

New Year ushers in new laws

Food tax reduced by half cent

BY CAROLE GRAVES

Effective Jan. 1, 2008, the state's tax on groceries was reduced from 6 to 5.5 percent. Local option sales taxes remain at their same levels.

Some grocery purchases will not qualify for the reduced tax. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco, candy, dietary supplements, or prepared food will continue to be taxed at state sales and use tax of seven percent plus the applicable local tax rate.

According to the Department of Revenue, consumers will save an estimated \$6.80 per person each year or about \$20 a year for a family spending \$325 a month. The tax reduction will cost the state some \$40 million in the next budget year.

At the close of the 2007 session, some legislators had discussed taking the tax even lower. Tennessee has one of the highest grocery taxes in the nation. However, further reduction seems unlikely in the 2008 legislative session due to a projected \$150 million to \$240 million budget shortfall.

Also, Tennessee will get two sales tax free holidays this year on clothing, computers and school related items, a special holiday March 21-23, in addition to the annual back-to-school tax holiday, which takes place in August.

New DNA law needs funding

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Communications Coordinator

The parents of Johnia Berry must wait a little longer before the bill bearing their daughter's name comes to fruition. Funding the Johnia Berry Act, a new law which became effective Jan. 1, will be on the front burner in January as state lawmakers tackle the issues for 2008.

Berry, 21, of Bristol, was stabbed to death in her Knoxville apartment Dec. 6, 2004 with DNA evidence finally leading to the arrest of a 22-year-old suspect following a difficult three-year investigation.

The new law requires persons booked for violent crimes ranging anywhere from rape and murder to aggravated robbery and arson to submit a DNA sample at the time of their arrest that will be forwarded by the arresting agency to the TBI and uploaded into the national DNA database, CODIS. Previously, state law only required DNA samples from convicted violent offenders.

According to Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) spokesperson Kristin Helm, the sample will remain in CODIS until the person goes to trial. Should the charges be dismissed or the person acquitted, the

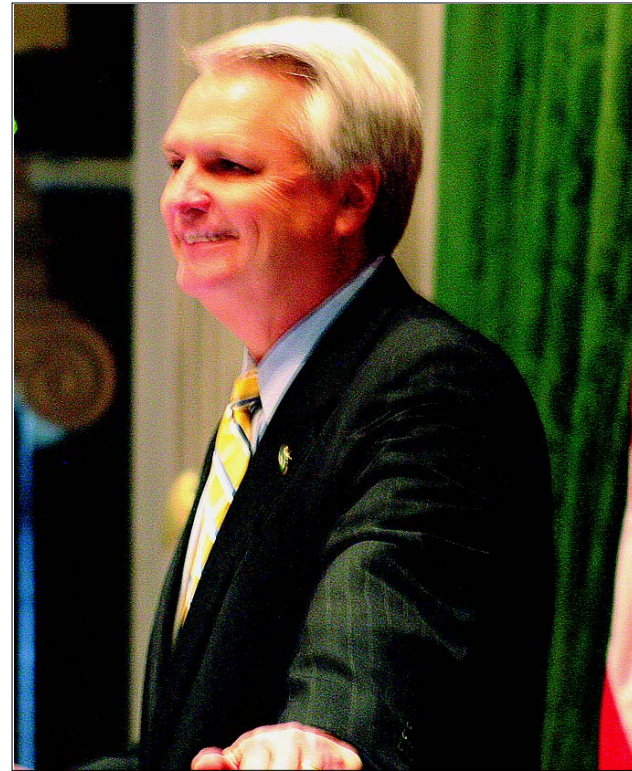
Make plans to attend District Meetings

TML staff will provide municipal officials with a review of the 2008 TML legislative priorities, as well as an update of recent actions affecting municipalities throughout the month of January. Several districts have already met. Below is a listing of the remaining districts still scheduled to meet.

The League has elected to move the annual legislative conference to mid April this year in order to have a more productive conference as the

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|------------|------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| January 18 | District 4 | Sparta Oldhams Theater | 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. |
| January 24 | District 1 | Johnson City Millennium Center | 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. |
| January 25 | District 3 | Collegedale | 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. |

105th General Assembly reconvenes



House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh and Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey open the 2008 legislative session.



Visitors in the Senate gallery rise for the Pledge of Allegiance as the 105th General Assembly reconvenes.

Photos by Victoria South



Johnia Berry

sample will be removed and destroyed.

Beginning as a pilot project in 1990, CODIS blends forensic science and computer technology enabling federal, state, and local crime labs to exchange and compare DNA profiles electronically, linking crimes to each other and to convicted offenders.

Law officials anticipate the measure will expedite solutions to violent crimes while helping solve cold cases as well.

"There is a national trend to expand coverage of state DNA databases to include all felony offenders and a growing recognition of the impact of forensic DNA analysis in resolving 'cold' cases," writes Dawn Herkenham, Science Appli- See DNA on Page 8

General Assembly will be conducting more thorough committee meetings and floor sessions when the conference convenes.

As such, this means that the January district meetings will provide the only opportunity to fully brief and prepare municipal officials before debate begins on many of the issues affecting municipalities.

Your attendance at these meetings in key to TML's success in the 2008 legislative session.

Streamlined Sales Tax project addresses sourcing issue

On Dec. 11, 2007, the Streamlined Sales Tax Project (SSTP) adopted a proposal to allow the states participating in the project to maintain point-of sale sourcing on intrastate commerce, but to implement destination sourcing on interstate commerce, which satisfies the concerns the Tennessee Municipal League has about the issue. The Streamlined Sales Tax Governing Board unanimously approved the amendment.

Background

As a result of U.S. Supreme Court rulings, out-of-state vendors with no physical presence in a state cannot be compelled to collect state and local sales taxes. As catalog, mail order, and Internet commerce have grown, state and local governments have been experiencing ever-increasing losses in sales tax revenue. For state and local governments that rely heavily on the sales tax, loss of revenue due to "remote sales" is of particular interest. These concerns gave rise to the multi-state Streamlined Sales Tax Project, which has proposed a uniform framework for taxation that would eliminate the wide variations in sales tax law among all states that conform to the common framework.

In 2000, the Streamlined Sales Tax Project (SSTP) was created for

the purpose of developing and implementing a simplified taxing system. In 2002, SSTP reached consensus on the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement that took effect on Oct. 1, 2005. Initially, 34 states, including Tennessee, signed and expressed interest in conforming their state's laws to the requirements stipulated in the Agreement. However, only 13 states had enacted legislation and were fully participating in the Agreement on its effective date.

In 2003, the General Assembly adopted legislation (Public Chapter 357) bringing the state's tax structure, rates, and definitions into compliance with the requirements of the Agreement. A year later, the General Assembly approved a bill making technical corrections to the 2003 legislation and establishing an effective date of July 1, 2005, for Tennessee's streamline legislation.

In 2005, the General Assembly adopted legislation that delayed implementation of Tennessee's streamline legislation and the state's full participation in the Streamline Sales and Use Tax Agreement until July 1, 2007. Absent any intervening actions by the General Assembly, Tennessee's streamline legislation and the sourcing change would have See STREAMLINE on Page 8

States Legislatures face unsettled conditions

The issues state legislatures will face in 2008 are relatively known factors this year but will be shaped by some very strong political and economic forces, according to a forecast released by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

NCSL's annual Top 10 forecast takes a look at the hot topics on state legislative agendas. State budgets top the list, joined by immigration, driver's license standards, transportation funding, uninsured Americans, education reform, concerns for the middle class, the environment, consumer protection, pensions and the nation's infrastructure.

"Predicting the major issues state legislatures will address in 2008 is relatively easy," says NCSL Executive Director William Pound. "Predicting how the presidential

campaign, the politics on Capitol Hill and the economy will affect these issues is difficult."

Forty-four states and Puerto Rico hold regular sessions in 2008, most convening in January. Here is what NCSL's experts expect state lawmakers to be working on this year.

Issue #1: State Budget Concerns

Slow revenue growth rates mean state budgets continue to weaken. Legislative fiscal directors reported to NCSL on revenues and expenditures for the first four months of fiscal year (FY) 2008 for most states. The report, *State Budget Update: November 2007* includes information on revenue performance, spending overruns, projections of budget gaps or surpluses, and the top fiscal issues anticipated for the 2008 legislative sessions.

TML adopts legislative priorities

BY CAROLE GRAVES
TML Communications Director

Training requirements for firefighters, addressing infrastructure needs, enforcing code violations, statewide cable franchising, and collective bargaining are among the top municipal issues that the Tennessee Municipal League will focus on during the 2008 legislative session.

The TML Board of Directors met in December to establish legislative priorities and to identify issues most likely to be addressed by the General Assembly. Initiatives were adopted in the areas of community development, public safety, transportation, environment, utilities, and finance and general administration.

The following is a selection of TML legislative policies.

Finance &

General Administration

- TML supports legislation granting cities the same commission afforded to county clerks for collection and remittance of the state portion of the local business tax. If statutes were amended to allow municipalities to charge five percent for performing tasks associated with the state business tax, then municipalities would be able to recoup some of the costs incurred and eliminate the current inequity.

Public Safety

- TML, along with the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, is seeking approval of legislation establishing a minimum training requirement of 16 hours of training for all firefighters in Tennessee before they may actively participate in firefighting. In addition, firefighters will be required to complete an 84-hour basic firefighting class within three years. None of Tennessee's 34,000 firefighters, whether they are career, part-time, or volunteer, are required by law to complete any minimum training. There is a direct correlation between firefighter deaths and injuries, the inability of firefighters to rapidly prevent fire spread, the large dollar fire-related losses suffered each year in Tennessee, and the lack of adequate training of many Tennessee firefighters.

- TML opposes any state or federal legislation that would either allow or require the recognition of police or firefighters unions and legislation to enact the so-called "Police Bill of Rights" or any similar legislation.

Community Development

- TML is seeking approval of legislation that would grant statutory authority to abate nuisances caused by violation of municipal codes. By clarifying that the state's "Abatement of Nuisance laws covers the violation of any building, electrical, housing, or fire code, or such similar codes, it will allow municipalities to better protect the public health, safety, and welfare of citizen, and maintain a constant quality

See PRIORITIES on Page 6

Twenty-four states and Puerto Rico reported state revenues have been hurt by the housing sector slump. At least a dozen states and Puerto Rico are seeing declines in their real estate transfer or recording taxes. Many states anticipated a slowdown in this revenue source, but the drop is even greater than expected. Legislative fiscal directors identified health care and Medicaid, along with transportation, as key budget issues their legislatures will address in 2008. At least 16 states are expected to address a variety of K-12 issues, including funding levels, and at least 13 states and Puerto Rico are expected to consider overall budget issues.

