



TML District Meetings continue in January

District 7	January 10 9 - 11 a.m.	City Hall Medina
District 8	January 11 9 - 11 a.m.	The Chamber Center Covington

TML staff will be on hand to present updates on the latest events and news affecting municipalities at the state and national levels. For more information, contact TML at 615-255-6416.

State's economic recovery improving at modest rate

BY CAROLE GRAVES
TML Communications Director

The state's economic conditions continue to improve, with November revenue collections coming in 4.5 percent higher than last year.

State finance officials were given the news during the Tennessee State Funding Board meeting held earlier this month in Nashville.

Commissioner Emkes reported that November collections were \$11.0 million more than the budgeted estimate with year-to date collections for four months up \$71.0 million more than projected.

"It's important to remember we won't see how 'Black Friday' and after-Thanksgiving retail sales performed until this time next month, when we've collected revenues for November spending," said Emkes.

Several of the state's expert economists also provided revenues projections for the current budget year, as well as made predictions for FY 12-13. Economists described the state's economic recovery as improving at a modest rate.

"We continue to expect a moderate pace of economic growth over the coming quarters and consequently anticipate that the unemployment rate will gradually decline," said Lee Jones, vice president Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. "There are significant downside risks to the economic outlook, however, including a stuck housing market, unemployment and exposure to foreign markets."

Jones reported that nationally sales tax revenues for Thanksgiving weekend were up by 7.5 percent over last year and in the Southeast region it was even higher – an 8.5 percent increase.

"Retail sales are coming in strong," Jones said. "The big question is whether they will continue throughout the holiday season. But we are cautiously optimistic going forward."

Robert Currey, chief economist with the legislative Fiscal Review Committee, reported that nationally the unemployment rate has dropped to 8.6 percent and that unemployment insurance claims for the state

See **ECONOMY** on Page 4

Congress repeals three percent withholding

BY LARSETZKORN
Nation's Cities Weekly

Legislation repealing 3 percent withholding as passed by the House last week awaits President Obama's signature.

The House passed the repeal after the Senate voted 95-0 to do in November. The President is expected to sign the legislation supported by NLC.

In a rare showing of bipartisan agreement, no House or Senate member voted against repealing the law.

While never implemented because of numerous deferrals since 2005, the provision would have mandated that federal, state and local governments withhold three percent from the payment for most goods and services and remit it directly to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), to ensure payment of federal taxes.

"As NLC pushed repeal for a long time, I'm pleased Congress finally realized the mechanisms to collect taxes and punish bad actors are already in place, instead of passing on to cities the job of IRS agents," said David Hooks, chair of

NLC's Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR) Policy and Advocacy Committee, and council member, Gadsden, Ala.

NLC, with its public and private sector coalition partners, argued that implementation of 3 percent withholding imposed significant unfunded financial and administrative burdens for local governments.

"Many governments do not have existing systems to handle a large increase in additional information reporting or that contain modules that can withhold and remit monies for each payment made," said Ronald Green, member, NLC's FAIR Committee, and Houston city controller.

In addition, NLC called for repeal because of withholding's inflationary and anti-competitive effects for smaller businesses.

"Companies would have likely passed the withholding along in increased prices when dealing with governments," said Chris Hoene, director of NLC's Center for Research and Innovation. "In turn, bids to cities would have been higher and smaller businesses competing for government business would have been unfairly disadvantaged."

Columbia's Ridley Park awarded TCAPWA project of the year

BY JENNIFER MOODY
Columbia Assistant City Manager

Columbia's Ridley Park Project was recently presented with the Project of the Year award by the Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association (TCAPWA).

Each year TCAPWA recognizes a project in a Tennessee city that "epitomizes outstanding planning, construction, and management." Moreover, the project will now become the State Chapter's nomination for the National American Public Works Association Top Ten Projects of the Year.

Columbia's Ridley Park is an impressive, 78-acre, state-of-the-art complex featuring 12 multi-purpose athletic fields, including four 300-foot fields that may be used for either

adult softball or youth baseball and six 200-foot fields that can accommodate girls fast pitch softball and Little League baseball. Additionally, 40 acres of the site are reserved for future development into a soccer complex as the need for the fields develops. Since opening in April 2011, the complex has become a top-rated, regional destination for tournaments.

With the park's recent successes, it's easy to forget the facility was more than a decade in the making and faced many challenges that could have ended the project were it not for the community's determination to see it completed. The project began in early 2005, when the city of Columbia contracted with Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon, Inc. (BWSC), an architectural and engineering firm, to develop a mas-

Fire, police becoming part of Tennessee's modern family

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

They're there when you need them, 24/7, even on holidays. That's the message Johanna and Luke Paiva wished to convey along with baskets of assorted goodies the Wednesday before Thanksgiving at Franklin Fire Department's Station No.2. Two months ago, the Paiva's now 10-month-old baby boy, Jack, a little fireball with a feathery shock of strawberry blonde hair, suffered a sudden and unexpected medical emergency and Franklin's fire and police staff sprang into action.

What started out as a normal day for the Paiva family turned into every parent's nightmare when the usually playful little boy woke up from his naptime howling in pain. Jack's breathing turned shallow and his skin pale, as Johanna frantically dialed the pediatrician's office. While listening to the answering service's pre-recorded message, she felt the baby go limp in her arms. "His little face and lips turned white, his skin was cold and clammy, and he closed his eyes, and wouldn't open them when I called his name," Johanna recalls.

Paiva and her husband, Luke, placed Jack in the car and sped off to Williamson County Medical Center. As Luke, a police officer, tore



Photo by Victoria South

Ten-month-old Jack Paiva's parents wound up making the detour of their lives when the baby became seriously ill and unresponsive during an emergency ride to the hospital. Assessing the urgency of the situation, the 911 dispatcher instructed the Paivas to pull into Franklin's Fire Station number two where Jack received emergency assistance from the staff paramedic and fire personnel. On Nov. 23, the family returned to the fire department to thank the staff and dispatchers who helped them. Pictured: Jack, held by staff Engineer Andrew Ivey, tries on an oversized fire hat for size, as his mother Johannah Gilman Paiva and Franklin Fire Captain Clay Mackey look on.

through the Mack Hatcher/Cool Springs intersection, Jack grew even more pale and totally unresponsive. Dialing 911, Johanna tried desperately to revive the child screaming his name, as Williamson County 911 Dispatcher Anthony Sedlak an-

swered the call. "He remained calm, patient, and caring, determining our exact location," Paiva recalls. Assessing the urgency of the situation, Sedlak directed the distraught parents to pull over at nearby fire station

See **EMERGENCY** on Page 3

Governments learning the language of LEAN

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

When Chuck Parke first began distributing the Lean principals he learned at Nissan around other departments and industries, he received lots of push back. Procurement and customer service personnel said "We can't use this set of tools because it's not manufacturing." His former employer, TRW Inc., said "We can't do Lean because we're not Japanese—and Lean requires an oriental mindset."

"That's what the push back was, not from the hourly people, but from the managers," Parke recalls before a group of more than 50 attendees at the recent LEAN Conference, sponsored by the University of Tennessee Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership in partnership with the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE). But after years of successes, including a four-year stint with the U.S. Air Force, where he taught the overarching principals of Lean, Parke, executive director of UT's Center for Executive Education, is quick to inform skeptics that Lean works in any industry, application and culture. "Your organization has its own nuances," Parke stressed. "You have to bend and shape these tools to make them work for you."

The conference, *Improving Public Service: Application of Lean Principals*, featured a video spot from Mark Emkes, state commissioner of Finance and Administration, and a session with Walt Matwijec, assistant vice president for Continuous Improvement for the Metropolitan Nashville Airport

Authority.

Parke and guest speaker Keith Groves, from UT's Center for Industrial Services (CIS), identified Lean history, applications and tools along with the types of waste that plague most industries and organizations including government services.

"The whole idea behind Lean is to eliminate processes and things that don't add value," said Parke. "And by value, I mean for the customer." Lean is geared to produce a simpler, less complex working space and involves the reduction of steps required to complete vital processes.

