



Will the Health Care Act affect city governments?

BY NEIL BOMBERG
Nation's Cities Weekly

The new federal health care signed into law last month is expected to fundamentally change health care over the next five years.

Some of the very important changes the law makes in health care include achieving near universal coverage and expanding Medicaid.

However, there is nothing in the law that appears to force cities and towns to change the ways in which they provide health insurance to their employees.

Cities and towns will continue to be able to self-insure if they wish to, and participate in state-wide risk pools through which they can purchase insurance at lower rates.

However, cities and towns that self-insure will, after two years, need to demonstrate to the Secretary of Health and Human Services that their self-insurance plans are sufficiently funded or capitalized to cover likely medical claims, and all

cities and towns, like all employers, will have to meet coverage minimums. They will also have to provide insurance to all workers — full and part-time — if they offer insurance to some.

A number of coverage changes will have to take place this year, and some of these may affect city employees and their plans. These changes will:

- Prohibit pre-existing condition exclusions for children in all new plans;
- Provide immediate access to insurance for uninsured Americans who are uninsured because of a pre-existing condition through a temporary high-risk pool;
- Prohibit dropping people from coverage when they get sick;
- Lower seniors' prescription drug prices by beginning to close the donut hole (though this will be a slow process spanning several years);
- Offer tax credits to small busi-

See **HEALTH CARE** on Page 6

TML Conference June 13 - 15 in Gatlinburg

City officials will have the opportunity to hear firsthand the views of each gubernatorial candidate during the TML Annual Conference, scheduled for June 13 - 15 in Gatlinburg.

The list of candidates running for Governor in Tennessee firmed up this month, with one Democrat (Mike McWherter) and three Republican contenders (Bill Haslam, Ron Ramsey, and Zach Wamp) all vying for the job. Candidates are scheduled throughout the three-day event and will be given time at each of the planned general sessions to provide their views on the "State of the State" and why they are the best candidate for the new job.

Other conference highlights include dynamic workshops and general sessions that focus on key elements that help mold and shape prosperous hometowns during



tough economic times.

The conference will kick off Sunday, June 13, with registration, vendor presentations, and the opening general session followed by the host city reception.

An awards breakfast on Tuesday will conclude the conference.

Workshops and general sessions will focus on key elements that help mold and shape prosperous hometowns during tough economic times.

While in Gatlinburg be sure to make time to check out the many attractions the city has to offer.

To register, go to the League's website: www.TML1.org.

New office to oversee state and local finance

The Tennessee Comptroller's Division of Local Finance will be merging with the Division of Bond Finance to create the Office of State and Local Finance, effective April 1.

The office will assume all duties and responsibilities of the former two divisions.

The Division of Bond Finance has been responsible for managing the state's debt, including issuance of all bonds, notes and payments of the debt.

The Division of Local Finance has been responsible for approving budgets and debt obligations and providing technical assistance for local governments throughout Tennessee.

"This merger allows us to provide efficient services and make government work better in all Tennessee communities and for our investors," Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said in announcing the change.

The office will be led by Mary-Margaret Collier, former director of the Division of Bond Finance.

"I am excited to be working with local government once again," said Collier. "We welcome your calls and questions and look forward to



Collier

partnering with each of you to make government work better for all of Tennessee."

Collier may be reached at 615-401-7872 or at mary.margaret.collier@tn.gov.

The new mailing address will be: Office of State and Local Finance, James K. Polk Bldg., 505 Deaderick St., Suite 1600, Nashville, TN 37243-0273.

Municipal issuers should file the state form, CT-0253, and other requests with the Office of State and Local Finance at that address.

State Funding Board sets revenue estimates for FY 2010-2011, little growth expected

BY CAROLE GRAVES
TML Communications Director

Some of the state's top economists are predicting that Tennessee is slowly beginning to emerge from the "Great Recession," but also caution that the economy is still in a precarious situation.

The State Funding Board met last month to get advice from a battery of experts before setting the revenue estimates that will be used to plan next year's state budget.

Based on their projections, the Funding Board agreed that tax revenues for fiscal year 2010 - 2011 could grow by 1.73 to 1.98 percent and the general fund will grow by 2.05 to 2.3 percent.

The forecast, however, is slightly lower than what the Funding Board had originally adopted in December 2009 and is a far cry from revenue collections four or five years ago.

"The base now is extraordinarily low," explained Jim White, executive director of the General Assembly's Fiscal Review Committee. "The state has not collected that low amount of revenue since 2005."

White told the Funding Board that since the recession started 18 months ago, revenues are down by

\$1.32 billion – a 15 percent decline.

"This decline is historic and unprecedented," said White.

Revenues for the current fiscal year continue to underperform. General fund collections were \$196 million below expectations through the first seven months of this budget year, and represents the 21st consecutive month of negative growth in sales tax collections since January 2008.

Finance Commissioner Dave Goetz reported that the state's general fund revenue could fall short by an additional \$75 million next year and tobacco taxes could be down by \$25 million, leaving state officials with the task of plugging yet another budget shortfall – this one in the neighborhood of \$100 million for FY 2010 - 2011.

"For next year, will we be working on additional set of recurring reductions to bring through the Administration's amendment," said Goetz.

Economists are forecasting between -1.77 percent and -1.29 percent total negative decline for the current fiscal year.

Looking ahead to next year, economists predict some growth when compared to the current year.

"Am I expecting a robust year?"

No. But am I expecting, for the first time in three years, to see positive revenue growth? Yes," said Bill Fox, director of the University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER).

"There are gradual increases in employment, there are gradual increases in car sales, and gradual increases in housing starts. All of which are critical for sales tax collection in Tennessee. They're not booming. If they were booming the forecast would be twice as large," MTSU Professor Albert DePrince told the Funding Board. "2011 - 2012 will be the year that we will see a brighter tone in the revenue outlook."

The Funding Board's revenue estimates are used by the administration and legislature in determining steps necessary to close the current year budget, ending June 30, 2010, and in preparing the budget for state government for the new fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010.

"We don't want to be too high; but we don't want to be too low. And the danger is just as serious either way," said State Comptroller Justice Wilson. "We haven't adjusted these numbers for the possibility of an extraordinary event – and it could happen."

House Transportation Committee to take up traffic camera legislation

BY CAROLE GRAVES

This week, the House Transportation Committee is scheduled to take up legislation filed to regulate the use of traffic enforcement cameras.

Under consideration are Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Harmon's bill, HB 3024, and an amendment produced by Rep. Phillip Johnson's working group.

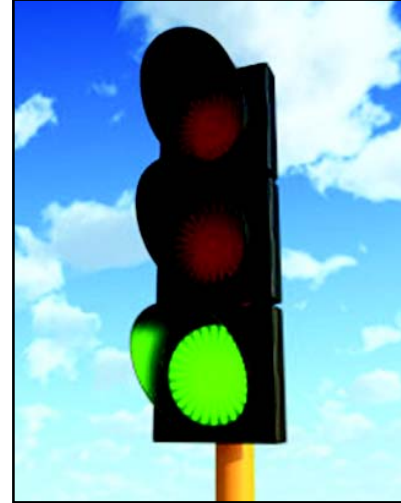
Harmon appointed Johnson to work with a group of interested stakeholders, including the Tennessee Municipal League and the Tennessee Chiefs of Police Association, to develop a set of standards for cities to follow when implementing this automated technology. Standards developed by this committee were to be submitted to the Transportation Committee for consideration, and if adopted, would be in-

corporated into Harmon's bill.

Plans to consider the working group amendment were delayed last week, however, when Chairman Harmon offered his own set of amendments to the legislation. His revisions incorporate much of the working group's amendment, but he also offered several additions to be considered.

For example, under Harmon's version, no local government may operate a traffic enforcement camera on any highway receiving state financial aid unless the contract with the private vendor is for service rendered and not based on the percentage or number of traffic citations generated by the traffic camera. Harmon's amendment also limits the term of a vendor contract to four years or less.