Issue #2: Immigrant

With Congress unable to act, state legislatures passed an unprec- See ISSUES on Page 9

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

ATHENS
According to city officials, Athens Public Works department is the first in Tennessee and several neighboring states to implement standard operating procedures department wide. Supervisors and workers were asked to document everything their jobs entail and how they go about completing the work. The city plans to provide the information to the Municipal Technical Advisory Service, which could become a guide for other departments.

BARTLETT
Reminiscent of the 60s sitcom "Car 54," the majority of Bartlett's finest will soon be patrolling the streets in black and white squad cars, a change from the contemporary white vehicles marked with colored writing and striping. The traditional black and white is expected to strengthen public recognition citywide, according to a press release issued by the department. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen recently approved a resolution to paint 20 vehicles for a total amount of \$17,758.20. According to assistant police Chief Gary Rikard, the change should improve visibility of the vehicles while serving as "a great morale booster."

CHATTANOOGA
Chattanooga City Council unanimously approved a resolution to allow citizens to rent goats. A resident will have to purchase a permit from the city, then an inspector will come see if they really need the goats. There is no minimum acreage, but the applicant must show you have invasive vegetation, such as kudzu. If approved, they'll be put in touch with goat contractor. The permit will expire at the end of the kudzu growing season. Residents can start applying for them in March or April.

CLEVELAND
In the future, pets adopted at the Cleveland Animal Shelter may go to their new homes already spayed or neutered and with an implanted microchip in the event they become lost. The Cleveland Animal Advisory Board has entered discussions about subscribing to Home Again, a Schering-Plough Healthcare product. According to national statistics, one in three pets will become lost at some point. Of those, more than 80 percent are never recovered. Incorporating the microchip program would increase the cost to the adopting families, advisory board members said. Board member Larry Burns suggested that low-income families should have access to programs that can help pay pet adoption fees.

CLINTON
Clinton recently received a half-million dollar grant from the state to use for the rehabilitation of older homes. Tennessee Economic and Community Development Commissioner Matthew Kisber recently approved more than \$21 million in Community Development Block Grants to assist with infrastructure improvements in Tennessee. Clinton's grant fell under the housing category and was the highest amount awarded for housing improvements. According to City

Manager Steve Jones, the city has started an effort to improve some of the city's oldest homes for residents on fixed incomes.

FRANKLIN
The Franklin Water Management Department is one of 17 water systems in the Mid-Cumberland region that has been awarded a 2006 Water Fluoridation Quality Award from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The award recognizes those communities that have maintained a consistent level of optimally fluoridated water for the calendar year. The CDC recommends water fluoridation as a safe, effective, and inexpensive method of preventing tooth decay and studies have shown that tooth decay is prevented among all age groups, not just children. In 2001, the U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services recommended that communities either adopt or maintain fluoridation of public drinking water supplies. More than 170 million people, or 67 percent of the United States population served by public water supplies, currently drink water with optimal fluoride levels for preventing decay.

GREENEVILLE
A one-page "2008 Downtown Greeneville Calendar" has been published that features illustrations of five historic Greeneville churches — Central Christian, Christ United Methodist, St. James Episcopal, First Presbyterian and Cumberland Presbyterian. The calendar's artwork and design are the work of Chris McAdoo, a Knoxville artist.

HALLS
The city board approved an expenditure of \$27,000 toward the purchase of equipment that will allow public Works Department workers to read rural gas meters from their trucks. The funds will pay for more than 500 meters and the software and training needed to implement the radio-transmitting program. According to Public Works Director Alan Cherry, the equipment will reduce the margin for manual entry errors and increase dog bite safety among workers reading meters in rural areas.

HENDERSONVILLE
Novita Technologies, Inc. has announced plans to locate its corporate headquarters and manufacturing facility in Hendersonville's Freehill Industrial Park. The privately-held electronics manufacturer and automotive industry supplier will bring 60 high-technology jobs paying an above-average wage to Sumner County. Novita President Mike Incorvaia said the company plans to ramp up to full operation this month. Novita manufacturers lighting and sensing technology for use in automobiles. The company's patented SideEyes® Object Detection technology enables drivers to see objects that don't appear in side-view mirrors.

KINGSPORT
Kingsport is moving ahead with the idea of advertising on a city-owned bus. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen approved two resolutions governing the "Move to Kingsport" bus, establishing advertising rates and outlining rental rates. The city pur-

chased the 24-passenger bus for \$48,000 and uses it in connection with the "Move to Kingsport" campaign. Once a month the city provides tours for people who have recently moved to Kingsport. The bus is also utilized for groups of city officials traveling out of town or touring a site. According to Development Services Manager Chris McCart, future policy will govern the type of advertising appearing on the bus.

NASHVILLE
Nashville is one of two test sites for a publicity campaign that will target seniors suffering from depression to seek help. Experts say seniors are at serious risk for depression because they are likely to experience traumatic events, such as the death of family and friends and serious health problems. According to Dr. Gary J. Kennedy, a board member of the Geriatric Mental Health Foundation, which is also conducting the depression awareness campaign in Baltimore, depression is treatable and not a normal part of aging. Kennedy said symptoms of depression such as changes in sleep patterns, indecisiveness and losing interest in activities are too often written off as a normal part of aging. But even when depression is recognized, seniors are sometimes hesitant to seek treatment.

OAK RIDGE
For the 45th year, Oak Ridge has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada for its comprehensive annual financial report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. The program requires award winners to demonstrate a "constructive spirit of full disclosure to clearly communicate its financial story" and to present the material in a user-friendly format. In addition, Oak Ridge was recognized by the GFOA with its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 23rd year.

PORTLAND
The demolition of Portland's train depot in 1972 marked the end of an era for the city which some say served as the heart and soul of the community. City leaders are hoping to recapture the depot's historical significance with future plans to build a replica of the depot where it once stood at the intersection of Main and Russell Streets in the downtown district. Future plans for the former depot site will be part of the second phase of Portland's Main Street revitalization plan. Once completed, the depot could serve as a visitor's center used for educational purposes and as a community meeting room.



PEOPLE

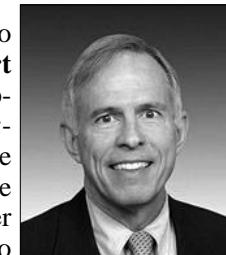
BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Gov. Phil Bredesen has been named policy chairman of the Democratic Governors Association's executive committee by West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin. Manchin cited Bredesen's background in the health care field as the primary reason for his appointment. Manchin also said the appointment reflects a shared interest in business-friendly policies.



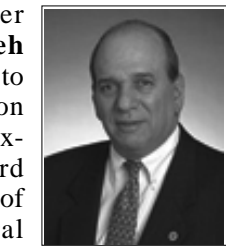
Bredesen

Murfreesboro Democrat **Bart Gordon** was appointed chairman of the House Science Committee after more than two decades in Congress. WPLN recently conducted an interview with Gordon about his efforts to build bridges between the parties and his recent push with NASA to make a massive air safety study public.



Gordon

House Speaker **Jimmy Naifeh** says he plans to seek re-election this fall and extend his record stint in charge of the General Assembly's lower chamber. A Covington Democrat, he has been House speaker nine two-year terms, which makes the 68-year-old the longest serving House speaker in state history. Naifeh told reporters he has no plans to become heavily involved in the presidential election this year because he will be focused on maintaining a Democratic majority in the House. Democrats hold a 53-46 advantage over Republicans in the House. All 99 seats are up in November's election.



Naifeh

The Warren County Commission has appointed attorney **Steve Roller** to replace state Sen. Jerry Cooper who announced his resignation earlier this month. Roller, who once worked for the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance, was appointed on a vote of 12-10 on the ninth ballot, according to Senate Democratic Caucus spokesman Mark Brown. Roller, a Democrat, beat out Commissioner Bill Zechman. His ap-



Roller

pointment will not alter the partisan makeup of the Senate. Democrats and Republicans both have 16 seats in the General Assembly's upper chamber, with one independent member.

Loren Crabtree, 67, has resigned as chancellor of UT's Knoxville campus. Crabtree cited differences concerning governance of the Knoxville campus as reason for his departure. "We've got the same goals but different thoughts about governance, and that was counterproductive," Crabtree said. Jan Simek, Chief of Staff to former Chancellor Crabtree since 2005, will serve as interim chancellor.



Crabtree

Mayor, **A. Keith McDonald** has been reappointed chair of the First Tier Suburbs Council of the National League of Cities (NLC) for 2008. The First Tier Suburbs Council, one of several NLC councils, works to address the unique set of challenges faced by municipalities located outside of central cities and inside the ring of developing suburbs and rural areas. In 2008, the council will continue to focus on strip center redevelopment and infrastructure modernization.



Simek



McDonald

Dayton City Council members have begun the search to fill the seat of the late **Jim Barnes**. The city is requesting letters of interest from possible candidates, while Mayor Bob Vincent said council members hope to fill the seat by the end of January. Barnes was elected to his third four-year term in May and died of cancer in November.



Barnes

Jim Shulman, currently serving as executive assistant to Commissioner Dave Goetz for the Department of Finance and Administration, has a new title and at a new department. Shulman was named Deputy Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Health, reporting to Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. He has previously served as director of member services for TennCare, worked on the Bredesen administration's health care safety net, and on CoverTennessee. He has also served on the legislative staff of Speaker Jimmy Naifeh. A former member of Nashville's Metro Council, Shulman served two terms and chaired the Budget, Public Works, and Transportation Committee's during his tenure.

TML requests E-mail addresses

The quickest way to keep city officials apprised of legislative happenings is through e-mail or fax. Each Friday during the legislative session, TML prepares and distributes a weekly bulletin.

To receive the *TML Legislative Bulletin* by e-mail or fax, please send your contact information to Mona Lawrence, by fax at 615-255-4752, by e-mail to mlawrence@TML1.org, or call 615-255-6416.

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Mentorship, a lifeline for nation's youths in foster care

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

Thirteen-year-old James shares a group home with 5 other boys and his personal plan of hope.

"On Thanksgiving Day at the Loveless Café I asked him about his goals," said Metro Nashville Police Officer Ryan Matson, James' volunteer mentor. "They're in writing here on the wall."

Like any good friend, Matson knows about James' love for Vanderbilt football and basketball, about how he dreams to play varsity ball one day.

"I told him Vanderbilt expects the total package," Matson said. "Falling in line, working hard and making good grades."