"Typically 95 percent of all lead time is non-value-added," said Groves. Non-value added items include: inventory, defects, overproduction, waiting, non-standard work, transportation, intellect and motion. While business or organizational challenges can be complex, even mundane issues over time, such as sloppy departmental housekeeping, could increase overhead and drastically impede production.

"If I go to get my oil changed and it takes the technician 15-20 minutes to find his tools, that's non-value added time for me. I don't



Kathryn Rawls, president of the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence, greets attendees from state and local sectors at the recent LEAN conference, *Improving Public Service: Applications of Lean Principals*, in Nashville sponsored by the University of Tennessee Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership.

want to pay for that," Parke explains. "You tell someone in the production industry to go find a broom and 99 percent of the time they can't find one," Groves adds. "When you finish with the broom, where do you put it? Well—you have to hide it so nobody else will get it," Groves chides, as the audience roars with laughter.

Waste includes the failure to use individual's mental, creative, and physical abilities in organizational settings. "Ask yourself this question," said Parke. "Does the people at the lowest level of your organization

See **LEAN** on Page 6



Receiving the TCAPWA Project of the Year award are: Ron Harrison and Buddy Petty of Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc. with Columbia Parks Director Brian Borden, Public Works Director Ken Donaldson, and Assistant Public Works Director Jeff DeWire.

NEWS
ACROSS
TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

BRISTOL

Executives with the Kansas-based telecommunications company Sprint announced plans to move one of their call centers from Interstate 81’s Exit 7 in Bristol, Va., to a 48,500-square-foot facility that’s being built off state Route 394 in Bristol, Tenn. The building, which is being built less than 500 yards away from the Food City grocery store on state Route 394, will house the more than 600 employees who currently work at the Exit 7 call center and provide the company with room for future growth. Construction on this new facility will start during the first quarter of 2012. It will become fully operational by 2013 and sits just off Sprint Drive – a street so-named because it formerly housed a call center used by Sprint’s yellow pages operation.

BRISTOL

Approximately 250 full-time jobs will be eliminated at Bristol Compressors as part of a significant restructuring at the company. Company spokespersons report a “number of factors have made this action necessary, including a sluggish recovery from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, and the lowest level of new home sales in the past 40 years, which has reduced demand for Bristol’s products. Spokespersons said the restructuring plan is geared to further improve Bristol’s competitive positioning and enable Bristol to continue to provide its customers with high-quality products and service.

CHATTANOOGA

The bus system has a grant to buy three buses that are expected to vastly expand the range of electrically operated public transit in the city. A \$2.5 million federal grant will be used to buy new electric buses that can recharge in minutes and operate all day on city streets at about 20 percent of the cost of diesel buses. The Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) says the technology allows bus drivers to park over induction coils in a garage or buried beneath a street and recharge the batteries wirelessly in a few minutes. The technology is called wayside induction. The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga is working with CARTA to test the wireless charging technology. The new buses will recharge at the rate of one minute per mile. A driver on the three-mile tourism route downtown would recharge while picking up passengers at both ends of the circuit and, in theory, keep driving all day. The benchmark is what testers refer to as “one minute, one mile, one time.”

CHATTANOOGA

The Wrigley Manufacturing Company will add 54 new jobs locally when a \$409,244 expansion of its existing facility is completed. Hamilton County commissioners approved a grant awarded from Gov. Bill Haslam’s FastTrack Infrastructure Development Program to fund the gum and candy company’s expansion, including the addition of a rail spur. Headquartered in Chicago, Ill., Wrigley operates as a subsidiary of Mars, Inc., a private, family-owned company founded in 1911.

CLEVELAND

Dozens of agencies are taking part in the Tennessee Targeted Community Crime Reduction Grant programs. The \$800,000 grant, in its second year, targets what police call Sectors One and Two, the south and east areas of Cleveland. One part of the program to reduce crime rates and recidivism in the area is an elementary school class called Resisting Aggression Defensively. Law enforcement, the city and county school systems, city government and nonprofit agencies such as the Boys and Girls Club and the Bradley Initiative for Church and Community are working to bring down the crime rate in Sectors One and Two using funds from the grant.

COLUMBIA

Columbia State Community College has started buying triple-X Internet domains to keep porn sites from being associated with the college. The college is spending about \$1,000 to buy eight triple-X domains. It joins other Tennessee higher education institutions in making the move, including the University of Tennessee.

FRANKLIN

Aldermen have discussed details of a new contract between the city and the state Department of Transportation (TDOT) to build an access road off Lewisburg Pike and into the city’s 110-acre Civil War park off Carnton Lane. The project would cost around \$869,000 and the city would commit \$369,000. This summer, the state approved a \$500,000 grant to build the access road. In October, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area will give Franklin a \$240,000 grant to buy the kiosks, signs and brochures needed to help bring more visitors to the park. Aldermen also discussed details of a contract between the city, the state Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and the Harpeth River Watershed Association to remove a low-head dam on the Harpeth River, which is directly across Lewisburg Pike from the Eastern Flank of the Battle of Franklin Park. TDEC officials are pledging around \$189,000 in in-kind contributions, including actual removal of the dam, while a \$500,000 grant would pay for much of the work. Franklin’s share is estimated to be around \$309,000, but could be lowered to around \$275,000 with more in-kind donations.

GATLINBURG

The city has installed electric car charging stations in two downtown parking garages. The 240-volt Blink Wall Mount Chargers are part of the EV Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. The stations can fully recharge an electric car battery in four to eight hours. City Manager Cindy Cameron Ogle said the stations are critical to extending the driving range of electric vehicles to the town. Gatlinburg was a preferred site for the stations because the Smoky Mountains are popular with travelers.

KINGSPORT

AGC Flat Glass plans to shut down one of two production lines at its Blue Ridge Plant in Kingsport in the first quarter next year, impacting as many as 100 employees. A company spokesperson said the business has been negatively impacted by a big influx of imports from China. The plant’s “K1” furnace was scheduled

to be rebuilt in the spring. But AGC officials decided to delay the rebuild and shut down the line for some period of time. The plant employs 280 to 300 people. Of those, approximately 100 people are tied to the production line scheduled for closure. The plant manufactures glass for the solar industry.

MEMPHIS

Smith & Nephew Inc. laid off 80 employees in Memphis after the company combined the Memphis-based orthopedic reconstruction division and its Andover, Mass.-based endoscopy unit in July. The affected employees were given notice and “comprehensive severance packages and outplacement support,” according to a company spokesman. The move affected 150 employees globally. The London-based medical-device maker employs 2,000 to 2,100 here. The Memphis operation is now part of the company’s Advanced Surgical Devices division, the combination of the orthopedic and endoscopy businesses. According to a company statement, there were duplications in roles when bringing the two divisions together. “Couple that with a more challenging economic and regulatory environment in some of our more established markets; it’s an overall negative effect on our entire industry, not just Smith & Nephew.”

MEMPHIS

Memphis is scheduled to implement the 311 system for reaching non-emergency government services in the spring. The city plans to spend \$1.5 million to set up the first phase of the 311 system. Mayor A.C. Wharton hopes that first phase will be complete by March, with the entire system — at a cost of about \$5 million — in operation within two years. The operation will be housed at the main library, which already operates the 211 system that directs people to community resources. The first phase will include three city divisions: the mayor’s service center, public works and community enhancement. The remaining divisions could be added piecemeal or all at once. Unlike 911 service, there will be no fees for 311 on customers’ telephone bills. Memphis becomes the sixth Tennessee city — and the last of its four largest — to set up 311 service. The TRA says Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Dyersburg and Mt. Juliet already have the service.

MURFREESBORO

More than \$107 million is being pumped into 33 significant transportation projects in Rutherford County through 2015. The projects are among a five-year work plan, the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s transportation improvement plan for fiscal years 2011-2015. The MPO leads the region’s planning and funding efforts with the goal of creating a regional, multi-modal transportation system. That regional area currently includes 1.5 million people throughout Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, Wilson and parts of Maury and Robertson counties. While the Rutherford County list includes traditional road widening and interchange projects, it heavily focuses on alternative transportation, such as adding sidewalks, bicycle paths, bus transit improvements, bus equipment, traffic camera monitoring equipment and expansion of greenways. At least 19 of the Rutherford projects are within Murfreesboro.