No action was taken last week by the committee to give members



more time to review both proposals. The bill is set to be heard on Tuesday, April 13 at 3:30 p.m.

Please see Page 6 for a summary of Chairman Harmon's proposal.

See **CAMERAS** on Page 5

Common sense approach "Let's Move" to aid cities in conquering childhood obesity

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

On a recent episode of his new hit TV show *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution*, Oliver, a celebrity chef on a mission to reintroduce healthy foods into America's schools, cleverly demonstrates to a group of school children what really goes into processed chicken nuggets, a staple at most fast food chains and school cafeterias. While he grinds poultry skin and by products such as fat, bone, even lips into a crude hash, the class breaks out into groans of disgust. However, after the concoction is breaded and formed into the familiar shapes and dunked into hot oil, an amazing phenomenon occurs. The children suddenly can't wait to eat them holding their plates out eagerly while Oliver struggles to maintain his composure.

"Let's be honest, our kids didn't do this to themselves," First Lady and childhood obesity advocate Michelle Obama explains to *Newsweek Magazine*. "Our kids don't decide what's served in the school cafeteria or whether there's time for gym class or recess. We're in charge. We make these decisions."

With more than 12 million of the nation's children and adolescents classified as obese— 37 percent in Tennessee—national rates have continued to triple among kids ages 12 to 19 since 1980.

Obese children are defined by a body-mass index at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same

age and sex.

Along with a greater risk of developing conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes, obese children may be stigmatized by society and suffer from self esteem issues and depression. According to the American Diabetes Association, if the current trends continue, nearly one in three children born in 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. In a domino effect, the disease is also linked to heart attack, stroke, blindness, amputation, and kidney disease. A chilling study concludes that obesity threatens the very future of the nation, with obese children more likely to die prematurely as adults than children who are not obese.

The First Lady has been traveling cross country in hopes of bringing elected officials, PTA's, food manufacturers, and school food service staff on board her national childhood obesity campaign "Let's Move." According to Obama, the initiative has less to do with demonizing snack and fast foods and more to do with giving parents the education and tools to keep their families



Michelle Obama has traveled cross country speaking to mayors, governors, the food industry, PTAs and school cafeteria staff in hopes of bringing them on board her national childhood obesity campaign "Let's Move."

healthy and fit on a daily basis by bringing more fruit and vegetables, and whole grains and less sugar, fat and salt into the nation's schools. The campaign also aims to help grocery stores serve communities that do not have access to fresh foods, and finding new ways for children to become more physically active in school and at home.

"We've seen the effects on how our kids feel and how they feel about themselves," Obama said. "We also know it wasn't always like this. Back when many of us were growing up, we led lives that kept most of us at a pretty healthy weight. We walked to school every day, ran around at recess and gym and for hours before dinner. We ate
See **LET'S MOVE** on Page 8

Recreation Report: Tennessee 2020 seeks to bond future generations with the land

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

People need parks and parks need people. While that statement may sound profoundly simple, facilitating a vital connection between the public and our natural resources for future generations requires partnerships, management, and a myriad of strategies from public information to green practices all found in the state's new recreational plan *Tennessee 2020 Vision for Parks, People & Landscapes*, unveiled by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC).

The report, which replaces the state's 2003-2008 plan, documents the most critical needs facing conservation and recreational infrastructure throughout the next 10 years. Mandated since 1965, these plans enable Tennessee to receive federal Land and Water Conservation funding to pay for parks and conservation projects.

Since the time when ancient

they need, regardless of where they live. The report indicates that local recreation infrastructure as it currently exists in Tennessee, contains wide disparities in the levels of recreation opportunities available to residents of the 95 counties. In the plan's survey, many citizens noted lack of time as the primary reason they couldn't exercise. Locating parks and greenways near work places and homes would provide a solution for that dilemma.

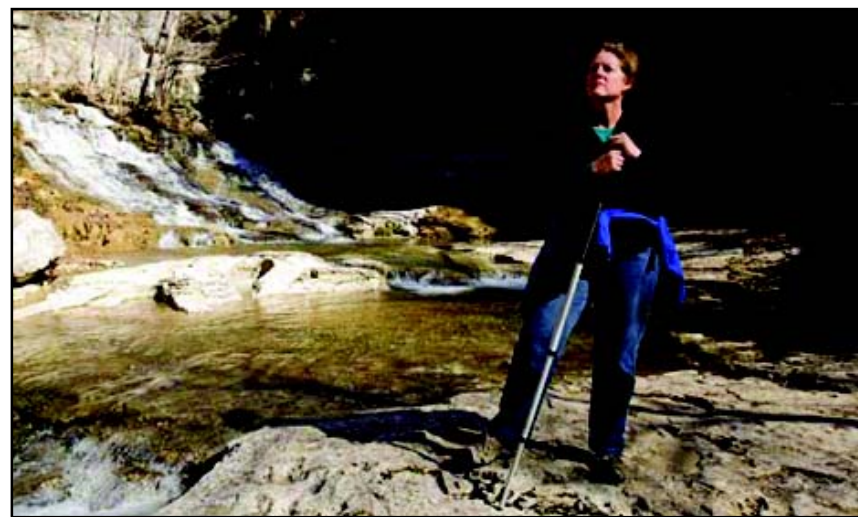
The report also finds that rural regions need help in harnessing their recreation assets for economic development. "Many of Tennessee's rural counties have lagging economies with high rates of joblessness and poverty. Yet these tend to be the same counties that are richest in recreation assets," the report says.

Recently acquired conservation lands, state forests, and wildlife management areas, are not being managed to maximize their value as resources for public recreation, according to the report. The challenge

ation planning, resource conservation, and related legislation has been cited as difficult to locate, which could hinder the public's ability to participate in important decisions.

TDEC encourages Tennesseans to become better stewards of local water quality, reminding the public that all surface waters of the state are property of the state. Natural waterways are the largest and most widely available class of publicly owned recreation resources in Tennessee. With 60,417 miles of rivers, streams, and creeks at least one within half a mile of every community, home and school, many are not fulfilling their potential for recreational use because they are not accessible to the public.

In conclusion, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, at the time of its passage in 1965, was intended to serve as the nation's primary source of funding for resource conservation and recreation. From 1965 to 2009, LWCF grants provided Tennessee a total of \$71 mil-



The state's new recreational plan *Tennessee 2020 Vision for Parks, People & Landscapes* indicates that the need for continued public investments in parks and recreation is the highest priority issue to emerge in the 2020 planning process. According to a University of Tennessee survey, the direct benefits visitors gain from their state park visits have significant economic benefits to Tennessee.

Facilitating a vital connection between the public and our natural resources for future generations requires partnerships, management, and a myriad of strategies from public information to green practices.

civilizations and early settlers roamed the hills of Tennessee, our connection with public lands has been mutually beneficial. The report indicates that the need for continued public investments in parks and recreation was the highest priority issue to emerge in the 2020 planning process.

A recent study on the Estimated Economic Impact of Tennessee State Parks by the University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture determined that economic activity generated by Tennessee State Parks has a very significant impact on the state's economy and creates thousands of jobs in many rural areas where jobs are needed most.

A survey of 1,100 state residents revealed that for every dollar the state puts toward parks, it gets some 17 times that amount back in economic impact. "They (the state) put in about \$40 to 41 million a year from the general fund into state parks. So for every dollar that the state puts in, they get \$17 back in direct expenditures," said Professor Mark Fly, of the University of Tennessee, who helped author the study.

According to the survey, the direct benefits visitors gain from their state park visits have significant economic benefits to Tennessee as well by reducing physical and mental health costs and increasing overall productivity. Additionally, Tennessee State Parks improve economic well-being by increasing the state's attractiveness to outside industries, retirees and people seeking to relocate in areas rich in natural amenities.

In light of these findings, TDEC is calling for the state legislature to enact a dedicated funding source for state parks and recreation.

