

## Make plans to attend Legislative Conference March 7-8 in Nashville

As we embark on the first session of the 107th General Assembly, it will be a year marked by many firsts – a new Governor and Administration, a new House Speaker, new committee chairmen, and several new freshmen legislators.

By attending the Tennessee Municipal League's Annual Legislative Conference, slated for March 7 – 8 at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown Nashville, city officials will have the opportunity to meet several of the new leaders on Capitol Hill.

In addition, the two-day conference provides an excellent forum for city officials to interact with their legislators and to be updated on the many legislative issues currently being addressed by the General Assembly.

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

### Agenda At-A-Glance Monday March 7

11 am Registration  
12 pm Buffet Lunch  
1- 4 pm Program  
5 pm Attend Legislative Floor Sessions  
Dinner on your own

### Tuesday March 8

7:30 am Breakfast  
8:00 am Program  
9:30 am Attend Legislative Committees



## Slow growth predicted for state, deep cuts still needed

BY CAROLE GRAVES

Revenue collections continue to improve, but some of the state's top expert economists advise that prudence and caution should be used when setting projections for next year.

"No one is calling it a robust recovery," said Jim White, executive director of the legislative Fiscal Review Committee. "The housing market is still very weak – in fact it declined in the fourth quarter – and personal savings rates are still low."

White, who was one of four presenting revenue projections to the State Funding Board earlier this month, said Tennessee has gained back about half the 212,000 jobs lost during the recession, but that it would likely be two more years before employment levels are where they should be. "Because of that, I'm not as optimistic," he said.

Nationally, all major components of the Gross National Product are expected to produce positive growth, reported Dr. Bill Fox, director of the Center for Business & Economic Research at the Univer-

sity of Tennessee. Consumer spending is projected to increase by 3.2 percent, which is up from 2.6 percent, and marks the largest surge in four years. Some of that spending was on big ticket items, which Fox says points to a good sign.

For the fourth consecutive month of this fiscal year, state tax collections have exceeded budgeted estimates. Year-to-date collections for five months were \$98.9 million more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was over collected by \$78.4 million and the Franchise and Excise taxes were \$37.7 million above the budgeted estimate.

However, despite the up tick in sales tax collections, economists are projecting that taxable sales will not fully rebound until at least fiscal year 2013-14.

All of the economists agreed that the state will see some growth. Projections ranged from 2.2 percent to 3.5 percent growth for the current budget year to 2.5 percent to 4.4 percent growth for next year ending June 2012.

"My primary concerns are un-

See **REVENUE** on Page 3

## Proposed SEC Ruling: Volunteer board members as registered financial advisors?

BY LARSETZKORN

NLC Federal Relations

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (Sec) recently issued proposed rules that would require appointed board members of municipal entities to register with both the SEC and the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) if they advise on the issuance of municipal securities.

As drafted the rule would exempt municipal elected officials and staff from the registration requirement. However, not excluded from the proposed rule are all appointed volunteer members of local government boards or other citizen volunteers.

The rulemaking's reach would thus subject citizen board members and other volunteers to federal SEC fiduciary duty, pay-to-play rules, and reporting requirements resulting in significant time, money and legal consequences.

As you know, cities depend upon the members of their communities to help facilitate local government operations through varying volunteering activities.

Practically for cities, registration with its associated costs and burdensome paperwork requirements will have a chilling effect on local governments' ability to obtain

the highest quality volunteer participation for their municipal entities.

In addition, many states and cities already have statutory provisions concerning the fiduciary responsibility of volunteer board members of their authorities. The proposed rule would only serve to micro-manage local governments and impose duplicative redundant regulatory burdens as an answer to unsubstantiated and undefined issues.

The registration requirement is found in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Public-Law 111-203, 124 Stat. 1376 (2010)). Under the Dodd-Frank law, the registration requirement applies to all municipal advisers who provide advice to "municipal entities" and other borrowers involved in the issuance of municipal securities. The advice may be related to derivatives, guaranteed investment contracts, "investment strategies," or the issuance of municipal securities. It also applies to advisers who solicit business from a state or local government for a third party.

The National League of Cities will file comments by the Feb. 22, 2011 due date.

To learn more about the issue and to submit comments on the proposed requirements go to the What's Happening Section of TML's See **SEC** on Page 3

## New sign regulations carries hefty price tag for local, state officials

BY CAROLE GRAVES

TML Communications Director

All across the country, local and state government road and public works departments are bracing for what many are calling another unfunded mandate by the Federal government.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has raised the minimum reflectivity of road signs to increase sign visibility, a mandate that will take effect in January 2012. FHWA standards require state and local agencies to assess their road signs and develop a replacement plan for non-compliant signs before the mandate deadline.

The potential impact on road and highway department budgets – which could be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for some cities and counties – has spurred an outpouring of disapproval and concerns.

"I am a manager of a municipality of roughly 15,000 residents. The new regulations governing traffic signs are unnecessary and an enormous burden on already cash strapped municipalities ..."

"As budgets get tighter, entire line items are being cut, including sign budgets and engineering consultants. Each year, it gets harder and harder to maintain safe roads ..."

These are just a few of the comments that have been submitted by local officials from across the country to the U.S. Department of Trans-

portation with hopes that the FHWA might reconsider some of the new requirements.

The concerns expressed by state DOTs and local highway agencies prompted the U.S. Department of Transportation to open up a new round of comments about the potential impacts of compliance dates in the current economic downturn.

In announcing the new comment period, U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood noted that asking for additional input is the right thing to do given the difficult economic conditions. "I believe that this regulation makes no sense," LaHood said. "It does not take into account the high costs that local governments would have to bear. States, cities, and towns should not be required to spend money that they don't have to replace perfectly good traffic signs."

"We want to be sure these safety requirements are reasonable, fair and cost-effective," he stated.

For example, Cookeville estimates that just meeting the first phase of the replacement plan will



The FHWA has raised the minimum reflectivity of road signs to increase sign visibility, a mandate that will take effect in January 2012.

cost the city some \$100,000.

