM also helped Franklin obtain an EPA grant to fund 44 percent of the project. The project resulted in a preservation of open space and an attractive entrance to a major City gateway.

Partners, for the Walker Springs Wastewater Storage facility, Knoxville; TLM Associates, Inc., for Lexington's Downtown Revitaliza-

tion and Raw Water Intake and Pipeline, Parsons; and Qore, Inc., for the 21st Century Renaissance Park Development, Chattanooga.

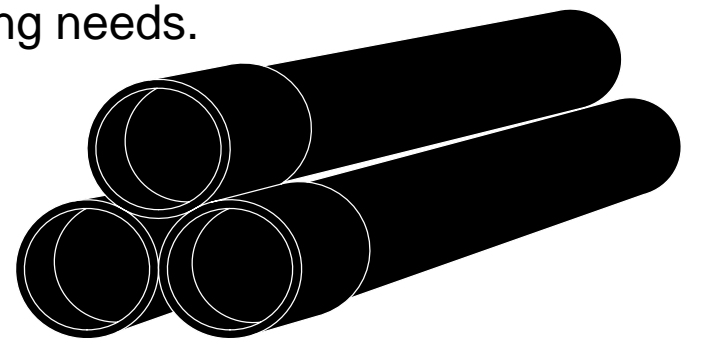
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Arbor Day tips: challenges for green communities

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Communications Coordinator

As last year's devastating tornadoes have demonstrated, the Ides of March can mean severe storm damage across the state destroying lives, homes, and substantial segments of urban forestry and landscaping. Ice storms, hurricanes, and tornadoes can often leave neighborhoods looking like war zones.

Municipalities investing money and resources into greening the environment with trees might lose their investment if a plan is not developed to respond to and re-green in the aftermath of natural disasters.

"Because trees are such a large part of a city's visual landscape, damage to them from a severe storm can be a major shock to residents," said John Rosenow, president of the National Arbor Day Foundation. "Seeing a favorite tree down or badly damaged in the front yard can be a traumatic experience, almost like losing an old friend."

According to the foundation, only 39 percent of America's municipalities have programs to systematically care for publicly owned trees.

"Trees are vital elements in the fabric of any community," says Rosenow. "They provide cooling shade in the summer, help reduce the chill of winter winds, clean the air, reduce noise, and provide a home for songbirds to name just a few of the benefits of trees in an urban setting."

Several cities across Tennessee belong to the Tree City USA program, established by the foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. Tree City USA provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and na-

tional recognition for urban and community forestry programs.

To qualify for the program, municipalities must meet four standards:

A tree board or department – A body legally responsible for the care and management of the community's trees, including either a professional forester or arborist, a forestry department, or group of concerned citizens comprising a volunteer tree board charged by ordinance with developing and administering a comprehensive tree management program. A combination of the above designees would be ideal.

A tree care ordinance – Designates the establishment of a tree board or forestry department and confers responsibility upon this body for writing and implementing an annual community forestry plan and provides clear guidance for planting, maintaining and removing trees from streets, parks and other public places.

A community forestry program budgeted at least \$2 per capita – Research shows that most municipalities already spend more than this amount on trees. Development of an annual work plan including an inventory and report on species diversity, planting needs, hazardous trees, insect and disease problems and a pattern of regular care such as pruning and watering to be approved by the city council.

An Arbor Day observance and Proclamation – A tree-related celebration of any type or size, whether brief, day-long or all week to heighten community awareness and promote better community forestry. Some cities link Arbor Day with tree-related festivals such as dogwood festivals, which garner substantial revenue for the community.



Photo by Victoria South

A statewide Arbor Day ceremony was held March 2nd in Clarksville, selected 2006 Tree Advisory board of the year by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council. Arbor Day and Tree City USA recognition ceremonies will be hosted by communities, schools and Tree Boards in cities and towns across the state throughout March and April. Pictured lower left: Tracy Jackson, Clarksville Tree Board; State Forester Steve Scott; Commissioner Ken Givens, Tennessee Department of Agriculture; and Dottie Mann, Clarksville Tree Board plant a Yellowwood tree in honor of the 101st Airborne. Other notables in attendance were: Johnny Piper, Mayor of Clarksville; Sen. Rosalind Kurita, Rep. Curtis Johnson, Col. Edward Loomis, 101st Airborne; Jennifer Smith and Patrick Haller, director and president of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council respectively.

