

## Legislative Conference March 8-9



Make plans now to attend the Tennessee Municipal League's Annual Legislative Conference, slated for March 8 - 9 at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown Nashville.

The two-day conference provides an excellent forum for city officials to interact with their legislators and to be updated on the many legislative issues currently being addressed by the 106<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly.

At the forefront of everyone's mind is the state's financial crisis and how to balance the budget amid an unprecedented time of negative revenue growth and historic-level deficits. Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, House Speaker Kent Williams, Deputy Governor John Morgan, and Finance Commissioner Dave Goetz have all been invited to address TML's membership and to provide a financial update and outlook for the coming year.

Also invited is Revenue Commissioner Regan Farr to provide an update on the changes in business tax collections, and ECD Commissioner Matt Kisber to discuss strategic state initiatives and crucial community partnerships that have resulted in major industrial investments throughout Tennessee.

City officials are also encouraged to use their time in Nashville to attend Monday evening floor sessions and to schedule time to visit with their legislators.

The voice of Tennessee's municipal governments must be heard, and the Legislative Conference is a key opportunity to communicate



Ramsey



Williams

that message.

To register on line, go to TML's website at [www.TML1.org](http://www.TML1.org). Contact the TML offices at 615-255-6416 for more information. To reserve a hotel room, contact the DoubleTree at 615-244-8200.

### Tentative Schedule

#### Monday, March 8

11 a.m. Registration  
12 noon Buffet Lunch  
1 p.m. **General Session**  
John Morgan  
David Goetz  
Regan Farr  
Matt Kisber  
4 p.m. House and Senate Floor Sessions

#### Tuesday, March 9

7:30 Breakfast  
8:00 Kent Williams  
Ron Ramsey

## UT economists report on state's fragile condition

BY CAROLE GRAVES

Describing the state's economy as still "fragile," UT's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) issued its 2010 Economic Report to the Governor.

The report projects some economic growth for 2010, but cautions that it will take "several years for the level of economic activity to return to where it stood before the recession hit."

The lack of substantial gains in the job market combined with the already unprecedented level of unemployment, will sharply limit economic growth, according to Matt Murray, director of the study.

Murray projects that the state unemployment rate will average 10.4 percent this year and will hover just above 10 percent in 2011. "This will translate into more than 300,000 unemployed people in Tennessee in 2010 and 2011 and will put sustained pressure on the state's unemployment insurance trust fund."

The number of unemployed people has nearly doubled since the

recession started in December 2007. Murray predicts that state unemployment numbers will remain "stubbornly high" for several years to come, not falling below 7 percent until 2016.

Some encouraging news comes from anticipated growth in revenue tax collections. The study predicts a modest 2.1 percent growth in taxable sales in 2010 - "a substantial improvement over the 7.6 percent loss last year."

Taxable sales were down 2.2 percent in 2008 and slipped further down in 2009 by 7.6 percent. "To illustrate the depth of the problem, taxable sales in 2009 were below the level of sales recorded in 2005. Tennessee's sales tax performed worse than the national average in the third quarter of 2009."

On a fiscal year basis, taxable sales are expected to fall 2.5 percent in the current fiscal year before recording a 3.3 percent gain in the 2010-11 fiscal year. Murray predicts that revenues will not surpass their pre-recession peak until 2012-13. See **ECONOMY** on Page 5

## Mike Tallent named to IPS leadership

MTAS Executive Director Mike Tallent will assume the role of IPS Assistant Vice President on March 1.

Tallent joined MTAS in 1979 as a municipal management consultant covering West Tennessee and Southeast Tennessee, advising cities that range in size from Englewood to Chattanooga.

After serving as MTAS interim executive director beginning December 2007, Tallent was named MTAS executive director September 2008. His knowledge of MTAS' history and development—along with years of solid relationships with Tennessee's municipalities equipped him to effectively lead MTAS staff and to anticipate the needs of cities across the state.

"Mike is a valuable member of the IPS leadership team, and it is a

natural move for him to step into the role of assistant vice president," said IPS Vice President Mary Jinks. "Having been on board here for more than 30 years, he has a solid grasp of our public service mission and is dedicated to seeing IPS and its agencies fulfill that mission."

"I am thankful for the many years I have worked for the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and the opportunity it has provided me to serve the cities of Tennessee," said Tallent. "The friendships I have experienced over the years and the part I have played in assisting cities improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations and thereby maximize the return on the taxpayer's dollar make those years with MTAS cherished years. Looking to the future, I am truly excited about the opportunities and chal-

## TBI to charge local police lab fees

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

As harsh cuts loom over next year's balanced budget, local law enforcement officials across the state find themselves contemplating a bitter pill, forensic testing fees proposed by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). At \$20 per exhibit, \$100 if DNA testing is involved, TBI estimates the fees would generate \$2.2 million annually and would preserve 30 forensic scientist' positions in the state's three crime labs located in Nashville, Knoxville and Memphis.

For fiscal year 2010-2011, the TBI is faced with two tier budget cuts at 6 and 3 percent made up of \$34 million in current service and interdepartmental funding, TBI Director Mark Gwyn testified at the state's 2009 budget hearing.

"We have chosen a path that would adversely affect the least amount of people who invest in services with the state," Gwyn said, noting that one other state, Mississippi, has a similar fee schedule.

"Right now, with the proposed cuts at 9 percent, if this fee schedule was passed, we could maintain normal operations," said Kristin Helm, TBI spokesperson. "If we make the cuts and don't get the fees, then positions will have to be eliminated."

Built into the proposal SB 2902/ HB 3537 co-sponsored by Sen. Randy McNally and Sen. Bill



To preserve 30 forensic scientist' positions, the TBI is proposing a \$20 per exhibit forensic fee for local police agencies, \$100 for DNA testing.

Ketron in the Senate and Rep. Mark Maddox in the House, police departments can recoup the fees upon conviction of the defendant. The fees will be recovered from the defendant as court costs and repaid to the submitting agency that remitted the fees to the TBI for services.

"It is up to each individual agency to bill the defendants their lab fees as court costs," said Helm.

Under the current system, defendants currently pay \$100 in court

costs for blood-alcohol and drug testing, which the TBI is proposing to increase to \$250.

However, the measure also arrives at a time when local departments are concerned about serious cuts of their own, according to Chief Greg Etheridge of the Livingston Police Department. "We are two officers down now due to budget constraints. This could cost thousands of dollars we were not planning for," See **FEES** on Page 5

## TML, TACP to draft traffic camera standards

BY CAROLE GRAVES  
TML Communications Director

Legislation filed to regulate the use of traffic safety cameras was approved last week by the House Public Safety subcommittee under the condition that interested stakeholders be included in the rule-making process.

The Tennessee Municipal League and the Tennessee Chiefs of Police Association, among others, have been asked to help draft a set of standards for regulating the use of automated traffic cameras. The group, under the leadership of Rep. Phillip Johnson, also includes representatives from the Tennessee Department of Safety, the Department of Transportation, the Tennessee Sheriff's Association, and the American Engineers Council.

The working group will have until April 1 to draft the rules and submit to Rep. Bill Harmon, chairman of the House Transportation Committee and sponsor of HB 3034, a comprehensive bill filed this legislative session to regulate the use of traffic enforcement cameras by local governments - both red light and speed cameras.

Harmon's bill is the result of recommendations made by the Transportation Study Committee, who met this past fall to discuss the future of photo law enforcement and whether it should be strictly regulated or even prohibited.

Harmon said he will hold his legislation without action in the full Transportation Committee until April 1.

"If I do not have recommendations by April 1, then I will attempt to pass every bill that has been introduced in the House this year that affects red light cameras," said Harmon. "If that doesn't put pressure on them, I don't know what does because there are bills out there that do everything from eliminating them to doing nothing at all."

Standards developed by this committee will be submitted to the full Transportation Committee for consideration.

As currently drafted, HB3024 includes the following directives:

- The Comptroller's Office must conduct a study on traffic safety cameras, reporting back to the General Assembly no later than Jan. 15, 2011;
- No local government may place or operate a traffic safety camera on any highway receiving state financial aid, unless engineering solutions for safety have been exhausted and payment to the vendor is not based on a percentage of citations;
- Contracts must be submitted to the Comptroller and the Comptroller's Office may conduct an audit for the purposes



of reviewing a contract's compliance with law;

- Traffic safety camera violations must follow a graduated scale of \$10 for the first offense; \$25 for the second; and \$50 for third and all subsequent offenses.
- Court costs will be limited to \$10 on all penalties; and
- No local or county government may enter or renew a contract with a vendor for the operation of traffic safety cameras until July 1, 2012.

"I'm disappointed that we can't pass this bill as is," said Harmon. "But there's more than just us in this House and I think this is an opportunity to be able to pass a bill after we get those regulations."

## Obama's FY 2011 budget increases city programs

BY LARRY JONES  
U.S. Conference of Mayors

The President submitted his budget request to Congress on Feb. 1, proposing significant increases for a number of city priority programs in Fiscal Year 2011.

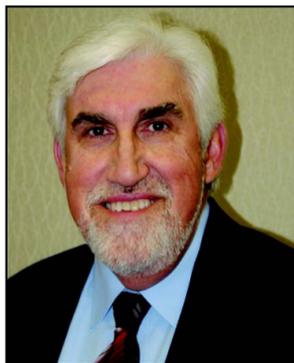
The proposal calls for: doubling Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) from \$298 million to \$600 million; adding \$110 million to the Homeland Security First Responder Programs; increasing the Choice Neighborhoods public housing program for severely distressed residents from \$65 million to \$250 million; adding an additional \$989 million to the Head Start early childhood development program; increasing Youth Training and Summer Youth Jobs by \$100 million; and increasing Homeless Assistance Grants by \$190 million. These are just a few of the many increases called for in the new budget for city priority programs.

Also Community Development Block Grants, which provide direct funds to local governments to pro-

mote community and economic development, would receive level funding at \$3.99 billion. The Byrne Justice Grants, which provide assistance to local communities to help curb violent crimes, would also be level funded at \$519 million.

Further, the President's budget includes a new \$4 billion National Infrastructure Innovation and Finance Fund to encourage investments in projects of regional or national significance. Funds would be available in the form of grants, loans or a combination of both to local and state governments on a competitive basis. Multimodal projects including highway, transit, rail, aviation, ports and maritime would be eligible for funding.

President Obama also requested \$527 million in the Department of Transportation budget for the Livable Communities program to help local and state governments make smarter investments in transportation infrastructure and leverage that investment to integrate transportation, housing, and other critical investments aimed at reducing green-



Tallent

lenges that will be afforded me in serving as Assistant Vice President for the Institute for Public Service."

Until a replacement for MTAS executive director is named, Tallent will serve dual roles.