In 1-3 months, James writes, he wants to make all As and Bs, and in 3-6 months he'd like to get a job at McDonalds or Chick Filet and move back home with his mom.

"I'm not sure about that goal...." Matson's voice trails away gently, uncertain if a parental reunion will be part of the plan for a kid who's been in state custody since he was 5 years old.

A permanent home, the guidance of parents and family, that's what most people recall about the growing up years. But, imagine a youth with no goals, without the security of family, facing life's

goals; developing self-esteem and a positive vision for their lives.

MENTOR is leading a national movement to connect young Americans with caring adult mentors, delivering research, policy recommendations, and practical performance tools needed to help make mentoring a reality for America's youth.

Aggressive recruitment efforts have paid off in Tennessee as Governor Bredesen's Mentoring Initiative reaches its goal of 250 volunteer mentors since the program's inception in Jan. 2007. A project of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, the initiative operates through a partnership between the Department of Children's Services and Youth Villages, a private, nonprofit organization with a mission to help children and families live successfully.

"This is such an exciting initiative, one launched with the highest expectancy," said Tam Gordon, special assistant to Gov. Bredesen. "Our goals are being met; the kids and the adults are excited. It (the program) works, and we are striving to get as many kids and adults together as quickly as possible."

According to the Harvard Mentoring Project, approximately 20,000 youth, some as young as 18 years old, "age out" from the foster care system nationwide, yet the system provides few services to help them transition to independent adult



Mentor Ryan Matson (right) and his new friend James, 13, take in a Vanderbilt football game as part of Gov. Bredesen's Mentoring Initiative. The pair share an interest in sports and created a list of goals for James.

become homeless, and 34 percent end up on welfare.

Jeanne Anne Naujeck in the *Nashville Tennessean* stresses some of the difficulties young adults formerly in foster care face when entering the business world.

"Without stable parental guidance, some youths just don't know

of three contacts that will be provided by the time a match between a mentor and a teen has been made.

Each volunteer is subject to a mandatory screening prior to being paired with a young person, including background and fingerprint checks and verification of references and work history.

A mandatory training session is also included where mentors are encouraged to help young people set future goals and work toward accomplishing them. The project requires a 4-6 hour per month commitment for at least a year.

"We all wear many hats as we work to raise public awareness from volunteer recruitment to manning booths at county fairs," said Stephanie Beatty, L.I.F.T. Mentor Program Supervisor, Middle Ten-

nessee Region, Youth Villages. "We hope to become a model for other states."

Beatty invites adults interested in becoming a mentor to attend a luncheon this month at Youth Villages. She can be reached at 615-250-7227 or by e-mail at StephanieBeatty@YouthVillages.org.

According to Gordon, Bredesen has dedicated a proclamation in honor of National Mentoring Month and a celebration may be forthcoming.

"We are looking toward an event to highlight National Mentoring Month," Gordon said.

Adult Tennesseans interested in becoming a mentor can call 1-866-519-LIFT (5348) to receive an application or log on to www.tn.gov/mentoring.



Stephanie Beatty, L.I.F.T. Mentor Program supervisor, Middle Tn Region, Youth Villages; Carla Smith, L.I.F.T. Mentor Program supervisor, East Tn Region, Youth Villages; Tangina Sanders, L.I.F.T. Mentor Program supervisor, West Tn Region, Youth Villages; Governor Bredesen; Caroline Hannah, director of Program Development and Community Support, Youth Villages; Althea Jack, L.I.F.T. mentor; Melvin Malone, L.I.F.T. mentor

challenges alone.

Throughout the U.S., adults from all walks of life are discovering how even a year of mentorship can significantly impact the future of young people in foster care.

As National Mentoring Month (NMM) kicks off its seventh season, nationwide campaigns spearheaded by the Harvard Mentoring Project, MENTOR, and the Corporation for National and Community Service are emphasizing how individuals, businesses, schools, government agencies, nonprofits and faith-based communities can work together to close the mentoring gap in America for the 15 million children and teens awaiting adult mentors.

Youth development experts agree that mentoring helps young people aspire to higher educational

living.

In Shelby County, Bredesen joined with philanthropist Clarence Day and Shelby County Mayor A.C. Wharton to announce a \$1.5 million grant from the Day Foundation matched by the state Department of Children's Services providing expanded support for youth leaving foster care. The program helps an average of 300 young adults find their first jobs, secure affordable housing, complete their educations and obtain health care.

"Helping teenagers in foster homes prepare for the transition to adult responsibilities is a critical investment in our youth," Bredesen said.

Statistics reveal that 60 percent of teens aging out of foster care have not graduated from high school, 38 percent are unemployed, 25 percent

social skills or workplace protocol, like calling a supervisor to say they'll be late or out sick."

These are issues Matson is currently working on with James as he teaches him behavior expected in his daily interactions; respecting the feelings of others, behaving in an orderly manner in public places, or ordering food politely in a restaurant.

"I didn't expect him to suddenly do a 360-degree turn-around when I began working with him," Matson said. "He's changing with little steps, with guidelines and goals. He's a good kid, a sharp kid."

The Mentoring Initiative is voluntary for youths in foster care and includes optional mentor support groups and resources. All mentors will have a support team consisting

Educational Resources

The theme for the 7th annual National Mentoring Month (NMM) is "Share What You Know. Mentor a Child." NMM is sponsored by the Harvard Mentoring Project of the Harvard School of Public Health, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. The campaign's goal is to recruit volunteer mentors to help youth achieve their full potential. Additional information about National Mentoring Month is available at www.WhoMentoredYou.org.

The National Agenda for Action is a product of an 18-month national conversation on mentoring incorporating the input of hundreds of individuals in the mentoring field. It is a comprehensive roadmap detailing the realistic steps necessary to bring the power of mentoring to all the

young people in the nation who need mentors. The full report can be found at www.mentoring.org.

The Jim Casey program, administered through Vanderbilt University's Child and Family Policy Center, supplements the limited transitional services DCS provides, such as job training and tuition. It has three components: a Tennessee Youth Advisory Council of current or former foster care youths ages 16-24; a Community Partnership Board with adult members offering help on such life issues as jobs, school, health care and housing, and Opportunity Passports, a financial literacy program for youths "aging out" of foster care that provides money-management classes, the bank accounts and the "Door Openers" program by which employers can assist youths with jobs and mentoring.

Mentoring Month Spotlights

- General Colin Powell will appear in public service announcements (PSAs) on television and radio to promote the recruitment of volunteer mentors. General Powell founded the America's Promise Alliance, the nation's largest multi-sector collaborative dedicated to the well-being of children and youth.
- Jan. 21, the National Mentoring Month campaign will join in celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, which is spearheaded nationally by the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Thank Your Mentor Day™ celebrated Jan. 24, where Americans will reach out to thank or honor those individuals who encouraged and guided them, and had a lasting impact on their lives. Additional information about National Mentoring Month is available at www.WhoMentoredYou.org.

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STATE BRIEFS



235 attend first Congressional District History, Heritage, Tourism Summit at Tusculum College



Photo courtesy of Cameron Judd

The first Congressional District History, Heritage and Tourism Summit drew more than 200 people to Tusculum College representing all segments of tourism, preservation, and historical organizations

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and the State Employee Recycling Program have **received the State Government Partner of the Year Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** for the fifth consecutive year. Tennessee's State Employee Recycling Program is one of only nine programs and organizations nationwide recognized with a WasteWise Partner of the Year Award from EPA in 2007. WasteWise is a free and voluntary partnership program that was launched by EPA in 1994, providing guidance and recognition to nearly 1,900 organizations working to find practical methods to reduce municipal solid waste and to improve financial performance. One unique element of the state's waste reduction effort is the Green Cubicle Program, which sets aside space for the collection of non-traditional items, such as clothing, coat hangers, eyeglasses and greeting cards, for reuse, donation and recycling. Since its inception in 1990 through 2007, state employees recycled 15,138.5 tons of mixed office paper, saving \$454,155 in disposal costs and receiving \$129,884 in recycling revenue. These recycling funds are deposited in the Solid Waste Management Fund. For more information about EPA's WasteWise program, visit the WasteWise Web site at www.epa.gov/wastewise or contact the WasteWise Helpline at (800) EPA-WISE (372-9473). For information about Tennessee's State Employee Recycling Program, visit www.tdec.net/ea/serp.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is now accepting **applications through Feb. 15, for the next round of Green Island Corridor Network grants.** The Green Island grant program seeks to establish a statewide network of publicly accessible B20 and E85 (types of biofuels) refueling stations, particularly along interstates and major highways. For successful proposals, TDOT will pay 80 percent of the costs of installing an E85 or B20 pump and fuel storage equipment, with the maximum grant amount being \$45,000. The grants will assist with the funding to help retail fuel stations install biofuel infrastructure and will help a limited number of retail fuel stations with the capital costs of converting or installing fuel storage tanks and dispensing equipment to sell B20 and/or E85. The grant application package is posted on TDOT's website at www.tn.gov/tdot/biofuel/application.htm.

Tennessee has a new tool to crack down on **companies that hire illegal immigrants.** A new law in effect Jan. 1, 2008 states that if a company hires illegal immigrants, they could be forced out of business. Additionally, if a city, county, or state official has good reason to believe a company is hiring illegal immigrants, a complaint to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development could spark an investigation.

Tennessee ranks **34th in the nation**

in funding programs to protect kids from tobacco, according to a national report released by a coalition of public health organizations. Tennessee currently spends \$10 million a year on tobacco prevention programs, which is 31 percent of the minimum amount of \$32.2 million recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Last year, Tennessee ranked last in the nation, spending nothing on tobacco prevention. The annual report on states' funding of tobacco prevention programs, titled "A Broken Promise to Our Children," was released by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and American Lung Association.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation has **launched the "Tennessee Smart Commute" Web site,** www.tennessee.gov/tdot/smartcommute, to help commuters in the volunteer state identify alternative ways of traveling to and from work each day. The Smart Commute website is a clearinghouse of information on commuting options across the state. The Web site provides information on a variety of commuting options including walking, biking, passenger rail, public transit, and ridesharing. Visitors can even chat with others looking for someone to share a ride to work. TDOT will continue to add links for additional commuting options as they become available. In addition, TDOT welcomes commuter comments and suggestions.

The state got top marks for its **preparedness in responding to public health emergencies** from a new study by a national health advocacy organization. Tennessee scored a perfect 10 out of 10 possible indicators of preparedness to respond to public health emergencies, according to the study entitled "Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Disease, Disasters and Bioterrorism." Tennessee was one of seven states to get a perfect score according to the Trust for America's Health organization. The indicators for the study included having plans to distribute emergency vaccines and medical supplies, having sufficient capabilities to test for biological threats, and maintaining or increasing funding levels for public health services.