MEMPHIS

Gift wrap maker Cleo is closing its 600-employee Memphis plant after



Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner John Schroer joined the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and state and local leaders in Maury County to celebrate the reopening of a section of State Route 7. The roadway has been closed since the May 2010 floods triggered a massive landslide that caused the road to collapse.

auctioning off the huge presses for scrap this fall. A small Minnesota firm is trying to edge into the gift wrap business by buying the \$7.5 million worth of equipment left by Cleo. The Industrial Development Board of Memphis and Shelby County approved tax abatements worth nearly \$1 million over six years for Impact Innovations Inc. of Clara City, Minn. The firm is considering locating a 25-employee plant and a related design and marketing office in Memphis, the Memphis suburb of Southaven or the Nashville suburb of Franklin. Owned most recently by CSS Industries Inc. of Philadelphia, Cleo prospered for years, employing more than 1,000 Memphis workers in a plant capable of producing a strip of gift wrap two billion feet long every year.

NASHVILLE

Nashville received a big donation, which will eventually help make the city even greener. Family members and friends of Cornelia Fort Airpark donated \$200,000 to the Open Space Fund. The money will go toward a master plan that calls for more parks and green areas around town. The city says the donation will help replenish the Open Space Fund, which will allow future land acquisitions to be made. The 135-acre Cornelia Fort Airpark in east Nashville will be the first acquisition for Nashville’s Open Space Master Plan and is now a part of the Shelby Bottoms park system. The National Resource Defense Council named Nashville one of 14 “Emerald cities” in the country for its green infrastructure policies and Open Space Plan.

NASHVILLE

The LifePoint hospital chain plans to switch addresses from Williamson to Davidson county, bringing hundreds of jobs and a boost in tax revenues to Metro government coffers. A new building that would total more than 200,000 square feet is planned on what’s currently an open field. LifePoint plans to consolidate offices that are spread across several buildings at Maryland Farms roughly three miles away across the county border in Williamson. The move would be a significant boost for the Seven Springs development, which has one building with room for several more.

NASHVILLE

Eager to reduce congestion while staring at an upcoming quarter-century of population growth, a group of mass transit leaders agreed that the city should start planning a bus rapid transit system that would run from East Nashville’s Five Points area to Harding and White Bridge roads in West Nashville. Transportation planners estimate the project would cost about \$136 million and it isn’t clear how much local funding would be needed. The study esti-

mates building a streetcar system would cost twice as much and draw only a few more riders.

OAKRIDGE

Oak Ridge leaders are taking steps toward a new development that could create more than a hundred jobs in the coming months. The city council recently revised its earlier decisions about Woodland Town Center. Plans call for moving forward on the development that will be located in the center of town on Illinois Avenue. It would include restaurants and eventually more businesses. The plan was approved three years ago, but funding and infrastructure were just finalized. The city has decided to abandon Quincy Street between South Illinois Avenue and South Purdue Avenue and use the land for the center. City officials note the development will create 135 construction jobs, while the restaurants should create an additional 100.

ROGERSVILLE

Sam Dong, Inc. has announced the company’s decision to locate a second manufacturing facility in Rogersville. The company will invest \$2.8 million over the next three years and create 85 production and maintenance jobs. Sam Dong, Inc. produces specialty magnet copper wiring products used in the production of transformers, motors and generators. The company’s second Rogersville facility will be located at 303 Thorpe’s Chapel Road. Headquartered in Eumseong, South Korea, Sam Dong, Inc. has three South Korean facilities and two in the U.S. The current facility employs 207 people and is the company’s first U.S. facility.

SPRING HILL

General Motors has announced it will begin building its Chevrolet Equinox at its idled Spring Hill plant next year and plans to begin making a 2015 midsize vehicle there in the future. GM will invest a total of \$244 million and create nearly 1,900 jobs. The initial \$61 million investment will create nearly 700 jobs. Production on the Equinox is scheduled to begin in the second half of 2012. The timing on the second vehicle was not announced.

TELFORD

Nakatetsu Machining Technologies has announced the decision to expand its Telford facility. The \$6.3 million investment will create 35 new manufacturing jobs and retain 60 at the plant. The company is a manufacturer of tapered roller bearings for the automotive industry. This latest expansion will allow the company to operate two additional production lines, which are expected to be installed in January 2012. The facility has been located in Telford since 2007.



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STATE BRIEFS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

TNTrade to boost exports

State officials announced an initiative designed to bolster Tennessee exports and offer modest help to small companies that want to sell products overseas, perhaps for the first time. The new trade program, TNTrade, was launched in Memphis, the city that government and business leaders praised as a leader in logistics. One key component would reimburse companies up to \$5,000 in export expenses to aid small and mid-sized companies that want to do business or expand sales overseas. State officials believe exports are concentrated too heavily in a few areas of Tennessee at this stage. The state’s export industry is expected to exceed \$30 billion this year, a 15 percent increase over 2010. A trade mission to China and South Korea to make contacts for Tennessee-based medical equipment manufacturers and other health-care interests is also on tap next spring.

Original Emancipation Proclamation coming to the State Museum

The original copy of the Emancipation Proclamation is coming to Tennessee in 2013, in a rare display marking the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the end of slavery. Gov. Bill Haslam announced an effort to bring the first Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Abraham Lincoln to Nashville, as part of an exhibition of Civil War documents at the Tennessee State Museum. The exhibition will cost about \$450,000. The document has been put on display in the Southeast only one previous time in the past half century. The display will be part of a six-month exhibit about the Civil War that will open at the state museum on Feb. 12, which is also Lincoln’s birthday. The proclamation — signed by Lincoln on Jan. 1, 1863 — ended slavery in the 11 Southern states that seceded from the Union.

Oct. unemployment rate drops

Tennessee’s October unemployment rate of 9.6 percent dropped slightly from the previous month. The September rate was 9.8 percent. The national unemployment rate for October was 9 percent. State Labor Commissioner Karla Davis says education and health services were two of the sectors fueling the employment hike. According to a survey of businesses, monthly employment increases came in local government education services, up 7,500 jobs; educational and health services was up 4,100; and trade, transportation and utilities increased by 2,600 jobs. From September to October, leisure and hospitality decreased by 2,000 jobs; mining, logging and construction was down 1,000; and financial activities declined by 800 jobs.

Wildlife headquarters underway

After two years of planning and design work, the construction of the new headquarters and visitor complex for the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge is under way. The 12,479-square-foot center is being built with funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). The new center will provide an administrative headquarters for both the Tennessee and Cross



Construction of a new headquarters and visitor complex for the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge is under way. The new headquarters is located on Britton Ford Peninsula of the Big Sandy Unit, a 15-minute drive from Paris.

Creeks National Wildlife refuges and will not only provide office spaces but a state of the art visitor center, auditorium, observation deck, nature book store and a classroom for environmental education programs. Construction of the building, as well as upgrading the access road and bringing utilities to the site, is expected to be completed by next fall.

Recession changes government

The aftershocks of the 2008 Great Recession are changing the face of Tennessee government, particularly its size. Most state functions are operating with almost 10 percent fewer workers now than before the downturn. Data compiled by legislative analysts shows there were 47,102 full-time positions supported by the general fund in the pre-recession 2007-08 budget. That has fallen to a projected 42,856 in the 2012 state budget that took effect July 1. The information is based on annual figures for the last five budget years compiled by the House and Senate finance committees and the Office of Legislative Budget Analysis. Figures exclude the Transportation Department, which is funded separately. That department lost 6.6 percent of its workers during the period and has 4,667 in the current budget. Higher education employees also weren’t included in the analysis. State legislative analysts estimated the share of the budget funded by state taxes and fees dropped some \$1.5 billion between fiscal year 2008 and FY 2012. Tennessee revenues are improving, but are still expected to come in short of FY 2008 levels until next year.

