

# TENNESSEE Town & City

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## Local planning transition funding available to cities

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development has announced the agency is now accepting applications for transition funding from the 212 communities for whom ECD formerly provided local planning services.

Gov. Bill Haslam included \$1 million for the transition in his 2011-2012 budget and each community applying for grant funds will receive an equal amount. Grant applications will be e-mailed directly to each of the client communities and applicants will have until Sept. 1, 2011, to return the form. Applications will also be available on the agency's web site at [www.tn.gov/ecd](http://www.tn.gov/ecd).

Only communities with contracts for local planning services with ECD during the 2010-2011 fiscal year and who received a notice of contract termination from ECD will be eligible to apply for the grants. The applicant community must be willing to match the grant with funding equal to their 2011 Local Planning Assistance service fee for the transition

and must guarantee the funds will be used for services from a qualified planning professional.

ECD announced it would end local planning services for communities in April as part of a reorganization of the department. As part of the reorganization, ECD announced it would temporarily maintain a staff of planning professionals to assist local communities in obtaining planning services through a private firm, a local development district or through other options. If the community has signed an agreement with a development district to provide planning services, the development district may apply for the transition grant, but will be required to provide proof of a contract or service agreement in order to qualify.

Communities with questions about the grant program may contact the following ECD staff: [dan.hawk@tn.gov](mailto:dan.hawk@tn.gov) (Statewide Director); [sheryl.ely@tn.gov](mailto:sheryl.ely@tn.gov) (Knoxville); [david.pechin@tn.gov](mailto:david.pechin@tn.gov) (Jackson); [art.brown@tn.gov](mailto:art.brown@tn.gov) (Nashville); and [steven.bias@tn.gov](mailto:steven.bias@tn.gov) (Cookeville).

## Legislature passes law to change use of traffic enforcement cameras

BY JOSH JONES  
*MTAS Legal Consultant*

Municipal authority to own, install and operate traffic surveillance cameras was hotly contested during the 2011 Tennessee General Assembly. Throughout the course of the session, no less than a score of bills were introduced diminishing, some completely removing, the ability of a city to employ an effective method of accident prevention at intersections. The one bill to emerge from the discussions and eventually pass was Public Chapter No. 425 (HB1500/SB1684) that makes significant changes to the traffic enforcement camera landscape.

Foremost among these changes is the requirement that a municipality conduct a traffic engineering study prior to the installation of a new unmanned traffic enforcement camera. Such a study must be completed in accordance with the standard engineering practices of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and certified by a licensed engineer specializing in traffic engineering. A traffic camera vendor is prohibited from conducting the study or even participating in the selection of the engineer.

Also present in the legislation are the hurdles it places on municipalities to ticket vehicles turning right (and left onto a one-way) at red lights. Now to ticket a vehicle, solely using unmanned camera evidence, for failure to come to a complete

stop before turning at a red light, the evidence must clearly show the vehicle with a front tire before the stop line when the signal is red and subsequently show the same vehicle with a rear tire past the stop line while the signal is red. Furthermore, to ticket a vehicle, using solely unmanned camera evidence, for making an unlawful right turn on red, a clearly marked "No Turn on Red" sign must be in place.

With respect to speed cameras, the legislation prohibits any unmanned camera within one mile of a reduction of the speed limit of 10 or more miles per hour. This provision does not however apply to reductions in and around school zones. All cameras, whether monitoring for speed or other violations, must now be preceded by signage 500 to 1,000 feet in advance.

The bill also changes the procedures for noticing and fining alleged violators. Now a POST-certified officer must review the evidence, and if a violation is determined, a notice of such must be sent to the alleged violator within 20 days of the occurrence of violation. This notice must state the amount of the fine, which cannot exceed \$50, and also state any additional fees or costs that could result from a failure to pay or from being found guilty after contesting the violation. Viola-



Changes to the traffic enforcement camera law requires that municipalities must conduct an engineering study prior to installations of new camera.

tors still have 30 days from the mailing date to pay a citation. Now, however, additional fines and costs can be assessed after this period lapses.

Despite the fact that these provisions will impact current contracts, it seems clear that all provisions of the bill will be enforceable on and after the July 1, 2011, effective date.

Should you have any questions, contact your MTAS management consultant.

## For states, federal debt deal is short on details

BY JOHN GRAMLICH  
and MELISSA MAYNARD  
*Stateline Staff Writers*

As state officials begin to decipher Washington's spending reduction deal, it's clear that federal aid to states for certain programs will take a hit over the next decade. But it will be a while before they know exactly which programs and how big a hit.

That's because the deal, which the U.S. House passed Monday night (August 1), leaves a lot of choices hanging into the future. It calls for \$917 billion in deficit reduction over 10 years by setting caps on discretionary spending. But exactly how to meet those caps — and what funds to states might be cut — is a question for Washington to answer another day. Also undetermined is how much a joint congressional committee charged with finding another \$1.5 trillion in deficit savings would cut from aid to states.

So for states, which have been waiting anxiously to see whether the federal government would soon begin defaulting on its payments, there is relief — but also more waiting ahead.

John Nixon, budget director in Michigan, says his state has been preparing for the prospect of big federal cutbacks for a while, by examining programs that rely heavily on federal funding in hopes of finding efficiencies. "We've always known that big reductions were coming," he said Monday. "Now, it's just a matter of figuring out where they're going to come and how quickly. But from a state-level perspective we're thrilled to see a deal."

In New Jersey, Republican Governor Chris Christie chided Congress and President Obama for taking so long to reach an agreement at a press conference on Monday. "I think we have to look at the specifics of it as to whether it's going to be a good deal for the states or not," he said. "Here's what I'm happy about: They finally did something. I don't know, I'm like most other citizens of this country who are sitting around saying, you know, what the hell are they doing down there?"

### Medicaid mechanics

Among the biggest concerns for states was — and remains — the

See **DEBT** on Page 9

## NLC, coalition file FCC comments supporting broadband deployment

BY LAURA BONAVIDA  
*NLC Federal Relations*

NLC, along with other national organizations, filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in response to a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) entitled "Expanding the Reach and Reducing the Cost of Broadband Deployment by Improving Policies Regarding Public Rights of Way and Wireless Facilities Siting."

The FCC issued the NOI to gather information from industry and local governments on a number of issues involving local public rights of way management, compensation and wireless facilities siting requirements.

Specifically, the NOI sought information and data regarding challenges, best practices and educational efforts.

The coalition's comments show that local government rights of way policies and procedures neither hinder nor delay broadband deployment and adoption.

The comments were submitted by NLC, the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the International City/

County Management Association, the Government Finance Officers Association, the International Municipal Lawyers Association, the American Public Works Association and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors. A copy of the coalition's comments can be accessed at <http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7021693807>.

The local government coalition calls on the FCC to reject federal regulation of local rights of way practices and challenges the commission's legal authority to regulate these local policies, noting specifically that such regulation "would run afoul of the Communications Act and raise serious constitutional concerns."

The coalition's comments underscore the reality that one size cannot fit all and that state and local policies surrounding rights of way are complex and necessarily reflect community specific public interest objectives. Federal regulations should not preempt local decisions.

The coalition's comments reiterated that increasing broadband deployment and adoption continues to

See **FCC** on Page 9

## Recession has residual impact on local government tax revenues

BY STANLEY CHERVIN  
and HARRY A. GREEN  
*TACIR*

The residual impact of the economic recession continues to plague the finances of many local governments. While the recession formally ended in June 2009, its impact on state sales tax collections—the second most important local tax source—lingers in many counties. While state sales tax collections have increased by 4.5 percent over the last 10 months (Department of Revenue collections for the period of July 2010-April 2011), and total local sales taxes (for the same period) increased by 4.1 percent, 20 counties collected less than during the comparative previous 10 month period.

In addition to disappointing growth in 20 counties, the actual level of sales tax collections for the state, as well as for many counties, remains below collection levels of four and five years ago. Forty-nine counties collected less in the recent July-April period than during the comparable period four years ago. Compared to collections from four years earlier, the total decline in collections for these 49 counties was \$59 million. Twenty counties collected less in the recent July-April period than during the same comparable period five years ago. The total decline in collections for these 20 counties, compared to collections



The true litmus test of the impact of the housing value slump will first come when counties who last reappraised in 2008 and in 2009 (based on sales in 2007 and 2008) reappraise in 2012 and 2013.

five years earlier, was \$26 million.

The largest declines were experienced in Davidson County (\$22.6 million less than four years earlier) and in Shelby County (\$11.5 million less than five years earlier). Despite the recent growth in collections in Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Shelby Counties, all four are yet to reach collection levels of four years ago. Thus not only are many rural counties suffering from the lingering impact of the recession, but so are our four largest counties. They are all struggling to maintain basic service levels with sales tax revenue that in many cases is less than that

received four and five years ago.

### Local Property Taxes

The property tax remains the most important source of local tax revenue in all but one county (Sevier County). The impact of the recession and falling property values on property tax collections will depend directly on the delayed impact on assessments. Since falling residential and commercial and industrial market values have only a limited immediate impact on assessed values, much of the impact of falling property market values will appear during reappraisals. Housing prices

See **TACIR** on Page 4

## Sue Atchley to serve as interim state Senator

The Knox County Commission has chosen Sue Atchley, wife of former legislator Ben Atchley, to fill a seat in the state Senate.

The 77-year-old Sue Atchley will replace Jamie Woodson, who resigned to become president and CEO of State Collaborative on Reforming Education.

"It's an honor and truly a privilege," said Atchley, 77. "It's a caretaker's job and to me that means helping the constituency. You wouldn't believe the hours you spend on the phone. I didn't realize there are that many people who needed help, and it's very rewarding to be able to help them."

Atchley says she does not intend to run for the full-time senate seat. Her husband, Ben, retired from the state Senate in 2004

State law required the commission to choose a temporary successor to serve until a special election is scheduled by the governor. It's anticipated to coincide with Knoxville city elections Sept. 27 and Nov. 8.

Five candidates applied for the position and commissioners held



Photo by Dan Andrews, *KnoxFocus*

Sue Atchley takes the oath of the office of interim State Senator with her husband Ben Atchley, former state senator, by her side.

public interviews last week.

Commissioners in a 6-4 vote picked Atchley.



NEWS  
ACROSS  
TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

ATHENS

Athens will receive \$2 million in federal and state funds to upgrade its drinking water system through Tennessee’s Department of Environment and Conservation. The city is one of eight municipalities recently selected to receive funding through the State Revolving Loan Program, which is administered by TDEC, for drinking water and wastewater construction projects. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants fund the program, and the state adds a 20 percent match. The debt terms only require the repayment of \$1.6 million over 20 years at a 3.18 percent interest rate, while \$400,000 of the loan principal does not have to be repaid. Planned projects include a liquid chlorination system, a pump-based backwash system, a cover for outside filtration pools and bank restoration at the utility’s well operations at Oostanaula Creek.