See **OBAMA** on Page 6

# NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



## BY TML STAFF REPORTS

### ALCOA

Construction will start soon on Alcoa's new greenway pedestrian bridge over the U.S. 129 Bypass. A groundbreaking ceremony was held recently at the site of the bridge along the existing greenway trail just south of the municipal building on Associates Boulevard. The bridge will link the existing 10 miles of the city's greenway trails to the western side of the city, a portion currently with no trail access. Construction will extend the trail via new Culton Creek trails to subdivisions along Louisville Road and West Hunt Road.

### CHATTANOOGA

Chattanooga State plans to raise thousands of dollars for college programs and scholarships through partnerships with area restaurants. Hardees, Subway and Waffle House committed to donating part of their sales to Chattanooga State Community College to support adult learners. Waffle House already has given more than \$5,000 to the school's GED program after raising the money through a fundraiser that gave \$1 to Chattanooga State for every waffle sold. Hardee's is displaying tabletop cards to provide information about where to go to get a college degree.

### CLARKSVILLE

An aircraft modification company that could bring as many as 200 high-paying jobs to Clarksville has inquired about locating at Outlaw Field. In addition to 200 jobs, salaries for the company would start around \$65,000 a year. A 130,000-square-foot building with office space would be needed, and it would bring in machinery and equipment worth more than \$2 million. County Mayor Carolyn Bowers said the company would make modifications and upgrades to the aircraft facility.

### CLINTON

Auto parts supplier SL America will add 300 jobs in a \$35 million expansion at its SL Tennessee LLC plant in Clinton. The new jobs in the planned \$35 million expansion will be created by the end of 2010, according to the Department of Economic and Community Development. SL Tennessee is a parts supplier for Volkswagen,

General Motors, Hyundai and KMG. The Korean-owned Clinton facility opened in 2001. The statement said the plant builds gear shifters, parking brakes and lighting products. The announcement follows Volkswagen's decision to award SL Tennessee a contract to make automatic shifter assemblies for the new VW plant at Chattanooga and to supply VW production in Mexico.

### COLUMBIA

A plant that makes car wash sponges will shutdown later this year. The company, Mapa Spontex, will lay off 132 employees beginning in March. Spontex USA makes cleaning supplies such as rubber gloves, sponges and scouring pads. The company is now headquartered in France. The Columbia manufacturing facility is the only U.S. plant.

### DICKSON

A downtown renovation project is now full steam ahead following the awarding of a contract between the state's transportation department and the city of Dickson. Previously, the state had given the city notice to proceed after awarding \$1.2 million in enhancement grant funding, but the contract officially ensures the Tennessee Department of Transportation's participation and support for the project. Mayor Don Weiss Jr. said it was the largest amount TDOT had ever awarded. However, the \$1.2 million in state funding could be in jeopardy if it does not follow a rigid timeline. This month the state gave notice that the federal government was pulling back \$20 million in funding for Tennessee projects. TDOT is effectively canceling all grants given after October 2005 unless projects can meet certain provisions, which include delivering a "realistic schedule" that shows construction can be "delivered for authorization" by Sept. 1. Wesson said that should not be a challenge.

### DYERSBURG

City officials updated members of the Dyersburg City Board on ways the city has prepared for the upcoming 2010 Census. Dyersburg IT Director Carmen Cupples reported on steps the city has taken since January 2007, when it entered the LUCA, or Local Update Census Addresses Program. The program allowed the



Courtesy of the city of Alcoa

City officials took part in a groundbreaking ceremony recently at the site of Alcoa's new greenway pedestrian bridge over the U.S. 129 Bypass. The bridge will link the existing 10 miles of the city's greenway trails to the western side of the city.

city to supply and check streets and addresses on the census map to ensure a more accurate count. City officials have also participated in the Boundary and Annexation Program, which also helps to ensure an accurate count of areas within the city. Between March 15 and 17, residents of Dyersburg and Dyer County should be receiving a letter from the U.S. Census Bureau. "The slogan for the census is "10 Questions, 10 Minutes,"" said Cupples. "Residents who do not return the census application by April 1 will receive a visit from an employee of the census bureau."

### FRANKLIN

Citizens now have more ways than one to keep up to date on what's happening in Franklin. The city's new and innovative website www.franklincity.gov allows citizens to sign up for e-notifications on meetings, events and more. Residents can follow the city on Twitter for local traffic updates, on Facebook for the latest news and events, post favorite Franklin photos on their Flickr page and watch Franklin TV videos on YouTube. Not only is the city reaching out to citizens with social media, but the new site is easy to navigate, intuitive and very user friendly.

### FRANKLIN

Leaders have frozen the city's pension plan over growing fears the current plan risks the city's financial future. Beginning Feb. 1, no new city employees will be eligible to be included in Franklin's pension plan, which was considered among one of the best for cities its size in Middle Tennessee. The plan, which was beefed up in 2003, has meant burgeoning expenses through the years for aldermen to face. Last year, the city contributed around \$8.4 million toward the pension plan, including a

one-time \$2 million contribution to cover downswings in financial markets and the addition of eligible employees. To cope, Mayor John Schroer and city aldermen in January stopped adding new employees to the plan and set a six-month deadline to make changes to the pension plan. Officials say it's the only way they can permanently address a plan that they believe is becoming too costly to maintain. "If we don't (change it), we'll go broke. It's as simple as that," said Schroer about the pension freeze. "We'll be spending more money on pensions than on building roads, and that's just not right." Current pension plan participants will not be affected by any future changes made to the plan.

### JACKSON

For the first time in 25 years, no deaths have occurred as the result of a traffic crash in Jackson. In 2006, the year before the Jackson Police Department began utilizing technology-based systems to enforce traffic laws, 12 people were killed. In 2007 the number was reduced by half to six. In 2008 the number of people killed was cut in half again to three. Last year there were no fatalities due to traffic accidents.

### JOHNSON CITY

Washington County will be providing the school system with an additional \$1.5 million in capital outlay notes for school construction projects. The funds have removed the "maybe" factor from some very important additions, including \$700,000 for an improved security system at the high school, \$200,000 for furniture at the 8/9 campus and Career Technical Center, more than \$93,000 for energy conservation measures, and \$10,000 for attorney fees.

### KINGSTON

Kingston and Watts Bar Lake have some good news. The city and the lake will be the location of The Bass Federation's national championship in April. City officials announced the tournament at a recent city council meeting. Rick Ross, the city's parks and recreation director, said city officials sold the tournament as a comeback story on how the community is cleaning up the Dec. 22, 2008, ash spill disaster at TVA's Kingston Fossil Plant. The Bass Federation champions from each of the 50 states will converge on Kingston from April 22-24. On April 24, the tournament will whittle the field down from 50 to seven boats. The event will stream live on ESPN.com, and a two-hour feature on the tournament will play on Versus TV, formerly the Outdoor Life Network.

### KNOXVILLE

Semperian LLC, which services loans for General Motors Acceptance Corp., will close its Knoxville facility on April 5, a move that will affect some 170 employees. A spokesman for GMAC, said the move is aimed at aligning the size of the company with the current business environment in the auto industry and GMAC's existing auto portfolio. Semperian's call center is located at 2420 Cherahala Blvd. The jobs are being transferred to the company's other core locations in

Lewisville, Tex.; Little Rock, Ark.; and Jacksonville, Fla. In December, Semperian announced it would lay off 45 employees at the end of 2009, a move that was described as "part of an ongoing effort ... to reduce costs and gain efficiencies." At the time, the company said it would have about 300 employees remaining at its call center in the Pellissippi Corporate Center.

### MEMPHIS

Citing economic concerns, Riverwood, Ill.-based Discover Financial Services is closing its Memphis facility at 5305 Distriplex Farms Drive. Discover's credit card operation primarily handles cardmember and merchant statements as well print and emboss credit cards. The closure, around the end of March, will mean the loss of about 80 jobs. Affected employees will have the opportunity to apply for other positions within the company.

### NASHVILLE

Some Nashville drivers are not feeling the need to feed the downtown parking meters on Saturday. And the city has the citations to prove it. Since the parking enforcement went into effect last month in portions of downtown, Metro Public Works patrol officers have issued more than 200 tickets. Parking hours and limits on Saturday include meters in the area bordered by James Robertson Parkway, Rosa L. Parks Boulevard, Broadway and Second Avenue North. The meter's rate in these areas is \$1.50 an hour. Public Works recommended the change to encourage more turnover at meters, making street parking available to more downtown visitors and patrons.

### NASHVILLE

Students at Vanderbilt's Peabody College of Education could receive their master's degree for free if they commit to teaching in a Metro classroom once they graduate. The program aims to attract middle-school teachers for science, math and reading - areas Metro often struggles to fill. A master's degree at Peabody normally costs some \$32,000. But under the agreement the college is waiving a third of that amount for Metro. Camilla Benbow, dean of Peabody's education program, says the school recommends about 150 students for teacher certification each year, with about half going on to teach in Middle Tennessee.

### OAK RIDGE

Sitel, a Nashville-based business process outsourcing company, is looking to hire more than 150 new employees as part of an expansion of its insurance customer care facility in Oak Ridge. A leading financial company has outsourced its inbound customer support services for auto insurance to Sitel, which plans to hire licensed insurance associates, with bonuses available for Property and Casualty licensed applicants. Sitel's offices are located at 1089 Commerce Park Drive.

### TULLAHOMA

An ordinance to halt soliciting at intersections has been approved in a split vote by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The board voted 5-2 to adopt the first of two ordinance readings that will halt a practice Mayor Troy Bisby has deemed potentially dangerous and an inconvenience to motorists passing through intersections. The soliciting ban drew opposition from the American Legion Auxiliary, which primarily relies on roadway soliciting to raise funds for its annual Poppy Day drive in April to benefit war injured veterans, and the Marine Corps League, which supports a Toys for Tots Christmas gift drive to benefit needy children. The board agreed to allow a three-month period so the organizations would have time to simultaneously raise money toward their causes and seek other means to generate income.



## PEOPLE



## BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**Charles Sherrill** has assumed the position of State Librarian and Archivist. Sherrill has served as director of the Brentwood Library since 2000 and also works as an adjunct faculty member at Jackson State Community College. Prior to taking over as director of the Brentwood Library, he was the director of public services for the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

### William F. (Bill) Fox

director and professor of economics with the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee, was named one of the most influential people in the state and local tax world over the last 10 years by *State Tax Notes* magazine. His work set the standard for analyzing the effects of electronic commerce on state sales taxes. Indeed, it is among the most



Fox

widely cited work in all of state taxation. He has made tremendous scholarly contributions to the corporate tax debate as well as to discussions of business taxes in general. He has advised states and nations on tax reform and fiscal federalism issues.