Officials explore ways to promote TN farmers and forester products

State agriculture officials are exploring various ways to promote Tennessee farmers’ and foresters’ products as part of a broader effort to spur economic development in rural areas. Among the ideas on the table: targeting agribusiness recruitment efforts, marketing lesser-known commodities and seeking “green” certification for building products from Tennessee. The Tennessee Agriculture and Forestry Economic Development Task Force has met twice since it was formed in October. The group is looking at several key concepts to better target agribusiness recruitment efforts by identifying which companies are most likely to relocate here or expand in Tennessee, then aggressively courting them. The state also

might take a role in a 12-state compact that promotes hardwood sales, which total \$300 million a year in Tennessee, by seeking LEED, Green Globe and other “green” certifications for Tennessee wood products.

THP radio system announced

The state has announced an agreement with Motorola Solutions Inc. for a statewide radio system for state troopers. Under \$39.2 million appropriated by the General Assembly, radios will be upgraded in the Tennessee Highway Patrol Chattanooga, Fall Branch and Knoxville districts. It’s the first phase of the project replacing a system more than 30 years old. Officials said it would help troopers communicate with authorities in Kentucky, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Officials said the new system also will help communications between troopers and similar Motorola radio operations used in cities including Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, Jackson and Franklin.

City, counties stock up on salt

City and county road departments are stocking up on road salt ahead of time for winter weather in Middle Tennessee. Last winter, the weather was so harsh nationwide it caused a shortage in the amount of road salt available for roads departments to purchase. The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) reports that all salt bins are at capacity in the state’s 95 counties. TDOT has increased its winter weather budget by nearly \$1 million to \$15.5 million and has more than 191,000 tons of salt and more than 1.6 million gallons of salt brine ready for use. This year the department also added two additional salt vendors in case there is another shortage of salt.

New app aims to prevent suicide

State officials announced a new suicide prevention smartphone app for Tennessee soldiers. The “Guard Your Buddy” app is the first of its kind in the country with the potential to spread to other states. At least six Tennessee guardsmen or women have taken their lives since 2004. Soldiers, or others, can use the app to dial a clinician when suicide is threatened. Maj. Gen. Terry “Max” Haston, the state adjutant general, said the Guard faces a challenge because it is not a post like nearby Fort Campbell where in-person counseling might be available. The project is being done along with the

Jason Foundation, based in Hendersonville, which works to prevent youth suicide.

Energy rebates still available

More than \$1 million remains for energy efficient appliance rebates in Tennessee. The money is for consumers who have upgraded to a qualifying Energy Star appliance

since April 22, 2010. According to the Energy Division of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, about \$4.1 million has been paid to Tennesseans through the program. New applications must be postmarked by Jan. 14. For details go to www.e-rebates.org/teearp or call 877-741-4304.

Gov. Haslam announces \$10M in block grants for East Tennessee

East Tennessee will soon receive more than \$10 million in block grants designed to help with infrastructure improvements, Gov. Haslam announced. The money comes from the more than \$23 million in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) recently approved by Haslam and Community Development Commissioner Bill Hagerty. CDBG funds were distributed based on priorities set by the communities themselves.

The Tennessee General Assembly authorized the funds, which are administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development. Cities scheduled to receive block grants include:

Community Livability - Bulls Gap: \$240,363, Ducktown: \$100,000, New Hope: \$200,000, and Sunbright: \$176,720.

Sewer Lines - Soddy Daisy: \$340,000

Sewer Systems -Copperhill: \$225,000, Crossville: \$500,000, Elizabethton: \$500,000, Greeneville: \$500,000, Jamestown: \$500,000, Mount Carmel: \$500,000, Norris: \$300,000, Oneida: \$500,000, Sneedville: \$500,000 and Spring City: \$350,000.

Water Lines - Newport: \$500,000 **Water Systems** - Benton: \$500,000, Caryville: \$468,420, Gainesboro: \$300,000 and Livingston: \$500,000

November tax collections represent modest growth

Tennessee revenue collections for November were \$765.6 million, which is 4.58 percent above November 2010. November collections represent consumer spending that occurred during October.

“The overall growth rate in our November tax collections - particularly the sales and corporate taxes - leads us to believe that growth during fiscal year 2012 will be moderate,” Finance and Administration Commissioner Mark Emkes said. “Typically, about one-fourth of all franchise and excise collections come in during April, and coupled with national economic indicators, it means we must remain vigilant in monitoring our spending patterns. On an accrual basis, November is the fourth month in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

November collections were \$11.0 million more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was over collected by \$12.6 million and the four other funds were under collected by \$1.6 million.

Sales tax collections were \$9.4 million more than the estimate for November. The November growth rate was positive 5.19 percent. Year-to-date the growth rate for four months is positive 6.18 percent.

Franchise and excise combined collections for November were

\$40.7 million, which is \$2.7 million above the budgeted estimate of \$38.0 million. Year-to date the growth rate for four months is positive 10.47 percent.

Gasoline and motor fuel collections were \$3.4 million less than the budgeted estimate of \$73.8 million. For four months year-to-date collections are \$6.2 million below the budgeted estimate.

Tobacco tax collections for the month were under collected by \$900,000. Privilege tax collections were \$400,000 less than the budgeted estimate of \$16.6 million. Inheritance and Estate taxes were over collected by \$100,000 for the month. All other taxes were over collected by a net of \$3.5 million. Year-to date collections for four months were \$71.0 million more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was over collected by \$69.5 million and the four other funds were over collected by \$1.5 million.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2011-2012 are based on the State Funding Board’s consensus recommendation of April 15, 2011 and adopted by the first session of the 107th General Assembly in May. They are available on the state’s website at <http://www.tn.gov/finance/bud/budget.html>.

Economy gradually improving

ECONOMY from Page 1

are hovering just below 400,000.

“We’re at the threshold,” he said. “We need to get below 400,000 before we can say that we are really adding jobs back into the economy.

He reported that Tennessee lost 6 percent of its jobs during the peak of the Recession. Currently, that number has climbed to 2.5 percent fewer jobs prior to the peak performance in 2006.

“Retail sales will continue to grow, but at more sustainable rate. But the housing market will remain sluggish through 2012,” he said.

Currey projected that for the remaining FY11-12 year, revenues will grow by 3.8 percent, bringing the total growth for the year to 4.4 percent; and FY 12-13 will see a 3.9 percent increase.

At press time, the Funding Board had not set revenue estimates for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

The Funding Board, which is made up of Commissioner Emkes, Secretary of State Tre Hargett, Comptroller Justice Wilson, and Treasurer David Lillard, uses the projections to make budget estimates for each fiscal year.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Sen. Lamar Alexander has a new chief of staff. **Ryan Luskarn** will succeed Matt Sonnesyn, who is leaving to pursue private interests. Sonnesyn will continue his job as staff director of the Senate Republican Conference through early 2012. Among his previous jobs, Luskarn served as communications director for Tennessee U.S. Rep. Marsha Blackburn.

Rockwood City Council has offered the city administrator's job to **Jack Miller**, Crossville's former top official to replace Jim Hines, who is retiring. Miller has a work record that includes extended stints as city manager in several cities.

Jennifer Rawls, former executive director of the Tennessee Economic Council on Women, will be the new director of communications for the city of Clarksville. Rawls, who is a licensed attorney and worked in private practice, has also worked in the Tennessee Attorney General's office for 10 years.



Rawls

Brian Noland was unanimously approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents as the ninth president of East Tennessee State University. He will succeed Dr. Paul E. Stanton Jr. on Jan. 15. Stanton's retirement is scheduled for Jan. 14. Stanton has been president since January 1997. Noland is currently chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, a job he has had since 2006.



Noland

Guy W. Patterson has been named the new director of Public Services for the city of Goodlettsville. Patterson has more than 30 years of professional experience and served as assistant director and director of Public Works for the city of

Victorville, Ca. for more than 20 years. His background includes extensive experience in street maintenance, sewer collection, traffic control, fleet maintenance, street lighting, transit services, stormwater, park maintenance and managing contractual services. Patterson started his new position on Nov. 21.