CHARLESTON

Olin Chlor Alkali Products, one of the largest manufacturers of chlorine and caustic soda in the U.S., broke ground for the construction of a new manufacturing facility in Charleston. When completed, the new facility will produce the highest quality chlorine, caustic soda and related products and have a capacity of 200,000 tons, including an expansion of the plant’s production of potassium hydroxide (KOH). The Cleveland-based company has invested \$160 million in the new plant and the construction will be completed in the year end of 2012.

COOKEVILLE

The city received a \$600,000 grant that will help in the construction of the long-awaited Tennessee Central Heritage Rail Trail. The moneys are part of a Tennessee Department of Transportation enhancement grant. The ceremony was attended by city and county leaders as well as Rail Trail Authority representatives. The group is overseeing Tennessee Central Heritage Rail Trail, a project that started in 2005 with the goal of running a 19-mile hiking and biking path from Cookeville to Monterey — all alongside refurbished railroad tracks.

DECHERD

Nissan will spend \$67.9 million and add up to 90 jobs at its Decherd engine plant to build electric motors for its Leaf battery-electric cars. Up to 150,000 motors will be produced annually at Decherd beginning in early 2013 for installation in their Leaf cars that will be assembled at Nissan’s Smyrna manufacturing complex.

ETOWAH

ThyssenKrupp Waupaca, Inc. has decided to reopen the company’s iron foundry in the first quarter of 2012. As a result, 250 employees will be hired to restart production at the facility. The facility was idled in January 2010 as a result of the significant downturn in the North American automotive and truck markets and subsequent decrease in order volume. The decision to reopen the facility comes on the heels of increased market demand. ThyssenKrupp Waupaca will begin installing new melt, core and mill room equipment in the Etowah foundry for ductile iron production beginning in the third quarter of 2011. Approximately 20,000 square-feet of manufacturing space will be added to the 270,000 square-foot facility to accommodate this new equipment.

FRANKLIN

Five million in public money and donations back in 2006 bought land for Franklin’s Civil War battlefield park. Now, a \$500,000 state road enhancement grant will aid in the construction of the road into the 110-acre park. That money will be paired with slightly more than \$360,000 the city has socked away for the completion of the project. Civil War preservationists are ramping up fundraising work to bolster interest in the city’s ties to the Civil War in time for the 150th anniversary of the Nov. 30, 1864, Battle of Franklin. Franklin’s Charge, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving battlefield land, is pursuing the creation of more parks along Columbia Avenue.

LAVERGNE

The city received official notice from Borders Group, Inc. that it is closing its facility on Waldenbooks Drive and laying off all of the 283 employees. The closings will begin on or about Aug. 15 and conclude no later than Sept. 1. The notice explained that the company had actively and in good faith sought a capital infusion and/or a purchaser. However, because the sale did not close a liquidation of Borders is required.

LEBANON

Amazon announced plans to open a 500,000-square-foot fulfillment center in Lebanon. The online retailer said it will create hundreds of full-time and seasonal jobs at the facility this year. The facility will be Amazon’s third fulfillment center in Tennessee, bringing its total footprint in the state to more than 2 million square feet. The other two sites are planned for Chattanooga and Cleveland.

MEMPHIS

Memphis is one of five cities splitting a \$24 million grant as part of the New York-based *Bloomberg Philanthropies* Mayors Project. The new government innovation program awarded Memphis \$4.8 million to be used to revive areas of the city cut off by highway construction and approach handgun violence as a public health crisis, according to Mayor A C Wharton. The money will pay the salaries of teams operating outside of city governments, who will help cities carry out and manage their plans with set goals to measure success. The project will also identify groups of cities interested in working together on particular issues to share best practices.

NASHVILLE

Restaurant Depot, headquartered in New York, is building a 53,000-plus-square-foot warehouse at 111 Oldham St. in Nashville, with plans to open in the fourth quarter of 2011 or early 2012. The new location will start with about 30-35 jobs with more expected to be hired as the business grows. Restaurant Depot, with 87 locations in 27 states, is a food service provider to mainly independent restaurants and caterers. Restaurant Depot also is looking to open in the Memphis area.

NASHVILLE

The city received a \$1.9 million transportation enhancement grant to for phase one of the Harding Place Pedestrian Network Project. The project will add concrete sidewalks to Harding Place from Nolensville Road to Tampa Drive. The grant is geared to improve pedestrian safety in an area of multi-family residences, retail centers, churches, a hospital and bus stops.

PULASKI

Spears Coastline Plastic LLC, a leading manufacturer of Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride (CPVC) pipe for fire protection, plumbing and industrial market applications, announced the company’s purchase of the New Tech Color Additives building in the Pulaski/Giles County Industrial Park. The company will be transferring its Ardmore, Ala.-based manufacturing facility to the Pulaski facility over the next few months, bringing 25 jobs to the region, with the intent to add 25 more within a five year period.

SHELBYVILLE

The city signed on the dotted line with the Tennessee Department of Transportation to begin the second phase of expanding an industrial access road serving Newell-Rubbermaid. Shelbyville won’t have to shell out a cent of the estimated \$770,400 to build it, as 100 percent of the project is being funded through the State Industrial Access Program. The program was established by the Industrial Highway Act of 1959, which authorizes TDOT to contract with cities and counties to develop industrial roads. If the city does have to purchase any additional rights-of-way, it would be responsible for 50 percent of the funding.

SMYRNA

Middle Tennessee’s first major solar farm made its debut, where about 3,500 solar panels will gather enough energy from the sun each year to power the equivalent of 100 homes. Schneider Electric, an energy management company with 1,250 workers in the region, invested \$6.25 million in the 6-acre solar farm. It is the third in the state to reach the 1-megawatt level. Schneider Electric officials said they’ll test the efficiency of their solar technologies at the site with the goal of cutting their customers’ energy bills by as much as a third. They also plan to open the farm to researchers.



Tullahoma celebrated the recent dedication ceremony of a historical Civil War Trails marker at Caboose Park on NW Atlantic Street. Pictured L-R: Dr. Michael Bradley, Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, Alderman Greg Sandlin, State Rep. Judd Matheny, Tullahoma Alderman Mike Stanton, Tullahoma Mayor Troy Bisby, Coffee County Commissioner Jackie Duncan, State Sen. Eric Stewart, John LaBar, Dave Johnson and Diane Bryant.

SPRING CITY

A \$3 million expansion of SSM Industries in Spring City will add an additional 45,000 square feet to the company’s manufacturing plant and create 13 new jobs initially, with plans to expand to a projected 25 employees. SSM Industries is a textile manufacturing company specializing in the development and manufacture of flame resistant, cut resistant and thermal fabrics. SSM fabrics are used by the United States military as well as in industries such as fire and rescue, auto racing, and gas and electric utilities. This expansion will enable SSM Industries to create specialized yarns to enhance its offering of highly technical protective fabrics.

TULLAHOMA

Tullahoma received a \$256,360 check to go toward a revitalization effort in the city’s downtown area. The money is part of a two-phase downtown rehabilitation project totaling \$685,140 that includes a \$364,690 phase one on West Lincoln Street — between North Jack-

son Street and Atlantic Street — and a \$320,450 phase two — continuing the effort around the corner on Atlantic Street to Grundy Street. The money will go toward phase two. The city’s phase two share will be about \$92,000, including \$64,090 as part of the 80-20 percent match with the state paying the greater share, and another \$28,000 in engineering, design and right of way costs.

TULLAHOMA

State Sen. Eric Stewart, State Rep. Judd Matheny and Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission member Dr. Michael Bradley were on hand to help dedicate a historical Civil War Trails marker at Caboose Park on NW Atlantic Street. The marker notes that in January 1863, after the Battle of Stones River, Confederate General Braxton Bragg’s Army of Tennessee fortified Tullahoma to protect the supply depot and Bragg’s headquarters. Tullahoma also served as the army’s medical center, with divisional and general hospitals.



PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

After spending all of his adult life as a firefighter, Oak Ridge Fire Chief **Mack Bailey** is retiring. Bailey’s last day on the job will be Aug. 19. He’ll have been the city’s fire chief for 20 years. Bailey, 59, was hired in 1991 after spending years in various firefighting posts in Columbia, his hometown Greer, and Charleston County, S.C.



Bailey

Germantown Fire Chief **Dennis Wolf**, 55, has been hired as the new fire consultant with UT’s Municipal Technical Advisory Service. The Tennessee Fire Chief’s Association recognized Wolf in 2010 as its Fire Chief of the Year. He became Germantown’s fire chief in 1995, starting in 1975 as a volunteer fire fighter. Assistant Fire Chief **John Selberg**, 51, will be taking over the top spot as of Aug. 1. In addition to his duties as assistant chief for the past 21 years, Selberg and others helped develop Tennessee Task Force One in the 1990s. The Memphis and Shelby County task force is a part of a national program of first responders. Selberg was hired as a part-time firefighter in August 1979.



Wolf



Selberg

The city of Oak Hill has named **Tommy Campsey** as its new safety coordinator. Campsey was a 34-year veteran of the Brentwood Police Department and will serve as a liaison between Oak Hill and Metro Nashville Police Department. Campsey will be responsible for scheduling patrols off-duty Metro police officers hired by the city.



Campsey

**Vickie Haskins** has been selected as Shelbyville’s new city recorder. Haskins replaces long time recorder Betty Lamb, who retired July 18. Haskins is a certified professional legal secretary and has worked for several attorneys’ offices, as well as at the county courthouse as a judicial assistant.



Brewer

Veteran journalist **Clint Brewer**, 40, has been named assistant commissioner of Communications and Creative Services for the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. Brewer comes to ECD with more than 15 years experience in the Tennessee media as an award-winning reporter, editor and publisher. He was previously at *The Tennessean* in Nashville as the newspaper’s political editor. He has also previously served as editor of the daily *Lebanon Democrat* and the *Nashville City Paper*.

The Department of Defense recently recognized state Rep. **Curtis Johnson**, of Clarksville, for his work on legislation benefiting military



Johnson

families. Johnson received the award in part for sponsoring House Bill 1106, which stipulates that a court must hold an expedited hearing for a temporary modification to a decree for child custody or visitation for parents facing mobilization for military duty. It also requires courts to allow testimony by electronic means while a military parent is out of state and authorizes courts to grant permanent modifications to decrees of child custody or visitation if a parent volunteers for successive or frequent duties requiring them to be out of state.