In East Tennessee, the Blount County Highway Department estimates the cost of compliance to be roughly \$500,000. "In today's economy, it will be impossible for us to meet this requirement without adding to our already inflated debt," said Ed Mitchell, Blount County mayor.

For Metro Nashville, the estimated cost ranges from a staggering \$8 to \$12 million.

The latest sign standards are intended to enhance the ability of drivers to read signs more quickly, especially at night. The quicker a driver can read information from a sign, the less time they take from the See **SIGNS** on Page 6

## Chaos in municipal service costs creates window for partnerships

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Communications Coordinator

People are talking trash these days, along with water, sewer and other municipal services currently caught in the crossfire of a bruising economy. As the annual cost of services continues to outpace available revenues, local governments across the country are financially strapped to balance their budgets. Many are opting for revenue enhancing measures such as creating or increasing service fees, increasing property taxes, or canceling some services altogether.

"This historic recession has forced city officials to make difficult decisions that impact the social and economic fabric of their communities," said Ronald O. Loveridge, mayor of Riverside, CA and past president of the National League of Cities (NLC). "It's making city officials fundamentally rethink and repurpose the provision of services in their communities."

After more than a year and a half of wrangling, beginning with a suggestion by former City Manager Ed Craig to initiate a \$9 service fee for an automated garbage truck system in 2009, Shelbyville council members have revisited a decision to impose a monthly garbage collection



Many local governments are opting for revenue enhancing measures such as creating or increasing service fees, increasing property taxes, or canceling some services, such as trash pickup, altogether.

fee to combat its \$770,000 budget shortfall. The city is choosing instead, to prepare an ordinance that

ending the city's trash pickup would result in a savings of \$500,000 per year along with an unspecified prop-

"I think it's a trend you'll see more and more... It just so happens that solid waste is something you can cut out of your budget pretty easily." —Dana Deem, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

would end residential garbage pickup altogether.

Estimates by the current City Manager Michael Dill project that

erty tax hike to balance the budget. The city would likely sell its four garbage trucks, keep its transfer station. See **PARTNERSHIPS** on Page 5

## Haslam implements 45-day freeze on new regs

Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam has implemented a 45-day freeze on any new regulations and rules as part of the top to bottom review of state government.

Haslam also announced the formation of four Cabinet working groups on Safety and Security, Jobs and Education, Efficient and Effective Good Government and Services.

"Our goal is to ensure that state government is customer service focused," Gov. Haslam said. "A thorough review is one way to assist overburdened businesses wrestling with the economic downturn."

The governor exempted any rules or regulations from the suspension that would pose an imminent threat to public health or safety or are required in order to conform to a court order.

"In our commitment to transparency, it is critical that we weigh the benefits of a rule or regulation to consumers along with the cost of impacting jobs," he said.

Gov. Haslam asked each commissioner to take immediate steps to identify those rules and regulations that fall within the time frame. The Office of Consulting Services in the Department of Finance and Administration will coordinate the process.

"To attract and retain high quality jobs, Tennessee must maintain a business-friendly environment," Haslam said. "State government should do everything it can to create the best possible environment for job growth."

The Safety and Security working group consists of the following departments and agencies: Safety, Correction, Military, Tennessee Bu-

reau of Investigation and Tennessee Highway Patrol.

The Jobs and Education working group consists of the departments of Economic and Community Development, Agriculture, Commerce and Insurance, Financial Institutions, Labor and Workforce Development, Revenue, Tourism and Education.

The Efficient and Effective Government working group is the departments of Finance and Administration, Environment and Conservation, Transportation, Human Resources, Veterans Affairs and General Services.

The Human Support working group consists of Children's Services, Health, Human Services, Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Health.



NEWS  
ACROSS  
TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**ATHENS**  
E & E Manufacturing of Tennessee LLC has announced plans for a \$6 million investment to add metal stamping capacity to its Athens plant. By June, the plant should have a 1,500-ton press in place, which will mean the potential to create additional manufacturing jobs. A company spokesperson said the addition of press capacity is in response to an improving automotive parts market in North America. The new press will produce stampings and welded products for BMW and other OEM customers.

**BRISTOL**  
The city’s fire department is accepting enrollment applications for its Citizen’s Fire Academy, which starts April 21 at the main Bluff City Highway station. The free six-week class is open to Bristol residents who are 18 and older – but only 10 applicants will be selected. “We want them to get a full sense of what we do as firefighters on a daily basis, and how we prepare ourselves to do it,” said Assistant Fire Chief Jack Spurgeon. Activities include: entering a simulated fire chamber with breathing apparatus; riding on fire fighting vehicles and participating in training exercises and learning how 911 calls are handled.

**CHATTANOOGA**  
Chattanooga has been named a 2011 Top Seven Intelligent Communities of the Year by The Intelligent Community Forum at the Pacific Telecommunications Council’s annual conference in Hawaii. The ICF’s top seven communities provide a model of economic and social development in the 21st Century using information and communications technology to power growth, address social challenges and preserve and promote culture.

**CHATTANOOGA**  
Trucking company U.S. Xpress will boost its Chattanooga work force by 30 percent in coming months as rising consumer confidence and a thawing economy drive demand for trucking and transportation services in 2011. The increase means adding 300 new hires to the current 1,000 local workers as part of a plan for long-term growth.

**CLEVELAND**  
The Cleveland Utilities Board of Directors approved preliminary planning contracts with two companies to lay up to 15 miles of water lines. The entire project is expected to cost about \$9 million and take about six years. A 2004 master plan concluded that water demand would increase by five million gallons a day by 2025. Water demand was 9.3 million gallons recently, but the need is higher in summer, 13.7 million in July 2010 and 12.8 million in August 2010. A growth study last year for Cleveland and Bradley County, projects 33,000 more people, 14,000 new households and 19,000 new jobs by 2035.