Dr. David R. Reagan of Johnson city is the new chief medical officer for the Tennessee Department of Health. He currently serves as chief of staff for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Mountain Home. Reagan has a medical degree and a doctorate in organic chemistry from Vanderbilt University.



Foster

Mike Foster has been appointed as Decherd's new city administrator. Foster previously served as Decherd's City Recorder, City Administrator, and Municipal Judge and as Franklin County Commissioner. He also served as sheriff of Franklin County through 2006.

Kenny Martin, Mt. Juliet's Director of Economic and Community Development, will become interim city manager replacing Randy Robertson, who has accepted the city manager position in Vestavia Hills, Ala. Martin, 46, also served as the city's former police chief. He will start the job Dec. 19.



Martin

Director of Putnam County Schools **Kathleen Airhart** has accepted the position of Deputy Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Education and is resigning from her post in Putnam County effective December 30. Airhart has been director of Putnam County Schools since 2007 and was recently named Tennessee Superintendent of the Year. Before being named director of Putnam Schools, Airhart worked as the Tennessee Curriculum Representative for the McGraw Hill Publishing Company, helping school

systems across the state with curriculum and research initiatives.

Ridgetop Police Chief **Randall Adcock** has been appointed to the Tennessee Peace Officers Standard and Training (POST) Commission by Governor Bill Haslam.



Adcock

The Tennessee POST Commission is responsible for developing and enforcing standards and training for all local police officers. The commission also promotes continuing law enforcement training for the full time peace officers in Tennessee. In addition, the Commission certifies law enforcement training instructors, curricula, and specialized schools. The commission is composed of 18 members and includes local law enforcement personnel, legislators, and Tennessee citizens.

City Recorder **Lynn McClurg** has been selected as Sevierville's interim city manager following the resignation of Steve Hendrix.



Detective Jason Kennedy recently graduated from the National Forensic Academy (NFA) with ceremonies in Knoxville. The NFA is a program of the University Tennessee Law Enforcement Innovation Center located in Oak Ridge. The academy provides students with practical hands-on experience in the fields of photography, firearms and ballistics, fingerprinting, blood spatter interpretation, fire investigation, and a variety of death investigation techniques. Instructors for the academy are from all areas of law enforcement and forensics. Detective Kennedy is the first Tullahoma police officer to attend this training and now will be able to train fellow officers on photography and fingerprint techniques at crime scenes and crime scene management. Kennedy has been an officer with the Tullahoma Police Department for six years; and has been an Investigator for three.



The city of McMinnville closed a \$2 million variable rate loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) to finance street and sidewalk improvements. Pictured are City Recorder Shirley Durham, Mayor Norman Rone and TMBF Representative Steve Walker.



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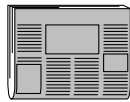
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CITY ADMINISTRATOR

SEVIERVILLE. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of City Administrator. The position answers to a 5-member council and is responsible for 275 full-time employees and a \$50 million budget. Candidates must be proven managers with excellent communication and team building skills. Requirements include: demonstrated success in Public Administration, budgeting and finance, intergovernmental relations, leadership and strategic planning. At least seven years experience as City Manager/Assistant City Manager or equivalent. Bachelor's degree required. (Master's preferred.) Salary \$83,408 to \$136,792 plus excellent benefits depending on qualifications. Applications are public record. To learn more about Sevierville, visit us on the web at www.seviervilletn.org. Resumes should be mailed to Mayor Bryan Atchley, P.O. Box 5500 Sevierville, TN. 37864-5500, faxed to

865-453-5518; or e-mailed to mayoratch@aol.com by Fri. Dec. 30, 2011. The city of Sevierville is EOE and doesn't discriminate on the basis of sex or handicap in its programs or activities pursuant to Public Law 93-112 or 101-336.

FINANCEDIRECTOR

FAIRVIEW. The city is accepting applications for a Finance Director. The Finance Director has general supervision over general financial affairs of the City. A complete job description and list of qualifications are available at Fairview City Hall or at www.fairviewtn.org. Applicants should submit their resume to 7100 City Center Way, Fairview TN 37062 or to cityhall@fairview-tn.org. The position is open until filled. EOE.

FIRECHIEF

MCMINNVILLE. The city is accepting applications from qualified individuals for the position of fire chief. The city has two stations with 28 firemen working 24 on and 48 off. The department also provides first responder services. The ideal candidate will possess highly developed technical, presentation and communication skills, will have in-depth knowledge and experience in the management of fire departments and will have significant operational experience in the various ranks of a fire department as his/her career has progressed. It is imperative that the fire chief set high standards of professional excellence develop a superior training program for staff and establish a succession plan for the department. The ideal candidate will have a minimum of six years of progressively responsible supervisory or administrative experience in fire fighting services, Certification of Fire Officers school level 4, Fire Inspector State Certification or obtain within one year. The successful candidate will be examined by city physician to determine if applicant can perform all essential duties required of this position. The candidate must be physically able to complete a job task related physical abilities exam annually. Residency within the city is required within 90 days of employment. The full job description can be viewed at <http://www.mcminnvilletenn.com/>. The salary for this position is dependent on experience and qualifications. The salary range is \$58,846 to \$85,252. In addition the city offers a progressive benefit package that includes paid vacation, paid holidays, an extensive benefit package that includes; insurance, dental, vision etc., and contributions to the state of Tennessee retirement plan. Qualifies persons should submit a resume of experience and qualifications, letter of interest, salary history and four professional references to : Jennifer Rigsby, Human Resource Administrator, City of McMinnville, PO Box 7088, McMinnville, TN, 37111. Closing date for applications is Dec. 29, 2011.

Governments learning the language of Lean

LEAN from Page 1

know what your biggest problems are? If the answer's no, then how could they help you fix it? "Ordinary people can do extraordinary things when given the right set of tools," Parke continues. "What is the skill level for problem solving for your employees? Is the environment in your organization where people can speak? How easy is it to tell low-level employees "Just shut up and color?"

Organizational processes are slowed routinely through delayed signatures, lengthy hiring procedures or excessive decision making, broken or worn out office machinery, even storage spaces that can't be utilized because they're crammed with unneeded surplus supplies. "When I walk into a manufacturing plant, I instinctively start counting the number of forklifts," Parke said. "If there's a lot, that tells me there's a lot of waste."

Lean links processes— from the final step back to the start—in a smooth continuous flow, without detours and generating the shortest lead time, highest quality and lowest cost," according to Groves. Agencies begin by creating a strategic plan of their most relevant areas, breaking the processes down step by step and creating new patterns to guide those processes in the future. "Separate what adds value to the customer to what does not," Parke advises. "You're also going to find there's a lot of things that don't add value that you (as an agency) don't have the choice to eliminate due to governmental regulations or other restrictions." Parke suggests that groups set these processes aside, focusing only on those that can be controlled and refined. "The last thing that you want to do is make something efficient that you don't need to do at all," he adds.

By creating a value stream, leaders are able to map out and edit the number of steps leading to the most desirable outcome for processes. Through value stream mapping, the city of Cape Coral Florida, for example, reduced the time to obtain a permit for construction from 21 days to eight days. The time required to hire a firefighter was whittled down from 66 days to 30 days, and lot mowing time was reduced from 52 days to 19 days. "Come up with an action plan to get from point to point," said Parke. "And then, do it all over again."

Groves recently participated in a benchmarking process initiated by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and implemented by the County Technical Advisory Service and CIS to see how Lean manufacturing principles could benefit a local



Parke



Groves

government environment. The project led to a savings of more than \$75,000 for Madison County. "The county wanted to move the property assessors' office in Jackson (located across the street) back to the courthouse," Groves explained. "Our goal was to save the county \$75,000 in rent and to create a more user-friendly service for the customers of Madison County."