U.S. Rep. **John Murtha**, a retired Marine Corps officer, has died as the result of complications from gallbladder surgery. He was 77. In 1974, Murtha became the first combat veteran of the Vietnam War elected to Congress.

House Speaker Kent Williams has appointed **Kyle Spurgeon** as a member of the board of directors of the West Tennessee Regional Megasite Authority. Spurgeon is president and chief executive officer of the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce. He has been appointed twice



Spurgeon

by Gov. Bredesen to serve on the Tennessee Board for Economic Growth and serves as chairman of the Tennessee Building and Finance Committee.

### Corporal Jeremy McLaren

28, is the first police officer in Spring Hill to die from injuries sustained while on duty. McLaren was injured when the driver of a pickup apparently ran a red light striking his vehicle. McLaren leaves behind his wife, mother and father.



McLaren

### Rep. Joe Kent

has passed away following a battle with lung disease. He was 72. Kent served 24 years as a Memphis police officer and represented parts of East Memphis and Germantown from 1978 through 2004 in the Tennessee legislature.



Kent

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# Slice of Duck River nets nature's bounty

*National Geographic measures diverse life forms in one cubic foot*

**BY VICTORIA SOUTH**  
Communications Coordinator

If you could hold a cube of one of the most biologically diverse places in the world right in your hands, what would it be? A Pacific Ocean coral reef in Polynesia? Table Mountain in South Africa? A rain forest in Costa Rica? In the magazine's quest to discover how much life could be discovered in only one cubic foot, *National Geographic* says yes to all of the above and includes a Tennessee connection—the Duck River.

In the essay "Within One Cubic Foot," by Edward O. Wilson in *National Geographic's* February issue, the Duck River is hailed as "one of the most biologically rich places in the world." On his visit to the state, photographer David Littschwager and his team of fellow biologists, corralled a tiny ecosystem consisting of 32 species of fish, seven mussel varieties, various insects, snails, crayfish and turtles into a 12-inch square metal frame where they were photographed and released.

"If all the organisms were to disappear from any of the cubic

treasure trove," agrees Leslie Colley, manager of The Nature Conservancy's Duck River Program. "It has more freshwater mussel species than any river in the Southeast and more than 150 fish species. It's a vibrant special place that we are fortunate to have in Tennessee."

The Conservancy notes that freshwater mussels that have disappeared across much of the U.S. thrive in the Duck River. Sensitive to pollution, their presence is a strong indicator of its water quality.

"The Duck River is a healthy river and with the help of our supporters, we aim to keep it that way," said Colley.

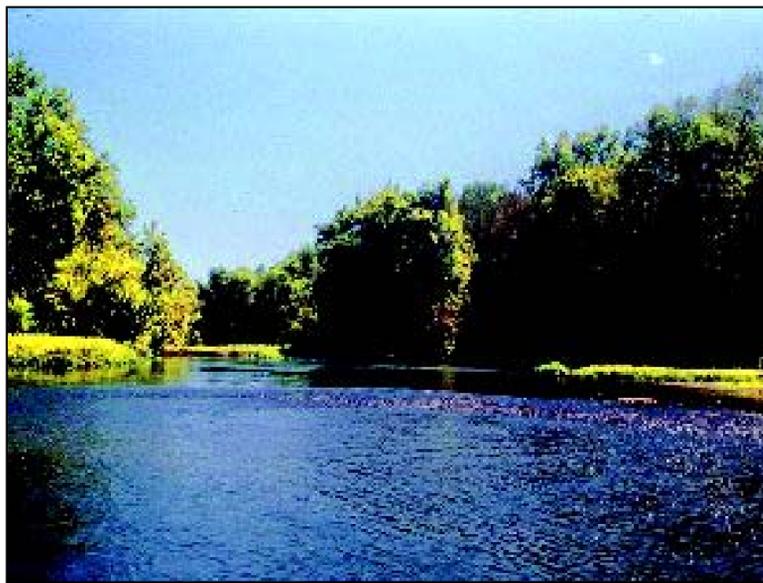
Located just 45 minutes south of Nashville, the river winds 290 miles throughout the state providing enough recreation and drinking water for more than 250,000 Tennesseans. Major towns along the Duck River include Shelbyville, Columbia, and Centerville.

Colley and other members of the Nature Conservancy have been working cooperatively with local communities for more than a decade to maintain the river's biological richness and water quality.

The conservancy in 2006 and 2007, collaborated with several agencies and local leaders to facilitate a roundtable process for local planners, developers, and decision makers across four counties and eight municipalities in the upper Duck River watershed. The resulting "Growth Readiness Report" is a how-to guide for local communities on adopting "smart growth" zoning and land-use plans that promote river-friendly development.

Having received the designation as "State Scenic River," the Duck is a vast part of the rich history of the region. Remnants of habitation along the river and its surrounding landscape date as far back as the Archaic period approximately 8,000 years ago until today.

"It's just a system that is ancient," said Colley. "It's one of the remnants of our great Southern rivers."



Duck River Photo by Leslie Colley

Located just 45 minutes south of Nashville, the Duck River winds 290 miles throughout the state providing enough recreation and drinking water for more than 250,000 Tennesseans.



According to the Nature's Conservancy, The Duck River has more freshwater mussel species than any river in the Southeast.

spaces depicted in these photographs, the environment in it would soon shift to a radical new state," Wilson writes. "Altogether, a new physical equilibrium would be approached, at which the cubic foot would resemble that on some distant, sterile planet."

"The Duck River is absolutely a

Since 2004, a federally supported Landowner Incentive program has allowed the Conservancy to bring more than \$600,000 to local landowners so that they could make environmentally friendly improvements along the river, such as cattle fencing, water stations, and creek crossings.

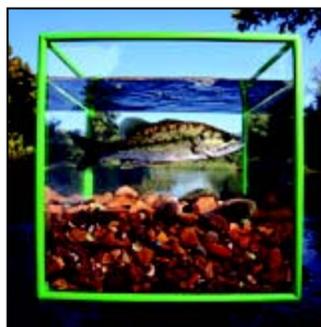


Photo by David Littschwager

### Nature Conservancy Projects

On Big Rock Creek, a major tributary to the Duck River, the conservancy has been working on a successful long-term restoration project funded with \$1.5 million of grant support from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

One highly visible component of the project has been the result of a partnership with the city of Lewisburg. The conservancy planted 1,000 native trees and shrubs along the city's creek

and greenway, stabilized the severely eroding streambank and added riffles and pools to the stream channel.

Because the water quality and health of the Duck River are very good, the conservancy is embarking on a project to relocate endangered mussel species from the Clinch River for the time being to the Duck, where mussels are thriving. Once the Clinch River can again support these mussel species, the conservancy plans to return them to the Clinch.

For more information about the Nature Conservancy, visit <http://www.nature.org/>

### The Duck River Attributes

- According to *Nature Conservancy*:
- 2 million acres—drained by the river
  - 290—miles of running river
  - 151—species of fish
  - 54—species of freshwater mussels
  - 22—species of aquatic snails

- National Geographic* finds:
- 32 fish species
  - 7 mussel species (3 endangered)
  - Several turtles
  - 100-plus non-native Asian clams



Photo by David Littschwager

For more information about the Duck River, consult these resources:

- [Averting a Water Supply Crisis while Protecting Endangered Species](#) - By Sally Palmer
- [The Duck River Watershed Annotated Bibliography](#) - compiled by Tennessee Technological University
- [The Watershed Water Quality Management Plan for the Upper Duck River Watershed](#) - compiled by the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation

To see *National Geographic's* article, "Within One Cubic Foot," visit [//ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/02/cubic-foot/wilson-text](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/02/cubic-foot/wilson-text)

## Good Risk Management is just Good Management



The TML Risk Management Pool is one of the largest providers of workers' compensation coverage in Tennessee. The Pool insures more than 40,500 of Tennessee municipal employees, including those who perform some of the most dangerous jobs like utility line workers, firefighters and law enforcement officers.

Controlling accidents through an effective loss control program is a vital foundation of the Pool's program. By each member taking responsibility to continuously reduce risk exposures through good risk management practices, municipal governments are helping taxpaying citizens get the very best for their tax dollars.



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## BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**Gov. Phil Bredesen said that he considered - but ultimately rejected - shutting the doors of state government once every other week as an alternative to laying off more than 1,000 state employees.** The governor said after a speech to the Tennessee State Employees Association that the furlough option would have idled government operations on 24 Fridays a year, and would have made up the equivalent of a 10 percent pay cut for all of state employees. Bredesen said he would rather "ask 1,000 people to find other jobs than to hit all 45,000 state employees with a salary cut of that kind of magnitude." Other options like limiting furloughs to those making more than \$80,000 would not have generated the savings needed to help address the state's budget woes, he said.

**Michael Jackson has joined Justin Timberlake in failing to meet the Tennessee Senate's standards for an honoring resolution.** The resolution honoring the late pop superstar received only seven votes in favor and six against. Measures need at least 17 votes to pass the state's upper chamber. The Senate vote on the resolution sponsored by Sen. Beverly Marrero came a week after the resolution passed the House with one vote to spare. Lawmakers there noted that Jackson was once married to Lisa Marie Presley of Memphis, so he was Elvis' son-in-law.

**Tennessee dairy farmers are hoping to get a boost from legislation that was unanimously approved by the Senate.** The measure sponsored by Sen. Mike Faulk of Kingsport passed 26-0. The companion bill overwhelmingly passed the House last year, and the two chambers must now reach an agreement before the measure goes to the governor. The legislation would establish a category of milk called "Tennessee Prime Milk," of which at least 80 percent is produced in Tennessee. Faulk says it would give Tennessee dairy farmers a "niche between organic milk, which is very expensive, and the normal milk that you find in the grocery stores." He says he wants to jump start the state's dairy industry, which has struggled.

**Tennessee's hospitals have agreed to tax themselves which would replace proposed cuts to the state's Medicaid program, TennCare.** Gov. Bredesen wants to cut TennCare by \$200 million, which is a reduction that will ultimately hit hospitals. But because the federal government matches state Medicaid funding - two to one in some instances - hospitals estimate the reduction to have a total impact of \$540 million. To compensate, the hospitals will impose as much as a 2 percent fee on their revenues. That will replace the \$200 million cut by the state so the federal funds can still be drawn down. THA president Craig Becker says hospitals are insisting that the fee be revisited in one year.

**At 455 miles in length, Tennessee is home to the longest stretch of Interstate 40 in the nation.** For the fourth straight year, the nation's truckers have also rated it the best stretch of roadway in America. In

addition, truck drivers rated Tennessee's overall roadway system third best in the country for the eleventh year in a row according to a recent survey of truck owners and operators by *Overdrive Magazine*. *Overdrive Magazine* polls more than 300 truck drivers across the nation each year asking them to rate the nation's roads and drivers, state by state. The survey includes opinions about the quality of the roads, the smoothness of the riding surface, road markings, construction detour availability and more.