"We were among the first people in Tennessee to sign up for Tree City," said Regina Merritt, chair of the Norris tree board.

Known for its beautiful oak-lined sidewalks, Norris has been a Tree City USA member for 27 years, followed by Athens and Maryville at 25 years each. The Norris board cares for and maintains 180 trees across the city aided by resident state forester Darren Bailey.

"It's a yearly process of maintenance and programs," said Norris. "In our memorial program, people can plant a tree in honor of loved

ones. A tree is planted for an honoree on Arbor Day and school children are given seedlings for planting and perform a musical program. Our utility board has developed a pruning program, Tree-Line USA, where tree crews adhere to strict pruning standards."

While a plan has not been developed in Norris, Merritt, like other municipal tree board members across the state, has become more aware of disaster maintenance trends "We've never really had to deal with it before, but I've been reading about disaster plans." Merritt said. "Currently we've been working on maintaining our existing trees."

In the event of a natural disaster, the National Arbor Day Foundation urges property owners to administer tree first aid rather than making hasty decisions to remove damaged trees.

"Trees are amazingly resilient," says Rosenow. "It may take several years, but many of the trees damaged by a storm will recover as they grow."

The foundation advises the following steps:

- Safety first - Be wary of utility lines and hazardous overhanging limbs.
- Hire a qualified arborist – A professional is best for trees that are large, require high climbing, are leaning against wires, buildings, or other trees.
- Remove broken branches still attached to tree – If done properly, this will reduce the risk of decaying agents entering the wound. Small branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Large branches should be cut back to the trunk or a main limb by an arborist.
- Repair torn bark – To improve

tree's appearance and eliminate hiding places for insects, carefully use chisel or sharp knife to smooth the ragged edges of wounds where bark has been torn away. Try not to expose the greenish inner bark any more than necessary, as these layers are the lifeline to the tree's nourishment between roots and leaves.

- Don't top trees – Professional arborists say that cutting main branches back to stubs (topping) is one of the worst things to do to trees. Stubs tend to grow weakly attached branches that are more likely to break when a storm strikes. Topping also reduces the amount of foliage producing food and nourishment needed for damaged trees to regrow. A severely damaged tree is more likely to die than repair itself after topping.

In August, the UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service and The Tennessee Urban Forestry Council will sponsor a number of workshops designed to educate municipal tree board members and employees in the fundamentals of urban forestry, while promoting local government awareness on this increasingly important topic.

Topics include the economic and environmental benefits of urban forestry, starting a community urban forestry program, the roles of tree boards and staff, and best management practices of urban forestry.

Tentative workshop locations are in Knoxville, Johnson City, Cookeville, Smyrna, Collegedale, Bartlett, and Jackson.

For a free booklet about saving trees damaged by a storm, send your name and address to The National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

Senior property tax freeze impacts local revenues

TAX FREEZE from Page 1

sponsor of the constitutional amendment, to address local concerns with this implementation legislation.

TML's concerns include:

- The large percentage of seniors expected to be eligible for the freeze and the fact that a larger percentage of the population will pass the age threshold as baby boomers reach retirement age, will create a cap on local government revenues from a significant portion of their residential tax base.
- This cap will require larger and more frequent rate increases on industrial, commercial, agricultural, and younger residential property owners to generate additional needed revenue.
- In those cities or counties adopting this program, the cost of providing public services will not be capped, but an increasing portion of their tax base will be frozen. This will ultimately result in a reduction of services to all citizens or higher taxes for non-seniors. Also, as a matter of equity, the proposed eligibility thresholds are, in most counties, higher than the median income level of younger heads of households. This means many younger taxpayers will have higher property taxes in order to offset the freeze on taxes for some seniors

who are making more money than they do.

- With high eligibility levels, many cities and counties will not be able to afford the program. Setting high income eligibility levels may result in fewer counties participating meaning that truly needy senior taxpayers do not benefit.
- Local governments are not currently structured to administer a tax system with an income verification factor. As incomes fluctuate, this program will require annual re-verification.
- After a local government opts into the program, the General Assembly may significantly change the program, making it more costly.
- Many terms used in the amendment are not clearly defined. This will result in ambiguities and difficulty in administration of the program.

TML's recommendation

TML supports income eligibility levels that match the state's low-income elderly tax relief program (currently set at \$20,000). This will ease administration since it will use an existing application process and will target relief to the truly needy. It will also enable more local governments to be able to participate in the program without being fiscally irresponsible.