**CROSSVILLE**  
The city could see an estimated \$800,000 increase in water and sewer revenues, sparked mostly by the replacement of out-dated water meters. The figures are based on the replacement of meters for more than 3,500 residential customers and 34 commercial and industrial user meters. If figures hold true to the end of the fiscal year, this would represent just over a 10 percent increase in revenue. Some meters dated back to the 1950s, with most being at least 20 years old or operating improperly.

**FRANKLIN**  
Williamson County ranks third in the nation when it comes to job growth. According to Washington research firm Woods and Poole Economics Inc., Williamson County is expected to see growth of more than 3 percent in employment through 2040 compared to the rest of the country, which will see more than a one percent growth. “I think the fact there are 3,000 counties in America, the fact that we are number three speaks volumes for the leadership in Williamson County,” Matt Largen, Williamson County Economic Development Director said. “In today’s world, you want to have two things to have a successful economy, innovators and decision makers, and Williamson County has both.” The county’s proximity to Nashville is an added bonus and so is its access to Interstate 65. The quality of life issue also factors in, according to Largen.

**GRAY**  
The state is set to buy a tract of land next to the Gray Fossil site. The

parcel contains more than 14 acres. The site museum director has been discussing the purchase with the family who owns it since 2006. The Tennessee Board of Regents negotiated with the family, and the state will pay the appraised value of the property. East Tennessee State University operates the site where the current digs and the museum are located. The fossil site now includes less than 5 acres. The site was unearthed in 2000 by a state crew cutting a road through the property. It has since produced a rich supply of animal fossils.

**GREENEVILLE**  
Foliot Furniture has laid off 47 workers at its plant in Greeneville. The plant still has a work force of 30 people. Foliot Furniture, which opened its Greeneville facility in 2008, manufactures furniture for hotels, college dormitories, military housing and other markets.

**HENDERSON**  
Premier Manufacturing Corporation will expand the company’s Henderson facility. The expansion represents a \$2.8 million investment that will add 45 new production jobs to the plant located along Highway 45. Premier Manufacturing is a leading supplier of fabricated wire products for the Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) industry. The company, whose headquarters is in Cleveland, Ohio, was recently purchased by SSW Holding Co. SSW Holding then made the decision to consolidate production of guards and grills for air conditioners at the Henderson facility.

**LEWISBURG**  
Ace Bayou Corporation announced that it’s buying property to expand its Lewisburg plant. The company makes beanbag chairs, bar stools, ottomans and pet products. The company employs more than 100 people, but plans to hire about 100 more people once the expansion is complete.

**LOUDON**  
In an effort to make sure dispatchers and first responders are more than prepared to handle incidents, the Loudon County E-911 has teamed up with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s Missing Kids and 9-1-1



The state is set to buy a 14-acre tract of land next to the Gray Fossil site and museum. The site, unearthed in 2000 by a state crew cutting a road through the property, now includes less than 5 acres. It has since produced a rich supply of animal fossils.

Readiness Project. It’s collaboration — at no cost to counties — to provide training and resources from leading organizations addressing missing and exploited children. Loudon E-911 is the first center statewide to partner with NCMEC. Dispatchers are required to undergo 45 hours of training for missing children calls each year, according to the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board. They must also complete 10 hours of additional related training every two years. Loudon’s 15 full-time and six part-time dispatchers, who handle an average of 67,000 calls each year, recently completed all the necessary training to become a call center partner.

**MEMPHIS**  
Japanese manufacturer Mitsubishi is negotiating with city leaders and the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce to locate a \$200 million manufacturing plant at the Rivergate Industrial Port owned by Belz Enterprises. The project could bring hundreds of jobs and millions in capital investment to the city.

**NASHVILLE**  
In April, Metro Nashville’s 600 school buses will be tracked using a \$1.5 million Global Positioning System (GPS). Transportation dispatchers watching LED screens, will observe moving, flashing dots on a map of Nashville. The dots, color-coded green for on-time buses and red for tardy ones, will allow dispatchers to see the buses as they travel. GPS will be used to help curb late buses, ensure drivers follow policies and refute parents who say their child’s bus never came. It will also better serve students with disabilities who ride buses. The system also may be used to consolidate routes and save transportation costs in the coming school year.

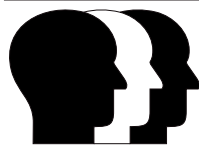
**NASHVILLE**  
Gulf Oil has announced a branded

partnership with Tri Star Energy of Nashville, returning the motor fuel brand to the area for the first time in 25 years. Tri Star Energy has slated 21 stations for its initial phase of rebranding, located throughout Nashville and Middle Tennessee. Each has a traditional convenience store attached as well.

**ONEIDA**  
Armstrong Hardwood Flooring Co. closed its distribution center in Scott County and announced it was cutting 18 jobs. An Armstrong spokesperson said ten distribution center jobs were eliminated and eight positions in the company’s operations will be cut, four of which are eligible for recall. Last year, Armstrong laid off 260 employees. The company continues its parquet, floor care, chemical plant and other operations and employs 54 workers at its Oneida facility.

**SHELBYVILLE**  
Tyson Foods, one of the city’s largest employers, will take part in a new, federal program that makes sure they do not hire any illegal immigrants. Tyson is the first major food company to become a member of the IMAGE program with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Tyson’s executives note they hope this will show customers and people who live in the community that they are using the best hiring practices.

**SOUTH FULTON**  
City officials have approved action to limit the number of dogs which can be kept at any one residence. The city’s updated animal control ordinance adds “Not more than five dogs shall be kept at any one residence.” Commissioners cite loose dogs roaming around town and residences with as many as seven or eight dogs as reasons for the ordinance change.



PEOPLE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

U.S. Rep. **John J. Duncan Jr.** of Knoxville will serve as chairman of the House Transportation Committee’s Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. The congressional panel is responsible, among other things, for developing a multi-billion-dollar highway bill every five years. The bill is the vehicle that is used to determine where federal dollars will be spent on highway projects across the United States.