**Brian Bills** has been selected as Chairman of the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA). Bills most recently



Bills

served as Regional Line of Business Manager, Senior Vice President for SunTrust Mortgage in Knoxville. The THDA was created to promote the production of more affordable new housing units for very low, low and moderate income individuals and families in the state, to promote the preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing units and bring greater stability to the residential construction industry and related industries.

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# History rolls on with traveling Library of Congress exhibit

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

It isn't every day that citizens discover a national treasure parked in their own back yards. But in the midst of today's spiraling gas prices and bruising economy, it can be pretty sweet. That's what 60 small communities throughout the U.S. are saying about a free traveling Library of Congress exhibition making its way across the country. Mounted in a customized 18-wheel semi tractor-trailer, which expands up to three times its width, the nation's oldest federal cultural institution—condensed as the "Gateway to Knowledge"—features facsimiles of the library's priceless artifacts along with interactive kiosks, computer terminals and other informational resources geared to showcase its vast collections.

The two docents on board, hus-

band and wife team Josh and Abigail Van Gelder, act as tour guides for the venture, handling all aspects of the exhibit, from set up to break down, and even driving the big rig. The national tour, initiated in late September, was made possible through the support of the Rapoport family, founding members of the James Madison Council, the Library's private-sector advisory group.

The exhibition's schedule is ever changing, with new stops added weekly, if not daily. "The reception has been really good," said Abigail. After a two-day stint (the length of each exhibit visit) the truck has just departed Wilmington, OH. and is rolling on to Ashland, KY.

"We were lucky enough that the Rapoport foundation gave a gift of \$1 million toward the first 60 stops," Van Gelder continues. "And the Madison Council has generously allowed us to continue through this

year's National Books Festival, which will be held Sept. 24-25 in Washington D.C."

According to Van Gelder, the hope of Abby and Emily Rapoport, the project's young benefactors, is to present the venue to small towns similar to those in Ohio and Iowa, where they attended college. "Abby and Emily grew up loving the Library of Congress," Van Gelder said. "Their ultimate goal is visiting smaller towns in rural parts of the country spreading the message of what the library has to offer and providing these resources."

While the exhibit contains plenty of engaging material for entire families as well as life-long learners, it also includes programming particularly designed for teachers and students.

"We had 1,142 visitors in the two days they were here in May," said Alesia Burnley, director of the Lebanon-Wilson County Library. "Everyone in the community was very excited. School children came from every sector, private, elementary, high school and home schoolers. U.S. Congressman Jim Cooper was also here."

As visitors enter the trailer from a central staircase, they find several areas of museum-style exhibits. Among them, are facsimiles of the 1507 Waldseemüller Map, the first document to use the word "America;" the 1455 Gutenberg Bible; the rough draft of the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson and with edits by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams; poet Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass;" and jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton's "Frog-i-More Rag." Computer terminals steer visitors to the library's extensive website, where they can take virtual tours of the Library of Congress in a matter of minutes.

The exhibition also outlines the role Thomas Jefferson played in re-establishing the Library of Congress after the burning of the U.S. Capitol in 1814. Originally part of the capitol in Washington D.C., during the war of 1812, the Library of Congress was burned by the British. Upon his retirement, Jefferson offered to sell his collection of nearly 6,500 books to the U.S. government to help re-establish the library. Congress paid Jefferson \$29,950 for his entire col-



Photo courtesy of Jeffie Nicholson

Williamson County Mayor Rogers Anderson (Left Center) and Franklin Mayor Ken Moore are surrounded by Williamson County Public Library staff and other officials celebrating the arrival of The Library of Congress "Gateway to Knowledge" traveling exhibition to Franklin.

lection.

"As both a storehouse of world knowledge and primary resource for the U.S. Congress, the Library is energized by the prospects of the exhibition playing an important role

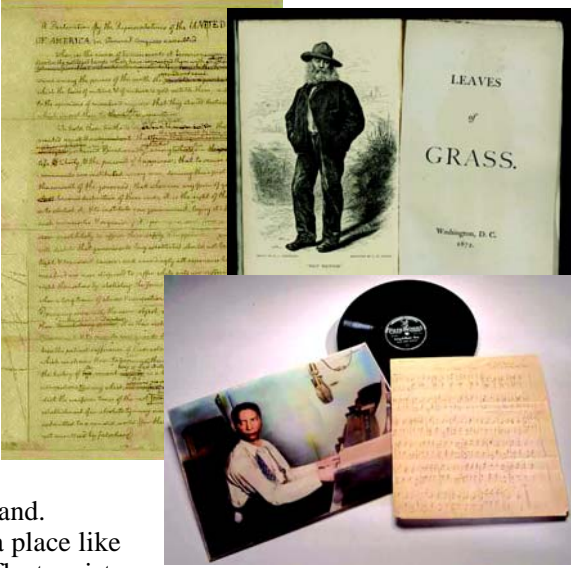
in sharing the national collection with the people to whom it belongs," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington.

"As America is unique in its own way, every city that we've visited is unique," Van Gelder adds. Her enthusiasm is captured in her blogs about the sights and experiences of the venue's spectators as well as those of she and her husband while traversing America's heartland.

"I've never been to a place like Franklin before," she reflects wistfully in her blog entitled "If I had a Million Dollars." "It just feels like a small town...They have been able to maintain the unique and comfortable quality of the original and historic Franklin...You could find the best of all you want and all you need there... It's just unfortunate that we weren't able to spend more time there."

According to Jeffie Nicholson, main library coordinator for the Williamson County Public Library, the total number of visitors to the two-day exhibit in Franklin was 1,163. "Franklin was honored to be one of sixty sites in America, and the only one in Tennessee, to host the Library of Congress and their "Gateway to Knowledge Traveling Exhibition," said Franklin Mayor Ken Moore. "One of the highlights of a visit to our Nation's capitol is to visit the Library. Unfortunately, for many of us, it may be our only visit in a

lifetime and others may never have the opportunity. Through the generosity of the Rapoport family, many more people will be able to view some of the treasures in the library such as a copy of the Declaration of



Among the Gateway to Knowledge exhibit offerings are facsimiles of the rough draft of the Declaration of Independence, poet Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" and jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton's record "Frog-i-More Rag."

Independence and learn how to connect to the library through our home computers. It is one more way that we can continue to understand and celebrate our heritage as Americans."

To view the Library of Congress website, visit [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov). For further information about the "Gateway to Knowledge" exhibit, including a complete schedule of stops, visit [www.loc.gov/gateway/](http://www.loc.gov/gateway/). To read Abigail Van Gelder's blog, visit <http://thevangelders.com/>

## Student musicians inspire U.S. senators

During their weekly Tuesday breakfast with Tennesseans visiting Washington, U.S. Sens. Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker, and all in attendance, were treated to a performance by Susanna Johnson of Murfreesboro on viola, and Kameron Myers of Franklin on violin, both musicians participating in this year's National Symphony Orchestra National Trustees' Summer Music Institute 2011.

"I wish the United States Senate could operate with even a small bit of the harmony you two shared with us this morning," Alexander told the musicians. Of their performance, Alexander said, "I applaud Susanna and Kameron for their talent and commitment to music, which has been a great source of joy in my life since my mother took me to my first piano lesson as a child. I told them this morning that when I was a law clerk in New Orleans back in the '60s, I'd go down to a place called Your Father's Mustache on Bourbon Street and play whatever instrument they needed that night—trombone, tuba, or washboard. I hope their love of music — one of Tennessee's great treasures that unifies our state like almost nothing else — continues and that they keep looking for ways to bless other lives with their great talent."

"Music heritage runs deep in Tennessee, so the opportunity to watch two talented young people like Susanna and Kameron perform for us in Washington is special. It's a reminder of what makes our state and country great," Corker said. "The recognition they received from Lamar Alexander, the Senate's resident musician, is high praise indeed."



Susanna Johnson of Murfreesboro and Kameron Myers of Franklin, both participants of the National Symphony Orchestra National Trustees' Summer Music Institute 2011, perform for Sens. Alexander and Corker in Washington D.C.


Johnson and Myers were among 55 students chosen to participate in this year's institute, and are the only Tennessee participants. The institute runs for four weeks, during which students receive training and "experiences designed to aid aspiring musicians for futures in music," according to the Kennedy Center Education Department. Training includes intensive coaching by members of the National Symphony, private lessons, a side-by-side rehearsal with members of the NSO, master classes with NSO musicians, seminars, and a concerto competition.

Students also perform six Kennedy Center concerts between June 27 and July 25.

According to the Kennedy Center, participants are chosen by recorded audition and résumés sub-

mitted either to the state chapters of the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education or to other designated arts organizations located in their regions. The various institutions review the résumés and narrow the submissions to a final round including the recorded auditions that is then judged by a jury of NSO musicians.

"Tennessee Tuesday" is a light breakfast of coffee and doughnuts cosponsored by Sens. Alexander and Corker for Tennesseans visiting Washington every Tuesday that the Senate is in session. Guests can meet the senators, staff from both senators' offices and, when possible, have their photographs taken with the senators. Tennesseans interested in attending can call 202-224-4944 to make a reservation and confirm the room location.



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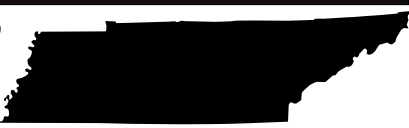
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STATE BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Wire taps and the law

Police and prosecutors are relying more heavily on wiretaps. They say listening in on suspects' cell phone calls is an effective way to combat drug trafficking and gang activity, but defense attorneys say the government should be careful not to go too far. According to the newly published Wiretap Report by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, authorities across the nation acquired more wiretap orders in 2010 than any prior year — 3,194 cases — which is a 168 percent jump since 1997. Nashville, which accounted for nearly every wiretap order in Tennessee during that same time frame, has gone from zero wiretaps a decade ago to one every 11 days in 2010. That includes both local and federal authorities. "Wiretaps are the most effective way to infiltrate and disrupt international drug conspiracies. That's just the reality of it," U.S. Attorney Jerry Martin said. "It's a very effective tool, and while it may be on the upswing, it's a tool that we use very carefully." Martin said the increase can be attributed to an increasing reliance by drug traffickers on cell phones, particularly pay-as-you-go, disposable phones they try to use for only short periods of time to avoid detection

THP finishes 2nd in Challenge

The Tennessee Highway Patrol has finished second in the 2011 National Law Enforcement Challenge. It was based on traffic safety enforcement, officer training, public information and crash reduction. The THP finished third in 2009 and 2010, and first in 2006. This year it competed in the state police/highway patrol category for agencies with 501 to 1,000 officers. The competition was sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Home sales brighter says GNAR

Some experts expect to see brighter sales and price data for the rest of the year in nine counties tracked by the Greater Nashville Association of Realtors. This year, however, Middle Tennessee saw a 16 percent decline in June homes sales. Median home prices sank in the first six months of the year in many of Middle Tennessee's suburban counties, while wealthier neighborhoods appear to be making a price turnaround. Williamson County saw its median single-family home price edge up 1.3 percent to just over \$336,000 by midyear. Suburban Rutherford County, meanwhile, has seen its median price for single-family dwellings slide 3.4 percent in January through June compared to the same period a year earlier. Realtors contend that last June's stronger-than-usual sales was a result of the \$8,000 federal tax credit that spurred first-time buyers to action before the incentive expired. In Davidson County, the median home price over the first six months of the year fell to \$150,000 from \$153,000 the previous year, the report found. That was based on nearly 2,700 residential sales in the county over that period. Total housing sales were down 13 percent and condo sales were down 26 percent in the county in the first six months of the year. Among the report's most encouraging news was that Middle Tennessee's pending sales at the end of June bumped up to 2,130 properties from 1,976 at the same point last year.