**Things could soon get a lot harder for people who drink and drive. Tennessee lawmakers are trying to agree on legislation that would require DUI offenders to have a special device installed in their cars.** There are currently two bills before lawmakers, and one is much stiffer than the other. This would affect first-time, convicted DUI offenders. Under one bill, anyone arrested with a blood alcohol level of .15, who requests a restricted driver's license, would have an ignition interlock device installed on their car. Another version of the law would require a person with an alcohol level of just point .08 to get the device, regardless of the restricted license.

**The economic downturn means fewer parents can pay their court-ordered child support, and Tennessee is marking its first decline in child support collections in almost 10 years.** From July to December, the state collected about \$254 million in child support payments compared with \$267 million during the same period in 2008. In the meantime, the Department of Human Services is seeing more parents complaining about missed child support payments and asking for help collecting. The department is gearing up for its annual tax refund seizer program, hoping it will help struggling single parents who have custody of their children, but it isn't likely those collections can close the gap in a recession. Tennessee's Department of Human Services has a number of tools to collect child support from parents ordered to pay - including tracking them from job to job, garnishing wages or unemployment benefits, and seizing tax returns or lottery winnings.

**A new exhibit at the Tennessee State Museum focuses on the landmark events that helped shape the civil rights movement of the 1960s.** The exhibit, entitled *We Shall Not Be Moved: The 50th Anniversary of Tennessee's Civil Rights Sit-Ins*, continues through May 16 and is free to the public. During the 1950s and 1960s, African-Americans began mobilizing in a massive movement against segregation. Fifty years ago, a handful of Nashville college students along with religious leaders Kelly Miller Smith and James Lawson, began a sit-in campaign targeting downtown lunch counters.

**The state legislature has overridden Gov. Phil Bredesen's veto of a bill that would block local unelected boards from imposing nutritional labeling requirements on restaurants.** The override won final approval in the House of Representatives. It means that local governing

bodies could require restaurants within their jurisdiction to place nutritional information on their menus, but unelected boards, such as local health boards, would not have that authority. In 2009 the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Board of Health voted to require that chain restaurants post calorie counts on their menus. The bill was aimed at blocking that requirement. Bredesen vetoed the bill on July 1.

**Two years after a state law went into effect to penalize employers of undocumented workers, only one business has been formally charged.** Under the law, a business that hasn't taken steps to determine a worker's eligibility could lose the licenses it needs to operate until it can prove the illegal workers are gone. A company caught twice in a three-year period could lose its licenses for up to a year. But labor officials say the law doesn't provide money to add extra inspectors, who also have to investigate allegations of child labor, workplace smoking and other labor complaints.

**The Tennessee Valley Authority says its fuel costs are up due to higher demand in colder than normal temperatures and that means monthly residential bills will increase between \$2.50 and \$5.50.** TVA said the increase takes effect in billing periods that begin March 1. The upward fuel cost adjustment is the first since October 2008. The adjustment is the way TVA manages changing fuel costs and the cost of purchased power. TVA began the fiscal year Oct. 1 with an 8 percent general rate increase.

**The Tennessee Valley Authority's top executive says the cleanup of coal ash spilled into the Emory River in East Tennessee will "probably" be finished by mid-May.** Tom Kilgore told the utility's board members meeting in Bristol that he is pleased with the progress of the river cleanup. About 2.2 million cubic yards of coal ash have been removed from the river, about 70 percent of the ash spilled into the water in December 2008. The EPA expanded the area that is closed from zero-mile marker to the 6-mile marker. About 5.4 million cubic yards of coal ash laced with arsenic and potentially toxic substances spilled out of a holding pond at the Kingston TVA plant. The ash removed from the river is being taken to a solid waste landfill in Alabama.

**The Tennessee Department of Transportation expects to propose a plan to allow lone drivers to pay to use the car pool lane.** Currently, lone drivers can be ticketed for using the lane. TDOT says they want to convert those violators into legal users. The department is looking at whether a so-called "HOT" lane or High Occupancy Toll lane is feasible for Interstate 65 south of Nashville. Ed Cole, chief of environment and planning for TDOT, says such "HOT" lanes could help manage traffic by allowing maximum use of all lanes. "Basically a motorist or a truck driver pays a price and is guaranteed access and speed, legal speed, on that HOT lane." Buses, motorcycles, and vehicles with more than one person would still be allowed to use the "HOT" lane for free. The transportation department is studying if the state could afford the change. Lawmakers questioned how the department would collect fees and control use on such a toll lane.



Photo courtesy of The Tennessean

A new exhibit at the Tennessee State Museum focuses on the landmark events in that helped shape the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The exhibit, entitled *We Shall Not Be Moved: The 50th Anniversary of Tennessee's Civil Rights Sit-Ins*, continues through May 16.

## Holiday sales disappointing

Tennessee sales tax collections continue to be a concern for the state's general fund. Negative growth in sales tax collections continued in January, with overall January revenues coming in at \$947.4 million, which is \$16.1 million less than the state budgeted.

"January is the 20th consecutive month in which sales taxes have recorded negative growth," Finance Commissioner Dave Goetz said. "January collections represent December holiday sales, which brought reports of positive growth at the national level, so it's very disappointing that we didn't have a similar experience in Tennessee."

"Despite the severe national recession, the state will continue to monitor spending in order to end the fiscal year with a balanced budget as required by the state's constitution," Goetz said.

On an accrual basis, January is the sixth month in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

The general fund was under collected by \$5.2 million and the four other funds were under collected by \$10.9 million.

Sales tax collections were \$20.4 million less than the estimate for January. The January growth rate was negative 1.86 percent. For six months revenues are under collected by \$159.0 million. The year-to-date growth rate for six months was negative 5.72 percent.

Franchise and excise taxes combined were \$11.3 million above the budgeted estimate of \$128.5 million. For six months revenues are over collected by \$5.2 million.

Gasoline and motor fuel collections for January increased by 5.77 percent but were \$4.2 million below

the budgeted estimate of \$71.2 million. For six months revenues are under collected by \$14.1 million.

Tobacco tax collections were \$451,000 above the budgeted estimate of \$21.9 million, and for six months they are \$4.3 million over the budgeted estimate. Inheritance and estate taxes were over collected by \$1.8 million for the month.

All other taxes were under collected by a net of \$5.1 million.

Year-to-date collections for six months were \$185.1 million less than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was under collected by \$152.3 million and the four other funds were under collected by \$32.8 million.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2009-2010 are based on the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation adopted by the first session of the 106th General Assembly in May 2009, and are available on the state's website at [www.tn.gov/finance/bud/budget.html](http://www.tn.gov/finance/bud/budget.html).

The State Funding Board met again on Dec. 18, 2009, and adopted revised revenue ranges for 2009-2010. The revised ranges reflect growth rates ranging from -1.50 percent to -0.25 percent in total taxes, and -2.35 percent to -0.85 percent in general fund taxes.

Based on the funding board's consensus recommendation, the official budgeted estimates for 2009-2010 were revised in late December. The revised estimates are reflected on pages A-70 and A-72 in the 2010-2011 Budget Document. The revised estimates assume an under collection in total taxes in the amount of \$161.3 million, and an under collection of \$153.2 million in the general fund.

### Tennessee Municipal League Board to meet March 8

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Municipal League will meet in regular public session on Monday, March 8, 2010 at 10 a.m. in the Tennessee Ballroom (lobby level) of the DoubleTree Hotel, 315 4th Avenue North, Nashville, TN., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said board. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Monday, March 1 at the offices of the Tennessee Municipal League, 226 Capitol Blvd., Suite 710, Nashville. Additional information concerning the above may be obtained from Mona Lawrence at 615-255-6416.

### Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund Board of Directors to meet

Notice is hereby given that the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund Board of Directors will meet in regular public session on Monday, March 8, 2010, at 8:30 a.m., local time, in the Vanderbilt Room (lobby level) of the DoubleTree Hotel, 315 Fourth Avenue North, Nashville, TN., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said board. Some members of the board may participate in such meeting by telephonic means, which will be audible to any member of the public attending such meeting. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Monday, March 1, at the offices of TMBF, 226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 502, in Nashville. Additional information concerning the above may be obtained from Lisa Shelby at 615-255-1561.

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**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

**LAFOLLETTE.** The city is seeking qualified applicants to fill the position of City Administrator. This person will serve as the administrative head of the city government and oversee day to day operations. The city administrator is responsible for supervising all department heads, including the police, fire, parks & recreation, animal control, streets and sanitation, codes enforcement, as well as all administrative employees. Minimum qualifications include an undergraduate degree and training in business or municipal management or public administration. A masters degree is preferred. The mayor and council desire a person with skills in budgeting and financial management. The applicant should also have good people skills as well as good oral and writing communication skills. The applicant should have experience and knowledge in the application for and administration of state and federal grants and have the ability to deal with personnel, public safety and long range planning. The city of LaFollette offers an excellent benefit package. Salary for this position is negotiable. Resumes will be accepted no later than 2:00 pm on Monday, March 1, 2010 and should be marked: City Administrator, City of LaFollette, 207 South Tennessee Avenue, LaFollette, Tennessee 37766.

**FIRE CHIEF**

**COLUMBIA.** The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Fire Chief. Salary range: \$57,242-\$87,963. Requirements include Bachelor's degree in Business or Public Administration, Master's degree preferred. Extensive experience in Fire Service command level positions required. Completion of the National Fire Academy Executive Development program or a similar state academy program preferred. Experience in a collective bargaining environment a plus. Physical examination and drug screening will be required prior to employment. Submit resume with salary requirements and list of references to: Personnel Director, City of Columbia, 707 N. Main St., Columbia, Tenn. 38401; [kcollier@columbiatn.com](mailto:kcollier@columbiatn.com). Resumes accepted until March 1, 2010. Visit our website at [www.columbiatn.com](http://www.columbiatn.com). Additional information may be obtained by telephone at 931-560-1570. EOE

**HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR**

**MURFREESBORO.** The city is seeking applicants for the position of Human Resource Director. Salary range - \$5,560.66 - \$6,811.84 monthly DOQ&E; Bachelor's degree (Master's preferred) in Human Resources, Business or Public Administration and 5 to 7 years of executive level human resources management experience (or related) required; or, any combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this position. Administers and oversees personnel benefits, including retirement, FMLA, Disability, ADA, and Drug and Alcohol Testing for compliance for over 1,000 employees. Responsible for all payrolls pursuant to FLSA. Must submit resume, cover letter, professional references, and application by Friday, Feb. 25, 2010. Phone 615-848-2553, TDD 615-849-2689. FAX 615-904-6506, between 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday 02/08/10 to Friday02/12/10 [www.murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov); EEO/AAP

# Local police departments debate TBI lab fees

FEES from Page 1

he said. "We had one hundred DUI's last year alone. A \$100 cost billed to a defendant can be like getting blood out of a turnip."