Duncan

**Robert E. Oglesby** has been selected to serve as Tennessee’s state architect. Oglesby replaces the retired Mike Fitts. A licensed Tennessee architect for more than 25 years, Oglesby served as president and principal-level designer for EOA Ar-

chitects in Nashville and, more recently, as the executive vice president of Wiser Company in Murfreesboro. The state architect serves as the curator of the Tennessee State Capitol and grounds, oversees the state’s building and land development projects, and develops design standards for agencies.



Harper

The Tennessee Black Caucus chose state Sen. **Thelma Harper**, of Nashville, as its chairwoman. Harper is the first senator elected to lead the caucus since the organization was created in 1975. Harper said expanding college opportunities for poor students, preserving the state’s pre-kindergarten program and improving health-care options for the working class would be among the priorities for the Black Caucus this session.

**Jack Tarkington**, Paris city manager since November 2007, has recently resigned. He will be replaced by former Paris City Manager **Carl Holder**, who served the city from 1993 to 2007.



Tarkington

The current executive director of the Henry County Alliance, Holder will serve in an interim capacity.



Holder

Mt. Juliet Mayor **Linda Elam** announced that she would resign by March 31 to focus on her newly elected position as a state representative for parts of Wilson and Sumner counties.



Elam

Parkinson wins House seat

Antonio Parkinson won the District 98 seat in the state House of Representatives to fill the seat left vacant by the November death of Ulysses Jones.

Taking 56 percent of the vote, Parkinson easily won the Democratic primary.

And since no Republicans are running, the general election on March 8 will be uncontested, meaning Parkinson takes the seat.

Parkinson, 42, is a firefighter and leader of the Voice of Raleigh and Frayser Community Action Network and the Raleigh-Frayser Block Party for Peace.

The Shelby County Commission originally planned to nominate an interim representative to fill the seat after Jones died, but delayed that until the primary election.

Shelby County Commission confirmed that the board will appoint



Parkinson

Parkinson to the seat until the March general election completes the victory.

The district covers parts of Frayser, Raleigh, North Memphis and touches parts of Midtown.

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## Scholarship fund offered for excellence in risk management

Risk Management is an important function in the daily operation of any professionally managed local government. It is one of the few departments that affect every operation or service provided by a local government. The Risk Manager seeks to implement decisions that will minimize or prevent accidental and operational losses of the local government.

Unfortunately, training and continuing education opportunities for local government risk managers are few. What is worse, in light of shrinking budgets, many local government decision-makers are not able to send their risk management staff to available training and educational opportunities.

As part of an ongoing commitment to and in partnership with its members, the TML Pool is proud to announce the "Excellence in Risk Management" Scholarship Fund. The goal of this fund is to promote professional public risk management by providing greater educational opportunities, training, and peer networking opportunities to risk managers, safety directors, and other employees who have risk management responsibilities.

The Pool plans to award two scholarships (up to \$2000 in financial assistance) to two qualified individuals to attend the 2011 Public Risk Management Association (PRIMA) Conference, which will be held from June 5 - 8 in Portland,

Ore. Eligibility for consideration is limited to individuals whose employing organizations are insured by the TML Risk Management Pool.

Applications and eligibility criteria for this scholarship were mailed to the TML Pool membership on Feb. 1. In order to be considered for this scholarship, completed applications must be received by Feb. 25. If an additional application is needed, please contact Lottie Scobee, Loss Control Executive Assistant, at 1-800-624-9698.

In addition, beginning July 1, this scholarship fund will be expanded to provide additional funds to qualified individuals to attend the Tennessee Public Risk Management Association (TnPRIMA) state conference.

According to Dawn Crawford, TML Pool president, "In order for an organization to have the opportunity to increase its level of risk management success, it is vitally important that local government risk managers be provided the opportunity to develop his or her risk management knowledge, skills, and abilities. This scholarship fund will assist the selected recipients in advancing their understanding of important risk management concepts, thereby adding more value to the risk services they provide to their public employer."

## State Funding Board sets modest revenue projections

**REVENUE**, from Page 1

employment, the instability of the sales tax and the petroleum tax," said state Comptroller Justin Wilson. "Recovery is coming. But the real issue is by how much."

Heeding the economists' advice to approach with caution, the Funding Board set revenue projections for the current year to grow 3.65 percent to 4 percent and 2.65 percent to 3.35 percent growth for the year ending June 2012.

Typically, the Funding Board sets revenue projects in December. But at the request of the new administration, the board delayed setting official revenue projections until after January collections which include December's holiday sales activity. Gov. Haslam and the Tennessee General Assembly use the revenue estimates to prepare next year's budget.

"Our goal is to project revenues and not to determine how the governor spends the money," said Comptroller Wilson. "But it's just as damaging, I believe, to underestimate as to overestimate," he said.

Along with Wilson, the Funding Board is made up of Secretary of State Tre Hargett, Treasurer David Lillard, and newly-appointed Finance Commissioner Mark Emkes.

"This week is more optimistic than last week," said Emkes, who had spent the previous two weeks in state departmental budget hearings.

Tennessee still faces budget cuts this year, as collections remain below pre-recession peaks and the state can no longer use stimulus funds from the federal government

to fill budget gaps. Nearly \$900 million in cuts will be needed to balance next year's budget.

Haslam has asked state departments to prepare for cuts of 1 to 2 percent in the fiscal budget year that starts July 1. The cuts would be in addition to the programs that Bredesen's administration flagged for elimination once the stimulus money ran out.

"We have to now go back and make those hard decisions, and I think they're even harder than I thought they would be," said Gov. Haslam following departmental budget hearings.

Among some of the programs that department heads have listed to cut include:

- laying off state troopers, releasing prisoners early, and paying less to local jails that house state prisoners;
- cutting school nurses, teacher pay for after-school tutoring, and funding for public TV stations;
- slashing funds for community mental health and alcohol and drug abuse programs;
- closing six state park swimming pools and replacing them with splash parks;
- cutting TennCare spending by roughly \$103 million, and
- cutting \$7.7 million to combat diabetes.