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With Cookeville's Jean Davis, nursing, politics, pharmacy run in the family

BY GAEL STAHL
Editor

Cookeville Vice Mayor Jean Davis, in her first year serving on the Tennessee Municipal League Board of Directors, is in her first year as vice mayor. She previously served four years as mayor and four as council member. Her unpadding four-page resume is so long as to be forbidding and relentless. Where did a full-time nurse, mother, and teacher find the time to be a nearly full-time community activist too?

The daughter of parents who were teachers, she met her future husband, Bobby Davis, at Cookeville High School where they dated intermittently. When Bobby graduated from high school, he went to Tennessee Tech for preliminary pharmacy studies. When Jean graduated, she entered the University of Tennessee at Memphis to pursue a B.S. in Nursing. Later Bobby entered UT at Memphis to complete his pharmacy education. They began dating again and were married in 1956.

After the Davis medical team graduated and returned to Cookeville, they started their family and careers. Jean worked at Cookeville General Hospital part-time as a staff nurse and sometimes a relief head nurse/supervisor until 1968. She then taught a health occupations course at Cookeville High School for five years in order to have similar hours as the two young children.

In 1973, she began a 17-year career with the Putnam County Health Department, starting as a staff nurse from 1973-1976, after which she was promoted to nursing supervisor and held that position until October 1990. She credits this job, the patients, and fellow employees for providing her the opportunity to touch lives and prepare for leadership roles that lay ahead.

In 1985 she received a Master of Arts degree in Educational Psychology and Counselor Education. The course of study was done a course or two at a time while maintaining the full-time job at the health department. Davis says going to college a second time around was enjoyable and more relaxed. She enjoyed being with the traditional students, claiming they gave her more energy and enthusiasm.

Her appointment in 1985 to the Cookeville General Hospital Board of Trustees was her springboard into the world of politics. By the time that seven-year term was completed in 1992, she was working at Tennessee Tech University as director of Student Health Services, where she started in the fall of 1990. That is where she was working when she ran for council in 1994. She got the most votes of council candidates and thus became mayor for the next four years.

Her 10-year involvement in several community organizations such as E-911 and on the Tennessee Tech School of Nursing Foundation Board of Trustees, and other community organizations was very helpful in being elected on her first try. A mayor in Cookeville's form of government chairs the council meetings and performs numerous ceremonial duties and responsibilities required by charter.

In November 1995, Davis retired from her nursing career to spend more time with her mayoral duties. After, her husband retired and sold his pharmacy in 1996, they began to slow their pace. In 1998, Jean decided not to run for reelection so they could travel and spend more time with children and grandchildren.

But in 2002, Davis was running for council again and won a seat. Continuing to enjoy serving, she ran for reelection and won the vice mayor position with the second most votes. In June 2006, she was elected to the TML Board of Directors.

Over the last 30 years, Davis has had 23 major community involvements and some weeks find her still attending as many as three different meetings a day. Asked to point out which ones keep her most busy, she tells how she helps the TTU School of Nursing raise money, serves as president of the local Hospice Foundation, is a member of the history museum board, a member of the Putnam County Health Council, and vice chairman of the regional airport board. The Cookeville airport is co-owned by the governments of Cookeville, Putnam County, Sparta, and White County.

Bobby Davis is also a former Cookeville mayor. He served two three-year terms in 1967-1973. The Davis children followed in his tracks. Both are pharmacists. Daughter Kim Morton is married to a Knoxville physician, and works part-time as a hospital pharmacist. Son Bill, married to a pharmacist, has a degree in pharmacy and law, using both to work for a pharmaceutical company, AstraZeneca, as a senior medical information specialist.

TT&C: What was the spark that ignited your interest in elective office in 1994?

JD: Beyond the fact that my husband had been in politics earlier, I'd done similar things. But I didn't have a burning interest to get actively involved until my term on the hospital board from 1985-1992. Serving on that board was hard, a lot harder than being mayor. With city government involved in its city-owned hospital, I became interested in running for municipal office. Becoming mayor meant I served another four years on the hospital board by virtue of office. That hospital board was just intense, and I probably felt it more because I was a nurse - attentive and attuned to the quality of care at that facility.

TT&C: What attracts newcomers to Cookeville?