More than **\$5 million has been raised for Tennessee's Rural Opportunity Fund.** The fund is a public-private partnership between the State of Tennessee, the Tennessee Bankers Association and Southeast Community Capital that will provide loans to rural businesses that do not have access to traditional financing. Sixteen community banks have committed money to the Rural Opportunity Fund, which has reached more than half of its \$10 million goal. Over the next 10 years, the Rural Opportunity Fund is expected to generate more than \$25 million in loans, financing more than 350 small businesses and minority and women-owned businesses and creating more than 600 new jobs.

The first Congressional District History, Heritage and Tourism Summit, hosted by Congressman David Davis at Tusculum College attracted at least 235 attendees representing all segments of tourism, preservation, and historical organizations and sites within the Northeast Tennessee region. According to Davis, partnerships among those involved in tourism and historic preservation is a vital first step in creating sustain-

able tourism in Northeast Tennessee.

"When I travel around the 1st District, people in Washington County know that Jonesborough is the oldest city (in Tennessee) and then I would come over to Greene County and learn about the bridge burners in the Civil War or go to Carter County and learn about the Overmountain men," Davis said.

"We have enough history here

to have people come and visit and not just stay one day, but spend their whole vacation in Northeast Tennessee."

"The outside world is going to find out about our secret sometime," added Tusculum College President, Russell Nichols.

Tusculum College currently has nearly a dozen structures on the national register of Historic Places.

Application for Parks grants due in March

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) wants to remind local governments and other eligible organizations to take advantage of the grant programs currently available to help create or to expand parks and recreation services. Applications for three grant programs with various eligibility and match requirements are due in March.

"We did a mass mailing in October and conducted regional workshops to notify various agencies directly of these opportunities, but with the March deadlines approaching, we'd like to remind organizations that now is the time to make sure those applications are completed and submitted by their respective due dates," said Mark Tummons, director of the department's Division of Recreation Services.

Local Parks and Recreation Fund Grants provide funding for the purchase of lands for parks, natural areas, greenways and recreational facilities. Funds also may be used for trail development and capital projects in parks, natural areas and greenways.

Eligibility: Each county government and incorporated municipality is allowed to submit one grant application per cycle. Cities and counties may apply jointly for one project in addition to applying for one city or county project, but a government that currently has an open project in this category of programs is not eligible to reapply until the open project is completed.

Grant Awards: LPRF grants require a 50 percent match, with a maximum possible award of \$500,000. By statute, at least 60 percent of the funds allocated for these grants will be awarded to mu-



Local governments may take advantage of three parks grant programs

nicipal governments. **Deadlines:** The deadline for filing an LPRF grant application is March 7. Grant recipients will be announced after July 1.

Recreational Trails Program Grants are provided through the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act. TDEC administers this program in Tennessee, and the grants may be used for non-routine maintenance and restoration of existing trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside or trailhead facilities, such as restrooms, shelters and parking lots; construction of new trails; and acquisition of land for recreational trails or corridors.

Eligibility: Federal, state and local government agencies may apply.

Grant Awards: RTP grants require a 20 percent match, with a maximum possible grant award of \$100,000.

Deadlines: The deadline for filing an application is March 7. Grant recipients will be announced after July 1.

Tennessee Recreation Initiative Program Grants provide funding to governments that do not currently have parks and recreation services within their jurisdictions.

Eligibility: Any incorporated city or county government that meets the criteria may apply through a competitive matching grant process.

Grant Awards: TRIP grants are for a three-year period. During the first two years, the community shall match up to \$50,000 from the state. The third year the community is responsible for 100 percent of the funding for the program.

Deadlines: The deadline for filing a TRIP grant application is April 4. Grant recipients will be announced in May.

To learn more about grants available from Environment and Conservation's Division of Recreation Services and the eligibility and application requirements of the various grant programs listed above, please visit <http://tennessee.gov/environment/recreation/grants.shtml> or call (615) 532-0748.

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Federal spending plan slashes anti-crime grants

BY JOHN GRAMLICH
Stateline.org Staff Writer

Law enforcement officials across the country are lambasting the federal spending plan approved by President Bush on Dec. 26, warning that a 67-percent decrease in funding for targeted state and local criminal justice initiatives imperils public safety.

The \$555 billion compromise appropriations bill for fiscal 2008, which Bush signed after a months-long standoff with Democratic congressional leaders over spending priorities, cuts to roughly \$170 million, from \$520 million last year, the money available to states and localities through the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.

The grant program, administered by the Department of Justice, helps pay for a host of law enforcement initiatives in states and cities, including drug task forces, anti-gang units and overtime for police officers.

In Pennsylvania, for example, the money is used to pay state police to help "beef up patrols" in smaller cities when it is necessary, said Michael Kane, executive director of the state Commission on Crime and Delinquency, which distributes federal criminal justice funds in the

Keystone State. In Philadelphia — where the murder rate has soared in recent years — the city uses the funds to pay for after-school programs for at-risk youth, drug treatment courts and technology to help fight crime, according to the Philadelphia Police Department.

About 60 percent of the Justice Assistance Grants go to states and 40 percent go directly to localities, often major cities like Philadelphia, according to the Department of Justice. All 50 states, as well as overseas territories such as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, received grants last fiscal year.

The substantial drop in this year's federal funding for the grants means "we'll have to lick our wounds in each state and see how we can survive for a year," said Jim Kane, executive director of the Delaware Criminal Justice Council, which distributes the federal funds to localities in that state. Kane, who is no relation to Michael Kane, said law enforcers will have to put "a finger in the dike" until funding increases.

"Let there be no room for doubt, communities everywhere will see the effects of this bill and its cuts to criminal justice funding. A cut to the JAG program is a cut to local law enforcement and victims of crime

everywhere," said David Stein-graber, president of the National Criminal Justice Association, a network of state officials that is organizing efforts to restore funding next year. "Congress has just made the job of every police officer in this country more difficult."

The association has blamed the funding shortage on members of Congress who favored pet projects over anti-crime dollars. When he signed this year's appropriations bill, President Bush criticized Congress for including in the legislation "nearly 9,800 earmarks that total more than \$10 billion," according to news accounts.

It is unclear when states and localities will begin to feel the pinch. In Delaware, Jim Kane said it likely would be during summer, when crime tends to spike and extra assistance — such as police officers working overtime — is needed. Pennsylvania officials, however, said the diminished grants likely would not disrupt existing criminal justice programs in the short term.

A number of local law enforcement units already have expressed concern over the cuts. Drug enforcement agents in Arizona, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Montana and North Carolina have warned their agencies face cuts and possible closure.

New energy law includes block grant program

BY CAROLYN BERNDT
Nation's Cities Weekly

On Dec. 19, President Bush signed into law a historic comprehensive energy bill aimed at moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security. The Energy Independence and Security Act (H.R. 6) passed the Senate on Dec. 13 and passed the House on Dec. 18.

Among the provisions important to cities and towns is a new \$10 billion Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program. Modeled after the Community Development Block Grant program, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program would provide grants to cities, counties and states for innovative practices to achieve greater energy efficiency and lower energy usage.

These grants would fund local initiatives, including building and home energy conservation programs, energy audits, fuel conservation programs, building retrofits to increase energy efficiency, "smart growth" planning and zoning, and alternative energy programs.

As outlined in the bill, cities with a population of at least 35,000

or one of the 10 most populous cities in the state would be eligible for the block grant. H.R. 6 authorizes appropriation of \$2 billion for each fiscal year 2008 through 2012. Of the appropriated amount, 68 percent would be designated for local governments (cities and counties), 28 percent for states, 2 percent for Indian tribes and 2 percent for competitive grants to local governments that were not eligible based on population or to a consortia of local governments.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who made energy policy a priority of her "New Direction Congress," said the measure was "ground-breaking in terms of what it will do in savings to the consumer, protecting the environment and providing a new direction." Bowing to opposition from the White House and some Republicans, Senate leaders stripped the energy bill of a \$21.8 billion package of tax incentives to encourage development of alternative energy sources, a mandate that utilities produce 15 percent of their electricity from alternative sources by 2020 and a Davis-Bacon wage requirement. Bush had threatened to veto the bill over these provisions.

Senate Majority Leader Harry

Reid (D-Nev.) indicated that the tax package and renewable electricity mandate would be revisited next session.

The tax package fell one vote short of the necessary 60 votes needed to keep the provision in the bill. Congress will face some urgency in considering the package again, as many of the tax incentives for solar, wind and other renewable energy projects will soon expire under the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

The bill, which caps the Democratic-controlled Congress's year-long effort to pass energy legislation in the face of rising oil and gas prices, would require cars, light trucks and SUVs sold in the United States to achieve a fleetwide average of at least 35 miles per gallon by 2020, an increase from the current levels of 27.5 mpg for cars and 22.2 mpg for light trucks and sport utility vehicles. Congress has not increased the Corporate Average Fuel Economy, or CAFE, standard since 1975.

That provision, along with language requiring 36 billion gallons of ethanol and other biofuels to be blended with gasoline by 2022, enjoyed bipartisan support.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

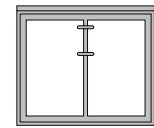


BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Millions of taxpayers will escape the alternative minimum tax this year, saving them about \$2,000 each. But there's an aggravating glitch. The Internal Revenue Service said it would take seven weeks to reprogram its computers to account for temporary tax rules passed by Congress. That will delay refunds of about \$40 billion to as many as 17 million early filers, perhaps until March, tax preparers said. About 4 million people a year pay the alternative minimum tax, but that would have increased to 20 million if Congress hadn't passed a one-year reprieve. The catch is that the relief came so late in the year that the IRS won't be able to start processing electronic or paper returns until February.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park has received a \$1.5 million increase for operations to cover pay raises and augment volunteer programs in the new federal budget signed by President Bush. The funding boost represents the largest single-year increase in the history of the nation's most-visited national park, raising the Smokies' annual budget to \$17.2 million. "The Smokies' funding is part of President Bush's Centennial Initiative, which calls for an additional \$100 million annually for the next 10 years to help prepare America's national parks for the National Park Service's 100th anniversary in 2016. Part of the \$1.5 million increase will allow the Smokies, which attract more than 9 million visitors annually, to fund pay raises and other cost increases, such as fuel and utilities. It also will fund expansion of the park's volunteer program by increasing staff to recruit, train and supervise more volunteers.