In 2007, the state park system was cited as the best in the U.S. yet, according to the report, our park system faces a more complex array of management issues in the future than ever before: Aging facilities, and some that are an economic drain on the system, might need to be eliminated. Also an ever increasing need to protect parks' biodiversity from threats such as invasive pests, development that threatens park boundaries and water quality are all issues on the horizon.

In the future, to employ a streamlined and more efficient approach to strategic management, park managers will need to utilize the new technologies at hand, such as GIS mapping. The strategy also calls for a statewide network of professional parks and recreation departments that will give all Tennesseans access to the recreation

will be to utilize these resources to their fullest potential toward local economic development.

A newer challenge for parks systems, unlike previous generations, is competition from sedentary forms of entertainment. The days when children, for the large part, spent vast hours of unstructured time outdoors is nonexistent. Teenagers are turning away from nature and the outdoors in favor of television and computers, and younger children have far less unstructured outdoor play time in 2010.

"Unstructured play in nature is essential for a child's healthy physical and emotional development, and the lack of it is reflected in the rising incidence of a host of disorders in the young: ADD/ADHA, teen depression and suicide, and obesity," the report notes.

The report also indicates that Tennessee's students, tomorrow's caretakers of public lands, are not being taught enough significant information about the environment for the future task at hand. Students lack understanding of the natural world they will inherit, especially at a time of unprecedented environmental challenges. "They should be learning now what they will need as adults to make difficult decisions in the face of climate change and other environmental issues," the report says.

As part of the 2015 action plan, TDEC, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), the Department of Education and the Tennessee Environmental Education Association (TEEA) plan to form a partnership to develop a State Environmental Literacy Plan which will use Tennessee's environment as an integrating concept, provide hands-on experiential learning at outdoor classroom sites at each school's nearby streams or creeks, parks and nature centers, and use each school's local watershed as the framework for a Tennessee place-based curriculum.

With the incidence of childhood and adult obesity on the rise across the state, and diabetes rates higher in Tennessee than anywhere in the nation, exercise has taken center stage as a means to combat skyrocketing, preventable healthcare costs and to afford Tennessee's citizens a greater quality of life.

The report draws a connection between greater participation in recreational opportunities and a better public information delivery system. Information is currently fragmented in Tennessee among many different federal, state, and local agencies. Likewise, information about recre-

tion to acquire parklands and build recreation facilities in nearly every county of the state.

However, in 2000, Congress diverted LWCF funds and the amount allocated to the states declined sharply. Tennessee's annual LWCF funding, formerly in the range of \$5-\$6 million, steadily decreased in the last 10 years and is now less than \$1 million. While the goals in the plan are essential, many of the strategies are contingent upon future federal funding in addition to interagency and public-private partnerships. To view the state's recreation plan, visit <http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/plan>.

BusinessWeek names Atoka among best suburbs

By Echo Day
Covington Leader

Atoka was rated the 43rd most affordable suburb in the United States. It was the only city selected in Tennessee.

"While many of the places on this year's list are near amenities such as country clubs and golf courses, the focus is not luxury, but rather communities where families can live well for less and enjoy good schools, low crime, and reasonable commutes," Venessa Wong wrote in the *BusinessWeek* story.

"Tipton County, where Atoka is located, was ranked the third-safest rural community in the U.S. last year by *Progressive Farmer*, an agricultural and country living magazine," she said. "The town of Atoka, 11.7 miles square, has grown rapidly in recent years and remains a quiet bedroom community for families."

The designation, said Town Administrator Mark E. Johnson, is a result of hard work by the community and its leaders.

"We're happy to be recognized. This validates all of the hard work the mayor, board, department heads and county leaders have put into making this a great community," he said.

Johnson also credits the recognition to proactive residents.

Though growth has slowed in recent years, since 2000 the town has seen a 250 percent increase in population.

The numbers of retail and commercial businesses has also increased. Last year, the town's only hotel opened and recently Pizza Hut Delivery and retail establishments such as Outlaw Furniture and Amazing Threads 2 Sew have also



Atoka was rated the 43rd most affordable suburb in the United States.

recently opened.

Selected suburbs were located within 25 miles of each state's most populated city, had between 5,000 and 60,000 residents, median family incomes of \$51,000 to \$120,000 and lower-than average crime rates. Resources such as U.S. Census Bureau data, Bureau of Labor Statistics reports and FBI crime statistics were used to gather information.

BusinessWeek editors stated a variety of factors was weighted in the decision, including livability (short commutes, low pollution, green space), education (well-educated residents, high test scores), crime (low personal and property crime), economy (high job growth, low unemployment rate, high family income), and affordability (median house-hold income, cost of expenditures).

Last year, Munford was named the fourth best suburb in the country,

giving both South Tipton cities the designation.

"We think it is phenomenal that two towns in South Tipton County have received this coveted recognition," said Rosemary Bridges, president of the South Tipton County Chamber of Commerce. "We've always known that South Tipton County is great place to live and raise a family, now we have national and state-wide recognition that serves as a testament to that belief. Congratulations, Atoka."

To read more about other cities recognized by *BusinessWeek*, visit http://images.businessweek.com/ss/10/03/0302_affordable_suburbs/index.htm.

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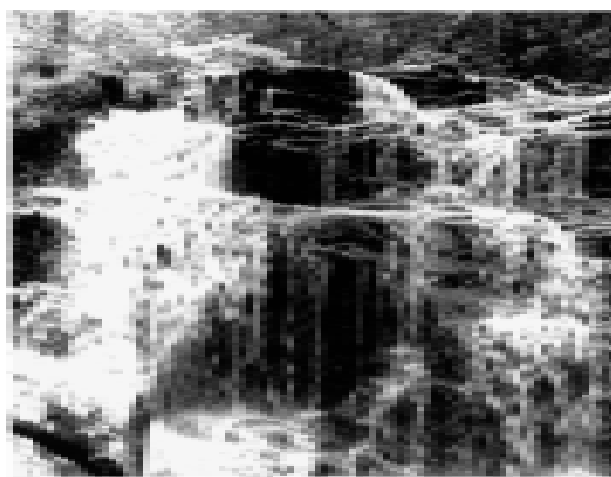
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STATE BRIEFS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

New employment statistics released by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show that Tennessee's unemployment rate has increased 88 percent in the last five years. The state's unemployment rate has grown from 5.7 percent in 2005 to 10.7 percent in 2010, according to the bureau. BLS data also shows that teens in Tennessee are having an increasingly hard time finding work. Teen unemployment in Tennessee averaged 28.5 percent in 2009; in 2005, that number was only 19.2 percent.

Tennessee kids are going to need more vaccines before school this fall. For the first time in more than a decade, the state changed its immunization requirements for school children. That means kids will get some shots earlier and will get more shots. There are four new shots to get kids into pre-K and four extra shots by kindergarten. Most pediatricians said they were already giving kids the shots on the new list. Hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Pneumococcal (meningitis, ear infections, pneumonia) and Haemophilus influenza type B are new for preschoolers. For children beginning school at kindergarten, they now need two doses of chicken pox vaccine, another two doses of hepatitis A and a final polio dose. Middle school kids now must have a Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis) booster, which is a new shot. Children will also need to provide a certificate of immunization. Because this is new, however, the state is extending the grace period until Oct. 1.

Tennessee motorists will have more information at their fingertips through the state's 511-travel system. New features include information about rest areas, public transportation, airports and tourism. Standard features such as incidents, construction projects and weather forecasts from the National Weather Service will remain in place, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation. Travelers can also access Amber Alerts, TDOT's Record-A-Comment phone line and 511 systems in neighboring states, such as Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina. The automated line launched in 2006. Residents may dial 511 from any landline phone or visit the Tennessee 511 website at www.tn511.com to access the infor-

mation before leaving home. TDOT is also on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TN511.