In addition, officials also have identified millions in administrative costs and salaries for vacant positions not filled.

Gov. Haslam is scheduled to present his budget plan to lawmakers March 14.



## State lauds first graduating class of Certified Municipal Finance Officers

The House chamber was the scene of a recent graduation ceremony and reception for the first group of Certified Municipal Finance Officers (CMFO) in Tennessee. At the forefront of programs nationwide that focus on the role of the municipal finance officer, the objectives and content for the two-year program was developed by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) and reviewed by the State Comptroller's Office following a 2007 law passed by the Tennessee General Assembly that requires at least one individual from each of the state's 347 incorporated municipalities to obtain certification by a certain date, depending on certain criteria.

The first graduating class was comprised of 97 individuals representing 86 cities and one utility district. All completed 11 courses covering a range of eight different topics, passing an exam for each course. Comptroller Justin P. Wilson awarded each student their CMFO certification, and also served as a speaker at the ceremony along with Director of Municipal Audit Dennis Dycus; UT Vice President of Public Service Mary Jinks, and MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant Dick Phebus.

"I commend all of the local government officials who successfully completed the certification process," Comptroller Wilson said. "I believe that their increased levels of training will help them become even better stewards of the taxpayers' money."

Once certified, local government officials must take a minimum number of hours of continuing professional education courses every two years in order to keep their certification current.

"MTAS would like to express our sincere congratulations to the first class of Certified Municipal Finance Officers," said MTAS Executive Director Steve Thompson. "We applaud each individual's commitment to the program and are very proud of their achievements. The purpose of this program is to advance the knowledge and skills required of municipal finance officers in today's complex financial environment."

The following were among those receiving CMFO certificates January 27 in Nashville:

Lynn K. McClurg, Linda L. Adair, Lisa H. Alexander, Bridget R. Anderson, Glenda L. Anderson, Stephen T. Anderson, David A. Beeler, Karen A. Bell, Carolyn Brewer, Donna H. Buckner, Gary D. Cantrell, Fredia D. Carter, Deborah P. Caughron, Dennis C. Clabo, Jr., Larry D. Clark, Clyde J. Cole, Cheryl L. Collins, David R. Crain, Anji Deaton, Al Deck, Lisa Dellinger, Sondra Denton, Kathy A. Dillon, Gail Dishmon, Cathy Dixon, Tammy L. Dotson, Tina C. Dunn, Catherine D. Durant, Shirley A. Durham, Martha Carol Fanning, Judy A. Gant, Jim E. Garland, April C. Goad, Marcus A. Graves, Esther C. Greene, Benny F. Griffin, Jere H. Hadley, Howard K. Hadley (Kim), Terry Harrison, Julieanne Hart, Norman D. Hatfield, Melissa A. Henderson, Julie J. High, Maggie Hunt, Deborah K. Johnson, Karen Johnson, Mark A. Johnson, Bobby



Photos by Victoria South

Erwin City Recorder Randy Trivette receives his CMFO certificate from Comptroller Justin P. Wilson and UT Vice President of Public Service Mary Jinks during the state's first CMFO graduation ceremony.



Dennis Dycus, director of Municipal Audit, Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury, speaks during CMFO ceremonies.

Gene Johnson Jr., Charles R. Kerley, Al Laffoon, Russell Lee, Betty Matthews, Amanda McClain, Roland R. McElrath, Janice E. McGinnis, Deborah G. McMullin, Annette Morgan, Jessica P. Morgan, Jane Shugart Murphy, Allison M. Myers, Monica Diane Myers, Monica Diane Myers, Rachel A. Nichols, Lisa Parker, Mary Faye Payne, Alicia Catherine Pique, Marylou Piper, Scott D. Powers, Stephanie Putkonen, Diane Cobb Qualls, Jayne Ann Ragan, Bruce Rasmussen, Ray E. Richesin, Jason

G. Roberts, Dynise Robertson, Phillis H. Rogers, John T. Rossmailer, Phyllis E. Schaeffer, Rachel M. Slusser, James Halstead Smith, Thomas W. Solomon, Charlotte Soporowski, Tonya Poole Steelman, Alyson P. Susong, Carolyn C. Susong, Terry H. Sweat, Dana L. Swinea, Martha B. Taylor, Tonya R. Tindle, Randy C. Trivette, Russell B. Truell, Mark A. Tucker, Michelle Vincent, Pamela S. Walker, Susan B. Wilson, Joby D. Winter, Rosemary Clark Womack, Sue Smith Wood.

## SEC proposes volunteers to register as financial advisors

**SEC**, from Page 1

website at [www.tml1.org](http://www.tml1.org).

In addition, a webcast will be held on **Tuesday, Feb. 15**, (11 AM to 12 Noon Eastern Time), that will discuss the proposed SEC ruling. During this webcast industry leaders

will discuss what their thoughts are on this proposed ruling.

To register, go to the CDFA website via this link and register: <http://www.cdfa.net/cdfa/cdfaweb.nsf/pages/Webcast11.html>

## Risk Management Pool Board to Meet

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the TML Risk Management Pool will meet in regular session on Friday, Feb. 25, 2011, at 10 a.m. local time in the board room of the Pool office building at 5100 Maryland Way in Brentwood, Tennessee for the purpose of considering and transacting all business which may properly come before said board. Additional information concerning the meeting may be obtained by calling the office of the TML Risk Management Pool, telephone number 615-371-0049.

## Good Risk Management is just Good Management

Municipal parks and playgrounds can contribute to a community's overall quality of life. But they can also pose some safety hazards. Each year, emergency rooms treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and under for playground-related injuries.

Through a comprehensive training program offered by the TML Risk Management Pool, city leaders are taught hazard identification and risk management methods.