"We have found with certain cases like DUI, they do pay," Gwyn said, adding that the state convicted roughly 13,000 individuals for DUI last year.

"The fees will raise millions in revenue for the TBI," said Sen. Ketron. "And the cost will be passed on to the defendants. If the bill were changed and passed on to locals, I would have to tell Sen. McNally I wouldn't be able to support it. My constituents tell me loud and clear, do not send unfunded mandates."

"It's optional," said Sen. McNally. "It's not mandatory, but is just like any equipment cities purchase, they can shop around." McNally notes the increased cost of the test also covers the appearance of an expert witness, a TBI agent to testify at the defendant's trial.

"I presented it to the sheriffs and police chiefs and got very little push back," said Gwyn. "I think they understand that no matter what, it's a bargain." Gwyn said that independent lab fees are considerably more expensive, double the suggested TBI fees schedule. "And the outside labs are going to charge you every time one of their scientists comes to testify, travel and all that," he said.

Currently no cap has been written into the bill for smaller, poorer counties, according to Rep. Maddox. "That's a good idea, though," he said. "And for a lot of convicted criminals, the increased court costs would be something else to hold over their heads."

According to Gwyn, the TBI performed a survey on small agencies, medium size and large agencies to gage the effects of forensic fees upon local governments. "The smaller agencies are probably talking \$1,015 a year," Gwyn said. "Medium, about \$5,000 - 6,000 a year."

For local police departments, the TBI and the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (TACP), the loss of 30 forensic scientists would deliver a crushing blow at a time when local police departments are becoming increasingly dependant upon forensic evidence to solve cases.

Last year, the state's forensic services division performed 270,000 forensic tests on 83,000 pieces of evidence.

"From our standpoint, it is the lesser of two evils with only three

crime labs," said Maggi Duncan, TACP executive director.

"There was once a huge backlog in DNA test results," Duncan said. "We just got through all of that a few years ago and it's better now."

According to the U.S. Attorney General's DNA Initiative, one of the biggest problems facing the criminal justice system today is the substantial backlog of unanalyzed DNA samples and biological evidence from crime scenes. The DNA Initiative lists two state and local backlog components:

1. Casework sample backlogs consisting of DNA samples obtained from crime scenes, victims and suspects in criminal cases;
2. Convicted offender backlogs consisting of DNA samples obtained from convicted offenders who are incarcerated or under supervision.

"If I have to send 25 scientists home in order to not bottleneck the system, we would be better off to cut out a discipline, such as toxicology or drug testing. That would force them to outsource to a private laboratory, which I believe is going to be far more expensive than a \$20 fee for drug tests," said Gwyn.

"The big question is why does the TBI need to charge?" said Oak Ridge Police Chief David Beems. "In 2009, the TBI took a 15 percent cut. They gave up their overtime, training money, drug buy money, basically all their operational money. They lost their \$5 million reserve fund and 22 people took a voluntary buyout. Now they're being asked to take a 9 percent cut."

"This puts officers' jobs on the line, Beems continues. "I've been in this business for 40 years and am vice president of the TACP. The TBI are taking unfair budget hits that are putting them out of business. Then all the police departments across the state will be affected. We would have to go to outside labs that will cost thousands of dollars and may have credibility issues. Fair cuts are not always equal cuts. I'd rather see the grass a little higher in a median or a park closed or something else then do something that will affect public safety. We have to set priorities."

Presently, there is nowhere in the statute that requires TBI to do DNA testing, according to Duncan. "We understand that TBI is between a rock and a hard place," she said. "They've thought of everything they can and this is their best alternative to keep forensic scientists." According to Duncan, one positive is that



McNally



Ketron



Maddox

testing fees do not apply when TBI takes an active part in an investigation.

"It's unfortunate they have to charge, but law enforcement officials can't afford for forensic scientists to be laid off," said Joe Garner, Union City police chief. "There are lots of people depending upon testing for justice to be served."

"We are lobbying to ship the fees back onto the defendants," said Millersville Police Chief Ronnie Williams. "Usually first time offenders will pay up. We understand Director Gwyn has got to do it and we all have to pitch in. If they don't have these test results ready for trial, it will just become a domino effect."

Most local agencies agree they will think twice about what samples are submitted for testing.

"I'm proud of our local police chiefs," said Duncan. "They are taking their time to figure out the best way to get through this."

"Forensics is the most expensive thing we do," Gwyn concedes.

"Just the 15 percent cuts last year has affected our investigational ability. We're not investigating things a year or two ago we were investigating."

## Typical TBI Forensic Services Turn Around Times January 2010

Laboratory	Unit	Turnaround Time (in weeks)
Nashville	Blood Alcohol	1
	Drug Chemistry	4
	Firearms	26
	Latent Prints	57
	Microanalysis	32
Knoxville	Blood Alcohol	2
	Drug Chemistry	3
	Serology/DNA	8
	Toxicology	6
	Memphis	Blood Alcohol
Drug Chemistry		4
Firearms		15
Serology/DNA		9
Toxicology		8

# UT economists report on state's fragile condition

ECONOMY from Page 1

fiscal year. The report also focused on Tennessee's auto industry's woes, citing the recent closures of Saturn and Peterbilt production facilities and the 43,000 jobs lost in 2009 in the transportation equipment sector.

However, the report noted that Nissan will build its new zero-emissions car in Rutherford County, and Volkswagen is building a new manufacturing facility in Hamilton County. "Despite some growing pains, Tennessee has successfully moved from a small player in the transportation equipment sector to a major player in the national arena."

Murray predicted that there will be rapid changes in the auto industry, saying that it will "continue to shift away from a narrow focus on low costs to value added and value creation."

The UT report also notes that the federal stimulus package has helped to stabilize the economy. Increased federal spending will add 1.3 percentage points to growth in the gross domestic product in 2010. Plus, the stimulus package has allowed states to stave off aggressive actions, including debilitating budget cuts, raised taxes and depletion of rainy day funds.

But the report also raises questions about how the states will be able to respond when stimulus funds are exhausted next year.

Figure 2.11 evaluates the size and duration of the budget shortfalls during the recession of the first part of the decade to the shortfalls of the current recession. According to the UT Center for Business and Economic Research (2009), total tax collections in Tennessee declined by \$44.4 million, or a 5.5 percent nominal decrease, from Dec. 2008 to Dec. 2009. However, from Dec. 2007 to Dec. 2009 tax revenues fell 13.4 percent.

Figure 2.3. Unemployment Rates on the Rise (December 2009 Unemployment Rate)

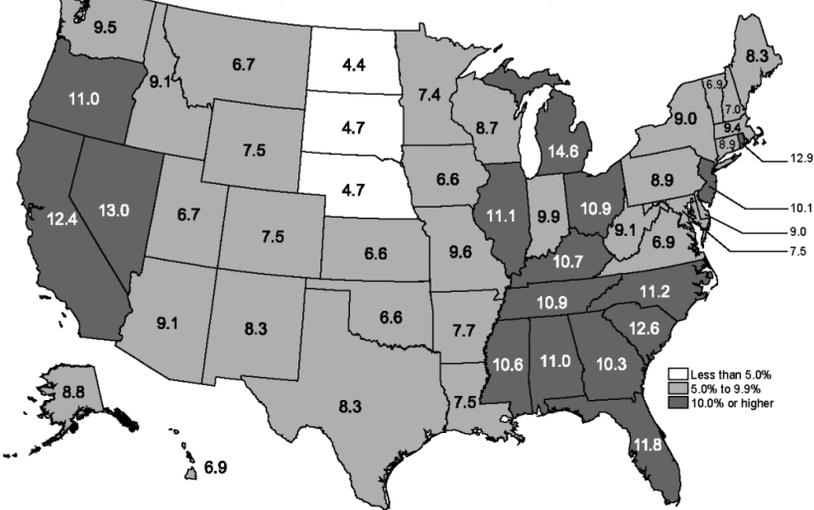
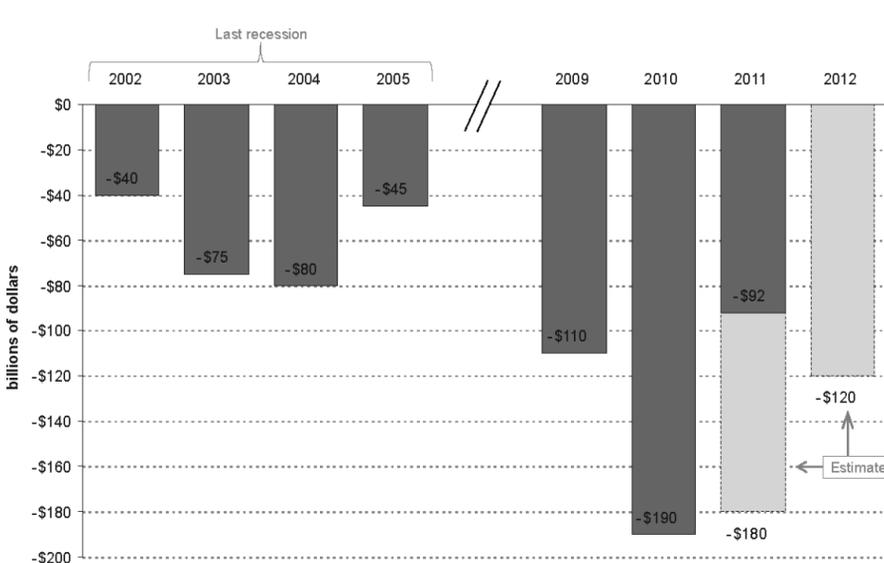


Figure 2.11. How Bad Will it Get? (Total State Budget Shortfall in Each Fiscal Year, in billions)



Every state in the country has experienced a rising unemployment rate since the beginning of the recession. Figure 2.3 illustrates the situation in Dec. 2009. North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska enjoyed the lowest unemployment rates. Sixteen states had unemployment rates in excess of 10 percent for the month, led by Michigan at 14.6 percent. Twenty-three states have seen their unemployment rates double compared to Dec. 2007. Tennessee's 10.9 percent unemployment rate was up 105.7 percent over the 5.3 percent rate that prevailed in Dec. 2007.

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Maynardville closed a \$2.5 million loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) for sewer line construction. Seated are: Gina Singletary, city recorder, and Mayor Paul Bowman. Standing are: Joe Muscatello, TMBF representative, and Jack Rhyne, city manager.