Before the move began, all of the county's directors attended a Lean training session. Lean principles were applied to the new location to ensure that all materials and records fit in the newly selected space. "The property assessor's office has a distinct path of the way the work needs to flow, and the Lean project helped the office work more efficiently," said Madison County Mayor Jimmy Harris.

"Our government at the federal and state level is facing challenges that I haven't seen before," Parke stressed. "As a senior leader, you have to make a compelling argument that things have to change. It's not a toe in the water deal."

"This has been really educational for me because I haven't had Lean training," said Portland Mayor Ken Wilber, who attended the conference in Nashville. "I thought it was more for manufacturing, but it is good for helping cities too. I have now set up a team to evaluate the way we handle calls for water, sewer, and gas in our Utility Department. Currently, workers pick up job tickets, then go out to the site. We want to look at how to streamline this process and eliminate the non-value added time by utilizing Lean principals in the future."

Because Lean is an effective tool to streamline or take waste out of processes, the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, the core of TNCPE, can serve as an extremely complimentary program to Lean, according to Rawls. "Any organization would have hundreds of processes which could be improved,

but when people have limited resources, you want to pick out the ones where you'll have the most bang for your buck and the most impact for the organization," Rawls said. "Our process helps you pick out where you will get the best benefit in making these improvements."

As a statewide non-profit organization, TNCPE invites organizations or departments within organizations, to complete self-assessments based on the seven Categories of the Baldrige Criteria. After an organization's initial assessment is complete, it will be evaluated by a team of TNCPE examiners, who prepare detailed feedback based on the findings. The feedback identifies the organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. "We use a holistic, global approach by looking at an organization as interrelated pieces to get the results you want, honing in on the greatest opportunities for improvement," said Rawls. "The TNCPE conference would be a great educational opportunity for local government folks," she added.

TNCPE will host its annual conference 2012: *Building a State of Excellence* on February 21-22 at the Franklin Marriot in Cool Springs. Pre-conference workshops will include a session on Lean principals and the lunch keynote speaker will be Michael Perich, consultant in Systemwide Continuous Improvement for Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, recipients of the Baldrige Award for Performance Excellence. For more information about TNCPE or the Annual conference, visit www.tncpe.org.

To download Nashville's Lean conference resources, visit www.ips.tennessee.edu, scroll down to "News and Announcements," then click on the Lean Conference Schedule.

Also, read about the history of Lean production in James P. Womack's book "The Machine That Changed the World."

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NATIONAL BRIEFS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The war on methamphetamine has gotten some support from Congress — millions of dollars to clean up the toxic waste generated by clandestine labs. President Barack Obama signed a wide-ranging appropriations bill that included the restoration of \$12.5 million for meth lab cleanup. Tennessee led the nation in the number of meth labs in 2010. The measure restores funding lost in February, when federal meth lab cleanup money through the Community Oriented Policing Services program ran out, and was not renewed. The program provided \$19.2 million for meth lab cleanup in 2010. Studies showed without federal cleanup money, many local police and sheriff’s departments were far less likely to seek out meth labs because they couldn’t afford the clean up.

State governments are facing a “big squeeze” from local governments and the federal government, according to a fiscal survey released by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO). That squeeze will happen as states get less federal funds due to anticipated cuts while local governments attempt to look for state help to deal with declining local property values. “State budgets are certainly improving, however, growth is weak and there is not enough money for all of the bills coming in,” NASBO Executive Director Scott Pattison said. “State officials will still be cutting some programs, and increases in funding for any program except for health care will be rare.” Pattison said growth in states’ budgets hasn’t come back to pre-recession levels. Overall, states’ budgets included




President Barack Obama signed a wide-ranging appropriations bill that included the restoration of \$12.5 million for meth lab cleanup.

nearly \$667 billion in general fund expenditures this year, a 2.9 percent increase compared to \$648 billion in general fund spending last year. But that’s still \$20 billion less than the pre-recession high of \$687 billion in 2008, according to the survey. State governments also will be pressured by local governments impacted by the decline in housing values.

Facing bankruptcy, the U.S. Postal Service is pushing ahead with unprecedented cuts to first-class mail next spring that will slow delivery and, for the first time in 40 years, eliminate the chance for stamped letters to arrive the next day. The estimated \$3 billion in reductions, to be announced in broader detail, are part of a wide-ranging effort by the cash-strapped Postal Service to quickly trim costs, seeing no immediate help from Congress. The changes would provide short-term relief, but ultimately could prove counterproductive, pushing more of America’s business onto the Internet. They could slow everything from check



Tennessee Delegation participate in NLC Business Meeting
The 2011 NLC Congress of Cities and Exhibition culminated last month with the 88th Annual Business Meeting. In addition to electing new officers for the organization, nearly 700 delegates from cities and towns across the country approved additions and changes to the National Municipal Policy (NMP) for the coming year. The NMP consists of policy statements that guide NLC’s federal advocacy efforts on a wide range of issues impacting municipalities, including transportation, federal funding, sustainability and tax reform. The full NMP is available for viewing on the NLC website, www.NLC.org.



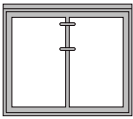
Dec.19-Jan.7:Bristol
Speedway in Lights. Drive on the legendary “World’s Fastest Half-Mile” where millions of holiday lights and hundreds of displays line the route. All proceeds benefit the Bristol Chapter of Speedway Children’s Charities. For more information, call 423-989-6900.

Dec. 31:Gatlinburg
New Year’s Eve Ball Drop and 24th annual Fireworks Show. Held at the Space Needle at Traffic Light #8. The Space Needle will come to life at the stroke of midnight with fabulous fireworks. Begins around 11 pm. For more information, call 800-568-4748.

Dec. 31: Nashville
Music City New Years Eve Bash Held On Broadway from 7 pm to 1 am. Street party features hours of live music, a beer garden, partner exhibits and special event party hats and horns. On the countdown to midnight, fans are treated to a Guitar Drop and a dazzling fireworks display. Free admission. For more information, visit <http://visitmusiccity.com>.

Jan. 5-8: Memphis
Elvis Presley Birthday Celebration Celebrate Elvis’ birthday with four days of fun events in Memphis. Includes dances, special guests, a nighttime tour and reception for members of the Elvis Insiders, a concert by the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and more. A highlight for the celebration is a birthday proclamation ceremony on the front lawn of Graceland. For more information, Email: glsales@elvis.com or call 901-332-3322.

COMING UP



TML District Meetings
Jan. 10:District 7, Medina City Hall, 9 a.m.
Jan. 11: District 8, The Chamber Center, Covington, 9 a.m.

TML staff will be on hand to present updates on the latest events and news affecting municipalities at the state and national levels, as well as the legislative agenda approved by the TML Board for the upcoming session. For more information, contact TML at 615-255-6416.

Feb. 21-22: The Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence Annual Conference and Awards Banquet- 2012: Building a State of Excellence. Held at the Franklin Marriott, Cool Springs. Learn best practices from role-model organizations. Pre-Conference Workshops Feb. 21 include: Balanced Scorecard and LEAN. For registration and more information, visit the TNCPE website at www.tncpe.org or call 800-453-6474.

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TMBF

TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL BOND FUND



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



The Town of Cumberland Gap closed a \$5,000 Highway Safety Grant Anticipation Note.

A year in photos: new administration, economic progress



Gov. Bill Haslam and First Lady Crissy Haslam at the Governor's inauguration ceremony.



Officials with German company Wacker Chemie AG break ground on a new polysilicon production plant in Bradley County.



Senate Speaker Pro Tem Jamie Woodson and Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey during Gov. Haslam's first State of the State address. Sen. Woodson stepped down from her senate seat following the 2011 session to become the president and CEO of the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE).



State Rep. Beth Harwell is sworn in as Speaker of the House.



Huntingdon Mayor Dale Kelley (right) serving as legislative liason, a cabinet-level post with Gov. Haslam, speaks with Rep. Richard Montgomery.



Nashville's Planning Director Rick Bernhardt and community members examine a redistricting map.



Sam Tharpe, TML's president and Paris mayor, greets city officials during TML's 2011 Legislative Conference in Nashville.