The National Federal of Independent Business urged Tennessee employers to get prepared for an inspection by the Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement division. NFIB noted that Homeland Security recently said it would check the hiring records of 180 businesses in Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama. The inspections target "compliance with immigration laws and regulations, including the Form I-9," according to the release. NFIB urges employers to take the "investigations very seriously" and reminds businesses that incorrect paperwork can result in fines of up \$3,200 per violation.

Tennessee construction employment has dropped by 15,400 jobs since February 2009. The state ranked No. 25 nationally as construction employment dropped 13.2 percent from 116,900 jobs in February 2009 to 101,500 jobs in February 2010. "The year over year numbers put Tennessee in the middle pack — the job losses in Tennessee have been bad, but other states have seen significantly worse declines," said Brian Turmail, senior director of public affairs for the Associated General Contractors of America. "Looking at the month over month declines, however, Tennessee fared worse than most states."

The staff of the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) will be hitting the state's highways and byways again in search of Civil War memorabilia. The materials TSLA staff members find during their travels will be copied, archived and used to create a digital exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Part of an effort to promote public interest in the 150th anniversary of the Civil War in Tennessee, TSLA is offering citizens around the state the chance to contribute to a permanent record of Civil War resources. The new initiative, called "Looking Back: The Civil War in Tennessee," will provide Tennesseans the opportunity to have their Civil War manuscripts, artifacts and photographs digitally copied and preserved for posterity without leaving their own communities. Materials collected across the state will be used to create

the virtual exhibit commemorating the war in Tennessee. Additional information on the project, including a schedule of upcoming locations and eligibility guidelines, is available at www.tn.gov/tsla/cwtn or contact Jami Awalt at (615) 245-3470 or civilwar.tsla@tn.gov.

The \$10 million Tennessee Rural Opportunity Fund, which provides loans to small businesses in rural areas, has been awarded the 2010 National Community Reinvestment Award from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council. The award recognizes financial institutions that are advancing innovative solutions to the challenges facing lower-income and distressed communities. Twenty-three banks in Tennessee are investors in the Rural Opportunity Fund. The banks, the state of Tennessee and Southeast Community Capital Corp. collaborate to provide loans to small businesses in Tennessee's rural communities. Launched in 2007 and operated by Southeast Community Capital, the fund is expected to generate \$25 million in loans and finance to more than 350 small, minority- and women-owned businesses that will create more than 600 new jobs in 10 years.

A new study says Tennessee Parks produce a massive return on state spending. Professor Mark Fly, of the University of Tennessee, helped author the study, based on a survey of 1,100 state residents. He says when it comes to funding parks, the state gets an unbelievable bang for its buck. "They put in about \$40, 41 million a year from the general fund into state parks. So for every dollar that the state puts in, they get \$17 back in direct expenditures." That totals some \$700 million in annual return. Fly says that makes parks a significant driver of employment, particularly in rural areas.

Once on the brink of extinction, bald eagles are increasing their numbers in Tennessee. According to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, 130 pairs were documented in 2009. The national symbol had nearly disappeared 30 years ago, but the species was taken off the federal list of endangered species in 2007. The agency credited the banning of DDT for saving the eagles. Now state biologists are considering removing them from the Tennessee endangered list. New nest sites are still being discovered each year, with more than 15 previously undocumented bald eagle breeding locations reported by TWRA personnel and volunteers last year alone.

Tennessee wins Race to the Top



Gov. Bredesen announces Tennessee as a Race to the Top recipient.

Tennessee has been selected to receive millions of dollars for education in the federal government's "Race to the Top" competition. The U.S. Department of Education announced Tennessee and Delaware as the competition's first round winners.

Tennessee will receive approximately \$500 million to implement its comprehensive school reform plans over the next four years. As one of the next steps in the process, the U.S. Department of Education will complete negotiations with successful states on their Race to the Top contracts to finalize award amounts.

The \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund is an unprecedented federal investment in reform. The program includes \$4 billion for state-wide reform grants and \$350 million to support states working together to improve the quality of their assessments.

The competition is designed to reward states that are leading the way in comprehensive, coherent, statewide education reform across four key areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals how to improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and

· Turning around their lowest-performing schools.

Forty states and the District of Columbia submitted applications for the first phase of grants. Delaware and Tennessee were selected from among 16 finalists who presented their proposals to panels of peer reviewers earlier this month.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, they awarded Delaware and Tennessee high marks for the commitment to reform from key stakeholders, including elected officials, teacher's union leaders, and business leaders. In both states, all school districts committed to implementing Race to the Top reforms.

Delaware and Tennessee also have aggressive plans to improve teacher and principal evaluation, use data to inform instructional decisions, and turn around their lowest-performing schools. In addition, both states have put in place strong laws and policies to support their reform efforts.

Bredesen expressed appreciation for widespread support for the state's application by the Tennessee General Assembly, Tennessee Education Association, educators and education advocates, business leaders, and the parents and families across the state that want to continue to provide better opportunities for Tennessee's children.

Tennessee's complete Race to the Top proposal can be found on the state Department of Education Web site at www.tn.gov/education.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

New federal rules aimed at boosting mileage, cutting emissions and hastening the next generation of fuel-sipping hybrids and electric cars call for a 35.5 miles-per-gallon average within six years, up nearly 10 mpg from now. By setting national standards for fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions from tailpipes, the government hopes to squeeze out more miles per gallon, whether you buy a tiny Smart for two micro car, a rugged Dodge Ram pickup truck or something in between. The rules will cost consumers an estimated \$434 extra per ve-

hicle in the 2012 model year and \$926 per vehicle by 2016, the government said. But the heads of the Transportation Department and Environmental Protection Agency said car owners will save more than \$3,000 over the lives of their vehicles through better gas mileage.

The job market is showing signs of life, though its slow recovery suggests unemployment will remain high for years to come. Employers added 162,000 jobs in March, the biggest monthly gain in three years, with one-third of the growth coming from the government's hiring of 48,000 temporary workers for the

2010 Census. Despite those gains, the jobless rate held steady at 9.7 percent as new workers entered the job market and people who had previously quit the labor force returned. The average length of unemployment rose last month to the highest point since record keeping began in 1948: more than 31 weeks. The number of workers out of work for six months or more rose sharply. The latest report, which marks the third month since November in which payrolls increased, indicates the labor market is pulling out of a deep downturn that slashed more than eight million jobs since the recession hit in late 2007.

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Summary of Traffic Enforcement Camera Legislation by Chairman Bill Harmon (HB3024)

Clarifies use of a citation (a)

- A traffic citation based on evidence from a traffic enforcement camera is a non-moving violation. The citation shall not be reported to the Department of Safety or used by any insurance provider or credit reporting agency.

Similar to the working group's amendment but mandates no vendor shall mail citation.

POST Certified Police Officer and who may send the citation (b)

- Amends current law to require a POST certified police officer to view evidence from a traffic enforcement camera and issue the citation. The citation shall be sent by the applicable law enforcement office. Any notice sent by a vendor is invalid. Deletes language relating to a second notice.

Signage requirement (c)

- Clarifies the advance signage requirement of at least 500 feet but not more than 1000 feet applies to all traffic enforcement cameras, whether at an intersection, fixed or mobile.

Similar to the working group's amendment, but changes "attempted" to "exhausted" in No. 1.

Traffic engineering study required for new traffic enforcement cameras (g(1))

- Prior to any new traffic enforcement camera, the local governing body by majority vote shall request a traffic engineering study must be conducted. The study shall:
 - 1) Assure that all reasonable engineering solutions have been exhausted
 - 2) Document the need for traffic enforcement camera
 - 3) Follow standard engineering practices as determined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
 - 4) Be stamped by a professional engineer specializing in traffic engineering licensed to practice in Tennessee
- A vendor of traffic enforcement camera systems shall not be allowed to conduct the traffic engineering study, or participate in the selection of the traffic engineer.