## Environment and Conservation seeks environmental achievers

*Nominations are open for Governor's 2010 Environmental Stewardship Awards*

The Department of Environment and Conservation is inviting Tennesseans to submit nominations for the Governor's 2010 Environmental Stewardship Awards. The awards recognize Tennesseans who go above and beyond to protect the state's diverse environment.

"The continued health of our communities is tantamount to the quality and safety of our environment, affecting our lives from the air we breathe to the health of our state's streams and rivers," said Gov. Phil Bredesen. "Recognizing those committed to protecting and preserving Tennessee is a worthwhile effort, not only to honor these individuals and organizations for their outstanding work but to encourage others to follow their example."

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; Solid Waste Reduction; Lifetime Achievement; Natural Heritage Conservation; Parks and Recreation; and Pollution Prevention.

Any individual, business, organization, educational institution or agency is eligible, provided it is located in Tennessee and its projects were completed during the 2009 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. **The deadline for nominations is March 31.** Award recipients will be announced in May 2010.

For more information, visit the website at [www.tn.gov/environment/awards](http://www.tn.gov/environment/awards).

## Public meetings set to review Solid Waste rule changes

The Tennessee Solid Waste Disposal Control Board (SWDCB) voted to continue its consideration of the changes to the solid waste rules proposed by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and amended following a public hearing held on Sept. 1, 2009.

These rule changes will be considered further during a special SWDCB meeting to be scheduled in late March.

Meanwhile, in an effort to assure that everyone understands these proposed revisions, the following meetings have been scheduled to provide an opportunity for interested parties to address questions they may still have concerning these changes:

- **Jackson**-Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2010, 10:00-1:00 (CST), Environmental Field Office, 1625 Hollywood Drive, Jackson
- **Nashville**- Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2010, 1:00-4:00 (CST) L & C Tower, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room-B, 401 Church St., Nashville
- **Knoxville**-Thursday, Feb. 25, 2010, 10:30-1:30 (EST), Environmental Field Office, 3711 Middlebrook Pk., Knoxville

Questions or comments concerning these meetings should be directed to Bob Knight at (615) 532-0082 or [bob.knight@tn.gov](mailto:bob.knight@tn.gov). Contact Denise Paige, TML government relations, at [dpaige@tml1.org](mailto:dpaige@tml1.org) with any concerns about the proposal. For a copy of the proposed language change, go to the "What's Happening" section of TML's website at [www.tml1.org](http://www.tml1.org).

## Obama's FY 2011 budget increases city programs

**OBAMA** from Page 1  
house gases, improving mobility and transportation access to economic opportunity, and improving housing choices.

On the downside, no funds are included for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EEBCG), which is authorized to be funded at \$2 billion annually.

### Budget Highlights for Tennessee:

- Extend for another year the broadest tax cut in American history – the Making Work Pay Tax Credit – for 110 million American families, including 2.3 million families in Tennessee.
- \$1.1 billion for Tennessee to develop better teachers and classrooms to meet 21st century challenges – part of a record level of funding for the nation's schools to foster educational excellence,

improve student achievement, and reward successful outcomes to prepare our nation's children for global competitiveness.

- Raise the maximum Pell award to \$5,710, and increase the funding available to Tennessee students to \$685.5 million. This will help more than 170,700 students in the state to afford college.
- \$5.5 billion for Tennessee to provide health coverage to low-income children and families.
- \$951.9 million for construction and improvements to roads, highways, and airports throughout Tennessee.
- \$42.5 million to modernize and expand clean, safe drinking water across Tennessee.
- \$415.5 million for housing assistance.

## MTAS welcomes new staff members

**Stephanie Allen** has joined the MTAS staff in the Knoxville office as a legal consultant in codification effective Jan. 1, 2010.

Allen graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a bachelor's in business administration. While pursuing her undergraduate degree, she interned with the U.S. Congress and Philip Morris USA. She received her Doctor of Jurisprudence and Master of Business Administration from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. While in law school, Allen interned with Oak Ridge National Labs; Retired Judge James Beckner, Third Judicial District Criminal Court; Chancellor Telford Forgety, Jr., Fourth Judicial District; Judge Benjamin Strand, Jefferson County General Sessions; as well as several law firms.

Prior to joining MTAS as a legal consultant, Allen served as a judicial clerk to Justice Sharon Lee on the Tennessee Supreme Court and Tennessee Court of Appeals.

In her spare time, Allen enjoys volunteering with charities and many outdoor activities, including snow skiing, hiking, wakeboarding, and dragon boating.

Allen may be contacted at 865-974-0411.

**Dana Deem** has joined the MTAS staff in the Knoxville office as a municipal management consultant effective Jan. 1, 2010.

Deem has worked in local government in Tennessee for 14 years and has served as the city recorder for McKenzie and as the city manager for Clifton. Deem has earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering Technology from



Allen



Deem

Southern Illinois University and a Master of Science in Operations Management from the University of Arkansas.

Deem served 21 years in the United States Air Force with overseas tours in the Philippines and Germany.

He and his wife Tan-Gee have three children, Holly, Jennifer and James, and two grandchildren, Taylor and Kylie.

Deem may be contacted at [dana.deem@tennessee.edu](mailto:dana.deem@tennessee.edu) or 865-974-9855.

**P.J. Snodgrass** has joined the MTAS staff in November as a training consultant.

Snodgrass is no stranger to MTAS. She has been a very valuable member of the Municipal Management Academy faculty for a couple of years.

She comes to MTAS from the University of Tennessee Information Technology Department, her most recent assignment being assistant director of the IT Business Of-



Snodgrass

Snodgrass earned a Bachelor of Science degree in applied organizational management from Tusculum College and a Master of Science degree in human ecology and a PhD in human resource development from the University of Tennessee. *Re-printed with permission from MTAS Municipal E-News.*

## Emergency Communication board to disburse millions to local 911 districts

The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board has begun disbursing what will be almost \$10 million annually in additional funding to local emergency communications districts (ECDs) for dispatcher training and 911 operations. Tennessee's 100 ECDs provide or facilitate local 911 services across the state.

Funds for the new disbursements come largely from the board's successful effort to end certain subsidies that were paid to wireless carriers through its cost recovery program. Approximately \$7.6 million of these funds have now been redirected to ECDs.

"Redirecting these funds will assist ECDs in addressing the challenge of declining revenue from local 911 fees," said TECB Executive Director Lynn Questell. "Our data tell us the time to act is now. We're pleased that this program will allow us to provide needed funding at this time."

The cost recovery program was created after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandated that wireless carriers receive funding for the costs of providing Phases I and II Enhanced 911 ser-

vice.

In 1999, the FCC rescinded that mandate, but because Tennessee's focus was to ensure that expansion of Phase II wireless service, particularly in the state's rural areas, continued without interruption, cost recovery was continued.

As a result, Phase II Enhanced 911 service, which includes caller location information, is now available in all areas of Tennessee with wireless service.

In 2009, the Board conducted surveys of 911 funding and held hearings on the economic status of the ECDs across the state, which pointed to the need for additional revenue to sustain the life-saving work of the ECDs.

After considering these findings and a recommendation from the board's Policy Advisory Committee, the board members unanimously voted to revise its funding priorities by diverting all but 5 percent of the cost recovery funds to the ECDs.

The board also recently disbursed more than \$2.2 million to the ECDs for dispatcher training, converting a pilot project established last year into a recurring funding



program. Tennessee law requires all dispatchers who receive initial or transferred 911 calls from the public to receive continuing education.

"Tennessee is one of the few states that provide funding for dispatcher training," notes TECB Chairman Randy Porter. "This is a tremendous benefit to local communities and helps enhance the safety of all our citizens." Distribution of the dispatcher training funds began in January 2010.

The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board is administratively attached to the Department of Commerce and Insurance, which works to protect consumers while ensuring fair competition for industries and professionals who do business in Tennessee. [www.tn.gov/commerce/](http://www.tn.gov/commerce/)

## Municipal Administration Program March Schedule

### RESIDENTIAL CODES

The class will cover a wide variety of changes that will occur when the implementation of the "Tennessee Clean Energy Act of 2009 goes into effect July 1, 2010.

This class will cover three major points: the new statewide energy code; one and two-family dwellings that are now covered by codes; and how cities can enforce these codes and what options does a city have in enforcement.

### Who Should Attend?

City managers, fire department officials, building inspectors, planning directors, codes officials, and any other municipal official who is responsible for the compliance with International Residence Code and the Tennessee Clean Energy future Act of 2009.

### Instructor:

Ray Crouch  
Fire Management Consultant

### Time

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

### Dates and Locations

March 3: Jackson  
March 4: Lakeland  
March 9: Johnson City  
March 10: Collegedale  
March 11: Smyrna  
March 17: Knoxville

### Training Facilities

**Jackson**, West Tennessee Center for Agricultural Research, Extension & Public Service, 605 Airways Blvd.  
**Lakeland**, International Harvester Club House, 4523 Canada Road  
**Johnson City**, Johnson City Municipal Building, 601 East Main Street  
**Collegedale**, Collegedale City Hall, 4910 Swinyar Drive  
**Smyrna**, Town Center, 100 Sam Ridley Parkway East  
**Knoxville** University of Tennessee Conference Center, 600 Henley Street

To register for this municipal administration program class, please visit the MTAS website at [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu) or contact Elaine Morrisey at [Elaine.morrisey@tennessee.edu](mailto:Elaine.morrisey@tennessee.edu) or 865.974.0411. Fees are \$25 per person per class for municipal employees and \$55 per person per class for all other participants. Submit payment with your registration. MTAS will need to receive payment in order to confirm your attendance for the class. MTAS can no longer accept payments/registration at the door.

Directions to the facility will be included in an e-mail message within two days of the event. Directions are also available at [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu).

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# An era of opportunity for cities, regions?

BY NEAL PEIRCE

Washington Post Writers Group

For America's cities and regions, this seems the worst of times. But take a look at their partnership with the federal government. It's a rapid turn for the better.

Check virtually any local budget and the dark side slams you in the face. Tax receipts are taking a deep dive while cities' needs, from sheltering the homeless to employees' health coverage to rising pension costs, are on the upswing. With slow recovery in jobs and property values, mayors and county officials will have a tortuously tough job well into this decade.

But check the Obama administration's fiscal 2011 budget, together with companion moves the White House is making to coordinate federal assistance to cities and metro regions. There's a silver lining to these "worst" times.

One example: The budget asks Congress to approve \$1 billion for the new National Housing Trust Fund — a key way for communities to fill the yawning shortage of affordable housing for their lowest-income residents.

Plus, the administration is asking for an extra \$85 million to finance 10,000 added housing vouchers. In a break from many recent years, it has requested 100 percent of the actual operating costs for public housing. A consolidated \$350 million rental housing initiative would, it is claimed, preserve 300,000 otherwise threatened assisted housing units. Community Development Block Grants would be funded at close to \$4 billion. And the administration is asking Congress to make permanent its Build America bonds program, designed to cut cities' costs for infrastructure projects.