As part of the 2011 Tennessee Festival celebrating the state's Sesquicentennial, Daniel E. Hughes portrays Civil War Major Gen. George H. Thomas and Mike Cole, superintendent of the Capitol Bicentennial Mall State Park, portrays Confederate Colonel Corn, CSA.

A year in photos: a look back at 2011



Livingston Mayor Curtis Hayes accepts the 2011 Tennessee Municipal League's Mayor of the Year award at TML's Annual Conference in Murfreesboro.



Lewisburg's Air Evac Lifeteam crew, as part of a workshop, arrives by helicopter at TML's 2011 Annual Conference.



Ecotality unveiled the first Blink® Direct Current (DC) Fast Charger in Tennessee in Lebanon at the Cracker Barrel Old Country Store®.



Erwin City Recorder Randy Trivette, flanked by State Comptroller Justin Wilson and UT Institute for Public Service Vice President Mary Jinks, receives his certificate of completion for the state's inaugural session of the Certified Municipal Financial Officers (CMFO) class.



"Welcome to Shelbyville," a documentary film that depicts the assimilation of Somali refugees in small town Tennessee aired locally on PBS. Pictured are film director Kim Snyder and Hawo, a Somali refugee.



Amazon.com is committed to creating 3,500 full-time jobs and hiring thousands of seasonal workers with projects in Chattanooga, Cleveland, Lebanon and Murfreesboro.



Middle school students arrive to lend a helping hand after Cleveland was devastated by April's tornadoes. Bradley County was one of the hardest hit areas.



State lawmakers pass a controversial measure to install a tracking system in order to control the ingredient pseudoephedrine, which is found in common over the counter cold medicines and used illegally to make methamphetamine.



Hollywood actor/director Corbin Bernson at a movie premier of his new soap box derby film 25 Hill, hosted by the city of Athens. Proceeds from the premier helped raise funds for the National Soap Box Derby.

House S&L Chair Bob Ramsey gives life’s challenges total focus

BY GAEL STAHL

Bob Ramsey, a dentist since 1974 and a politician since 1990, can be slow to take up a challenge, but when he does, he brings to it his whole-hearted attention, life experience, and dedication. He learns fast. As a boy, his dad took him canoeing and to the mountains. He developed into a fervent hiker and camper in the Smokies to the Chimney Tops and 10 times to Mt. LeConte. Cascades was a favorite. Last year, he crossed the Atlantic with his younger daughter on a 72-foot sail boat from the Canary Islands to Santa Lucia. They ran the 3,200 miles in 19 days as part of a crew of 10 standing watch three hours and off six. He’s taken his family to Tikal, Guatemala, and in the 1980s obtained his pilot’s license.

He was slow to run for public office. He resisted running for county commissioner and state legislator, but once he did, he ran, won, and quickly become first, the commission chair, county executive and mayor, then later in his third year in the House, became a subcommittee chair and next year, his fourth, he will be the committee chair.

His father was a physician from Hancock County near Sneedville who moved to Maryville in 1940. Ramsey, born in Maryville in 1947, graduated from Maryville High School in 1965, earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Tennessee (UT) in 1970, and became a doctor of dental surgery at UT Medical Units in 1974. Before long he was doing dental surgery on the same patients his father was doing surgery on. For 30 years he was the Blount County dental examiner doing the dental autopsies on John Does.

His wife Margaret earned her bachelor’s degree and teacher certification from UT. Serving as his office manager, he calls her the biggest influence in his life and his mentor in caring for the community and neighbors. She supported his public service and was the difference that his dental career didn’t evaporate when elective office sacrificially cut into his dentistry. Especially after becoming a state representative three years ago and his days in the office dwindled from four days a week to a day and a half.

Though he had always voted Republican he’d never been active until 1988, in his 24th year as a practicing dentist, when a medical waste incinerator company tried to put a facility in Blount County. The group that opposed it pulled him in and pestered him into running for the county commission.

In 1990, he gave in, ran against a brisk slate of good candidates and was one of 19 freshmen who beat 21 incumbent commissioners. He had no idea really what a commission did but they elected him commission chairman. He quickly learned Roberts Rules and did a good enough job so that when the new county executive died in 1992, they appointed him interim county executive for six months. That was a full-time job so Margaret had to keep the office going. When a new county executive was elected in September, he was off the commission. A year later, one of the commissioners had a conflict, and he was appointed to replace him. In 2005, when the county mayor resigned due to Parkinson’s disease they appointed him to replace her until the next election. Ramsey was re-elected commissioner in 2006 and re-elected chairman.

In late 2007, Rep. Doug Overbey resigned his District 20 House seat to run for a Senate seat. Ramsey’s friends urged him to run for the open House seat. Although reluctant at first, once he made the decision he campaigned heartily and won the seat over three others. In 2009, he joined the General Assembly with a feeling of purpose. Gone four days a week, Margaret was more indispensable than ever covering the office. Ramsey found it almost impossible to get any dental work done.

That first year was ticklish. House Republicans won a 50-49 majority in the House for the first time in 150 years but Republican Rep. Kent Williams was elected House speaker by the Democrats and his own vote. Ramsey maintained a good relationship with all and Williams gave him his favored committee assignments: State and Local Government due to his county commissioner experience and the House Health & Human Resources Committee due to being a dentist. Last session, in 2011, he chaired the State and Local Subcommittee and next

year he will be committee chairman.

Bob and Margaret have a 40-year-old daughter Heather Kelley who got a master’s in English and raises their granddaughter, 10 year-old Greer Kelly, in Birmingham, Ala., where she works for a financial department in Human Resources and Advertising. Their 33-year-old daughter Haley Ramsey has a Ph.D. in microbiology and biochemistry with a focus on immunology and does bone marrow transplant research in Austria. She’s now working with Harvard Medical Unit in Boston while finishing her post doctorate work.

TT&C: During your long tenure on the Blount County Commission, how did you relate to city officials?

BR: We have a highly envied program of county cooperation with our cities. Of the seven municipalities in Blount County – the largest being Maryville and Alcoa – my District 20 has a little less than half of Blount and the four municipalities of Louisville, Friendsville, Alcoa and Maryville with whom we relate well. We have a chamber of commerce that has a partnership for industrial development of all the cities with the state’s help. It’s very cooperative. In deciding the extent of development for cities, there has been no controversy, few problems.

TT&C: What legislation have you passed for municipalities in your district?

BR: I’ve worked closely with Alcoa and Maryville. Cities have been most interested in bills proposing to put restrictions on the development of utilities. Maryville provides a great preponderance of the waste and sewage services. Alcoa has a great measure of the water supply. Cities are interested in maintaining the productivity and progress of their utilities through state law and ask us to address it whenever something looks like it’s going to restrict their ability to perform services.

Cities also want to keep options open to provide cable service, if it is ever advisable. Cities are certainly interested in alcohol beverage laws that affect licensing and adoption of premiere resorts and related matters that affect their revenue.

They’re attentive to pending transportation grants and always contact me whenever that opportunity comes up. Right now cities and the county are involved together in several industrial development parks that they are supporting financially. Local governments are interested in the state support for recruitment and tourism.

TT&C: Some members of the Tennessee General Assembly view local governments as political subdivisions and partners with the state while others see it more as a ruler-subject relationship. What school of thought do you follow?

BR: I’m definitely the former. The operation of the cities and the counties really exist at the privilege of state law. At the state level we need to regulate what will enhance the progress of our cities and counties. We don’t want to be unilateral in our regulation or pressure of any kind. We want to be of use to maximize their economic growth and be in a regulatory position to help the progress of our cities and counties.