Same as the working group's amendment

Study requirements for new red light cameras (g(1)(A))

- At minimum the study shall include the following:
 - 1) Verification that the intersection meets signal warrants as defined in the latest edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
 - 2) Verification that the intersection meets all the requirements in the MUTCD with regard to signal layout, signing, and marking.
 - 3) Verification that the signal head displays are at least 12 inches in diameter and have back plates with yellow retro-reflective strips. The number and configuration of the signal head displays shall meet the latest edition of the MUTCD to maximize visibility of the displays.
 - 4) A crash history at the intersection must establish a rate higher than the statewide crash rate for similar intersections across the state based on at least the last 3 years of crash history.
 - 5) Angle crashes shall compose 10 percent or more of the overall crash rate at the intersection.
 - 6) Signal timing at the intersection shall be reviewed and optimized for the intersection. Yellow clearance intervals shall be calculated by standard engineering practices as outlined by the ITE. If the intersection is part of a coordinated signal system, the system timing shall be reviewed and optimized. All-red clearance intervals shall have been tried for at least 6 months without significantly reducing angle crashes prior to traffic enforcement camera implementation.
 - 7) Calculation of the violation rate of motor vehicles running the red light at the intersection, either manually or through the use of video cameras over at least a 24 hour period.
 - 8) Documentation that traditional enforcement methods are cost-prohibitive or of considerable risk to law enforcement, motorists or pedestrians.
 - 9) All documentation, including traffic engineering and traffic safety studies, shall be compiled by the governing body maintaining traffic enforcement cameras establishing the need for traffic enforcement cameras and made a public record.

Same as the working group's amendment

Study requirements for new speed cameras (g(1)(B))

- At minimum the study shall include the following:
 - 1) Verification that the current speed limit has been established by an engineering study and posted in accordance with the requirements of the MUTCD.
 - 2) Verification that all reasonable engineering solutions have been exhausted. Reasonable engineering solutions shall include, but not be limited to, speed limit signing in advance of the detection area and advanced speed reduction warning signs installed in accordance with the MUTCD, if the enforcement zone is in an area of reduced speed.
 - 3) A calculation of the violation rate for the posted speed limit. Counts of speed violations shall be done manually, through the use of video cameras or by the use of generally accepted speed monitoring equipment over at least a seven-day period.
 - 4) All regulatory, speed limit and warning signs shall meet the conventional road size or larger requirements of the MUTCD. Minimum size signing shall not be allowed.
 - 5) Documentation that traditional enforcement methods are cost-prohibitive or of considerable risk to law enforcement, motorists or pedestrians
 - 6) All documentation, including traffic engineering and traffic safety studies, shall be compiled by the governing body maintaining traffic enforcement cameras establishing the need for traffic enforcement cameras and made a public record.

New provision by Chairman Harmon

Local governing body to approve use of traffic enforcement cameras (g(2))

- After a proper traffic engineering study has been completed, the local governing body shall approve by majority vote use of traffic enforcement cameras at a new location.

New provision by Chairman Harmon

Current traffic enforcement cameras (g(3))

- On or after January 1, 2011, any traffic enforcement camera in operation shall be based on a traffic engineering study performed for the location it is used. The study shall assure that all reasonable engineering solutions have been exhausted and document the need for the camera use.

Same as the working group's amendment

Operational requirements for new and existing red light cameras (g(3)(A))

- In addition, the following operational protocols are:
 - 1) The intersection shall have a minimum one-half (0.5) second all-red clearance interval.
 - 2) To cite for right turn on red violations, signage shall be posted at the stop line with the following language "STOP HERE ON

RED" in accordance with the MUTCD. If there is no signage, no citations for right turn on red shall be issued.

3) Signage indicating the intersection is video enforced shall be placed in advance of the zone in accordance with current state law. All regulatory and warning signs relating to the intersection shall meet the conventional road size or larger requirements of the MUTCD. Minimum size signing shall not be allowed.

4) To run a red light, the target vehicle must have its front tire or tires on or before the stop line when the signal is red, and its rear tire or tires must past the stop line while the signal is red.

5) The governing body maintaining traffic enforcement cameras shall:

- Verify the intersection meets signal warrants as defined in the latest edition of the MUTCD
- Verify the intersection meets all the requirements in the MUTCD with regard to signal layout, signing and marking
- Verify signal head displays are at least 12 inches in diameter and have back plates with yellow retro-reflective strips. The number and configuration of the signal head displays shall meet the latest edition of the MUTCD to maximize visibility of the displays
- Review and optimize the signal timing for the intersection. Yellow and all-red clearance intervals shall be calculated by standard engineering practices as outlined by the ITE. If the intersection is part of a coordinated signal system, the system timing shall be reviewed and optimized.
- Evaluate the system on at least a monthly basis to ensure all traffic enforcement cameras are functioning properly, with the evaluation results made available to the public.
- Compile all documentation establishing the need for existing traffic enforcement cameras and make it public record.

Similar to working groups' amendment but with the addition of No. 5.

Operational requirements for new and existing speed cameras (g(3)(B))

- On or after January 1, 2011, the following is required:
 - 1) Verification that the current speed limit has been established by an engineering study and posted in accordance with the requirements of the MUTCD.
 - 2) Signage indicating that the location is video enforced shall be placed in advance of the zone in accordance with current state law. All regulatory and warning signs shall meet the conventional road size or larger requirements of the MUTCD. Minimum size signing shall not be allowed.
 - 3) Written documentation that all speed monitoring equipment is verified for accuracy by a qualified equipment traffic enforcement technician at least every 6 months. No employee of a vendor shall conduct or participate in the accuracy verification.
 - 4) All documentation establishing the need for existing traffic enforcement cameras is to be compiled and made a public record.
 - 5) Evaluate the system on at least a monthly basis to ensure all traffic enforcement cameras are functioning properly, with the evaluation results made available to the public.

New provision by Chairman Harmon

Contract based on services rendered (h)

- After January 1, 2010, no local government may place or operate a traffic enforcement camera on any highway receiving state financial aid unless the contract with the private vendor is for services rendered, and no payment is based on percentage or number of traffic citations generated by the traffic enforcement camera.

New provision by Chairman Harmon

Vendor contract length (i)

- Each local governing body placing or operating a traffic enforcement camera by contract with a private vendor after July 1, 2010 shall limit the terms of the contract to 4 years or less.

New provision by Chairman Harmon

State law governs contracts (j)

- A contract between a local governing body and a private vendor entered after enactment shall include language clearly stating state law governs the operation of traffic enforcement cameras.

Same as the working group's amendment

City to submit signed contract to Comptroller (k)

- The signed contract with the vendor shall be submitted the contract to the Comptroller's Office.
- The Comptroller may audit any city using traffic enforcement cameras to ensure compliance with state law governing traffic enforcement cameras.

New provision by Chairman Harmon

Locations of traffic enforcement cameras to be made available online (l)

- Each local governing body operating or placing a traffic enforcement camera shall notify the Comptroller of the locations by August 1, 2010, or within 30 days of it becoming operational. The Comptroller shall compile the location on the Comptroller's website. Each local governing body shall provide the locations on its website.

Same as the working group's amendment

Public awareness program and warning notices (m)

- Prior to issuing citations from traffic enforcement cameras at any new location, a local governing body shall commence a public awareness program, advising the public the location is implementing or expanding a traffic enforcement camera system at least 30 days prior to commencement of the program at the new location
- In addition, the local governing body shall utilizing a fixed or mobile traffic enforcement camera shall issue only warning notices for 30 days following the date the traffic enforcement camera becomes operational.

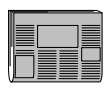
Similar to working groups' amendment but deletes language about late payments

\$50 fine only and no court costs (n)

- A violation from a traffic enforcement camera is a non-moving violation, subject to a fine not to exceed \$50, including court costs. No additional penalty or costs may be assessed. This deletes language allowing for charging court costs for second notices.