JD: People love our community's quality of life. Tennessee Tech University adds a lot to it,



Photos by Gael B. Stahl

Cookeville Vice Mayor Jean Davis at the TML Board of Directors meeting in March with fellow board member, Jackson Vice Mayor Johnny Dodd.

its first-class symphony orchestra, for instance. When the city and chamber of commerce were recruiting Oreck Manufacturing Company - perhaps you've seen Dave Oreck advertising his vacuum cleaners on TV? - he and his son visited Cookeville. When we told him about some of our amenities, he was amazed that a community of 27,000 inside the city limits and of 62,000 within the county had such a high quality symphony. No question, the university adds layers of value beyond all the jobs and good people it brings to Cookeville.

That's partly why our city and county continue to be rated a No. 1 retirement spot nationwide. Real estate persons will tell you how many calls they get from Florida and elsewhere almost every day. An amazing number of people are moving in from out of state. We got our share of people escaping from Katrina. Once they moved up from the coast, they found they liked our change of seasons and our community. Last night, I talked to a fellow at a reception who said he and his wife moved here from Bay St. Louis. They love the friendliness especially.

I've learned in public service that a community does not stand still. ... we need to be sensitive about our needs for more streets, quality parks and libraries, improving healthy living for our citizens and improving the health of our economic development so citizens have good jobs and varied work opportunities.

TT&C: What have been your council goals?

JD: Being a nurse, all through my three terms my ultimate goals have been the safety and well being of citizens. What rapidly opened my eyes during my first term to public safety needs was attending the six-week citizen police academy and the fire academy classes. Both departments hold courses periodically to teach and help you see from the inside how police and firefighters operate. I saw how important the people who fill those positions are.

Both are good departments. The fire department is so good that only two other cities in Tennessee have the same high ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating that Cookeville has. We're proud of that. That's one of the goals we reached, and I'm always looking to improve community safety and well being.

TT&C: What will Cookeville's emphasis be for the next four years?

JD: We discuss priorities and set goals every year. We just bought about six acres across from city hall. Since that land connects to Dogwood Park, which has a pavilion for concerts, we can now expand the park. That has the citizenry excited because that acquisition is a good-sized space in the middle of town that has been an eyesore. We can demolish some old stores, upgrade the area and expand the library and history museum, which is being refurbished. The contracted landscaping designer firm will meet with a steering committee of citizens to come up with ideas to develop something attractive.

Another emphasis is a vision of my predecessor, Mayor Womack, the Rail and Trail Initiative. I hope it will continue. We would like to build a trail alongside the railroad that passes through Cookeville. It would go all the way up the mountain to Monterey. As much as possible, we'd like to replicate the rail and trail in Damascus, Va. Money has been placed into that fund to replace some track, and it will be slow going, but it is something citizens would like to see.

Our city-owned hospital has an \$80 million project underway to build a north tower with all private rooms in order to provide the proper treatment to patients of this region. The rapidly growing cancer center will be moved to this location. Our hospital is well managed so that we are going to have to borrow only about 45 million for the tower and finance the remainder our self. Our hospital, like all public-owned hospitals has to treat more uninsured and indigent patients due to the cutbacks in TennCare. We are lucky that we have a couple of clinics relieving the hospital's emergency room of some of the load of free ambulatory care. Still, the flow coming through makes it dicey. Reimbursement for any medical provider including physicians is not the best. As for physicians, our community does quite well at recruiting physicians. They like coming

here. We will continue to recruit physicians and other health care providers so that our citizens can be well served.

TT&C: Has your economic picture changed with the closing of the TRW air bag company and Russell Stover candy company?

JD: The Oreck vacuum cleaner program bought the TRW building and is transforming it for its needs. So, while TRW is slowing down, the OREK manufacturing facility is starting up and getting settled. We are purchasing approximately 400 acres parallel to I-40 west of the Willow Ave interchange for a Highlands Business Park/Industrial Park. The chamber, Putnam County, and Cookeville are working on these projects together. We have a common need to meet the needs of prospects that are looking at Cookeville. If we do not have something ready for them, such as a prepared site, water, sewer, electric utilities, and roads, they are going to move on to where something is ready for them. The state will be helping us, we hope, through the Department of Economic and Community Development.

TT&C: Has Cookeville been able to implement its urban development plan pretty well?