Compared to the cities-come-last budget decisions of the George W. Bush years, the contrast is vivid. But there are two added, potentially decisive innovations in the Obama urban approach.

First, there is the Obama crew's

steps to work around the "silos" of separate federal departments to make aid revenue streams for communities work in mutually reinforcing ways.

The radical idea of closely collaborating agencies emerged last June with an unprecedented agreement by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Transportation, plus the Environmental Protection Agency. Their "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" aims to embrace better quality and energy-efficient housing, access to adequate public transit, good jobs, quality schools, safe streets and environmental protections — regardless of which department is technically responsible. The goal is to have the federal government "speak with one voice" in its field operations.

The partner agencies are now moving forward on this agenda. HUD, for example, has a new Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, guided by Deputy Secretary Ron Sims, who learned the ropes of metro-area coordination as King County, Wash., executive, and directed by Shelley Poticha, former president of the policy group Reconnecting America.

Add in President Obama's pitch for \$1.8 billion worth of speeded-up federally supported "New Starts" for local transit lines, plus more than \$10 billion for high-speed rail that would invigorate many metro areas' economies, plus the Transportation Department's \$1.5 billion "TIGER" grants for innovative local projects, and one sees a belated but crucial 21st-century city- and neighborhood building policy coming into focus.

It even reaches the Agriculture and Health and Human Services Departments — Obama seeks \$400 million to fight the twin scourges of obesity and joblessness in poor communities through a Healthy Food Financing Initiative. Fresh, more nutritious foods would be delivered to inner-city "food deserts" by helping new farmers markets take root

and constructing new supermarkets. This administration seems to truly believe that investing smartly in troubled neighborhoods can dramatically increase life prospects — especially for poor children.

Case in point: The new budget designates \$250 million for a "Choice Neighborhoods" program to link housing to school reform and supportive social services. And perhaps most exciting of all, a "Promise Neighborhoods" initiative (\$210 million). Its goal: to bring the innovative, proven, multipronged "cradle to college" strategies of the Harlem Children's Zone into communities nationwide, breaking barriers by working with parents and their children, right after birth, and providing kids with smartly conceived, ongoing, personalized support.

The idea is complex: It requires collaboration of city halls, corporations, community foundations, neighborhood centers, schools, health clinics, religious bodies and human service agencies. But it is possibly the best formula yet invented to break the bitter cycle of intergenerational poverty that so easily ruins personal lives, so often fills prison cells, and cumulatively acts as a dead weight on our entire society.

Mayors seem to appreciate the administration's outreach, underscored by officials' frequent field tours. They see serious intent to strengthen communities, to help them develop sustainable strategies to make us a more equitable and healthy society. It's serious stuff, and could eventually equal the post-World War II GI Bill in expanding our middle class and building our collective national strengths.

But might it all wither in re-primations over taxes, deficits or a tea party-style political backlash? Will today's silver lining tarnish and disappear? This is the profound danger.

*The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the Tennessee Municipal League.*



## TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

**February 20: Greenville**

*Antique Appraisal Fair & Show*  
Fair offers local and regional antique dealers showcasing and selling treasures and six certified appraisers assessing the value of antiques brought in by the public. For more information, contact Tammy Kinser at 423-638-4111 or e-mail [tkinser@greencop.com](mailto:tkinser@greencop.com) or visit [www.visitgreenevillett.com](http://www.visitgreenevillett.com).

**Feb. 28: Farragut**

*Folklife Museum Black History Month Open House*  
Held from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Farragut Town Hall. A special presentation at 3 p.m. focuses on the integration of Farragut High School (FHS) featuring a commissioned painting by local artist Alan M. Jones in honor of nine African-American students attending FHS in 1965. Exhibits, museum tours and light refreshments. A special presentation at 3 p.m. by Mayor McGill and members of the Farragut Folklife Museum Committee for the surviving members of the "Farragut Nine."

**March 8: Monteagle**

*Taste of the Mountain Food Fair*  
Held at the National Guard Armory. Everything from possum to pate" is the slogan of the event. Sponsored and promoted by the Monteagle Mountain Chamber of Commerce, this fair capitalizes on the unique qualities that characterize Monteagle. Restaurants, caterers, bakeries and other food providers will provide sample-size portions of their specialties to fairgoers who purchase "taste" tickets. A variety of live music is featured. For more information, call 931-924-5353 or visit [www.monteaglechamber.com](http://www.monteaglechamber.com)

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## NATIONAL BRIEFS

**BY TML STAFF REPORTS**

**The Obama Administration announced plans to boost the use of biofuels, including more ethanol from corn, and speed up work on a plan to capture carbon dioxide from coal, now the biggest source of global warming pollution.** The White House declared that the moves were part of a plan to decrease dependence on foreign oil and create a clean-energy economy that will support many new jobs. Officials said the new moves were based on sound scientific research that now gives a green light for coal-based electricity and corn-based fuel. President Obama told a bipartisan group of governors, including Gov. Phil Bredesen, that he was following a "non-ideological approach" to energy that included clean energy and efficiency but also

offshore drilling for oil and gas, new nuclear power plants and new technology that would allow for continued use of coal without emissions of heat-trapping gases.

**The nation's unemployment rate unexpectedly fell below double digits in January for the first time since September, to 9.7 percent.** As the pace of job losses continued to drop, employers gave more hours to many workers, and manufacturing payrolls grew for the first time in three years. But the encouraging signs, reported by the Labor Department, were tempered by newly revised data that showed the country lost a staggering 8.4 million jobs in the past two years — about four times the net job losses in the deep recessionary period of the early 1980s and 1.2 million more than previously estimated. The severe destruction of jobs since December

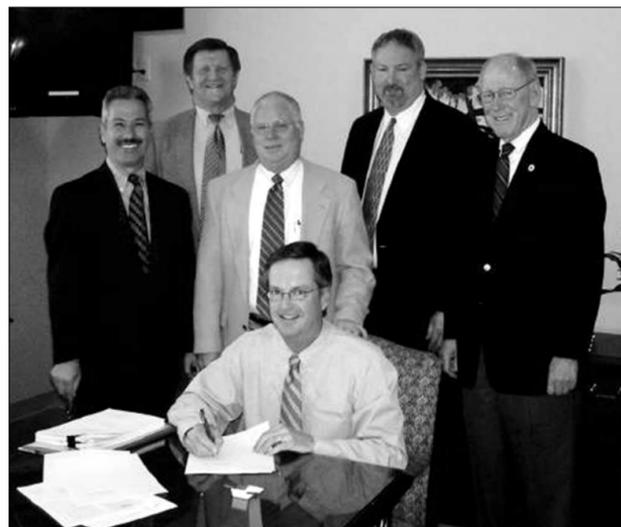
2007, when the latest recession officially began, means that it will take years for millions of distressed families, and the economy as a whole, to climb back from what is now being called the great recession.

**The number of U.S. households facing foreclosure in January increased 15 percent from the same month last year, and a surge in cash-strapped homeowners who've fallen behind on mortgages could be on the way.** More than 315,000 households received a foreclosure-related notice in January, according to RealtyTrac Inc. That number is down nearly 10 percent from 349,000 in December, which saw the third-highest total since the company began tracking foreclosure data in 2005. January marked the 11th straight month with more than 300,000 properties receiving a foreclosure filing.



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The city of Murfreesboro closes a \$103 million loan, the largest in TMBF history.



The town of Nolensville closes a \$21,000 loan.

# Comptroller Justin P. Wilson embodies success in several topflight careers

BY GAEL STAHL

Justin P. Wilson is the rare bird that has been everywhere, seen everything, and done well wherever his energy and high spirits take him. That's not always the first impression one gets of him, but it's a lasting one. You notice he's a genial, low key, big-easy, easing along kind of guy quietly humorous, terse, letting the hearer work for details about himself or family. While that's rewarding it can test one's chances of finding the details that reveal the mass and measure of the man behind the likable person. What emerges is a very detailed mind with wide abilities. For example, when pushed to explain his language proficiencies you learn he was fluent in Italian while studying in Italy and that he can conduct an interview in German if necessary.

But ask him about how he as state comptroller helps and oversees local citizens and their officials, he becomes eager, informative, and, at times, deadly serious about what local citizens and officials can accomplish if given the tools and revenue to do their jobs and know they must account for all funds they receive. He knows because he has spent more than his share of time over the last 35 years as member and chair of many local civic service agencies and utilities.

Wilson's grandfather is his only ancestor that held elective office. He was the state senator who cast the deciding vote on March 19, 1953, to provide free textbooks to school children.

Wilson's father, Pat, was in the insurance business and his mother a homemaker. Pat was stationed at the Oakland Naval Base and had just finished a tour of duty in the Solomon Islands (Guadalcanal) when Wilson was born. Four months later, the family returned to Nashville where they raised four sons in west Nashville, six miles from the Comptroller's office in the state Capitol.

As a child, Wilson had grandiose dreams becoming the king of Spain, or maybe a fireman.

He attended and graduated from Woodberry Forest School, a preparatory school. He also played on the soccer, football and track teams that won state private school championships but calls himself no star, 'just an almost good athlete.'

He earned an A.B. degree with Advanced Standing at Stanford University in 1967, and while there, spent a year of study in European history at the University of Florence in Italy. He received his J.D. degree from Vanderbilt University Law School in 1970 and practiced law in New York where he earned an L.L.M. degree in taxation in 1974 from New York University, considered the best tax school in the country.

He has taught business law at the state university in Belarus (the country between Poland and Russia) and has been an adjunct professor of law at Vanderbilt University.

In 1974, Wilson returned to Nashville to practice law for 30 years. He became a leader in civic and community organizations, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (1996-1997), and Gov. Don Sundquist's deputy governor for policy (1997-2003).