State grad initiative earns Five of Five Award

The Jobs for Tennessee Graduates initiative has been recognized for exceeding five goals of its parent organization. The initiative is a partnership between the state Department of Education and Labor and Workforce Development. Its parent

group is Jobs for America's Graduates. The state program earned the Five of Five Award for graduation rate, full time placement rate, positive outcome rate, full time job placement rate and employment rate. The initiative is designed to assist at-risk youth in graduating from high school and finding and keeping quality jobs. Students receive classroom instruction and community orientation to make them more employable.

State tax collections improving

Tennessee has begun to bounce back from a steep decline in tax collections that began with the recession in 2008, and officials are predicting continued growth despite a slow economy. After two straight years of decline, the state expects to see a revenue increase when it finishes closing out its books for the 2011 fiscal year, which ended June 30. The State Funding Board estimates that Tennessee will bring in at least 3 percent more in revenue in the budget year that started July 1, predicting a rise in tax collections for the second year in a row. The increase is expected even as high oil prices, widespread joblessness and a stagnant housing market continue to put a drag on the national and state economies.

Efforts to ease pain of DMV visit

Safety and Homeland Security Commissioner Bill Gibbons, whose office oversees drivers license facilities, and his staff are currently engaged in a "top-to-bottom review" of drivers license examination processes and renewal centers with an eye toward transforming them into "customer-friendly" hubs that get people in and out in a reasonable time frame. "The average wait time across the state is 55 minutes," says Gibbons. But that doesn't even count the hours it takes to stand in lines that sometimes wrap outside the building and leave people in the sweltering heat for hours before reaching the first kiosk to take a number. About 1.4 million people wait in lines at their local driver's license center each year.

Haslam cuts the ribbon on Tim's Ford Visitor Center and trails



Photo courtesy of TDEC

Gov. Haslam announces the grand opening of Tim Ford State Park's new visitor center, which was designed with the park's future growth in mind. The new facility is better-equipped to meet increased visitation and community needs.

Gov. Bill Haslam, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Commissioner Bob Martineau and Deputy Commissioner Brock Hill were joined by members of the General Assembly, local elected officials and members of the community for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and official grand opening of Tims Ford State Park's new visitor center and trail system.

Dedicated in 1978, Tims Ford is a relatively new state park that now manages nearly 3,000 acres on the Tims Ford Reservoir, including six islands, the Fairview Campground and seven public access areas around the reservoir. As part of the Tims Ford Reservoir Land Management and Disposition Plan, more than 2,000 acres have been added to Tims Ford State Park since 2000.

"This project demonstrates the importance of public-private partnerships and how they can improve upon our outstanding recreational areas, which help attract more people and more business to the area," said Gov. Haslam.

The new visitor center was designed with the park's growth in mind, providing a better-equipped facility to meet increased visitation and community needs. The 4,000-square-foot visitor center also will house a new gift shop, park offices and public meeting space. Incorporating a bit of history, the visitor center will include an exhibit titled *Tims Ford, A Lake, A Park, A People*, developed in conjunction with Middle Tennessee State University.

The interpretive history will share photos and stories of the communities along the Elk River that were impacted by the development of the Tims Ford Reservoir. Located approximately a quarter of a mile from the park's entrance, the new Tims Ford Visitor Center project was budgeted at \$820,000, and was completed under budget in eight months. Project costs were paid with proceeds from the disposition of TVA assets as part of the land management plan, in lieu of using state-appropriated funds.

As part of the project, Tims Ford State Park will partner with the Tims Ford Environmental Education Association to convert the park's

former visitor center into a dedicated Environmental Education Center, which will feature programs and exhibits about the flora and fauna found at the park.

Also enhancing the park is the new Tims Ford Heritage Trail System, created to offer visitors greater access to unique areas of the park. The new trail system allows park visitors an opportunity to walk a variety of trails and learn more about the homes and families that once lived on the land before there was a lake or a park. The Lost Creek Overlook Trail, along with the Old Spann House Trail and Ray Branch Trail, are all part of the trail development plan. Taking more than three years to complete, the development of the Lost Creek Overlook Trail was begun by Tims Ford and Tennessee State Parks staff and the Tennessee Youth Conservation Corps, with assistance from the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

Two unique cable bridges — spanning 164 and 180 feet — serve as landmark features on this particular trail. They are two of the longest cable bridges in the state. The Lost Creek Overlook Trail is 1.3 miles long and provides connections to existing trails and unique vistas of shorelines along Tims Ford Reservoir. The Lost Creek Overlook Trail was funded by a \$47,000 federal Recreation Trail Program grant, which was matched by in-kind labor provided by park staff, TYCC workers and TDOT bridge design services.

Tims Ford State Park is situated on Tims Ford Reservoir and serves as one of the state's most popular recreational and fishing areas. The 10,700-acre Tims Ford Lake is regarded as one of the top bass fishing and recreational lakes in the Southeast. Long before the construction of Tims Ford Dam on the headwaters of the Elk River, the area was used extensively by American Indians as a hunting and fishing territory. Archaeological excavations uncovered numerous artifacts and occupational sites, indicating that man had occupied the area as early as 10,000 to 12,000 years ago.

For more information, visit [www.tnstateparks.com/TimsFord](http://www.tnstateparks.com/TimsFord).

Arts Commission announces grant awards

The Tennessee Arts Commission, has announced grants awarded to local organizations for Fiscal Year 2012 (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012).

Tennessee Arts Commission grants are made possible through an appropriation of state funds by the General Assembly, federal dollars from the National Endowment for the Arts, and by Tennesseans who purchase collegiate/university, personalized, and specialty motor vehicle license plates.

"This state is indeed fortunate to have elected leaders who support the work of the Tennessee Arts Commission in building better communities through the arts," said Ellen M. Hays, chair of the Tennessee Arts Commission.

According to Hays, the Commission will award more than 950 grants during fiscal year 2012, totaling more than \$7.3 million dollars. These funds have a direct impact on communities across Tennessee, in both urban and rural areas. Grant categories include: Arts Build Communities, Arts Access, Arts Education, Arts Project Support, Cultural Education Partnership, Funds for At-Risk Youth, Partnership Sup-



The Tennessee Arts Commission has a dedicated revenue source from specialty license plates, which provided \$5.4 million for grant awards.

port, Individual Arts Fellowship, Major Cultural Institution, Rural Arts Project Support, Student Ticket Subsidy, Technical Assistance, Touring, Special Opportunities, and professional Development Support.

The Commission's allocation process involves a review by citizen advisory panels made up of Tennesseans with expertise in appropriate arts disciplines and final approval by the full 15-member Tennessee Arts Commission.

"The arts are changing lives in Tennessee. They improve education when integrated into the curriculum. They contribute to our economy, make our communities exciting, and make us better citizens," said Hays.

"The Commission is fortunate to have a dedicated revenue source from the specialty license plates which Tennesseans voluntarily purchase each year." The license plates provided \$5.4 million for grant awards.

The Tennessee Arts Commission is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences that add value to the lives of every citizen, and enhances the quality of life in Tennessee communities.

Additional information on grant programs offered by the Tennessee Arts Commission is available at: [www.tn.gov/arts](http://www.tn.gov/arts). For a list of grantees, listed by county, go to: [http://www.tn.gov/arts/grant\\_awards\\_fy2012.pdf](http://www.tn.gov/arts/grant_awards_fy2012.pdf)

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# MTAS’ Debt Management Policy available online

In December 2010, the Tennessee State Funding Board adopted a statement on debt management directing governmental entities in Tennessee to draft and adopt their own debt management policies no later than Dec. 31, 2011.

City officials should begin the process now to develop and adopt a debt management policy designed to meet their community needs.

MTAS has developed a model debt policy that establishes parameters by which municipalities should undertake debt obligations. MTAS model policy is now available online at [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)

For more background information, including a letter from state Comptroller Justin Wilson detailing debt management practices, go to the Hometown Connection section of TML’s website at [www.TML1.org](http://www.TML1.org)

Should you have any questions concerning debt management policies, contact the MTAS consultant in your area.

# Training offered to Tennessee Main Street, Tennessee Downtowns programs

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development hosted a two-day Downtown Revitalization Workshop in Nashville in June. Representatives from Tennessee’s 24 Main Street Program communities and 12 newly selected Tennessee Downtowns communities attended the free educational workshop, which was made possible through a \$50,000 sponsorship from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

“Revitalizing downtown commercial districts enhances the quality of life for our citizens and makes our communities more attractive to business investment,” said TCEC Commissioner Bill Hagerty. “I congratulate our Tennessee Main Street and Tennessee Downtowns program participants on their hard work and dedication to making their communities even better places to live and work.”

Keynote speakers for the workshop included Commissioner Hagerty; Valecia Crissifulli, senior director of partnerships for the Preservation Division National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Kennedy Smith, principal of The Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE). Training for the workshop was provided by the Tennessee Main Street Program staff and the National Main Street Center staff.

“The work that Main Street Program communities are doing sets an exceptional example for Tennessee Downtowns communities to follow by adding a great deal of value for the existing members of the community, as well as to potential new businesses and residents,” said Kimberly Nyberg, director of the Tennessee Main Street Program and Tennessee Downtowns. “The training provided at our Downtown Revitalization Workshop will help these communities create a long-term



Representatives from Tennessee’s 24 Main Street Program communities and 12 newly selected Tennessee Downtowns communities attended a free educational workshop hosted in Nashville by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. The workshop was made possible through a \$50,000 sponsorship from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

# \$51.9 million in Federal funds rescinded from TDOT

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has been notified by the Federal Highway Administration that \$51.9 million in federal funds will be rescinded from the department’s federal allocation of funds for fiscal year 2011. A rescission of funds means that federal dollars promised to Tennessee have now been cancelled and will not be received.

The rescission of funds is a separate issue from the debt limit discussions currently underway by federal lawmakers.