COMING UP



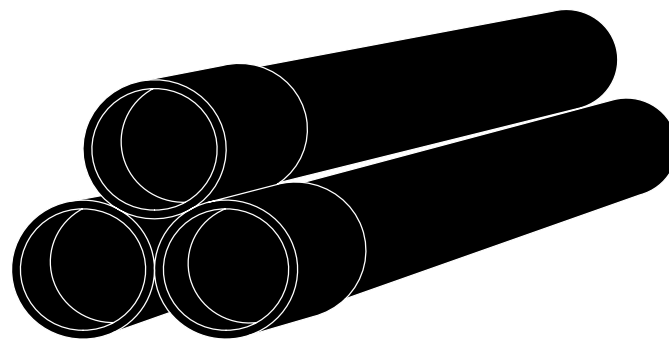
Jan. 23-25: The 2008 International Poultry Expo in Atlanta at the Georgia World Congress Center. If interested in attending and working with the Department of Economic and Community Development, contact Brenda Pfeiffer at 615-253-1913, e-mail Brenda.Pfeiffer@state.tn.us.

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TML Board of Directors gets down to business



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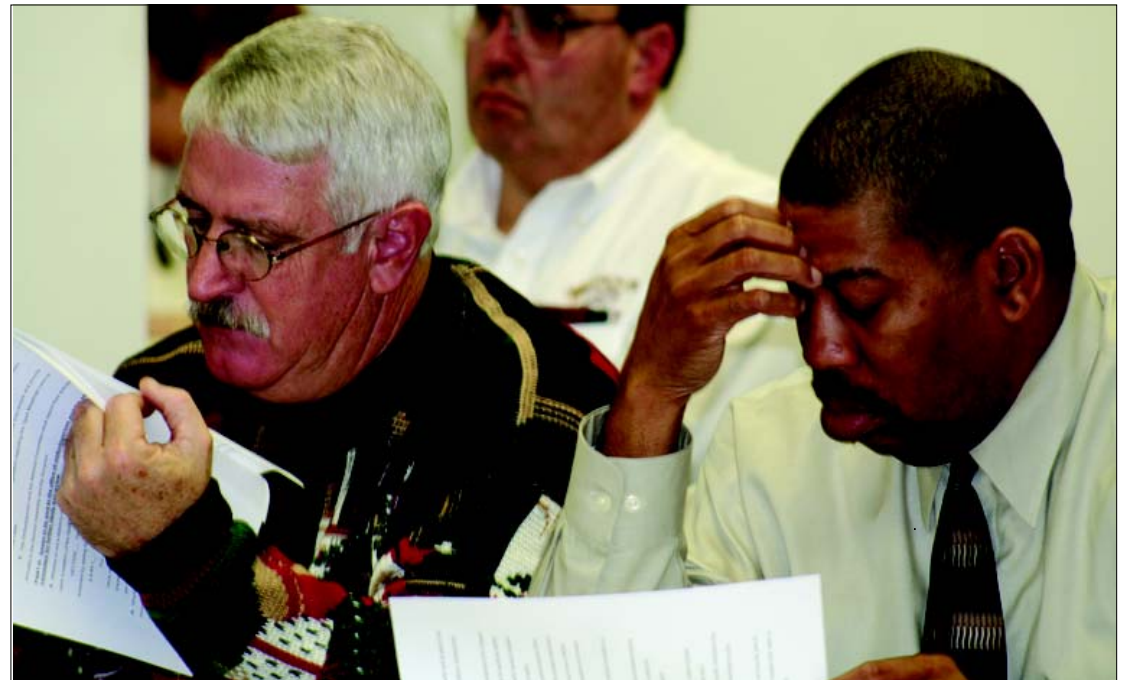
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Athens City Manager Mitch Moore and Murfreesboro Councilmember Ron Washington

Photos by VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Board of Directors adopts 2008 legislative priorities

PRIORITIES from Page 1
and standard of life.

- TML is seeking legislation to amend Title 6 of TCA to allow any municipality to establish a design review commission under the same terms and conditions applicable to municipali-

ties with mayor-aldermanic charters. By granting this authority to all forms of municipal government, a municipality could increase citizen involvement in planning and better control the aesthetics of their communities, thus enhancing economic devel-

opment and improving property values.

Utilities

- TML supports Chairman Charles Curtiss' negotiated cable franchising compromise that creates a new state franchising board to write and implement the state

franchise agreement.

In addition to the approved legislative priorities, the TML Board of Directors approved two resolutions in support of initiating broadband service in Tennessee. One resolution endorses municipal electric systems attempts to provide broadband

service; and a second resolution recommends that it should be the state policy to require broadband service in Tennessee to provide 10 Mbps by 2010 with the capacity of 100 Mbps and symmetrical access capabilities by 2015.

December meeting focuses on 2008 legislative priorities



The TML Board of Directors meeting is called to order.



TML Deputy Director Chad Jenkins



Murfreesboro Mayor Tommy Bragg and Mayor Davenport



Mayor Kelley and Mayor Ford



Margeret Mahery and Bo Mills, director of Public Services with Germantown



Sparta Mayor Tommy Pedigo

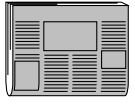


Mitch Moore and MTAS Interim Executive Director Mike Tallent



Mayor Piper and Mayor Proffitt

Photos By Victoria South



CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertising: \$9.25 per column inch. No charge to TML members. Send advertising to: TT&C Classified Ads, Mona Lawrence, 226 Capitol Blvd, Suite 710, Nashville TN 37219; e-mail: mlawrence@TML1.org; or fax: 615-255 4752.

BUILDING INSPECTOR
PORTLAND. The city of Portland is accepting applications for the position of Building Inspector until filled. The position is responsible for the inspection work in the enforcement of state and local regulations. This person performs on site building and structure inspections for compliance with state and local codes and regulations. They must ensure that land and building usage conform to health, safety, and zoning regulations. The Building Inspector advises the public and contractors concerning building, electrical, plumbing and other regulations and codes concerning construction. The salary range is \$30,290 - \$42,405. Application may be obtained from the Receptionist or Human Resources Department, City Hall, 100 South Russell Street, Portland, TN 37148 or at www.cityofportlandtn.gov. Resumes may be sent to HR@cityofportlandtn.gov or fax to 615-325-5345. For more information, call 615-325-6776.

CITY MANAGER
ELIZABETHTON. The city of Elizabethton is seeking applicants for the position of City Manager. Salary DOQ plus excellent benefits. Current salary mid-\$90's. Manager responsible for 240 full-time employees and \$14 million general fund budget. Position answers to seven-member council. Mayor chosen by Council. Must be a proven manager with top-notch communication and team-building skills. At least five years' experience as City Manager/Assistant City Manager or equivalent. Bachelors degree required, Master's or equivalent experience preferred. Application is a public record. Send resume by February 8, to Department of Human Resources, Attn: City Manager Position, 136 South Sycamore Street, Elizabethton, TN, 37643. Fax: 423-547-6249. For more information, call 423-547-6248 or email: alyons@cityofelizabethton.org

CIVIL ENGINEER
OWASSO, OK. The city of Owasso Public Works Department seeks a civil engineer to work under the direction of the Engineering projects manager and the Public Works director, and will be responsible for reviewing subdivision submittals, generating documents for city authorities, and working with other engineers for the design and construction of small capital improvement projects. Requirements: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major study in civil,

environmental or transportation engineering, construction management or a related field; two to three years of experience in professional civil engineering work, preferably in the area of design and/or construction of streets and roadways; possession of an Engineer-In-Training (EIT) certificate preferred; and all education requirements must be verifiable from records of satisfactory completion of courses. Join a team dedicated to improving the lives' of its citizens through innovative engineering and public works concepts. For more information, visit www.cityofowasso.com. Send resume to: employment@cityofowasso.com or Human Resources, P.O. Box 180, Owasso, OK 74055. Position open until filled.

FINANCE DIRECTOR/ RE-CORDER
SIGNAL MOUNTAIN. The Town of Signal Mountain is seeking applications for the position of finance director. The successful candidate must have a bachelor's degree in business administration, accounting or finance. MBA, CPA or Certified Government Finance Officer designation is desirable. A minimum of three years of increasingly responsible experience in government finance; or any combination of education, training and experience providing the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions. Knowledge of excel spreadsheet is also desirable. Salary: DOQ plus excellent benefits. A complete job description and applications are available at the Town Hall. Submit applications and/or resume to: Lynn Wampler, Interim Town Manager, 1111 Ridgeway Ave (Hwy 127N) Signal Mountain, TN 37377. For further information, contact Lynn Wampler at 423-886-2177. Position open until filled. The town of Signal Mountain is an equal opportunity employer. A full job description is located on the web at www.signalmountaintn.gov.

FIRE CHIEF
FAYETTEVILLE. The city of Fayetteville is accepting applications for the position of fire chief. The position will oversee budget, operations, and personnel matters for a full-time department operating two stations. The successful candidate will have a degree in Fire Sciences or a minimum of fifteen years experience, with five years as a supervisor. Must possess or have the ability to possess certification as EMT, HAZMAT, NIMS, Fire Code Inspector, and Building Code Inspector. A complete job description is available upon request. Salary DOQ. Applications should be submitted to the City Administrator at 110 Elk Avenue South, Fayetteville, TN 37334 or call (931) 433-6154 by January 31, 2008.

PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR
MEMPHIS/SHELBY COUNTY. The city of Memphis and Shelby County is seeking applicants for the position of Planning Administrator. Requirements include Master's Degree in City/County or Regional Planning plus 7years experience in urban planning or Bachelor's Degree in planning, engineering, public administration, architectural, or the social sciences plus 10 years professional experience in the field of planning. Five years in Executive/Planning Director capacity is required. Submit your resume by visiting www.watersconsulting.com/recruitment or for more details on the position. Position open until filled.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
OWASSO, OK. City of Owasso, Ok is seeking resumes for Public Works Director; position is responsible for planning, organizing, directing, and coordinating the activities of the Public Works Department. Requirements: Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university, Masters of Science in Civil Engineering or related field preferred; P.E. certification a plus; Five years increasingly responsible experience in a broad range of municipal services including engineering/architectural design or operations, refuse system operations, water/wastewater and/or street maintenance; Oklahoma Class "A" license as Wastewater Operator and Oklahoma Class "A" license as Water Operator or ability to obtain; other combinations of experience and education that meet the minimum requirements may be substituted. For more information, visit www.cityofowasso.com. Position open until filled.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT SUPERVISOR
OWASSO OK. The Public Works Department seeks a Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor to service a population of 33,858. The hired professional will work under the direction of the Public Works Director, and will be responsible for coordinating, supervising, and reviewing the activities relating to the operations and maintenance of the City of Owasso wastewater treatment facilities as well as monitoring projects, providing technical expertise, and responding to after hour problems and emergencies. Requirements: Associate's Degree in biology, chemistry, engineering, or a related field; five years of increasingly responsible supervisory experience in wastewater treatment operation and maintenance; minimum of three years experience must be at the Class A level; possession of an Oklahoma Class A wastewater works operator certification; possession of an Oklahoma Class B wastewater laboratory certification. See www.cityofowasso.com for more information. Send resume to employment@cityofowasso.com or Human Resources, P.O. Box 180, Owasso, OK 74055. Position open until filled.