JD: We do annexations carefully and try to work with the county. One of the beautiful things that evolved during my years in politics has been cooperation between city and county governments. I didn't see much of it during my first term, but since then, we realized we need each other. When business prospects inquired and asked about the kind of building and land they needed, we realized we didn't have enough of either. We cannot do this by ourselves. We needed each other. It's become a good working relationship. The city and county now have economic development funds in their budgets for land purchases. The city



Bobby and Jean Davis arrived early at the Doubletree Hotel ballroom to hear Speakers Ramsey and Naifeh and Comptroller Morgan speak at the first session of the annual TML legislative conference. On the right is Cookeville City Manager Jim Shipley.

and county work together on the animal shelter and the airport. Another project we worked on together was the half dozen or so soccer fields on one of the county properties next to the high school for community and school use.

TT&C: What do you remember about Mayor Bobby Davis' two terms as mayor?

JD: When he went into office in 1967, he worked extremely hard on our water supply, which then came from a city lake east of town. As the town grew, water shortages started happening, and one summer there was a near drought. During his administration the council worked with the federal government in Washington to get help bringing a main water line from Center Hill Dam. That is where our water comes from today. A few years ago, we installed a second line.

His administration was best known for providing Cookeville an adequate supply of water which in turn brought industries here. The model cities program also was awarded to Cookeville while he was mayor.

TT&C: Does Cookeville get along with its municipal neighbors?

JD: Baxter, Algood and Monterey are our sister cities in Putnam County. Algood shares city limit lines so that people used to joke that Cookeville ought to annex Algood. Now, Algood is growing so much it is saying it needs to annex Cookeville. When a Super Wal-Mart came to Algood a few years ago, a lot of subdivisions sprang up around it. Because Algood has more land around its perimeter for people to build subdivisions, that former small town has grown much larger. Cookeville sells them water and shares many things, like sisters usually tend to do.

TT&C: Besides its city-owned airport and hospital, what city services does Cookeville provide?

JD: The city is a little unusual in that it owns all its utilities, electric, gas, water and sewer as well as Cookeville Regional Medical Center and our airport - all those services that cooperatives and utility companies often provide to municipalities. We have automated trucks to pick up the trash cans that are supplied to residents. We have free pick ups of brush and limbs, that a lot of municipalities don't. The Putnam County Library is owned by the county but sits on city land, and a healthy portion of our municipal budget each year goes to operate that cooperative service.

TT&C: How does Cookeville's employment picture look to you?

JD: The university employs more than 1,300 and draws 10,000 students. It's a vital organ in our body politic as is the hospital, which employs nearly 1,500. The biggest employer in the county is up the mountain in Monterey where Perdue Farms, a chicken processor draws workers from all the counties east and north of Putnam, including Cumberland and Morgan counties. I've heard Chamber of Commerce people say that with all our industry, about 10,000 people come into Putnam County to work every day.

To keep them coming, I will continue working for our safety and welfare. I've learned in public service that a community does not stand still. People can say that all they want is for our town to stay like it is, but it will never stay like it is. It will grow or diminish, go backward or forward.

What we must do is look at how we grow. Cookeville is getting to be like many large towns. We're seeing it get congested at rush time, so we need to be sensitive about our needs for more streets, quality parks and libraries, skateboard parks, improving healthy living for our citizens and improving the health of our economic development so citizens have good jobs and varied work opportunities. If they have jobs, they'll enjoy their parks more, and Cookeville will be an even more wonderful place to learn, live, and move to.

TT&C: The Nursing School is still important to you and keeps you involved?

JD: The nursing building is so small we can enroll only 45 a year but we need to graduate twice that many, so Tennessee Tech is building a new nursing school. Lots of people worked to raise \$21 million for the construction. We reached our goal, and the state will do its part, so we're going to get that nursing school. It is being built as we speak. It should open in 2008. We also have more than \$100,000 in scholarship money to give out each year.

The new building will mainly house the school for teaching nursing students. One section will house Student Health Services. That's where I worked for five years and where, as director of Student Health Services, I spent the final years of my nursing career.

TT&C: Will the state ever be able to meet its huge need for nurses, especially RNs?

JD: That's debatable, but we think we're quite lucky here to have had this nursing school in place for about 20 years now. And soon, we'll be able to enroll many more nurses. That puts us in much better shape than a lot of places that don't have a nursing school. It contributes to a lot of people staying in towns around here, places that have fewer health care providers, places like Jamestown, Celina, Gainesboro, and Livingston. They may want to come to the university and go back home to work. Having good training here for the region helps rural areas get an adequate number of well-qualified health providers, specifically nurses.