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STATE BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Weatherization funds available

Tennessee has \$37 million in stimulus funds left to weatherize homes, including \$2.6 million in Davidson County. But applications are slowing, state and Metro officials say. The state has had a weatherization program since 1978 that adds energy-saving features such as insulation and weather-stripping to homes for low-income owners and renters. Typically, Tennessee has provided between \$3 and \$8 million a year for weatherization statewide. But in 2009, the program received \$99 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The state plans to weatherize 16,198 homes using the remaining ARRA funds. The Metro Development and Housing Agency estimates at least 400 more homes can be done with the stimulus funds.

Cumberland Plateau endangered

A conservation organization has put Tennessee’s northern Cumberland Plateau on its list of the 10 most endangered regions in the South for 2011. The report, by Southern Environmental Law Center, cites mountaintop coal mining in the Cumberland Mountains of East Tennessee as a threat to the region’s natural resources, which include some of the most biologically diverse temperate zone forests in the world. Tennessee’s endangered area encompasses an estimated 170,606 acres in the Cumberland Mountains of Scott, Morgan, Anderson and Campbell counties. The land is divided into wildlife management areas known collectively as the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area, and the property surrounds the headwaters of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. Last summer, former Gov. Bredesen signed a petition asking the U.S. Office of Surface Mining to designate the ridge tops on all the state-managed lands in the area unsuitable for surface coal mining.

Unemployment rate stagnant

Tennessee’s unemployment rate remained unchanged at 9.4 percent in December, according to the state Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Tennessee’s unemployment rate has remained unchanged since September, however, the Labor Department reports growth over the last year across a diverse range of industries. The national unemployment in December was also 9.4 percent, 0.4 percentage points lower than November.

TN receives “F” for smoking

Showing no improvement from last year, Tennessee got mostly F’s with the release of the American Lung Association’s report cards that measure state efforts to combat tobacco use. Tennessee got an F for its insurance coverage for smoking cessation, an F on its cigarette tax and an F on how much it spends on prevention efforts. The state received a passing grade of C in the smoke-free air category. The grades were unchanged from last year. The state-by-state grades were a part of the American Lung Association’s State of Tobacco Control 2010. The report said smoking costs Tennessee more

than \$5 billion a year in health-care expenditures and lost productivity.

Dueling meth bills likely

Manufacturers of pseudoephedrine, a popular decongestant that is also a key ingredient for making methamphetamine, are offering to pay for real-time electronic tracking of purchases so Tennessee won’t start requiring prescriptions. But state law officials say the association’s plan won’t work because meth makers have devised a method for getting around tracking systems, including one the state already has. Dueling bills are likely in the General Assembly as law enforcement officers push for a prescription requirement while the Consumer Healthcare Products Association pitches its tracking system. Tennessee last year surpassed its previous record for meth lab seizures, set in 2004. Seizures totaled 2,082 — a 45 percent rise from 2009 and 33.5 percent higher than the old record. There has been an uptick in Middle Tennessee with the most dramatic increase in Sumner County, which had 13 seizures compared with one in 2009. Seizures were also up in Davidson, Wilson and Robertson counties.

TVA mandates rate switch

The Tennessee Valley Authority is mandating a change in the way its distributors bill customers for electricity. Nashville Electric Service and other distributors were given two choices, to either charge customers a seasonal rate or charge a rate based on time of usage. NES is going to switch to seasonal rates in April, because it costs more to generate electricity during peak times, like in the summer and winter. Adding the anticipated increase will be about \$3 on summer electricity bills for the typical customer who uses 1,300 kilowatt hours per month. In the winter, customers will see a savings of about 60 cents, and [in] the transitional months, they’d see a savings of about \$2. NES customers will notice the changes starting with their April bills. TVA is requiring all utilities to switch to the new time-of-use rate by next year.

New crawfish species in TN

A new species of giant crawfish that’s twice the size of a typical mudbug has been found in a creek in southern Tennessee. The new species, called Barbicambarus simmonsii, is about 5 inches long and has unusual bearded antennae, covered by tiny, hair-like bristles. Aquatic biologists discovered the new crawfish in the deepest part of Shoal Creek in Marion County.

State lacks e-waste laws

Americans generate more than two million tons of electronic waste a year, some of it toxic. But fewer than half the states have laws governing its disposal, and Tennessee isn’t one of them. Many electronic devices contain toxic metals like lead, mercury, cadmium and beryllium, which are not allowed to be disposed of in a typical landfill, according to federal regulations. But unless local landfill rules prohibit it, Tennesseans can still dump their old electronics. Although electronics now make up less than 2 percent of municipal solid waste, the e-waste category is growing two to three times faster

than any other waste, according to the EPA. Without statewide standards in Tennessee, it’s up to each county to create and fund programs for its collection. There are at least 175 collection sites across the state, with 61 of Tennessee’s 95 counties making some provision for the collection and recycling of electronic scrap from households. Local governments can apply for solid waste assistance grants through TDEC to help offset costs.

Educators face evaluation shift

Starting with the 2011-12 school year this fall, Tennessee teachers and principals for the first time are to be graded partly on student test scores. The change has already started in some school systems that chose to pilot evaluation options, an effort to produce a state evaluation program. It is a shift from evaluations based solely on teacher behavior to one based half on student outcomes. The Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee will review pilot programs across the state before formulating the state evaluation model.

State hosts regional job talks

As part of Gov. Bill Haslam jobs agenda, a series of regional jobs roundtables will take place across the state. The roundtables are locally driven and will include local officials and state leaders from the areas of education and economic and workforce development. The regional approach to economic development will leverage each area’s existing assets and identify a unifying strategy that promotes partnerships between industry and education. Haslam will ultimately establish “jobs base camps” in each region, but this marks the first phase of convening stakeholders and discussing how the state can facilitate regional coordinated efforts and offer more support.

7-digit dialing to end in Middle TN

By 2013, everyone calling a number with a 615 area code in Middle Tennessee will dial 10 numbers for each call. Soon, it will be 615 and the phone number. Now it is up to the Tennessee Regulatory Authority to decide exactly when and how it wants to make the change. Also, when the switch happens, newcomers to the area or those who request a new phone number in Middle Tennessee will have a new area code. And they, too, will dial 10 digits. Area code 615 — which has been in service since 1954 — is simply running out. Before 1998, most state regulators opted to split the area code region with a new three-digit number. Federal law mandates that when introducing another area code to a region, the area code must be dialed, even for local calls.