“Nearly 50 percent of the department’s budget comes from the federal government, so a reduction in these funds significantly impacts the resources available to TDOT,” said TDOT Commissioner John Schroer. “This shortfall requires the department to make difficult decisions in our core highway programs,” Schroer continued, “We don’t want to make cuts anywhere that would delay the delivery of projects that are ready to go.”

TDOT is currently operating under a series of continuing resolu-

tions through “SAFETEA-LU” (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), the federal transportation funding bill, which expired Sept. 30, 2009, and funds are being distributed only months at a time. However, authorized funding levels have been significantly reduced by rescissions annually since 2002, with a cumulative impact of more than \$463 million.

Programs impacted by the latest federal rescission include the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the Transportation Enhancements Program. TDOT plans to deliver the remaining projects now under development in these programs with future federal funds.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Section 2201 of the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011, contains a \$2.5 billion rescission of unobligated balances of funds apportioned to the states of which Tennessee’s share is \$51,950,327.

# NATIONAL BRIEFS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**Think you might do better than President Barack Obama and congressional leaders in picking and choosing what government spending to cut - or taxes to raise?** A new computer game provides the chance to play “Budget Hero.” Budget Hero 2.0” is an update of an original version that came out in 2008. It shows players just how difficult it might be to carry out their grand policy objectives - universal health care, extending the Bush tax cuts or ending foreign aid - and still keep the government from either becoming irrelevant, or going broke. Developed by the Woodrow Wilson Center, a non-partisan think tank, along with American Public Media, the game has been played 830,000 times since the original version came out in 2008. The sponsors said they hope to get the new version into schools and universities by the fall semester. The game is free and available at <http://www.budgethero.org>.

**To help consumers and spur efficiency, U.S. states and cities are beginning this year to require that commercial buildings measure and disclose their energy use.** The new rules, which generally exempt small businesses, are expected to shame building owners into upgrades that will save energy and create jobs. They’re akin to nutritional labels on food, Energy Star ratings on appliances and miles-per-gallon stickers on vehicles. They won’t specify utility costs but will show a building’s relative efficiency, measured in energy use per square foot for apartments. The Department of Energy’s Kathleen Hogan says DOE plans next spring to begin testing a voluntary program to rate the energy efficiency of commercial buildings, similar to a pilot program it finished in June for rating homes. It’s hard to overstate how significant this is,” says Roger Platt of the private U.S. Green Building Council, adding many buildings don’t track energy usage. “It’s like a

12-step program. You first have to admit you have a problem.”

**Unemployment rates rose in more than half of U.S. states in June, evidence that slower hiring is affecting many parts of the country.** The Labor Department said that unemployment rates in 28 states and Washington increased last month. Rates declined in eight states and were flat in 14. That’s a change from May, when 24 states reported falling unemployment rates. The jobless rate rose in Tennessee (from 9.7 percent in May to 9.8 percent in June). Twenty-six states reported a net gain in jobs in June, while 24 states, including Tennessee, lost jobs. The changing trend in state unemployment rates reflects a weaker economy hampered by high gas prices and lower factory output. Nationally, employers added only 18,000 net jobs in June, the second straight month of feeble hiring.

strategy for their communities’ sustainability and development.”

The 2010 Community Reinvestment Statistics reported Tennessee Main Street Program communities generating more than \$89 million in public and private investment in downtown districts, creating 400 net new jobs, 94 net new businesses and 222 building rehabilitation projects.

Main Street revitalization is a comprehensive, incremental, self-help economic strategy that also focuses on developing public-private partnerships to enhance community livability and job creation, while maintaining the historic character of the district. For information about the Main Street Program and the Main Street Four Point Approach, visit [www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/).

The Tennessee Main Street Program includes Believe in Bristol, Main Street Greeneville, Main Street Cleveland, Jackson Downtown Development, Main Street Collierville, Johnson City Development Authority, Columbia Main Street, Downtown Kingsport Association, CityScape/Cookeville, Main Street Lawrenceburg, Crossroads Partnership/City of Morristown, Main Street McMinnville, Dandridge Community Trust, Main Street Murfreesboro, Main Street Dayton, Rogersville Main Street, Main Street Dyersburg, Savannah Main Street, Fayetteville Main Street, Tiptonville Main Street, Downtown Franklin Association, Main Street Union City, Greater Gallatin and Ripley Main Street.

The second round of Tennessee Downtowns communities was announced in December which included McKenzie, Henderson, Athens, Linden, Red Boiling Springs, Smithville, Centerville, Brownsville, Lewisburg, Mountain City, Rockwood and Pikeville. Each are home to downtown commercial districts established at least 50 years ago and have demonstrated their readiness to organize efforts for downtown revitalization based on the successful “Main Street Four-Point Approach to Downtown Revitalization.”

For more information about Tennessee Main Street Program and Tennessee Downtowns, visit [www.tennesseeemainstreet.org](http://www.tennesseeemainstreet.org).

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# USPS considers closure of 60 Tennessee post offices

Thousands of post offices could be shut nationwide as the financially strapped U.S. Postal Service (USPS) looks for ways to save money and stem its losses. In just the first three months of the year, the USPS lost \$2.6 billion. In response, the USPS has announced that it will study 3,653 local offices, branches and stations for possible closure. Many of those may be replaced by Village Post Offices in which postal retail services are offered in local stores, libraries or government offices. The offices would be staffed by private employees rather than government employees.

USPS officials say the vast majority of sales in post offices are stamp purchases, which can easily be handled at the new Village Post Offices. Some 70,000 locations, such as supermarkets and department stores, already sell stamps. In addition, the offices would accept flat-rate packages and some could provide post office box service. Customers would have to go to a remaining regular post office for passports or more complex services.

The Postal Service will weigh the effect the office has on its community, the effect the closing would have on employees and the availability of service, the potential savings and any other relevant factors.

In recent years, business has declined sharply as first-class mail moved to the Internet. In addition, the recession resulted in a decline in advertising mail, and the agency lost \$8 billion last year.

There are a total of 60 post offices in Tennessee the USPS says it will look into closing. Most of the



Photo by Alex Washburn

The USPS is studying 60 local offices, branches and stations for possible closure in Tennessee.

offices that face review are in rural areas and have low volumes of business. USPS officials say as many as 3,000 post offices have only two hours of retail business a day.

The USPS announced in January it was reviewing 1,400 offices for closure. So far 280 have been closed and 200 have finished the review process and will remain open.

Among the USPS's debt, a \$5.5 billion payment due Sept. 30 to cover future retirees' health benefits. Postal officials have sought permis-

sion from Congress to ease the requirement that they pay \$5.5 billion annually into a fund to pre-pay future retiree medical benefits and also that mail delivery be reduced to five-days-a-week. Mail carriers have been making rounds six days a week since the 19th century. A USA TODAY/Gallup Poll last year indicates that more than half of those polled had no problem with losing Saturday mail service.

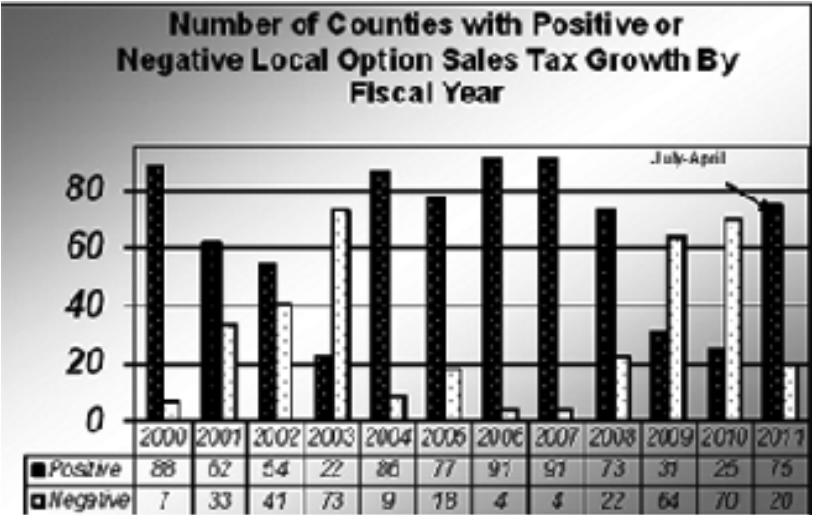
The list below are post offices in Tennessee under consideration for closure by the USPS.

### Post Offices

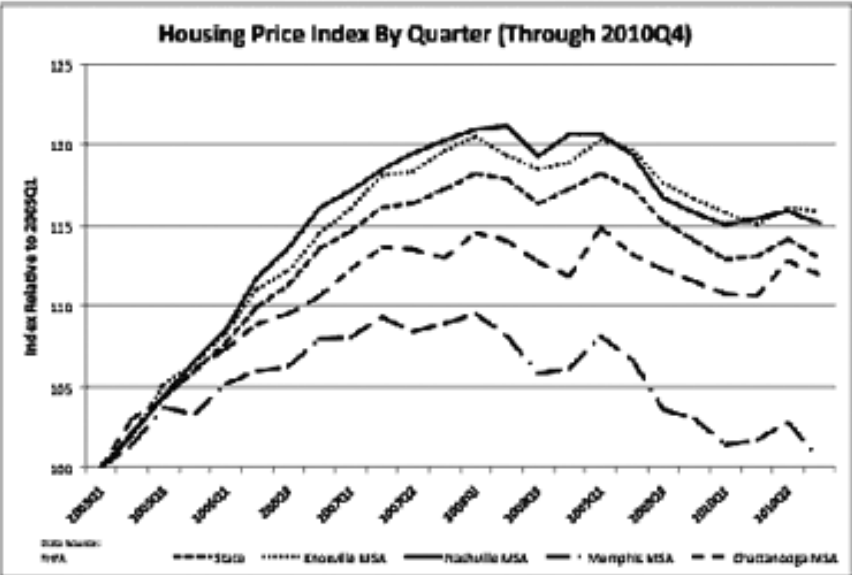
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Buena Vista  
Como  
Cottage Grove  
Crockett Mills  
Dukedom  
Eaton

Eva  
Frayser, Memphis  
Hurricane Mills  
Idlewild  
Lavinia  
Lenox  
Mansfield  
Mercer  
Naval Air Station Memphis/  
Millington  
Rives  
Tigrett  
Tom Murray, Jackson  
Westport  
Yuma  
Hollywood, Memphis  
Lamar, Memphis  
Mallory, Memphis  
Peabody Place Postal Ret Ctr,  
Memphis



The actual level of sales tax collections for the state, as well as for many counties, remains below collection levels of four and five years ago.