The TML Bond Fund and the city of Sparta recently closed a \$2.2 million loan for utilities, streets and roads. Seated left to right are Mayor Tommy Pedigo, City Administrator Marty Carmichael, City Recorder Tonya Tindell, and Joe Muscatello, TMBF representative.

March deadline for 2008 TDEC Stewardship Awards

The Department of Environment and Conservation is inviting Tennesseans to submit nominations for the Governor's 2008 Environmental Stewardship Awards. The awards recognize Tennesseans who go above and beyond to protect the state's diverse environment.

"Tennesseans continue to make great strides in protecting our environment and in recognizing that how we live our lives today affects future generations," said Environment and Conservation Commissioner Jim Fyke. "Our environment impacts everything we do from recreational activities to ensuring healthier communities, so it's important that we acknowledge the people and organizations that work hard to protect it."

The deadline for nominations is March 31, 2008. Award recipients will be announced in May 2008.

The Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards cover 13 categories: Agriculture/Forestry; Aquatic Resource Preservation; Building Green; Energy Leadership;

Environmental Education and Outreach; Green Schools; Greenways and Trails; Hazardous Waste Reduction; Lifetime Achievement; Natural Heritage Conservation; Parks and Recreation; Pollution Prevention; and Solid Waste Reduction, which is a new category for 2008.

Any individual, business, organization, educational institution or agency is eligible, provided it is located in Tennessee and its projects were accomplished during the 2007 calendar year. Nominees must have a minimum of three years of environmental compliance with the Department of Environment and Conservation to be eligible for consideration. Self-nominations are encouraged.

A panel of judges representing agricultural, conservation, forestry, environmental, and academic professionals will select award recipients based on criteria including on-the-ground achievement, innovation and public education.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.tdec.net/awards.

Sourcing issue addressed

STREAMLINED from Page 1
 BEEN implemented this year. However, last session, Governor Bredesen delayed the implementation of the streamlined sales tax provisions on sourcing until July 1, 2009.

Problems

Implementation of the state's streamline legislation will result in a dramatic shift in local sales tax revenues, substantially alter municipalities' incentive for economic development, and introduce a degree of uncertainty into the annual budget process.

For Tennessee to comply with the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement, the state must change the sourcing of sales tax revenues from the point of sale to the point at which the buyer takes possession of the item (point-of-sale sourcing to

destination-sourcing). Dr. Bill Fox, an accomplished and respected economist with the University of Tennessee, projected 193 cities will experience an increase in local option sales tax revenues, 150 cities will experience a decrease in local option revenues, and four cities will experience no measurable impact as a result of the sourcing change required under the streamline legislation. However, the estimated cumulative increase for the 193 "winners" is just \$19 million, while the 150 "losers" are estimated to experience a cumulative decrease of \$57 million – a difference of \$38 million. Or, \$19 million in local sales tax revenues will be redistributed among cities while \$38 million in local sales tax revenues will shift from municipalities to counties upon implementation of the streamline bill.

Berry law needs funding

DNA from Page 1
 cations International Corporation: CODIS Project in her report "DNA Database Legislation and Legal Issues."

"It will be a terrific resource," agrees Rex Barton, MTAS Police Management Consultant. "Yet, it will not be the panacea some think it will be," Barton cautions. "A lot of people have what is referred to as the CSI phenomenon, especially those familiar with the CSI television shows, expecting this type of breakthrough in investigations. We've got to start somewhere, and from a municipal perspective, it will be a valuable tool in police investigations."

Helm said that implementation of the law will increase the agency's DNA workload from 2,000 to nearly 25,000 samples at a cost of a million dollars per year to be applied toward supplying arresting agencies with Buccal swab collection kits, hiring new personnel and training.

"Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, (sponsor of the bill) is making this a priority as the 2008 legislature comes to order, but as of now, the TBI has no money to buy the kits," said Helm.

"A couple of agencies in Memphis and Chattanooga have purchased the kits themselves, but without funding, we can only index the samples for storage." Helm listed the cost of processing each swab kit at \$30 per sample.

"We support the bill and hope to work with the legislature and TBI in resolving the appropriation issue," said Maggi McLean Duncan executive director of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (TACP)."

"The importance of the Johnia Berry Act of 2007 to law enforcement and the citizens is of much concern to us." Duncan continued stressing that "collection kits should be certified and consistent."

"The law has potential," reports the *Bristol Herald Courier*, Berry's hometown newspaper. "But, without the money to make it work, the law is just words on a page."

Municipal Administration Program January Schedule

Budget and Property Freeze Workshop (3010)

A municipal budget should be much more than a legal document and an exercise in arithmetic. Developed properly, a good budget is a policy statement that reflects the goals and priorities of the city. This course will provide an overview of budgeting and is designed to help participants create a more effective and useful budget document in addition to learning the details on the property tax freeze legislation and how it affects your city.

Participants will learn how to identify and implement the steps in the budget cycle, prepare a budget calendar, and identify and project revenue sources (including property tax freeze revenue and project expenditures).

Instructor

MTAS finance consultants
Who Should Attend

This course is designed for all mu-

THE UNIVERSITY of
TENNESSEE UT
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 ADVISORY SERVICE

municipal employees who deal with finance and the implementation and collection of business tax.

Time

Public administration courses begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m.

Dates and locations

Jan. 24 Collegedale
 Jan. 29 Knoxville
 Jan. 30 Johnson City

Training Facilities

Bartlett Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center, 3663 Appling Road
Collegedale Collegedale City Hall, 4910 Swinyar Drive
Cookeville Town Center, One West

First Street
Franklin Williamson County Exposition Center, 4215 Long Lane
Jackson West Tennessee Center for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Public Service, 605 Airways Boulevard
Knoxville University of Tennessee Conference Center, 600 Henley Street

To register for this municipal administration program class, please visit the MTAS web site at www.mtas.tennessee.edu or contact Elaine Morrisey at Elaine.morrisey@tennessee.edu or 865.974.0411.

For program information, contact Kurt Frederick, MTAS Training Consultant, at 615.253.6385 or email kurt.frederick@tennessee.edu. Fees are \$25 per person per class for municipal employees and \$55 per person per class for all other participants.

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Top 10 reasons to be an elected official in 2008

BY SHERRY CONWAY APPEL
Nation's Cities Weekly

A lighthearted look at the serious job facing local elected officials.

1) You have to be able to add two and two together (and the answer must always be four).

One of the most important tasks local officials must undertake is to develop and implement a budget that accurately reflects both the needs of their communities and their ability to financially support those needs. Unlike the federal government, local governments must have a balanced budget — including a solid rainy day fund to ensure strong bond ratings.

2) You can never have a bad hair day.

Now that most council sessions are televised and the Internet has become the great sounding board for issues, you must be on your toes and ready to roll at a moment's notice. Public hearings, media interviews and community meetings help involve the public in the workings of government. When you go out the door in the morning, the next person you'll see will be a constituent — including your next-door neighbor!

3) Everyone knows what you buy at the grocery store.

Accessibility is critical to good governing. Most constituents don't see the difference between cornering you in the office or in the produce aisle. Leadership is not just about giving speeches at the rotary, it's about listening.

4) Everyone knows your name.

Just about everyone in your city knows who you are. A good bunch of them also think they know what you stand for and how you vote, even if they couldn't pick you out of a crowd! Although it's good to be recognized and have your work acknowledged, sometimes it's nice to be a bit anonymous. Unfortunately, anonymity is not one of the perks to this job.

5) Someone is always awake at midnight.

Those elected officials brave enough to have their home phone listed, know that someone is always ready to call you to discuss anything — the land use proposal for that empty field down the street or the noise the neighbor's cat is making in the middle of the night. Local government is a 24/7

operation, and being a local official is just about the same thing.

6) You have an intimate knowledge of your sewer systems. Making sure the sewer pipes run freely, the snow is plowed on time, and the traffic light down at the corner is working are critical responsibilities of local government and as an elected official, you need to know how they work, or better yet, who is in charge of fixing them. Local government is all about service — trash pickup, libraries that are open and have the latest books and technology, keeping the streets safe — are all the mainstays of daily life.

7) You get to ride on the back of a fire truck on the 4th of July.

Being the face of your community can be fun. Participating in parades, ceremonies, school events and other community gatherings are every-day occurrences, regardless of whether it's raining cats and dogs or it's a sunny afternoon. As every local elected official knows, the job requirements don't change for bad weather or tough situations. Despite everything else that might be happening in your life, when duty calls, you must answer — rain or shine.

8) School kids want to be you — but maybe just for a day.

As a leader in your community, it's no secret that kids and adults alike look to you for guidance and support. But with great respect comes great responsibility. Your words and actions not only reflect your beliefs and values, they reflect the perceived point of view for an entire community.

9) Someone will always disagree with you about something.

That's the great thing about America — everyone gets a chance to speak their mind. Since it's closest to the people, local government is the most open form of government — where everyone can have their say. It's also the best place to forge consensus over tough issues and to work toward building strong communities.

10) You are able to create small miracles.

Local officials can truly make a difference in people's lives. True leaders know when to use their influence to benefit the entire community — not for their own satisfaction, but for the people they represent.

Issues facing states' legislatures in 2008

ISSUES from Page 1

edented amount of legislation addressing immigration reform and immigrants in 2007. States introduced roughly 1562 pieces of legislation in 2007. 244 bills became law in 46 states, and NCSL expects similar numbers in 2008. While the presidential candidates have immigration issues at the top of their campaigns, there appears to be little hope that Congress and the administration will be able to pass any comprehensive reforms in 2008. Consequently, states will continue to focus on employment, education, health care, identification, public benefits and human trafficking.