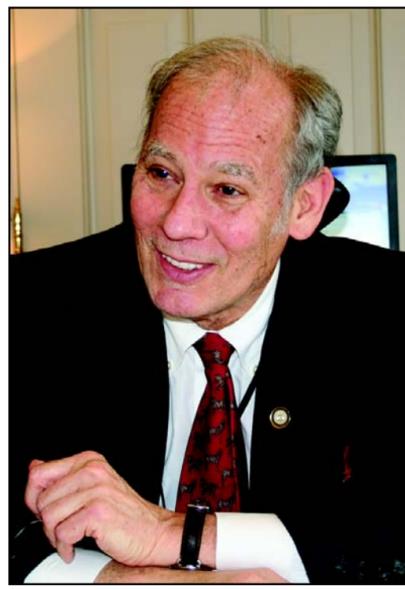
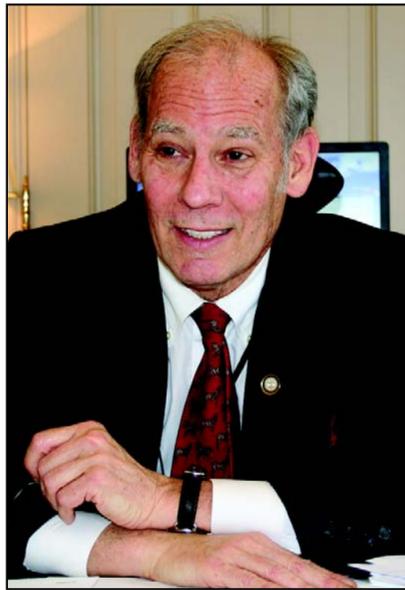
After returning to his law firm for six years, he was elected in January 2009 Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury. That state office's 600 employees maintain the state's closest relationship with municipalities. Wilson says he inherited a good clean department from Mr. William Snodgrass (1955-1999) and John Morgan (1999-2009). To some extent, it is the national standard.

Wilson's involvements in Metro Nashville/Davidson County government include serving as chairman of the Nashville Power Board and chairman of Davidson County Metropolitan Health Board, and of the Community Health Agency of Nashville and Davidson County. He was foreman of a Davidson County Grand Jury, president of Blair School of Music, member of the executive committee of Meharry Medical College and of the Watkins Institute, and a member of several bar associations. He was named the Tennessee Conservationist of the Year in 1997. Upon being elected comptroller, he resigned from all boards except the Financial Advisory Board of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Wilson almost ended up in a lifelong federal judiciary career in 1993 rather than in state government service starting in 1996. In March 1992, President George H. W. Bush nominated him to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Current Chief Supreme Court Justice John Roberts was another nominee. Despite some joking about which of them would wind up on the Supreme Court, neither was confirmed after Bush lost to Democrat Clinton in November.

Ironically, Wilson may be remembered more in the future not for anything he did but for something done for him. No one was more surprised than he was when, in 2002, Gov. Sundquist named Tennessee's 54th and newest state park the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park in recognition of his conservation and environmental contributions. The 300-mile trail and adjoining wilderness land starts at the Virginia/Kentucky/Tennessee border, crosses Tennessee and ends atop Signal Mountain overlooking the Alabama/Georgia border.

Wilson's wife Barbara Engelhardt is from Essen, Germany, near Düsseldorf. She earned her medical degree in Germany and was doing a fellowship at Vanderbilt Medical School when she met Wilson. They married in 1985



Photos by Carole Graves

"I believe city officials are very serious about protecting public funds and having good honest government. That's what state and local government is all about."

and have two sons, Walter and Wesley. Wilson also has two sons from a previous marriage, Justin Jr. and Whitney.

**TT&C: Why did you go to New York to practice law?**

**JW:** To get what I thought was the unbelievable salary of \$15,000 from Wall Street. I realized I did not have the background in taxation that some of the younger lawyers had, so I went to school at NYU at night and by happenstance ended up getting a degree in taxation. I never intended to become a tax lawyer.

**TT&C: Before you entered state government as deputy governor, you mostly chaired the metropolitan services you served on?**

**JW:** The Metropolitan Health Board was probably the primary one. That was when Gov. Bredesen was mayor. That was a challenge, so when I came to the governor's office, it was thought I would be more involved in health care than I was. After I left as deputy governor, I was chairman of NES, which provides public power for Davidson County. I don't think much of joining organizations unless you're going to be active in them.

**TT&C: Did you intend to make state government a career?**

**JW:** I became commissioner of Environment and Conservation understanding that my career in state government would last nine months. I was holding a place until Sen. Milton Hamilton could become commissioner. On the day I intended to go back to practice law, the governor suggested I continue to work for him as deputy governor and chief policy advisor. I did that for six years.

Deputy governor is fascinating because you have no authority except to the extent that the governor gives you responsibilities he wants you to have. I was assigned to deal with tricky questions – all tax policies, environmental and energy issues, relations with the federal government, and welfare reform. Leonard Bradley was responsible for devising the Families First program before I got there. Bradley had moved on, so I dealt with the amazing variety of issues that came up with Families First. During the last couple of years, the revenue wars were the major focus. Governor Sundquist kept me busy writing four or five alternative complex tax reform bills especially during the hectic legislative session of 2002 when government services shut down.

**TT&C: As such, what are your priority concerns for local governments?**

**JW:** The stimulus funds. The Recovery Act was enacted about a month after I became comptroller. It is a major, if not the major focus of this office right now. That is where we are directing a lot of resources. I would like to remind everyone particularly our friends in local government that we're talking about your citizens' tax dollars.

That's what's at stake. You and we have a responsibility to properly account for these funds, to let our citizens know how they're spent. There are extensive reporting requirements. Each local government that receives this money has a direct responsibility to report to the Office of TN Recovery Act Management (TRAM). I cannot emphasize that enough. If you want further information about this, you can check the TRAM website or the website [www.tnrecovery.gov](http://www.tnrecovery.gov)

**TT&C: Is your oversight of stimulus funds different from other local revenues?**

**JW:** We have overall responsibility to report fraud, and waste, and abuse of all public funds including recovery funds. One way that is done is by calling our hotline: 1-800-232-5454. It's anonymous if you want it to be. If you call, be very, very specific with information because simply saying that there is something out there doesn't really help us do our job. We're very serious and I believe city officials are very serious about protecting public funds and having good honest government. That's what state and local government is all about.

**TT&C: Have these funds arrived?**

**JW:** A lot of money has come; money is on the way; some of it is obligated; some of it's not. I encourage each of our local governments to be on the look out for it and take advantage of it because if you don't ask for it, someone else will. Your citizens are paying the taxes for it in any case. Going to [www.tnrecovery.gov](http://www.tnrecovery.gov) would probably be the best place to go if you're looking for money. If you ask for it the worst that can happen is to be told no. So ask. It costs very little to pick up the phone. State government is here to serve you. Sometimes people in state government forget that, and I don't want them to. First, get all the money you're entitled to and secondly, properly report it. Local officials should check with TRAM to be sure that they're following the directives of the state.

**TT&C: What's with the new Comptroller's Office online listing of revenue and expenditure information for Tennessee counties? Did you start that?**

**JW:** Oh, yes. We are putting online a breakdown of the budgets and expenditures of all the counties, where the money comes from and where it goes. You can break it down and see where your money comes from – such as grants, or tax dollars or revenue sharing – and see where it goes including salaries. I firmly believe that citizens should have this information readily available if they choose to have it. Just click on: [www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/TAG/](http://www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/TAG/) on the Comptroller's website.

**TT&C: Is your primary responsibility to be the state's money cop?**

**JW:** That's putting it in basic terms, and it's what we do. We focus on our investigative and audit activities because we believe that good government is responsive and responsible government. The best way to have good government is to be vigilant. We are out there looking



In 2002, Gov. Sundquist named Tennessee's 54th and newest state park the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park in recognition of his conservation and environmental contributions.

for fraud and waste and abuse and hope that by doing so the amount of fraud and waste and abuse will decrease. We work with prosecutors to get indictments and convictions. We can be proud of a substantial majority of our local officials. But, there are some we can't be so proud and we are dealing with those. I'm pleased with the overall quality of level of honesty and responsiveness of our local officials.

**TT&C: Why did you send out a draft of principles for reform of local government debt management?**

**JW:** Some local governments have entered into financial transactions that they didn't fully understand. Some of it hasn't worked out as well as they wanted them to work out. We're working to establish four basic principles outlining the responsibilities of the local governments.

The first is for local officials to understand what they're doing when borrowing money. If they need help doing that; that's fine. There are professionals out there who can help the officials understand what they're doing.

The second is to make this information available to the citizens. There is no better disinfectant than a good dose of sunlight. So, the second principle is making information readily available to the public.

The third principle is to have the professionals hired to do the deals working for the local governments and not for anybody else. Sounds pretty basic, but I've found several cases where that is not the case.

The fourth principle is to disclose what is being paid and to whom – what the fees are. When somebody is getting paid, it should be clear to all concerned.

I think these principles are pretty well self-evident. Many local governments carry out these principles; some do not. One of the ideas we came up with is the Model Debt Policy. We put out a first draft about this and requested comment from local officials.

**TT&C: What kind of comment did you get?**

**JW:** They pointed out a lot of problems and I'm glad they did. One of the recurring comments was that the model policy was "one size fits all." We moved away from that idea and put the responsibility where it belongs – on the local governments – in deciding the specifics of their debt management policies.

We will address the problems identified in our first draft and may very well, after getting a second round of comment, recommend a model debt policy for our cities and counties to the Funding Board. That's who adopts it, not the Comptroller's Office. The Funding Board's members are the state comptroller, the secretary of state, and the state treasurer plus the commissioner of Finance and Administration, and the governor.

Frankly, there are all kinds of ways to implement the underlying premises of those four principles: understanding what you're doing, when you borrow money, telling your citizens what you're doing, making sure the people who work for you work for you and nobody else, and making all fees public information. Within a broad range, local governments are probably better able to determine how to implement these principles than either the Funding Board or I are in determining that for them.

**TT&C: Does your office provide technical assistance to local governments?**

**JW:** Absolutely. I view that as a major role of the Comptroller's Office. One thing that is purely technical assistance but terribly important for cities, particularly now, is in regard to the population maps and all those things that go into redistricting at the local level. 'One man one vote' doesn't apply just to U.S. congressional and state legislative districts but also to county commissions and city council districts.

It's complicated. We don't draw the maps; we don't make the political decisions as to where the lines are drawn. We do have the technical assistance and the information you need to determine the blocks, the landmarks, to get all the stuff loaded right. It's a lot of work and includes maintenance and distribution of property parcel maps. We're the resource for that for both state and city government. The decennial census is around the corner and each and every city will have to deal with that. We're here to help you and get to you the technical information to make these decisions.

**TT&C: As a career lawyer, what interested you in this job as comptroller?**

**JW:** I don't know. I don't think that on election day Nov. 2, 2008, it ever occurred to me that the Republicans would have a constitutional majority. When they did receive a constitutional majority on Nov. 3, running for comptroller looked like a real challenge – I'm 65 years old and not a spring chicken – as an appropriate way to see what I could really do as far as public service is concerned. Within a day or two I decided to take a shot at it. On the Republican side, I was unopposed.

**TT&C: Describe your first year.**

**JW:** It's been challenging, to say the very least. As a practical matter, if you consider Mr. Snodgrass and his chief deputy John Morgan as a continuation, I'm only the second comptroller in 55 years. You have all those changes, the meltdown of the debt market and the stimulus package of the Recovery Act that was enacted literally a month after I was elected, it's been a busy year. That's what makes it fun.