Arts Commission receives Emmy

The Tennessee Arts Commission broadcast media project, which is a series of television specials about the arts, was recently recognized with a 2010 Regional Emmy Award. *Creative License* features stories about the unique people who create art, and places and groups where the arts are central to everyday life. The program airs on PBS stations across Tennessee. The award was presented during the 25th Annual Midsouth Regional Emmy Award Gala, at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville. The *Creative License* television special received the award in the Arts category.



The city of Crossville closes a \$6 million loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) for water, sewer and general public works projects. Pictured are: Crossville Mayor J.H. Graham, City Clerk Sally Oglesby, Finance Director Fred Houston, and TMBF Representative Steve Walker.

Oscars have a Tennessee connection

Three nominations share Tennessee ties

There’s always a Tennessee connection, and the 83rd Academy Awards® is no exception. Tennessee has ties to three nominations by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Nominated for the Best Original Song category is the track “Coming Home” from “Country Strong” (a Material Pictures/Sony Pictures/Screen Gems Production) which recently filmed the movie and recorded the soundtrack in Nashville. The song was written by Tennessee residents Tom Douglas, Troy Verges and Hillary Lindsey. The project participated in the Tennessee Film/TV Incentive Program which encourages film/TV projects to utilize Tennessee’s vast resources for music, facilities and talent.

Nominated for the Best Sound Mixing category for his work on “True Grit” is Tennessee resident Peter Kurland. He is also nominated for the 2011 BAFTA Awards (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) and is president of IATSE Local 492. Kurland previously received Oscar nominations for his work on other films such as “No Country for Old Men” and “Walk The Line.”

And nominated for Best Actress category is Tennessee resident Nicole Kidman for her role in “Rabbit



Actress Nicole Kidman is among three Academy Award nominations of Tennessee residents.

Hole” (Olympus Pictures/Blossom Films/Oddlot Entertainment/Lionsgate). Along with being the lead actress, Kidman produced the movie based on the Broadway play with the same title.

The 83rd Academy Awards® for outstanding film achievements of 2010 will be presented on Sunday, Feb. 27, at the Kodak Theatre at Hollywood & Highland Center®, and televised live by the ABC Television Network. For more information about the Academy Awards® visit: <http://www.oscars.org/awards/academyawards/index.html>

TML Board of Directors meets March 7

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Municipal League will meet in regular public session on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. in the Tennessee Ballroom (Lobby Level) of the Doubletree Hotel, 315 4th Avenue North, Nashville, TN., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said board. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Monday, Feb. 28 at the offices of the Tennessee Municipal League, 226 Capitol Blvd., Suite 710, Nashville. Additional information may be obtained from Mona Lawrence at 615-255-6416.

Municipal Bond Fund Board to meet

Notice is hereby given that the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund Board of Directors will meet in regular public session on Monday, March 7, 2011, at 9:30 a.m., local time, in the Vanderbilt Room on the lobby level of the Doubletree Hotel at 315 Fourth Avenue North, Nashville, Tenn., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said board. Some members of the board may participate in such meeting by telephonic means, which will be audible to any member of the public attending such meeting. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Monday, February 28, at the offices of TMBF, 226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 502, in Nashville. Additional information may be obtained at 615-255-1561.

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# Spiraling municipal service costs create partnership opportunities

**PARTNERSHIPS** from Page 1  
tion open for a fee, and let go of six public works employees who pick up the city’s trash.

“They have a hole in their budget,” said MTAS Municipal Management Consultant Dana Deem, who is working with Shelbyville to help prepare the trash service ordinance. “You can cover that hole with a fee for garbage pickup, an increased property tax or some other revenue, but the only thing they can really raise is property tax and they weren’t willing to do that. They were going to institute this fee, but it’s been very divisive. The only option they could see is to just stop trash pickup.”

During the fee ordinance process, Deem notes that the city ran into issues over rental properties, commercial businesses, and how to handle people that don’t pay.

“They had to go to the utility and ask to put trash service on the bill to collect with water and sewer,” said Deem. “The utility agreed, but what happens when someone doesn’t pay their solid waste fee? They can’t cut off by state law the electric or water or sewer because you don’t pay solid waste.

“Every city has their own personality,” Deem continues, “but I think it’s a trend you’re going to see more and more. It just so happens that solid waste is something you can cut out of your budget pretty easily.”

In the article, “Faltering Economy: Time to Thoughtfully Challenge the Status Quo,” writers Scott Collins, Brendan Hanlon, and Ed Scholz address revenue enhancing measures on the part of local governments and its all too common effect upon citizens.

“In most cases, these efforts frighten and infuriate citizens, who perceive these ideas as governments taking more of their money while they get only the same level of service they always received,” the authors write. “They don’t understand why their local government needs more money. And it can feel as though government is suddenly trying to tax and regulate everything it possibly can,” the writers add.

The authors stress that demonstrating strategic and efficient efforts in city services is a necessary challenge before approaching residents to ask for revenue enhancement options. “Efforts to raise new revenue for things such as trash pickup are usually effective only when the locality has proven to taxpayers that it’s doing a great job with the funds it already has.”

According to a report in the *Shelbyville Times-Gazette*, “angry citizens turned out en masse July

2010, for an informational meeting on the fee, claiming they are being double taxed and that the council should look at making other cuts in the budget.”

As Bedford county joins the Interlocal Solid Waste Authority (ISWA), which is in the process of negotiating a new long-term contract, Highway Superintendent Stanley Smotherman advised the county’s Financial Management Committee that if Shelbyville drops residential garbage pickup, it could have a \$700,000 impact on the county’s waste disposal costs the first year, *The Times-Gazette* reports. Smotherman estimates that if 400 tons of the city’s garbage winds up in the county’s convenience centers each month, it will increase the county’s annual landfill costs by \$110,400. In addition, the county would have to buy two new trucks, for a total of \$375,000, hire two new drivers, pay maintenance costs, insurance and depreciation.