Issue #3: Real ID

Real ID, the federally mandated program, requires states to issue driver's licenses and identification cards. The final rules or standards that each state must follow are still not in place, but are expected to be released in the first part of 2008. The federal government has set a May 11, 2008, deadline for states to meet the standards, and legislatures will have to deal with the regulations once they are finally released. Real ID is expected to cost states \$11 billion over five years and will have a major impact on services to the public. Legislative bodies in 44 states considered approximately 130 Real ID related bills, resolutions and memorials in 2007. Legislation passed in 25 states with six states explicitly prohibiting compliance by law. Legislatures are also exploring "enhanced driver's licenses" that are compliant with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

Issue #4: Financing America's Roads and Infrastructure

The collapse of the I-35 bridge over the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Minn., added urgency to an issue that has been high on the agenda in many states. Motor vehicles travel more than 2.9 trillion miles each year on U.S. highways. Critical infrastructure, which includes transportation, energy, telecommunications, water systems and emergency services, are essential to the U.S. economy and national security. Transportation is incredibly vital to all sectors of the economy, connecting people to jobs and allowing products to be shipped worldwide. States are trying to compensate for a projected nationwide shortfall in transportation spending to be \$1 trillion by 2015. Congress is working to replace the federal transportation funding bill that expires in 2009. Some states may consider increasing the gas tax, but with gasoline hovering around \$3 dollars a gallon, many lawmakers are reluctant to raise it. A number of states

will authorize greater participation of private companies in the construction, operation and financing of transportation projects. New toll roads may be planned. And the role of local governments in transportation will likely be strengthened.

Issue #5: Insuring the Uninsured

Health care is the single largest portion of total state spending at 32 percent. States spend more per capita on health care than any other industrialized country at more than \$5,500 a person. One in six people are uninsured and millions more are underinsured. Twenty-eight states passed or considered new health care laws or proposals to change the system in 2007, some inching toward the goal of universal or affordable coverage. The State Children's Health Insurance program, or SCHIP, was vetoed by President Bush for a second time Dec. 12, 2007, which leaves the fate of the program undecided. It's unclear whether an override will be attempted at this point. Congress is expected to pass a temporary extension that would keep the program funded through next year, but 21 states are expected to experience federal funding shortfalls in 2008, and nine states will hit those shortfalls by March. The outlook for '08 is grim as states struggle without additional federal funding and face losing some of the 6 million children currently covered by SCHIP to the ranks of the uninsured.

Issue #6: Transforming Education

There is a renewed focus on lowering the high school drop out rate. States are looking at strengthening the curriculum so it is more challenging to students and providing training for career and work oriented options after high school. Recruiting and retaining high quality teachers and principals is another issue on lawmaker's agendas. They can be the most important factors in improving student achievement, school performance, and raising state graduation rates. In terms of higher education, lawmakers are working on ways to make college more affordable, especially for lower income students, and making sure students graduate on time.

Issue #7: Helping Families

Homeowners will continue to see their adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM) and payments increase. This could put more homeowners at risk of losing their homes. An increased number of foreclosures could have an impact on state budgets as property values fluctuate. States may also consider homeowner assistance programs similar to what Puerto Rico recently passed that offers various programs directed to low-income, low- to moderate-income families and individuals. In addition, gas prices and ballooning health care costs are subjecting more families to serious financial hardship. One-third of families in the United States has no net worth or is in debt. Using a variety of relatively new tactics, legislators are creating incentives for working families to build assets, thereby increasing the likelihood of weathering a financial crisis. Policies to build wealth include promoting financial education among students and adults, matched savings accounts for investment in a home/business or education, and tax refunds.

Issue #8: Environmental Protection

Water policy is receiving increased attention in state legislatures as drought and rapid growth in many areas of the country pit competing users and states against each other. Water is an economic driver for expanding energy production, creating new industrial applications, improving recreation and commercial fishing, as well as meeting drinking and agriculture irrigation needs. Some of the bills legislatures could pass in 2008 would have an immediate impact. They would authorize local governments to restrict residential lawn watering during droughts, establish water conservation standards for buildings and appliances, and authorize use of reclaimed water for non-potable purposes. Other pieces of legislation that could have a long-term impact are issuing state bonds to provide funding for state and local reservoirs and pipelines to store and move water more efficiently, and negotiating or modifying interstate water compacts. States are also beginning to see what some feel are the direct effects of climate change: elevated temperatures, more severe forest fires, decreased rainfall, an increase in severe weather, and warmer ocean waters that are harming sea life. While discussion continues to evolve as to the role of human



activities in these events, states are taking action to limit the greenhouse gases are contributing to the rise in global temperatures. In 2008, states will continue the discussion of what to do to deal with climate change and some are likely to embrace voluntary and mandatory greenhouse gas emission plans, as a number of states did in 2007.

Issue #9: Protecting the Consumer

Outbreaks in 2007 of contaminated spinach, peanut butter, and pet food led consumers to be wary of our food safety system. In addition, the recalls of toys from China and the Consumer Product Safety Council's inability to protect consumers from these products created even more concern. Several states are now looking at tightening the law surrounding sales of products containing lead. For example, New Jersey adopted a law making it illegal to sell products that have been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, whether it is a voluntary or involuntary recall. Trade organizations are now asking Congress and states to strengthen food and product safety requirements because of increased concern and poor sales on some of the recalled products.

Issue #10: Pension Plans

Retiree health care costs will go up for states with a large number of baby boomers retiring in the next few years. All states provide retirement pension plans for state employees and teachers, and many have made commitments to provide or share the expense of retirees' health care. In recent years, states have paid increasing attention to the issue and state pension plans are in good to excellent condition. For retiree health care costs, however, no easy solutions present themselves. Most states appear to have more flexibility to change structures for retiree health care than for pension plans, and may do so in the future.

Systems that are still on radar screens or developing on the horizon:

State legislatures will see several issues still leftover on their radar screens from previous sessions and a few new issues that are starting to develop on the horizon.

Systems still on the radar screens of various legislatures include access to broadband technology and laws that will prohibit drivers from sending text messages while driving. Ethics and ethics reform will likely be hot topics during an election year. States also have until mid-2009 to comply with The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. If not, states face a 10 percent reduction in federal crime funds. Obesity also remains a hot topic because rates continue to rise, increasing health care costs and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. Issues developing on the horizon deal with antibiotic resistant infections. MRSA (methicillin resistant staph aureus) infection outbreaks are happening in more states, and legislatures are wrestling with how the infections should be reported. More states will likely be seeing a shower of new bills pertaining to paid family leave and sick leave. Eleven states have passed their own family leave laws, but only two states, California and Washington, provide for paid leave benefits. And a December report released by Major League Baseball on steroid use by players will likely result in legislatures taking a look at tightening use of controlled substances by young athletes.

NCSL is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the states, commonwealths and territories. It provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system.

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Jimmy Eldridge brings music, morgue, and insurance experience to the House

BY GAEL B. STAHL
Editor

Jimmy Eldridge was born April 1, 1948, in Tennessee, and was partly raised there. His mother, Ella Frances Hall, was from Bemis, a suburb on the southern outskirts of Jackson. His father, William, who was from Tracy City up on Monteagle Mountain, met her in Jackson and successfully wooed her pretending to be a singer from New York.

Eldridge didn't see a lot of Jackson during his childhood and youth because his father was actually an Air Force jet fighter pilot who saw action in three wars. Since the family got around a lot, Eldridge's schooling was a moveable target. He enjoyed every minute of it, even the military settings and discipline. It helped him hone a personality that thrives on meeting new people and enjoying the variety of quality encounters everywhere.

The travelog began in Arizona where Eldridge attended first and second grade, followed by two years at Dennison, Texas, site of Sherman Air Force Base. When his father was exchange officer with the Royal Air Force in England, the Eldridges were the only Americans on the RAF base. As a result, Jimmy experienced British culture from the inside, a rare opportunity for a military family. There followed two years in Newburgh, NY, when his father was at Stewart Air Force Base.

In 1963, they were at Malstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Mont., when President Kennedy spoke at his high school. Presidential security being light then compared to what it would be two months or so later, after Nov. 22, the ninth grader spotted the president's typewritten double-spaced speech had been abandoned at the podium. He managed to walk away with it – and still has it.

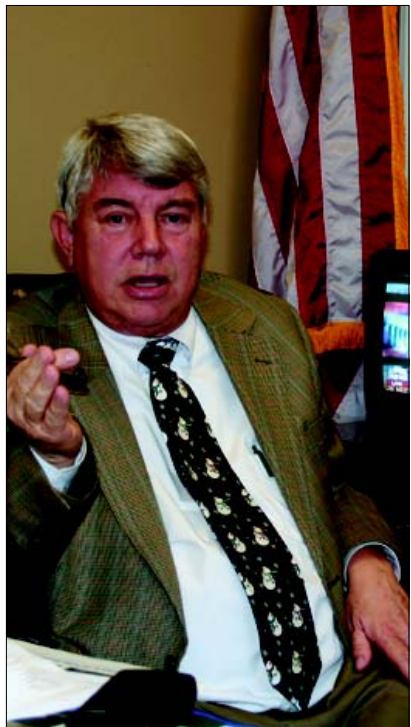
The following year, the Eldridges lived in Jackson while his father was stationed overseas as a base commander during the Vietnam era. That was followed by a tour at Shaw Air Force Base outside Sumter, S.C., and a year at McDill AFB in Tampa. Starting at Great Falls, Eldridge began developing his guitar skills. He successfully auditioned to play rhythm guitar with a Tampa Bay area garage band that played rock and roll all around Florida and the Southeast. By the time he graduated in 1968, Laurie Records had signed the group, the Beau Heems, and released several singles nationally, the first and best known of which was "I Missed My Cloud." A highlight of Eldridge's musical career was when the Beau Heems opened for the Dave Clark Five.

Upon graduating, Eldridge went home to Jackson to attend Lambuth College and the University of Memphis where he graduated with two bachelor's degrees. His first job was working at the Memphis/Shelby County morgue as a toxicologist. His wife, Carolyn, whom he met in Jackson, earned a Bachelor in Fine Arts at UM and was certified to teach K-12. She taught art for 14 years at Memphis and Jackson schools until she retired when Eldridge got involved in politics. Before leaving Memphis, Eldridge switched to the insurance business and after they moved to Jackson joined Carolyn's family's insurance agency.

Eldridge, chairman of the Madison County Republican Party (1998-2000) and member of its Executive Committee, was elected and re-elected to the Madison County Commission before being elected to the Tennessee House in November 2002. He was sworn in January 2003 and is now in the second year of his third two-year term in the General Assembly. He has served in the House Republican Caucus leadership since day one, having been elected assistant floor leader for his first two years. He is now in his fourth year as Republican Caucus vice chairman.

He represents two-thirds of Madison County, the largest population being in Jackson, a city of nearly 100,000. He maintains a good personal relationship with city officials and their Tennessee Municipal League representatives and staff. He says he frequently calls the TML offices to hear the municipal side of issues that affect his constituents and the state as a whole.