Housing prices in Tennessee peaked in late 2007 and during 2008. It will be 2013 before any county that reappraised during the price peak of the last housing boom is scheduled to reappraise again. Local governments should prepare to deal with the prospect of historically low increases in taxable assessments in the next reappraisal cycle.

## Recession's impact on local tax revenues

### TACIR from Page 1

in Tennessee peaked in late 2007 and during 2008 (see chart). Since values during a reappraisal are based on sales made during the previous year, many reappraisal notices received by Tennesseans in 2009 (that were based on sales in 2008) were probably a shock—given that by the time the reappraisal notices were received the housing market was already in decline.

The true litmus test of the impact of the housing value slump will first come when counties who last reappraised in 2008 and in 2009 (based respectively on sales in 2007 and 2008) reappraise in 2012 and 2013. Fortunately, no counties last reappraised in 2008 are on a four-year reappraisal cycle. Therefore, it will be 2013 before any county that reappraised during the price peak of the last housing boom is scheduled to reappraise again. The good news is that Tennessee for the most part

avoided the catastrophic declines (over last 5 years) in property values seen in Arizona (-43%), California (-42%), Florida (-40 %), and Nevada (-53 %). During the next reappraisal cycle in these states, local officials will have to face either draconian cuts to local budgets, or significant increases in nominal tax rates.

The outlook for Tennessee local governments, while less challenging than in many other states, will still require historically new strategies to deal with the prospect of historically low increases in taxable assessments during the next reappraisal cycle. No longer will the reappraisal cycle provide local officials with a cakewalk in raising new local property tax revenue. Local property tax revenue has risen over time primarily as a result of growing property values (and therefore taxable assessments). This has in many cases allowed nominal property tax rates themselves to remain fairly stable over a long period of time.

The combined effect of recent multi-year declines in local sales tax collections and the threat of required future property tax rate increases poses future funding problems for local governments. The availability of federal stimulus money and deliberate state funding decisions favoring K-12 education (at the expense of other state programs) helped stabilize K-12 spending over the last three years. However future K-12 program funding will be problematic.

This report will be updated as new information becomes available. It can be found at <http://www.tn.gov/tacir/Special%20html%20Reports/slowdown.html>

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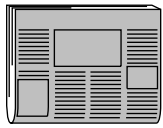
- 40,575 municipal employees for workers' compensation representing more than \$951.7 million in annual payroll exposures;
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**CITY MANAGER**

**CROSSVILLE.** The city is seeking resumes' for the position of City Manger. Looking for accomplished, assertive, and forward thinking individual with a strong emphasis on current knowledge of municipal finance, economic development, growth and management and transportation issues. Strong interpersonal and communication skills a must. This position is under the general guidance of the mayor and four-member council, and is responsible for overseeing an annual budget. The position exercises responsibility for planning, organizing, leading and controlling (through Department Managers) the activities of 165 full-time employees providing a broad range of services for the city through the following departments: Finance, City Administration; Central Staff; Police; Fire; Public Works; Recreation; Human Resources and Customer Service. Responsible for the development and implementation of operating policies and procedures and for monitoring compliance. Insures that city programs operate within state and federal laws. Works with mayor and council in overall program planning and policy development for the city. Must be able to interface with industry heads, the public, media and a variety of governmental boards and organizations. Requires a minimum B.S. or M.S. in Public Administration or a related field plus 10 years of successful experience in a senior management position, such position having had fiscal responsibility, human resource responsibility and long range planning responsibility. Salary is market competitive (range Min. 72,933 to a Max. \$109,400). Salary negotiable DOQ. The City of Crossville offers a benefits package which includes, group health, dental, and life insurance as well as retirement and vacation and sick leave. Candidate must pass a physical and post employment offer drug screen. Moving expenses negotiable. Resumes' may be sent to Sally Oglesby, City Clerk, City of Crossville, 99 Municipal Ave., Crossville, TN 38555 or emailed to sloglesby@crossvilletn.gov. The deadline for accepting resumes will be at the close of business (4 p.m.) on September 8, 2011. The City of Crossville is an EEO/Affirmative action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion, color, disability or national origin.

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**JOHNSON CITY.** The city is taking applications for an innovative and experienced Director of Parks and Recreation. The position is responsible for leading a staff of 63 employees and managing a \$3.42 million department budget. Candidates should possess strong interpersonal and communication skills; demonstrated leadership experience; extensive experience of a progressively responsible nature in organized parks and recreational activi-

ties. Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university required. Send a confidential resume and application to City of Johnson City, Human Resources Department, P.O. Box 2150, Johnson City, TN 37605. Visit our website at [www.johnsoncitytn.org](http://www.johnsoncitytn.org) to access an application, and view the full ad and job description. EOE

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**JOHNSON CITY.** The city is looking for an innovative and experienced Planning and Development Director. The position is responsible for leading a staff of 28 employees and managing a \$2.5 million department budget. This position oversees planning, building codes, development, GIS and M.T.P.O. Candidates should possess: strong interpersonal and communication skills; demonstrated leadership experience; extensive experience of a progressively responsible nature in planning, community development and building codes; and a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, master's degree preferred. Send a confidential resume and application to City of Johnson City, Human Resources Department, P.O. Box 2150, Johnson City, TN 37605. Visit our website at [www.johnsoncitytn.org](http://www.johnsoncitytn.org) to access an application, and view the full ad and job description. EOE

**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**GOODLETTSVILLE.** This growing suburban community adjacent to Metro Nashville, is seeking a dynamic, energetic individual with proven leadership skills for this Department Head position. The ideal candidate is a creative, innovative individual with the skills to plan, organize and direct the activities and operations of the department including: Street Maintenance/Repair, Vehicle Fleet maintenance, Solid Waste and Recycling Collection/Disposal, Sewer Collection system operation/maintenance, and storm water regulation / maintenance. In addition the Director will work closely with consultants and contractors on various capital improvement and construction projects including design and plan reviews. Minimum requirements: bachelor's

degree in related field; ten years of experience in the field of Public Works operations, including five years of progressively responsible supervisory experience, or any combination of education and experience to provide a thorough knowledge of public works management practices. Position must be able to effectively and tactfully communicate with staff, the public, elected officials and consultants. Position requires a team player who can work well with other city departments, the City Manager, the City Commission and outside agencies. Candidate must have the ability to obtain valid TN driver's license. Deadline for receipt of applications: All interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter along with five (5) personal and five (5) professional references to: City of Goodlettsville, Human Resources Dept.; 105 South Main Street, Goodlettsville, TN 37072. Or e-mail to [dfreeman@cityofgoodlettsville.org](mailto:dfreeman@cityofgoodlettsville.org) no later than August 31, 2011. To view a recruitment flyer and complete job description, visit [www.cityofgoodlettsville.org](http://www.cityofgoodlettsville.org). The city of Goodlettsville is an EEO/AA/TITLE VI/SECTION 504/ADA/ADEA EMPLOYER

**POLICE CHIEF**

**SPRINGFIELD.** The city is accepting applications for Police Chief. Individual will plan, organize and direct the activities of the Police Department under a Council/Manager form of government. Previous Chief retired with 21 years of service in the position. The Police Department consists of 39 POST certified officers and is one of the first in the state to be accredited by the Tennessee Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Bachelor's degree with a major in criminal justice, public administration, business administration or a related field required. A minimum of 15 years experience in law enforcement, with at least 10 years of supervisory experience above the rank of sergeant required. Master's degree in criminal justice can be substituted for two years of supervisory experience. Salary range \$57,013 - \$77,771 (DOQ). Applications must be received by Thursday, September 15, at the following address: P. O Box 788, Springfield, TN, 37172. The City of Springfield is an AA/EOE employer.

## TENNESSEE FESTIVALS



**Sept. 2-4: Nashville**

*73<sup>rd</sup> National Folk Festival*  
Held Labor Day weekend at the Bicentennial Capitol Mall. Free admission. Celebrates the roots, richness and variety of American culture featuring a broad array of music and dance performances: Kurdish, Cajun, Blues, Irish, Mariachi, R&B and Bluegrass. Break dancing featured on six stages. Workshops, children's activities, regional and ethnic foods, storytelling, parades, craft exhibits, demonstrations, and more. For more information, visit [www.nationalfolkfestival.com](http://www.nationalfolkfestival.com) or call 615-891-4944.

**Sept. 5: Harrogate**

*Annual Labor Day Celebration*  
Harrogate City Park at 3 p.m. with kids' games, live bands, food, crafts and business fair. Spectacular fireworks display at 9 p.m. For more information, call Harrogate City Hall at 423-869-0211.

**Sept 8: Clifton**

2011 Horseshoe Riverbend Festival Main Street. Thursday is Children's Night with a carnival and family-friendly events. Friday: enjoy the wonderful food vendors and arts and crafts. Dance the night away with live music and entertainment. Saturday: all day music and spectacular fireworks show. For more information, call Gina or Tommy at 931-676-3311.

**Sept. 9-11: Nashville**

*Italian Lights Festival*  
2750 Tucker Road. Located on the campus of St. Pius X, just five minutes from downtown Nashville. Free admission. Among the many events will be: grape stomping, wine garden, food pavilion with fantastic Italian cuisine, Kids Zone, music, wine tasting, Bocce Tournament on Saturday, fine arts, face painting, great parking, arts & crafts, gelato, Tea for Two with Mother Goose. For a complete schedule of events, visit <http://www.italianlights.org/schedule.html>.

**Sept. 9-10: Millington**

*22nd Annual International Goat Days Festival*  
Free admission. This fun-filled fam-

ily festival not only promotes the goat, but helps many worthy causes and charities. A huge variety of entertainment, Bluegrass music, children's fishing rodeo, goat milking demonstrations, contests, goat chariot race, parade, games, food and much more. For more information, e-mail [goatdays@bigriver.net](mailto:goatdays@bigriver.net) or call 901-873-5770.

**Sept. 16-18: Bristol**

*Rhythm and Roots Festival*  
On State Street in Historic Downtown Bristol. Four outdoor stages, one dance tent and 16 indoor venues. Enjoy artists Robert Randolph & the Family Band, Railroad Earth, Marty Stuart and John Oates w/18 South. Kids free activities on Sat. inflatables, youth musicians, games, rock climbing wall and much more. For more information, visit the website [www.bristolrhythm.com](http://www.bristolrhythm.com) or call Leah Ross at 423-573-4898

**Sept. 16-18: LaVergne**

*Old Timers Festival*  
Held at Veterans Memorial Park off Murfreesboro Rd. Free admission. Enjoy the crafts, rides, music, food, beauty pageant. A parade with Grand Marshall Channel 4 Newscaster, Larry Flowers, begins at 10 a.m. at City Hall, 5093 Murfreesboro Road. Old Time Gospel Homecoming on Sun.. For more information, visit the city website at [www.lavergnetn.gov/otd/#locate](http://www.lavergnetn.gov/otd/#locate).