Other provisions

- If a court finds that a traffic enforcement camera is operated in violation the operational protocols, any traffic citation based solely on evidence generated from traffic enforcement cameras is invalid.
- Defines "stop line" in statute (Section 2)
- Incorporates the term "stop line" into the statutes dealing with turning right on red and turning right at a stop sign. (Sections 3 and 4)
- Clarifying language regarding right turn on red (Section 4)
- Severability clause (Section 5)
- Bill becomes effective upon passage. (Section 6)

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FINANCE DIRECTOR

BARTLETT. The city is seeking applicants for the position of Finance Director. This position is the city's authority on all aspects of financial management and requires a comprehensive understanding of city government finance. The Finance Director manages the budgeting, accounting, accounts payable, debt service management and information technology functions of government and participates in the cash management, pension, investments, and certain aspects of the payroll process and purchasing. This position requires a bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, Public Administration, or closely related field, and seven (7) years of progressive experience with a minimum of five (5) years in a senior management role, preferably in the area of governmental accounting and budgeting. Candidate must have professional certification such as Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO), Certified Governmental Financial Manager (CGFM), Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) or Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Tennessee, in active status with a minimum of five (5) years of primarily governmental experience, with at least three (3) of those years in Tennessee, in order to comply with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Officer Certification and Education Act of 2007. Salary: DOQ; comprehensive benefit package including the City of Bartlett Retirement Plan. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Submit a letter of interest, current resume with salary history and a list of at least three professional references to: Personnel Director, City of Bartlett, 6400 Stage Road, Bartlett, TN 38134. Email: pVoss@cityofbartlett.org EOE.

MTAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service is conducting a search for applicants for the MTAS Executive Director position. The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) provides consulting and training services to all incorporated cities in the State of Tennessee as part of the university's public service mission. The MTAS Executive Director is responsible for leadership of the agency including strategic planning, workforce development, stakeholder relations and private fund raising. The Executive Director must establish and maintain relationships with cities through an advisory committee and with the TN Municipal League and its affiliate organizations. The executive director is responsible for overall agency management including human resource and budget issues and performance measures. Qualifications include a master's degree in public administration, city management or a related field and a minimum of 10 years experience as a senior leader in a complex organization, preferably in a local or state government or nonprofit organization with similar work goals. Experience as a city manager and/or managing staff in remote locations a plus. Applicant must have strong oral and written communication skills, ability to lead a multi-talented, multi-disciplined municipal consulting agency, and ability to manage budget and human resources. The position will be based in Knoxville and will require extensive state-wide travel. Applicants should send a resume and cover letter detailing how the applicant's credentials meet the requirements of the position. Include information on salary expectations. Send all information to MTAS Executive Director Search Committee Chair Chuck Shoopman via email at chuck.shoopman@tennessee.edu. For more information on the position and the statewide UT Institute for Public Service, visit www.mtased.ips.tennessee.edu. The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.

ARC grants assist Tennessee cities with infrastructure improvements

Gov. Phil Bredesen announced the recommendation of 17 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grants to assist state and local agencies, governmental entities, local governing boards or nonprofit organizations with infrastructure improvements.

"I am pleased to recommend these 17 communities for grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, and I am confident these funds will contribute to a foundation for long-term economic growth in the region," Gov. Bredesen said. "Tennessee's Appalachian communities benefit greatly from the support of the ARC, and I want to thank the organization for its generous investment in our state."

The following list includes those city projects the state recommended for ARC funding. The following list includes those city projects the state recommended for ARC funding.

Beersheba Springs Fire Hall Expansion Project: \$106,880

The project will benefit all 553 residents of Beersheba Springs as well as portions of Altamont and Warren Counties, more than 2,000 people in all, by providing additional space for fire and rescue equipment and providing training for the Fire Department and Rescue Squad. Funding for the \$151,825 project will include \$44,945 in other funds.

Celina Sewer System Rehabilitation Project: \$500,000
The project will benefit all 1,379 residents of Celina by addressing the infiltration and inflow problems of the city's sewer system. Funding for the \$625,000 project will include \$125,000 in other funds.

Crossville Downtown Economic Development Project: \$317,383
The project will benefit all residents of Crossville and Cumberland County by addressing deterioration of the public infrastructure of the city's downtown area. The funding will provide storm drainage, street paving and handicap accessibility with the goal of creating a vital and attractive area for job creation and commercial development. Projections estimate that, in addition to 256 new jobs, 602 jobs will be retained. Five existing commercial properties will be renovated and five new properties will be developed. Funding for the \$1,325,250 project will include \$1,007,867 in other funds.

Huntsville Sewer System Improvement Project: \$206,952
The project will benefit 640 customers of the Huntsville Sewer System, as well as assure adequate sewer services to all residents, businesses and industries within Huntsville, by addressing inflow and infiltration deficiencies in the city's existing sewer collection system. Funding for the \$258,690 project will include \$51,738 in other funds.

Johnson City/Cold Springs Utility District Water System Improvement Project: \$500,000
The project will benefit 32 new customers of the Cold Springs Utility Districts living on Rocky Knob Road, Berry Branch Road and Wilcox Road by extending water lines to these un-served areas in Johnson County, as well as making improvements to the county's cur-

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership that works for sustainable community and economic development in Appalachia.



rent water system. Funding for the \$625,000 project will include \$125,000 in other funds.

Jonesborough Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project: \$500,000

The project will address health and safety concerns, as well as benefit residential, commercial and industrial customers, by correcting design capacity and discharge standard failures of the town's waste water treatment plant. Funding for the \$2,500,000 project will include \$2,000,000 in other funds.

Morristown Lowland Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project: \$500,000

The project will benefit 24,965 residents of the City of Morristown by improving the Lowland waste water treatment plant, and will indirectly benefit nearly 246,339 residents in the nearby counties of Jefferson, Hamblen, Greene, Grainger, Hawkins and Hancock County. The project will also serve Lowland Environmental Services, which could create 75-100 jobs in the area. Funding for the \$1,000,000 project will include \$500,000 in other funds.

Mosheim Water System Improvement Project: \$487,742

The project will benefit all residents of Mosheim, as well as Appalachian Forest Products, by correcting deficiencies in the Mosheim water system and addressing capacity issues that currently hamper the development and sustainability of commercial business in the community. Funding for the \$975,484 project will include \$487,742 in other funds.

Newport Utilities Parrottsville Area Waterline Extension Project: \$428,874

The project will benefit 33 homes within two un-served areas within Parrottsville by allowing Newport Utilities to provide potable water. The source for the area is currently private wells, which draw water from an underground aquifer that has proven in some cases to be contaminated. Funding for the \$536,093 project will include \$107,219 in other funds.

Pikeville Dura Building Rehabilitation Project: \$497,000

The project will repair and replace a portion of the roof on the former Dura automotive plant building. Pikeville has acquired the building and needs to make the necessary repairs to allow immediate occupancy. The rehabilitation will include 36,000 square feet of roof, expansion joints, piping, curbs and drains. Funding for the \$997,000 project will include \$500,000 in other funds.

Sneedville Wastewater System Rehabilitation Project \$500,000
The project will benefit 468 residential, commercial and industrial cus-

tomers by addressing inflow and infiltration deficiencies of Sneedville's waste water system. Phase III will replace lines, manholes and laterals along a tributary of Creasy Creek to reduce the infiltration and inflow flow rate to the waste water treatment plant. Funding for the \$862,588 project will include \$362,588 in other funds.

Spring City Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project: \$500,000

The project will benefit all residents of Bledsoe County and will create 400 full-time jobs and 350 construction jobs at the Bledsoe County Corrections Facility by constructing a water treatment plant expansion that will serve the facility, a major Bledsoe County employer. Funding for the \$4,490,290 project will include \$3,990,290 in other funds.