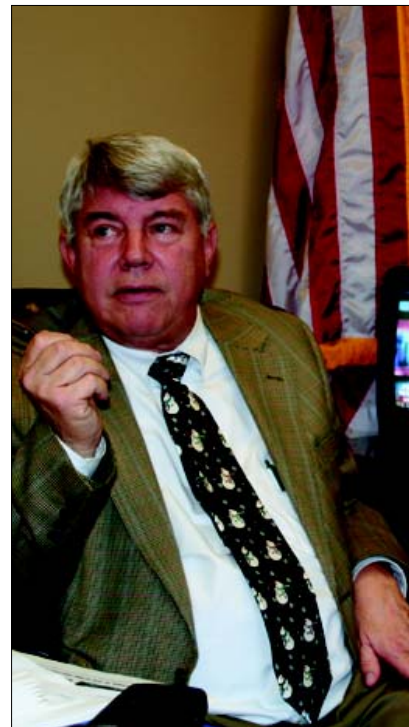
Married in Jackson in 1972, the Eldridges have two sons, Stephen, a CPA, and Michael, who is the family's fourth generation insurance practitioner. Their sons have given Jimmy and Carolyn two grandchildren with another on the way. Stephen's wife is an Ob.Gyn. physician with six months



I'm glad I majored in biology and chemistry. I may use it in politics. I carried a bill affecting umbilical cord and stem cell research.



When my friend, Congressman Ed Bryant, was elected to the U.S. House, he invited me to Washington D.C. for a few days.



Photos by Gael B. Stahl

Jackson is home to the International Rockabilly Hall of Fame. ... Supporting West Tennessee rockabilly is one of my passions.

to go on her residency. Michael's wife teaches kindergarten at a Jackson public school.

TT&C: Despite your nonstop travels, you did attend Tennessee schools?

JE: I went to Jackson High for the entire 10th grade and met a lot of people in Jackson that year. I came back to Jackson two years later to attend Lambuth University and went on to Memphis State University as UM was then called. I leaned toward the sciences in high school, so in my freshman year I immediately declared a major in biology. That meant taking a lot of chemistry. I found I enjoyed chemistry just as much as biology so I ended up with two majors and two B.S. degrees. I wouldn't change any of that. I realize people in politics often majored in history or political science. But I'm glad I majored in biology and chemistry. I may use it in politics. You never know.

TT&C: Does a scientific background help you as a legislator?

JE: I carried a bill affecting umbilical cord and stem cell research. Questions are going to come up when you get into legislating embryonic stem cells or DNA or standards for safe drinking water. In those areas, a background in chemistry or biology can help. I'm learning every day.

Because I was a chemistry and biology major, I worked in 1971 and 1972 as state forensic toxicologist for Dr. Jerry Francisco, the Memphis chief medical examiner. At that time, he was also the state medical examiner.

After I got married in 1972, I needed to get out and make a living. I was influenced by my father-in-law to give insurance a try. I started on my own in Memphis, liked it so well that when I came back to Jackson I joined the family firm, Hall Insurance Agency. By the time he retired, I had my own agency Five years ago, after 30 years, we merged the two, and I sold out as the principal in that major firm.

TT&C: Did you do community service before you ran for office?

JE: I am a former deacon in my church and sang in church choirs. I've been active in the community, in

the Rotary Club for more than 30 years serving on a multitude of boards. I have been on the Jackson Symphony's board of directors more than 15 years. As a matter of fact, my sister, Brenda Whalley, is the current president of the Jackson Symphony.

Having always enjoyed the political process, I wasn't a guy to fuss about things not going my way. I figured it was better to get involved in it and was elected to a seat on the Madison County Commission. After serving one full-term and part of another, I was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly to represent Jackson/Madison.

Another influence would have been my wife's family having a prominent law firm in Jackson. Waldrop & Hall Law was named for her grandfather's brother, Roy Hall. People like U.S. Congressman Ed Bryant came out of that law firm as did a federal judge, two Tennessee Supreme Court judges, and a U.S. attorney. Just being around family members was a political influence to get involved.

TT&C: What was your first taste for political service?

JE: When my friend, Congressman Ed Bryant, was elected to the U.S. House, he invited me to Washington D.C. for a few days. When I saw how the political world operated in Washington, D.C., I got excited about getting involved locally. I ran for the Madison County Commission in 1998, got elected, served as chairman of the Madison County Republican Party for 1998-2000, was a member of the executive committee, was re-elected commissioner in 2002, and then elected to the House and have served in the 103rd-105th General Assemblies.

TT&C: Your first opponent for a House seat in 2000 was long-time incumbent Rep. Matt Kisber. You ran strong?

JE: I ran against Matt even though he was a good friend and client of our family. What happened was the district changed so much when we went through a court-ordered redistricting of that district. Rep. Johnny Shaw was elected to represent District 80 – that was created to be an ethnic minority district. District 73 became a

more conservative, Republican district giving me an opportunity to run in 2000 and represent the new shift to those voters. It was a really tough decision because I thought a lot of Matt. It was all about the district changing, nothing personal. I ran a spirited race and won 47 percent of the vote, which set me up to run again in 2002. Matt chose not to run for reelection in 2002. I was elected; Phil Bredesen was elected governor; and Matt became his commissioner of Economic Development. He's done an outstanding job.

TT&C: You were a local government official when elected to the House. Did you run on municipal issues?

JE: I ran on a platform of not supporting a state income tax and of not being a career politician. Being new to politics, I would bring fresh ideas to my concerns about education, economic development and economic growth in my district.

Jackson is home to the International Rockabilly Hall of Fame. I supported it and helped it get a grant to promote tourism. Tennessee has a thriving strong musical heritage from the blue grass of the Appalachian Mountains all the way to the Memphis blues and jazz. And Jackson is home to rockabilly. Jackson native son Carl Perkins, who wrote "Blue Suede Shoes" made famous by Elvis, was rockabilly. W.S. Holland, Johnny Cash's drummer on every major hit he had and a friend of mine, was born and raised in Jackson's rockabilly heritage that extends to artists like Roy Orbison and Jerry Lee Lewis. Supporting West Tennessee rockabilly is one of my passions.

Cleveland, Ohio, has the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Jackson, Tenn., has the International Rockabilly Hall of Fame. We have an event every summer that brings artists from all over the country and tourists from as far away as Holland and England.

The Rockabilly Museum downtown has murals of Johnny Cash and Brenda Lee and other artists like W.S. Collins who recorded with Johnny Cash. The city of Jackson donated the building, an early-1900s fire station that became the Rockabilly Hall of Fame.

TT&C: Are your committee assignments helpful for Jackson/Madison issues?

JE: Yes. I'm on the State and Local Government Committee and Local Government Subcommittee. I serve on the Health and Human Resources Committee and Healthcare Facilities Subcommittee. The largest employer in West Tennessee is the West Tennessee Healthcare System with close to 6,000 employees. Our hospital is among the state's largest publicly-owned city/county hospitals. That committee work keeps me at the forefront of numerous healthcare issues affecting Jackson/Madison and Tennessee.

A bill I passed in 2007 affects county mayors. They used to be called county executives. When the law changing the title from county executive to county mayor was passed, some county mayors went back to calling themselves county executives. Going back and forth became an economic development problem for people from outside of Tennessee. My bill removed the authority of county legislative bodies to redesignate the county mayor as county executive by private act. Counties that

reverted to the county executive title can keep it, but if they ever switch to county mayor, that's final.

TT&C: What bills have you passed during your three terms?

JE: I was fortunate to pass six pieces of legislation that became law last session. One bill that became law permits inmates who received a specified educational degree to receive 60 days of educational good-time credit. These aren't hardened criminals but people who messed up and are getting out after five or six years. If they get a GED high school diploma, two years of college or a four-year degree, they get 60 days credit toward time served. That puts them back into the work force earlier with a better educational background for job hunting. Employers and citizens see they are willing to make amends for their mistake, get a degree, and become more productive citizens. It also saves the state money to get them out of prison quicker.

TT&C: Do you carry bills for the insurance industry?

JE: I passed a bill that revises the requirements for an insurance producer license so that instead of having to go sit through several days of a classroom study program, they can take the course online and then go take the final exam.

I also worked and passed a motor vehicle accident reports bill. Whether the report is prepared by a law enforcement person or by the owner or driver of a vehicle involved in an accident, the report must now include the name of the insurance company and the name of the agent.

TT&C: You indicated you passed a bill involving your biology background?

JE: In 2006, I passed the cord blood bill to encourage health care providers to inform expectant mothers that they may donate their newborn's umbilical cord blood. The issue of stem cell research is controversial but cord blood has proven an effective compromise measure. The stem cells harvested from blood contained in the umbilical cord after delivery can be banked for future use in the event of an illness and potentially provide enough useful stem cells for researchers. No fetuses or embryos are destroyed.

TT&C: How is it that you, a minority House member, can get legislation passed?

JE: I'm the kind of Republican who actively works both sides. I don't want to be one who never is able to get a bill out of committee and after being up here for years still is on the outside. I don't create controversial bills just to bother folks. I'm up here to pass good legislation that improves the quality of lives. I don't just work my own bills but support and cosponsor the good legislation of others. Sometimes, it's not about passing bills but getting rid of bad bills.

JE: Do you still play guitar with a group?

JE: No, the Beau Heems were just a phase of my life during high school. The drummer is now an orthopedic surgeon. Sometimes, someone will say, "I hear you play the guitar," and before you know it this short, gray-haired guy is up on the stage playing "Johnny Be Good" or something and they're saying: "That boy sure can play the guitar." I rarely play in any group except where a band is playing at a party. I may get up there and play a few old songs with them, "Twist and Shout" or "Louie Louie" since I came up in that era of pop and rock and three-piece jazz bands consisting of a guitar, a drummer, and a saxophone.

TT&C: What's your current hobby?

JE: That's a good question. I was a golfer; my father, a good golfer, who played in the Air Force World Golf Tournament and shot par or a little below. He dragged me around as his caddy. I eventually lost interest in golf but continue to play the guitar, sing in church choirs, and enjoy hunting and fishing and hiking around my 350-acre farm. I do little projects out there every year. I'm big on wildlife conservation. I set out food plots for wild life – our deer, turkey and squirrels. Right before deer season this year, we counted 25 deer on the farm. I enjoy watching the wildlife with binoculars all over the acreage. We've seen a red fox out there and have seen bobcats and a couple of coyotes running through. There are lots of different birds including a nice covey of quail.



Jimmy Eldridge has played rhythm guitar since the ninth grade.