**Sept. 16 -17: Tellico Plains**

*Ed Fest 2011 Music Festival*  
Hwy 68 & Cherohala Skyway. A weekend filled with games, music, food and fun for everyone. Attendees will not only enjoy the best music of East Tennessee throughout the day, but also fun, family entertainment. Enjoy the cuisine that our local restaurants have to offer at a Taste of East Tennessee, Arts & Crafts, Beauty Pageant, exhibits, Tennessee Meth Task Force Educational Trailer and much more. For more information, visit the website [www.edfest2011.webs.com](http://www.edfest2011.webs.com).

## Register now for the 58th Annual Governor's Conference on Economic and Community Development Sept. 22-23

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 58th Annual Governor's Conference on Economic and Community Development Sept. 22-23, 2011 at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel.

Join hundreds of state and local officials, business leaders, economic developers and more for unparalleled networking and the sharing of best practices. Working together we can build real solutions for creating jobs and growing Tennessee's economy.

Online registration for full attendees, spouses, students, luncheons, exhibitors and sponsors is available on the site at [www.tn.gov/](http://www.tn.gov/)

[ecd/GovConf11/index.html](http://ecd/GovConf11/index.html). Please note that once payments are processed no refunds will be available.

You may substitute another person at any time by submitting written authorization. All fees must be paid by 12 p.m. CDT on Sept. 19 in order to receive the early rate. For assistance with registration, email [tnecd@condorregistration.net](mailto:tnecd@condorregistration.net).

Also, don't forget to make hotel reservations at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel. Attendees are eligible for special room rates of \$110 for a single and \$130 for a double. These special rates are only available as occupancy permits or until 5 p.m. CDT on Sept. 2. To make reservations call 1-800-327-6618 or 615-255-8400 and mention "Governor's



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# Federal debt deal is short on details

**DEBT** *from Page 1*  
fate of Medicaid, the joint state-federal health insurance program serving more than 60 million poor Americans. That’s because Medicaid is generally the biggest item in state budgets. In the short term, the debt deal appears to spare Medicaid from immediate cuts in federal support. What’s more, Medicaid was specifically exempted from a “trigger” mechanism that would reduce spending automatically if the special congressional committee does not achieve its deficit-reduction goals.

Still, some governors are worried that deep cuts to Medicaid could be an outcome of the committee’s work. Connecticut Governor Dan Malloy, a Democrat, told reporters Monday that cuts made to Medicaid after 2013 could be “devastating” to his state and others. Most states already are being squeezed by Medicaid, with enrollments rising because of high unemployment and a sputtering economy.

Another area state officials are watching is transportation. Although no specific infrastructure cuts were outlined in the debt deal, discretionary spending is expected to be slashed as a result of it, and federal money for highways, roads

and bridges could be among the biggest targets.

At the very least, investments that the Obama administration hoped to make in infrastructure are likely to be scaled back or eliminated. For instance, Obama earlier this year pitched a \$32 billion competitive grant program for states that update their transportation policies by, among other things, cracking down on distracted drivers. But with such a big price tag, the idea could fall victim to the debt deal’s required budget cuts.

In the long run, a large number of state programs funded with discretionary federal dollars could be at risk of cutbacks or elimination. Discretionary funds help to pay for a wide range of state activities in the areas of education, housing, criminal justice and community development. In total, states rely on the federal government for one of every three dollars in their budgets. Roughly one-third of that amount comes from discretionary funding sources.

**Some wanted more cuts**

Some tea party-backed governors complained the deal in Washington did not sufficiently restrain

spending. “They have not cut enough,” Florida Governor Rick Scott said at a press conference on Monday. “The federal government’s got to live within its means .... If we don’t, there’s a day of reckoning at some point.”

Nikki Haley, South Carolina’s Republican governor, echoed that sentiment. She posted on her Facebook page, “From a governors perspective, the latest DC compromise does not freeze spending, does not require that DC balance the budget, and still keeps us in jeopardy of being down graded. It’s not a time to celebrate but a time to get serious about the results we produce for the good of our country.”

The most common response from state officials, however, was to play wait-and-see. In Delaware, Democratic Governor Jack Markell said he will be watching carefully to see what the long-term impact will be on social programs, where costs can easily be shifted to the states. “The broad outlines of the federal deal are becoming clear, but there are a lot of details that still need to be worked out,” says Brian Selander, chief strategy officer for Markell. “It’s those details that make the business of governing complicated.”

# Preservation grants awarded to communities

The Tennessee Historical Commission announced Historic Preservation Fund grants for 28 community organizations for programs and activities that support the preservation of historic and archaeological sites, districts and structures.

The grants awarded come from federal funds allocated by the Department of Interior under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. The programs in Tennessee authorized by this Act are administered by the Tennessee Historical Commission. The grants pay for up to 60 percent of the costs of approved project work and the grant recipient must provide the remaining 40 percent of the costs as matching funds.

This year’s selection process emphasized projects conducting architectural, archaeological and historic site surveys. Such projects are designed to identify and to record historic districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects built before 1960 that are significant to Tennessee’s history. Surveys could be for a specific geographic area or for sites associated with themes or events significant in the state’s history. Priorities for funding survey projects included areas experiencing rapid growth and development, other threats to cultural resources, areas where there are serious gaps in knowledge regarding cultural resources, and thematic surveys based upon existing historic study units produced by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Assistance also was made available for other types of historic preservation projects, including preservation planning studies for towns, neighborhoods and historic districts; the preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places; planning or pre-development work necessary to undertake restoration of a historic property; and restoration of historic properties. For restoration or restoration pre-planning, properties must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The FY 2011-2012 grant recipients include:

**In Carroll County:**

- City of McKenzie - \$9,000 to fund an architectural and historic survey of the city of McKenzie.

**In Claiborne County:**

- Claiborne County Historical and Genealogical Society - \$10,000 for the exterior restoration and repair of the Historic Claiborne County Jail.

**In Davidson County:**

- University of Tennessee Department of Anthropology - \$17,984 to continue funding an archaeological survey of the Bells Bend area, along the Cumberland River.
- Inglewood Neighborhood Association - \$9,000 to fund a survey and prepare nominations for historic districts in East Nashville’s Inglewood neighborhood for possible inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Middle Tennessee State University – \$12,675 for the creation of a comprehensive radiocarbon-based chronology for prehistoric shell-bearing sites along the Middle Cumberland River. The project also will include National Register documentation.
- Ladies’ Hermitage Association -

\$15,000 for the restoration of President Andrew Jackson’s tomb.

**In Fentress County:**

- East Tennessee State University - \$9,257 to fund an archaeological survey of the bluff lines in the Jim Creek area adjacent to Pickett State Forest.

**In Giles County:**

- Southern Tennessee Area Arts Repertory - \$6,000 for a condition assessment and restoration plan for the Pulaski Opera House.

**In Hancock County:**

- Hancock County Historical and Genealogical Society - \$11,000 for the restoration of the 1860 Old Hancock County Jail, including masonry work and roof replacement.

**In Knox County:**

- Airplane Filling Station Preservation Association, Inc. - \$24,000 to complete the next phase of restoration, including electrical wiring, plumbing, HVAC installation, handicapped access, metal repair and roofing.

**In McMinn County:**

- City of Niota - \$12,000 for the restoration of the Niota Depot, including repairs to the floor joists in the City Hall area of the building and replacement of the external platform.

**In Morgan County:**

- Historic Rugby, Inc. - \$20,000 for the exterior restoration of Newberry House, including structural repairs, masonry work and painting.

**In Shelby County:**

- Memphis Landmarks Commission - \$30,000 for an architectural and historical survey of the city of Memphis, with a focus on cemeteries. An additional \$6,000 was awarded to the Commission to help fund its participation in the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Assistance and Mentoring Program meeting.

**In Warren County:**

- Rock Island State Park / Tennessee State Parks - \$30,000 for the restoration of the Great Falls Mill, including a new metal roof.

**In Washington County:**

- State of Franklin Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution - \$5,050 for an architectural and historical survey of the city of Jonesborough, in areas outside of the established historic district.

**In Williamson County:**

- City of Franklin - \$3,000 to fund a survey and prepare nominations for the Franklin City and Rest Haven cemeteries for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Multi-County Grants:**

- Tennessee Division of Archaeology - \$36,788 to fund a survey of Rosenwald Schools located throughout the state, involving schools built throughout the United States primarily for the education of African-Americans in the twentieth century.
- Tennessee Preservation Trust - \$15,000 to fund the 2012 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference.
- Middle Tennessee State University / Department of Geography - \$20,000 to digitize data for historic and architectural survey files.
- Upper Cumberland Institute / Tennessee Technological Institute - \$15,000 to fund computerization of historic and architectural survey

data files.

- South Central Tennessee Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the SCTDD.
- East Tennessee Development District - \$32,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the ETDD
- First Tennessee Development District - \$25,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the FTDD.
- Greater Nashville Regional Council - \$25,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the GNRC.
- Southeast Tennessee Development District - \$52,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the SETDD.
- Southwest Tennessee Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the SWTDD.
- Upper Cumberland Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the UCDD.

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

# Sandwich shop grants funds to first responders

Grant deadline Sept. 15



A sandwich restaurant chain founded by firefighters now is providing \$250,000 in grants to 20 fire departments in several states. Two of the grants approved on June 28 by the Jacksonville, Fla.-based Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation will go to benefit first responders in parts of Alabama that were devastated by a deadly tornado in April.

The grants will go to fire and police departments and EMS organizations in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Indiana, Tennessee, Texas, Nevada and Utah.

The grants to tornado-stricken communities in Alabama come from a special fund-raising promotion the sandwich chain ran through May in which customers could "round up" their bill to the nearest dollar and contribute the difference to tornado victims. "Our local heroes need to be prepared at a moment's notice to protect and save lives," said Robin Peters, executive director of Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation. "Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, with the support of our restaurants, is dedicated to equipping, educating and funding first responders."

In 2005, Firehouse Subs, founded by former firefighting brothers Chris Sorensen and Robin Sorensen, created the non-profit Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, to provide funding, equipment and educational opportunities to first responders. The foundation has given more than

\$2.2 million to fire and police departments and EMS organizations. The foundation plans to allocate another round of grants in October with a Sept. 15 deadline to submit grant request forms.