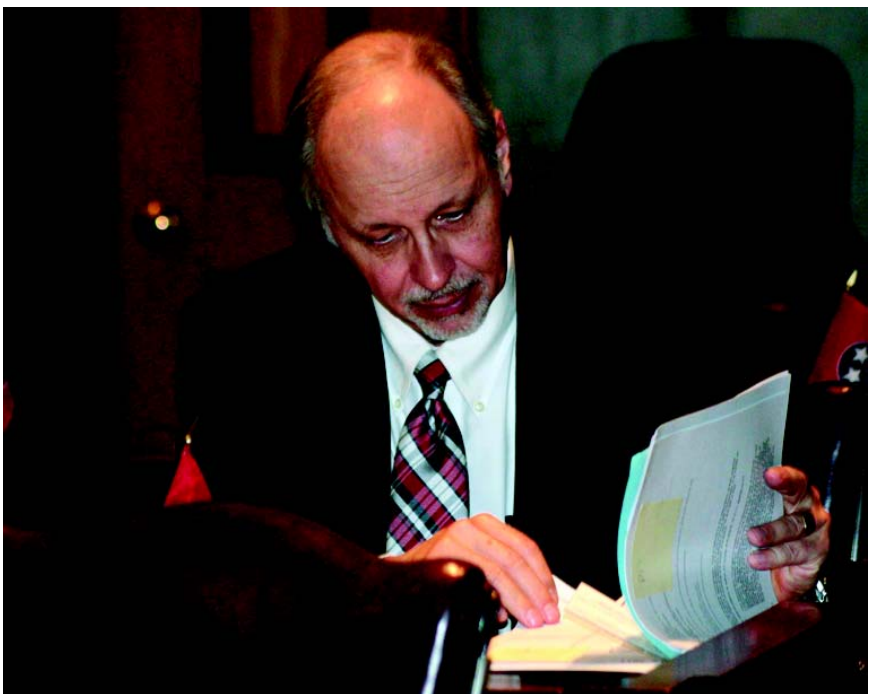
TT&C: When elected you said that due to your county commission experience you were looking forward to limiting unfunded mandates that burden local governments. Did you have any luck limiting unfunded mandates?

BR: Oh yes. That’s one of the first litmus tests we give legislation. Of course it happens. There are certain federal regulations with financial requirements that are passed through the state to local governments regarding education systems and utilities. We try to minimize it. Many bills come through State and Local Committee that fail for the specific reason they are unfunded mandates. The state is much more sensitive to that than when I first took office back when we were starting into the economic slump. I think we’ve been adequately sensitive to detecting unfunded mandates.

TT&C: TML has two priority bills that pertain to unfunded mandates by the state. One stipulates that any legislation with an estimated cost to a local government in excess of \$100,000 or combined estimated costs to local governments exceeding \$1 million shall not be mandatory unless fully funded. A second bill proposes that



Bob Ramsey



Rep. Ramsey on the House floor.

any rule or regulation by the state that fiscally impacts local governments, fiscal note, and cost-benefit analysis. What is your opinion of these?

BR: We adopted those requirements on a county level several years ago. It is a shortfall of planning when someone brings legislation that costs money with no way to pay for it. I would be totally supportive of looking at that on the state level.

Last session we debated whether any bill with expenditures should go through the Finance Committee or be ruled on in the subcommittee. We decided to send the fiscal note to Finance and let them rule on it. I don’t think you’ll find anybody that would oppose that. We would approve a cost benefits analysis also. Sending them all on to Finance was part of an effort of the administration to try to streamline things because Finance is usually absolutely overwhelmed.

Let’s face it. A lot of people in public office feel they have to propose legislation that’s costly just to address the needs of their constituents. They realize there’s no likelihood that it’s going to pass so we decided to just go ahead and send those and the fiscal note to Finance to rule on them.

TT&C: At our TML legislative conference last session, you said your subcommittee would hear as many as 80 immigration bills, some that require local law enforcement to get involved. Will your committee move these bills?

BR: The only ones I remember passing were the e-verify bill and the Sharia Law bill. They were amended after we worked with employers and local law enforcement too make sure that local law enforcement was satisfied. I voted for the e-verify after calling our law enforcement in Alcoa, Maryville, and Blount County. They said it would not be a financial burden and might help in being able to have a little more cooperation with federal law enforcement. We depend on the lobbyists representing our local services to determine impact of legislation. A lot of constituents have a certain distrust of lobbyists. I use them as a resource to see if there is going to be a negative local impact. It was mainly the business community that had problems with the e-verify law.

We passed the Sharia Law, Rick Womack’s bill, after amending it to mainly endorse local law enforcement’s involvement with federal law enforcement. Of course, any bill filed at the beginning of a term is still alive for the second session and many may come back. We will find

out if it is a financial burden.

TT&C: You told our membership there would be an increased emphasis on cooperative deliberation between the House and Senate. Did that happen?

BR: It has. Each week, my counterpart chairman of Senate State and Local, Sen. Ken Yeager, would invite me to sit in on his pre-meeting conferences with his research analyst and the governor’s research analyst. Then, I would do a pre-meeting for my committee with a research analyst, and later with the chairman. Last year, the governor sent a legislative liaison to those meetings with a list of bills with sug-

man Todd and Speaker Harwell wisely and fairly placed members and staff in productive and supportive positions to adequately facilitate deliberation. Their intent has been to maintain the attitude that citizens and members will remain relevant to the process. I will strive to do that as well. I must commend the valiant efforts of our support staff, legal analysts, clerks, interns, and assistants, especially my assistant, Angela Brown. Without these fine people in place our effectiveness would be diminished.

TT&C: As a dentist you sponsored a bill requiring public water systems that discontinue fluoridation in their water supply to give notice to their departments of health, environment, and conservation and customers. Why was this important?

BR: When I was county commission chairman the director of one of Blount County’s water districts had a wife who had an illness that might have been affected by fluoride. He pretty much unilaterally decided to discontinue the fluoride in their water system. That became a big issue for several utility districts around the state, the Tennessee and American Dental Associations, physicians, and health departments. But once done without public discussion, it was hard to reverse it or get it publicly discussed. The county mayor after me stuck his neck out and said he would not approve any utility board member that didn’t approve of fluoride.

Dental caries is the most prevalent chronic disease in childhood, seven times more likely than asthma. We dentists are convinced it needs to be in the water system until we can get parents and citizens to apply it topically with rinses. Our bill just wanted to allow the community and clients of the utility district to have a voice, not to bind or restrict any utility district considering clients’ health. We’re going to have to tweak that bill a little this year to encourage public awareness and discussion.

TT&C: You voted for legislation to help regulate meth-making? How do we solve this problem?

BR: Of all the public testimony that we’ve seen, that was probably the longest one. Tennessee’s social habits have put it at the top of the list for prescription drug abuse, controlled substances abuse, and prescription usage for many years. Our topography is supportive of clandestine drug activities. They can now carry meth labs instead of moonshine around in the trunk of a car. Due to increasing economic pressure and social problems we expect an increase in drug usage. That bill I voted for was one that can help, but the outlook for it doesn’t look good. We have so many budget constrictions. Flow-through federal grants are going to be difficult to maintain. With the cost of cleaning up meth labs, we’re starting to lose money because it’s an expensive process. Law enforcement does what it can and we’re trying to help them but due to budget constraints I think we have to go with education programs, detection programs, and try to make meth not profitable.

Sen. Yager and I sponsored a totally different bill dealing with pill mills and non-credible pain control clinics. In Blount County we’ve seen a great increase in pain management clinics doing atrocious things. Law enforcement got in touch with me and we put together something the Tennessee Medical Association, the Board of Nursing, and the Pharmacy Association could agree to. In October the Department of Health will adopt guidelines to regulate non-credible pain clinics. We hope that this gives local law enforcement some options with some saving of money and time to move toward more detection, eradication and, education.

TT&C: You said that your committee would focus on comptroller and treasury bills. Which ones?

BR: The comptroller and the treasurer are heavily involved in the retirement program and there may be some requests from the Treasurer’s Office to improve our retirement program. The comptroller is interested in the budgeting and borrowing practices of cities and counties and has been very cooperative about visiting us. His office has much to do with education. He changed accounting practices to make them more efficient. Some have been considered burdensome to local governments, so we get requests of all kinds. It is not always pleasant for local budgeting agencies but we’re there to help the communication. That’s impor-