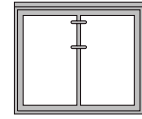
St. Joseph Water Rehabilitation Project: \$400,000

The project will benefit more than 2,000 residents in St. Joseph and the Iron City Utility District, as well as provide emergency water back up to the cities of Loretto and Green Hill, Alabama, by addressing deficiencies in the St. Joseph's municipal water system that include broken water lines, nonfunctioning flushing hydrants and inoperable water valves. Funding for the \$500,000 project will include \$100,000 in other funds.

"Sustainable economic development is always built on strategic community development, and programs like the ARC grants help to make that community development possible," ECD Commissioner Matt Kisber said. "I want to thank the Appalachian Regional Commission for their investment in this region of our state and congratulate the communities on this well-deserved assistance."

Allocation of ARC funds is based on priorities set at local levels where community needs are best known. The recommended projects will now be forwarded to Washington for review and approval. The Department of Economic and Community Development administers the ARC program in Tennessee. The program provides resources to help leverage community development and economic growth opportunities in Tennessee's Appalachian communities.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership that works with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life. The commission is a unique partnership composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a presidential appointee representing the federal government. For more information, visit www.arc.gov.

**COMING
UP**

April 14-16
Tennessee Personnel Management Association 18th Annual Conference in Memphis: *The Impact of the Economy on HR.* Holiday Inn Select Memphis East. For conference information, contact Richard Stokes at 615-532-4956 or Richard.Stokes@tennessee.edu

April 28-30
Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association Spring Quarter Meeting at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg. For more information, visit www.tnfirechiefs.com.

April 26 - 27: Grant Writing Workshop. Sponsored by The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Research and Strategic Planning Division and Grant Writing USA at the Wm. R. Snodgrass TN Tower, 3rd Floor, Media Room; 312 Eighth Avenue North in Nashville. This two-day workshop benefits both beginning and experienced grant writers from city, county and state agencies as well as nonprofits, K-12, colleges and universities are encouraged to attend. For more information and instant, online enrollment, please visit <http://grantwritingusa.com/events/write/natn0410.html>

Health Care changes

HEALTH CARE From Page 1

- nesses to purchase coverage;
- Eliminate lifetime limits and restrictive annual limits on benefits in all plans;
- Require plans to cover an enrollee's dependent children until age 26;
- Require new plans to cover preventive services and immunizations without cost-sharing;
- Ensure consumers have access to an effective internal and external appeals process to appeal new insurance plan decisions;
- Require premium rebates to enrollees from insurers with high administrative expenditures and require public disclosure of the percent of premiums applied to overhead costs.

These changes, which will take place over the next several months, will have a profound effect on city workers who benefit from health insurance plans as well as citizens. But they will go a long way to ensure that small businesses are able to purchase insurance for their workers; that most, if not all children are covered; that young people without access to health insurance will be able to remain on their parents' plans, and that no individual or family will have to declare bankruptcy because their health insurance plan stopped covering their health care costs due to annual or lifetime limits.

Over the next several months, the Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor, and the Internal Revenue Service will publish interim and final regulations governing the implementation of the health care reform law.

NLC will continue to monitor these regulations carefully.

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“Let’s Move” equipping cities to conquer childhood obesity

“I think the country is at a point where we’re ready,” —Michelle Obama

LETS MOVE from Page 1

home cooked meals that always seemed to have a vegetable on the plate. It’s clear that between the pressures of today’s economy and the breakneck pace of modern life, the well-being of our kids has too often gotten lost in the shuffle.” Unlike the 50s and 60s, when children were offered only one healthy lunch choice, — unrivaled by fried foods and vending machines — research today shows that nearly 42 percent of schools do not offer any fresh fruits or raw vegetables on a daily basis. In addition, today’s fast food offerings, a quick fix for most busy, hungry families, feature items such as 700 calorie sandwiches and 44 oz soft drinks. Under a bill pending in the Senate, schools could be preparing healthier foods under tighter national nutrition standards. The measure will also provide grants to help schools buy local produce.

With the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, the USDA will be holding a series of school nutrition events across the country in support of Let’s Move. “Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act allows us to enhance the nutritional quality of school meals and improve the overall health of our school environments,” said Kevin Concannon, under secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services.

“Let’s Move is not about trying to turn back the clock to when we were kids, or cooking five-course meals from scratch every night,” Obama stresses. “No one has time for that. And it’s not about saying no to everything either. There’s a place for cookies and ice cream, burgers and fries—that’s part of the fun of childhood. The whole goal of this initiative is to end the problem of childhood obesity in a generation,” Obama continues. “We need to change the way we view food and health forever.”

The National League of Cities (NLC) through its Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF Institute) is also working to combat childhood obesity by raising awareness among municipal leaders about actions they can take to reverse the obesity epidemic and applauds the First Lady’s efforts. “The National League of Cities (NLC) would like to commend First Lady Michelle Obama on her commitment to addressing the problem of childhood obesity in communities across the country. The First Lady’s efforts to promote nutrition and fitness will have an immensely positive effect on our nation’s communities, as well as the overall healthy and wellness of our country.” For more information on NLC’s work on childhood obesity, visit <http://www.nlc.org/IYEF/youthdevelopment/obesity/>.

In February, President Obama created the first-ever task force on Childhood Obesity, which requires government departments that have at times, been at cross purposes, to work together. However, the First Lady is quick to note that the executive order stops far short from intervening in citizens’ every day lives. “This isn’t something we can fix with a bill from Congress or an executive order from the president,” she said. “I’ve spoken with many experts about this issue, and not a single one has said that the solution to childhood obesity is to have the government tell people what to do. The role of government is to highlight and inform.”

Part of that information, according to Obama, should come from the FDA working with food manufacturers for easier to read nutrition labels on food packaging. “We don’t need a warning,” she said. “We need information that is easy to understand. Now, it’s in small print, and the chemicals— you can’t even pronounce them— and the portion sizes are hard to compare.” Changes are already on the horizon since the campaign’s inception. The American Academy of Pediatrics is urging its members to screen children for obesity, actually writing out prescriptions for parents explaining how to address their child’s health issues, and the nation’s largest beverage companies have jumped on board, agreeing to provide clearly visible information about calories on the front of their products, as well as vending machines and soda fountains.

The battle, Obama stresses, is as diverse as every community. “What works in Mississippi may not work in Arizona,” she said citing the soda tax, which is not a part of the Let’s Move initiative. “There are communities that believe that taxing sodas and other things works for them,” Obama said. “We need to look at the governors and mayors who know their communities, who understand their issues, and challenges and highlight those things that work.”

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation municipal leaders can provide healthy lifestyles by encouraging physical activity and good nutrition. Steps municipal leaders can take include:

- Forging partnerships with schools to develop school wellness plans and local wellness policies, and to build support for nutritional improvements within school and expanded access to athletic fields and recreational facilities;
- Making the most of out-of-school time by ensuring that programs offer nutritious snacks or meals and daily physical activity, as well as helping local programs access federal childhood nutrition funds;
- Promoting access to nutritious foods by attracting supermarkets to underserved neighborhoods, establishing food policy councils, and supporting farmer’s markets and community gardens;
- Utilizing parks and recreation to sponsor free or low-cost programs that encourage physical activity and serve healthy food; and
- Reshaping the physical environment to ensure safe walking and biking routes, create pedestrian-friendly zoning codes, and adopt traffic-calming measures that keep children safe while engaged in physical activity.

Tennessee’s lawmakers were given food for thought about reinstating mandatory school physical education classes as a panel of childhood obesity groups testified at the state’s capitol. Although statistics show that physical exercise improves academic performance, the surgeon general recommends at least 60 minutes a day for kids of all ages, P.E. is almost non-existent in today’s No Child Left Behind school day, which is top heavy on math and reading. Lawmakers are currently considering several bills aimed at increasing physical education in the state’s schools.