Please take a moment to review the following grant pre-qualifications:

- Must be a public safety entity
- Must be located within 30 miles of a Firehouse Subs restaurant
- Request cannot exceed \$20,000 (average donation is worth \$10,000)
- Must be a direct request (not a second party applicant)
- All applications must be mailed and received by the closing date. No e-mail or faxed applications will be accepted.
- If your department has already received funding from our Foundation, you must wait a minimum of one year before submitting another application

For more information on the Firehouse Sub Foundation and grant process go to [www.firehousesubs.com/FoundationOverview.aspx](http://www.firehousesubs.com/FoundationOverview.aspx)

# NLC files FCC comments

**FCC** *from Page 1*  
be “a priority” for local governments across the nation, recognizing that this can make communities “more competitive, trigger economic development and improve the delivery of government services.”

The coalition believes that “the commission should work cooperatively with its state and local partners” and urges the FCC to reestablish intergovernmental boards and task forces to increase broadband deployment “instead of regulating state and local practices.”

The coalition urged its members

to file individual comments detailing their communities’ experiences.

Anyone concerned about local government’s ability to provide for the safety of residents and security of facilities located in the public rights-of-way, absent additional federal, state or corporate interference, should read the questions included in the NOI. The industry arguments and attacks on local control of rights-of -way have clearly penetrated the consciousness of the FCC commissioners. Take this opportunity to fight for local control.

Reply comments must be submitted by August 30.

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# Rain Gardens go viral; compliments of Athens Public Works

*Homespun video provides valuable lesson about water quality*

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

The next time you admire a rain garden, there’s a chance you could have the Athens Public Works Department to thank for it. In late July, the department’s director, Shawn Lindsey, decided to take the city’s message connecting rain gardens with improved water quality to a broader audience by posting an educational video the department wrote and co-produced to YouTube, where so far, it’s received hundreds of hits.

“We have a problem in this state with water pollution and flooding and we’ve got to go back to those places where we’ve built things and created these problems,” said Lindsey. “We need to get those places to retain water. And we can do that through rain gardens.”

Filmed by a local production company that’s worked with the city before on other projects, the video’s top notch photography, folksy background music and homespun narrative by popular “Heartland” Series host Bill Landry, lends a professional quality to the spot, which Lindsey notes only cost the department \$1,000 through an EPA grant.

“We wrote the script ourselves,



*Athens Public Works video, Rain Gardens, stresses while people were building cities and other developments, the land was covered with impervious materials that could not absorb rain water. Pipes were built and drains to carry the water away, which caused flooding in streams that received the extra storm water. Pollution was also created, resulting in hazards for man and wildlife and important bio-systems.*

and after he heard about what we were doing, Bill Landry came on board wanting to be a part of it,” Lindsey notes. “He had the professional expertise to take our script and make it more appealing to our audience. If you want to save costs in making these videos, write what you want to say with power point and get volunteers to be your actors.”

Aiming for at least 1,000 YouTube hits in 10 days, Lindsey’s ultimate goal is to get Athens’ *Rain Garden* video on television. “The general public watches more TV than ever before, five or six hours a day,” he said. “I believe it will encourage many to build rain gardens and use smarter growth practices. I would like everyone in the state to have a chance to watch it and for it to be played in every classroom.”

**Water quality and flooding**

Over the last several years, Athens has taken a serious stand about flooding and water quality issues throughout the community. A study indicated flooding problems due to increased run off from urban development and an increase of impervious surfaces. Other problems include eroding creek banks to volume and velocity increase because of in-

creased development and loss of habitat.

The city decided to bring stake holders and decision makers together to talk about the problems and agree upon solutions. TVA funded these work sessions, which cost about \$30,000, resulting in Athens’ “Plan of Action to Improve Water Quality and Quantity Issues.” Among the plan’s components, is a decision to adopt subdivision regulation and zoning to encourage green development and regional detention. The city proposed building neighborhood detention areas to stop localized flooding and building regional detention ponds to stop regional flooding.

“We’ve been spending the last three or four years in Athens trying to build the largest detention ponds to hold back flooding, and they work great,” Lindsey said. “But there’s only so much room to do that. You can’t fix it by building big detention ponds and big regional detention facilities alone, you’re going to have to build small rain gardens everywhere. The rain garden gives everyone the chance to be part of the solution.”

The city’s goal, to build 250 local rain gardens, includes grants to residents for city crews to design, excavate, and give homeowners composted wood and leaf mulch to use in rain gardens. “We used part of our grant to build a few rain gardens,” said Lindsey. “Every time we build one, it seems to spark interest in five or six more people to build one of their own.” Other infiltration technologies for storm water run off are also taking shape throughout the city and the region.

“We’ve installed bio-retention swales, buffers around sink holes—there are a lot of different things that can be counted as rain gardens,” said Lindsey. “Once you know the principals, you can design many applications in various areas.” As an example, a new road, bio-retention swale and rain garden constructed at Athens Regional Park will be used to help showcase the use of rain gardens on projects to control run off.



*Using a \$30,000 grant from the TVA, TDEC, and the Southeastern Watershed Forum, the city of Athens, along with the area’s YMCA, built a 100 percent green parking lot. A rain garden for retention was one of six green development principals utilized in the project. Local Eagle Scouts contributed to the rain garden planting and informational kiosk that sports a living roof.*



Photo by Randall Higgins

*Foliage and a walking trail are part of the new wetlands garden at the E.G. Fisher Library in Athens.*

A new rain garden project at the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum features a tri-level outdoor patio of natural and permeable materials. The plaza hides a retention pond beneath its pervious surface. The water flows into a rain garden at the bottom of the plaza, then into a catch basin.

The city recently celebrated a new wetlands project at the E.G. Fisher Public Library which includes seven ecological zones. Accompanying an arboretum walk beside Oostanaula Creek and an amphitheater, the project, developed with EPA funds, has transformed a grassy field into a garden spot with shallow water, wildflowers, geese and other wildlife, all within a few steps of the library. When the creek overflows, the rainwater goes into the wetland where hundreds of na-

tive plants soak it up.

“Both projects had very creative funding sources combining in-kind labor, volunteers, federal grants from the EPA and TVA, private donations, local industry support and funds from UT Extension and Tennessee Wesleyan College,” Lindsey said. “We’ve got the money to plant the seeds, and each rain garden we build sparks more interest. It’s also a continuing learning process. If you talked to me a year ago about rain gardens, what I know today is ten-fold what I knew a year ago.”

Lindsey says Tennessean’s can support Athens’ *Rain Gardens* video by sending the link to friends or posting the video’s link to other websites when possible.

To watch the video *Rain Gardens*, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9MZUs2FGs8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9MZUs2FGs8)

## What are Rain Gardens?

Bioretention areas, or rain gardens, are landscaping features adapted to provide on-site treatment of stormwater runoff. They are commonly located in parking lot islands or within small pockets of residential land uses. Surface runoff is directed into shallow, landscaped depressions. These depressions are designed to incorporate many of the pollutant removal mechanisms that operate in forested ecosystems.

During storms, runoff ponds above the mulch and soil in the system. Runoff from larger storms is generally diverted past the facility to the storm drain system. The remaining runoff filters through the mulch and prepared soil mix. The filtered runoff can be collected in a perforated under drain and returned to the storm drain system.

**Landscaping**

Landscaping is critical to the function and aesthetic value of bioretention areas. It is preferable to plant the area with native vegetation, or plants that provide habitat value. Another important design feature is to select species that can withstand the hydrologic regime they will experience. Plants that tolerate both wet and dry conditions are preferable. Finally, it is best to select a combination of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous materials.

**A Word About Mosquitoes**

Mosquitoes won’t find rain gardens to be good breeding areas because if a rain garden is properly constructed, the water will drain within 24 hours (but usually within an hour or two). The Culex mosquito, the primary variety that can transmit West Nile virus to humans, prefers to breed in small, stagnant containers of water. These are usually old tires, pots,



A rain garden at Harvey Park in Spring Hill has become an environmentally smart solution for reducing the amount of polluted runoff entering McCutcheon Creek, a certified blueline stream. A blueline stream is one that flows continuously throughout the year.

birdbaths and pans under planters.

The development of a mosquito, from egg to adult takes 10 to 14 days depending on the air temperature. The warmer the air the shorter time the eggs take to mature. It takes 24 - 48 hours for eggs to hatch. After the eggs hatch the mosquito larva must live in water for 7 -12 days.

**Maintaining a Rain Garden**

Rain gardens are not completely maintenance-free. After your rain garden is planted and established, you may never need to water it or add any type of fertilizer or pesticide. It is important, however, to weed, clean-up and re-mulch the garden in the early spring and fall.

The most important work during the first year of the rain garden is watering and weeding. A young garden will need about an inch of water per week until it is established. All rain gardens need constant weeding and replenishing of mulch. As the garden matures, weeds will be pushed out by the growing plants. The mulch will need to be raked

periodically and replenished or freshened every spring.

In the spring, you will need to clean-up the rain garden by removing any dead material and replenishing the mulch. In the fall, it is important to remove some of the dead vegetation. You might wish to leave some of the material and seed bearing plants for bird habitat in the winter.

For more resources and information about rain gardens and storm water management, visit the Rain Garden Network website at [www.raingardennetwork.com/network.htm](http://www.raingardennetwork.com/network.htm) or the Municipal Technical Advisory Service at [www.mtas.tennessee.edu/public/web.nsf/Web/Stormwater+BMP](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/public/web.nsf/Web/Stormwater+BMP)

For a national menu of storm water best management practices, visit the EPA website at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/index.cfm>

*Materials provided by ETA and Biohabitats, (1993) and The Rain Garden Network.*

## EPA launches new strategy to promote the use of green infrastructure

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) launched a new strategy to promote the use of green infrastructure by cities and towns to reduce storm water runoff that pollutes the nation’s streams, creeks, rivers, lakes and coastal waters. Green infrastructure decreases pollution to local waterways by treating rain where it falls and keeping polluted storm water from entering sewer systems. In addition to decreasing water pollution, green infrastructure provides increased economic activity and neighborhood revitalization, job creation, energy savings and increased recreational and green space.

Large volumes of polluted storm water degrade the nation’s rivers, lakes and aquatic habitats and contribute to downstream flooding. Green infrastructure captures and filters pollutants by passing storm water through soils and retaining it on site.

Effective green infrastructure tools and techniques include green roofs, permeable materials, alterna-

tive designs for streets and buildings, trees, rain gardens and rain harvesting systems.

Energy savings is one of the greatest benefits of green infrastructure. On and around buildings, green infrastructure can reduce heating and cooling costs, and also conserves energy by reducing the amount of storm water entering combined collection and treatment systems, which reduces the amount of wastewater processed at treatment plants.

EPA will continue to work with federal agencies, state and local governments, tribes, municipalities and the private sector to identify opportunities for using green infrastructure and provide assistance to communities implementing green approaches to control storm water.

EPA will also provide additional tools to help states and communities leverage green infrastructure opportunities within other innovative environmental projects. For more information on EPA’s green infrastructure agenda: <http://epa.gov/greeninfrastructure>.