Deana Sanabria’s 4th grade class at Willow Brook Elementary in Oak Ridge is taking



Photo by Victoria South

One third of America’s children will eventually suffer from diabetes, and double that number for the African American and Hispanic communities.

healthy eating and exercise to the next level by counting calories, reading food labels and choosing healthier snacks. A state grant has funded an elliptical machine and a Wii Fit video exercise game for the classroom and the results are astounding. Not only are kids losing weight, but discipline problems are shrinking as well.

In Nashville, the only city in Tennessee awarded U.S. Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) funding, Mayor Karl Dean, Director of Health Bill Paul, M.D., and Tennessee’s Commissioner of Health Susan Cooper will be putting \$7.5 million in Public Health Stimulus Funds to work in target areas. More than \$370 million is being awarded to communities across the country to support public health efforts to reduce obesity, increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and decrease smoking. The planned community projects in Nashville funded by the grant will support bringing fresh fruits and vegetables into neighborhoods, healthy foods in schools, establishing community gardens, and increasing access to greenways and bikeways and include:

- Safe Routes to School, an initiative in partnership with Metro Public Schools;
- Share the Road, aimed at increasing awareness in addition to improving policy and signage regarding shared use of streets and roadways;
- The Golden Sneaker, a Tennessee Department of Health best practice program that builds lifelong skills for healthy living;
- Green Bikes, a prototype bike share initiative seen in many cities around the world, will enable bike riders to rent bikes for personal use at little or no cost;
- Both an Urban Garden and Corner Market initiative will be implemented through the Manna-Food Security Partners promoting healthy food, physical activity, and intergenerational activities as well as access to fresh fruits and vegetables in corner stores and neighborhood markets in so called “food deserts.”

“During the next two years, we will use this grant to increase healthy eating and active living in our community,” said Mayor Dean. The Metro Public Health Department will also receive funding to support healthier urban design that will provide safer avenues to physical activity. A city-wide group of parents and community members converged on the Nashville Farmer’s Market rallying to join the national movement of schools creating healthier environments by encouraging the implementation of the MNPS Wellness Policy, formation of healthy school teams at individual schools, and implementation of healthier school food options in cafeterias. With only 18 percent of Nashville high school students eating the daily recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, and approximately 41 percent of Tennessee’s youth at risk for overweight or obesity, families gathered to voice their concern for Tennessee students’ health, and voice their support for healthy initiatives in Nashville schools.

The CPPW funding will address improved nutrition by working to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in schools and targeted Nashville neighborhoods as well as promote increased policy, environmental, and social support for breastfeeding. The funding will create approximately 40 full-time and 40 part time jobs in Nashville, including a variety of public health professionals, community outreach workers, animal control officers, graduate assistants as well as full and part-time jobs within community organizations. Small demonstration grants will be made available to community and neighborhood groups to improve healthy eating and active living. An intensive two-year media campaign will promote healthy eating and active living, use of public transportation, walking and bicycling, Safe Routes to School as well as support one episode of the Children’s Health Crisis Series.

More information about CPPW funding and job opportunities will be posted on Nashville.gov and the Metro Public Health Department’s websites at www.health.nashville.gov. For more information about Let’s Move and tips on eating well and staying fit, visit the website LetsMove.gov.

Cumberland Culinary Center in Lebanon set for May 10 opening

In conjunction with the Pick Tennessee Products initiative



It’s going to be a little bit easier to get local farm fresh products onto the shelves of Tennessee pantries this summer. The Cumberland Culinary Center, a project of Cumberland University in Lebanon, is on target to open a new facility off Tennessee Blvd. adjacent to the vocational learning center at Lebanon High School on May 10, according to Dr. Paul C. Stumb, dean of the Cumberland University Labry School of Business & Economics. The 2,400-square-foot facility houses a commercial kitchen and storage space

Awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture through the state’s Agricultural Enhancement Program and \$100,000 in grants from the USDA, local entrepreneurs and farmers as well as students will gain invaluable experience about how to produce, promote and package products.

“Through the state’s Pick Tennessee Products (www.picktnproducts.org) initiative, the Cumberland Culinary Center will help increase Tennessee’s farm and agribusiness development income,” said Stumb. “It will create markets for Tennessee farm products and increase public understanding and appreciation for the state’s agriculture industry.”

Membership with the Cumberland Culinary Center Kitchen is open to Tennessee-based farmers, who may use the kitchen rental services for the preparation of produce for market readiness, along with specialty food producers and suppliers. Companies that rent the facilities will operate under complete supervision.

“Local farmers will find the center to be a terrific outlet for promoting locally grown produce,” said Stumb “and students will be able to learn about inventory control, purchasing and procurement, production scheduling and marketing. These are already topics we teach in the Labry School of Business & Economics, but the Cumberland Culinary Center will provide a first-rate opportunity for putting those lessons into practice through experiential learning.”

According to Sue Sykes, a local gourmet food proprietor and seasoned entrepreneur who will assist in training at the center, the school is looking at future ways to engage high school students studying culinary arts at the Wilson County Career Technical Center. “We would like for Cumberland to form a bridge in which to bring the two together,” she said.

The project has already enjoyed strong local support — garnering cash and in-kind donations from several area businesses. “This project has truly been a community-wide, team effort and we have so many people to thank,” said Stumb, who credits Sykes as an invaluable help in securing funding along with State Rep. Stratton Bone. “Aspiring entrepreneurs in the region — or existing entrepreneurs — should know that this will soon be available to them,” Stumb said. “It will be available at a very favorable rate compared to other for-profit commercial kitchens.”

For Cumberland Culinary Center membership and services information and forms, visit http://www.cumberland.edu/culinary_center/forms_resources.

Jumpstart Jackson shines in New Orleans

A recent gathering in New Orleans for the Southern Municipal Leaders Combating Childhood Obesity Leadership Academy gave Jackson a chance to shine as city officials networked to develop wellness policies alongside leaders from Alabama to West Virginia. Hosted by the National League of Cities YEF Institute in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the invitation only event gave precedence to southern cities in light of the higher prevalence of childhood obesity in the south.

In 2007, Jackson was selected as one of six pilot cities nationwide to participate in the NLC/Robert Wood Johnson Childhood Obesity Grant Program due to the city’s efforts to improve nutrition and physical activity and educating school principals and civic leaders about the impact of childhood obesity.

Now the city has become one of 10 cities selected by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as a 2010 Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and Environmental Change (ACHIEVE) community for their Jumpstart Jackson initiative and will be assisting in advancing the nation’s efforts to help prevent chronic diseases.

Jumpstart Jackson is a community coalition dedicated to improving health and fitness opportunities in the city. Jackson’s Parks and Recreation Department, a lead agency in securing the ACHIEVE designation along with the Jackson-Madison County School System, has received a \$35,000 grant toward professional development opportunities related to health education and community outreach.

These efforts include an Action Institute where community leaders can learn about effective strategies to design, implement and effect community change and to promote programming, focusing on issues such as physical fitness and obesity, nutrition, and tobacco cessation.

Sandy MacDiarmid, superintendent of



Jackson citizens join a community walk as part of the city’s focus on health initiatives.

Recreation, will serve as the ACHIEVE project manager in Jackson.

“The NLC provided us with a Roadmap for development of our local Wellness Plan,” said Jackson Mayor Jerry Gist. “The Roadmap afforded us invaluable assistance in focusing our efforts in the areas of engaging stakeholders, implementing strategies, and establishing a local coordinating body.”

The entire month of April will be chock full of Jump Start Jackson physical activities for citizens of all ages from senior olympics to kids wellness festivals to marathons and the ever popular “Walk Across Jackson.”

Jackson has also increased employee benefits and accessibility in the area of active living; with the city paying half of the membership fees for full-time employees at a health club of their choice.

But Jackson is not stopping now. According to Gist, the city has recently been selected by the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation to serve as the pilot city for a new walkability/bikeability project called “Walk with Me Tennessee.”

The continued partnership of government and school officials, local agencies and citizens in supporting health initiatives clearly indicates that healthy living is important to residents of Jackson and West Tennessee.