Shelbyville city officials plan to hold a public hearing in February to allow citizens to express their views before the third and final reading of the ordinance, which will likely take place in March. In the meanwhile, it’s reported that the city has received numerous phone calls from private garbage collection services with an eye on doing business with Shelbyville’s residents. “They (the residents) are going to end up paying anyway, to a private corporation instead of the city,” Deem notes.

While facing similar solid waste issues, another Middle Tennessee city is hoping to buck the trend through a regional partnership, according to Deem. “Right now solid waste is being hauled a hundred miles away,” Deem said. “If cities and counties got together to build their own landfill close in, they can save on that cost.”

The city, which Deem declined to identify due to ongoing negotiations, is considering a partnership with three other cities and three counties in building a regional landfill. “They wanted the services of MTAS for studies to help determine the site, someone who wouldn’t have a horse in the race to sell it to the counties and cities,” he said. “If it

happens, it will be a project that MTAS and CTAS take on together.”

The practice of shared regional services has reaped much success for an eight county district in north-eastern Mississippi through the Three Rivers Planning & Development District in Pontotoc. The district is an administrative arm of the Three Rivers Regional Solid Waste Management Authority, organized as a solution to the problem of solid waste disposal.

The authority owns and operates the region’s sole landfill. A uniform “tipping fee” for disposing of trash in the landfill is charged for transporting waste from strategically located transfer stations to the regional landfill. Today, the authority has transported more than 1.2 million tons of solid waste from member counties since 1998, making an average of 25 hauls daily.

“That cooperation 15-20 years ago led to a partnership that got Toyota into Blue Springs, MS,” said Deem. “Through the years they were able to lower the tipping fees, and are now paying less for solid waste disposal than 20 years ago.”

“Our local governments look at the cheapest, most economical way to provide any local government service while achieving the maximum service,” said Randy Kelley, executive director, Three Rivers Planning District. “If you present something that works and it gets the job done and is economical, then we’re in it together.” The successful door to door waste collection system sprang from a greenfield, according to Kelley, which the district bought, permitted, and placed a facility.

“Our tipping fee is \$22 a ton whether it’s Toyota or the city of Pontotoc,” said Kelley. “Today, we’re not only disposing of waste but environmentally taking care of methane gas with the best known technology and using the gas to generate electricity.”

With pickup fees ranging from \$13 to \$8 among the eight counties, bill collection has not been a problem, according to Kelley. “Through the cooperation of our legislature and our former and current governors, our local elected officials have established ways to assist local gov-



Some cities are discovering that public/private partnerships fit the bill when it comes to municipal services. Rather than cutting back on services in the face of huge deficits, cities can work with corporations to transform the way they are delivered.

ernments in collecting garbage bills,” he said. “It could be pulling a car tag, carrying them to what we call Justice Court, or putting it on their property tax. We went to fees because if you raise property tax, the large land owners end up paying a disproportionate share. It’s based on the concept of water, sewer or electric, you pay for what you create.”

Other cities are discovering that public/private partnerships fit the bill when it comes to municipal services. “Public-private partnerships driven by corporate citizenship have the power to improve the services that matter to city residents,” writes Jennifer Crozier, director, IBM’s Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs. In the article “Smarter Urbanization Requires Innovative Public-Private Partnerships,” Crozier explains that rather than cutting back on services in the face of huge deficits, cities can work with corporations to transform the way they are delivered. “Innovation from the private sector can help by making all the systems that run a city’s services smarter, more efficient and more effective,” said Crozier.

Don Schulte, Alliance for Innovation director of Business Devel-

opment, in his presentation “Raising Revenues without Raising Taxes,” explains that millions of dollars can be realized through creating new business opportunities and bundling assets. He provides examples of how cities can draw and initiate new partnerships through: advertising; media services; beverage and snack vending; banking; telecommunications; websites; commercial mapping; public recycling and community giving. Encouraging cities to identify and activate their assets and maximize their relationships with the business community, Schulte advises “Visualize Ford Motor Company donating all of your vehicles; Home Depot upgrading your recreation facilities or Petco sponsoring your dog parks and animal shelters.”

The Transforming Local Government 2011 Conference June 1-3 in Clearwater, Fla. will offer in case study sessions focusing on: collaboration and partnerships - public-private partnerships, public-public partnerships, public-non-profit partnerships, regionalism and shared service delivery.

For more information, visit [www.tlgconference.org](http://www.tlgconference.org)

## Local officials meet with Tennessee Congressional delegation to promote renewable energy, green jobs

Mayors and city council members representing a statewide environmental economic development organization visited members of Tennessee’s congressional delegation in Washington, DC, last month to promote renewable energy technologies and green employment opportunities for Tennesseans.

Pikeville Mayor Greg Johnson, Ducktown Mayor James Talley, Jackson City Councilman Ernest Brooks, and Memphis City Councilman Edmund Ford, all members of the Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC), discussed issues regarding new incentives for cellulosic ethanol, biodiesel production and TVA Green Power Switch outreach initiatives.

TREEDC is a statewide grassroots coalition of mayors and city councilmembers formed in 2008 by the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) and five mayors from across the state. UT President Emeritus, Dr. Joe Johnson, serves as the TREEDC chairman.

Councilman Ford, Jr.’s initial focus with TREEDC is to encourage

efforts to revitalize Memphis’ biodiesel production industry that is trying to recover from the Memphis Biofuels plant closing in July 2009. Ford urged the congressional members to assist with the city’s efforts to reopen the biodiesel plant which will employ more than 35 and help the United States meet its renewable energy goals regarding the production of biodiesel.

“TREEDC is unique in that there is no other green related organization in the nation created or operated this way,” said Ford. “The elected officials come from cities and counties in all shapes and sizes across Tennessee to carry out the mission of TREEDC on a grassroots level.”

Mayor Johnson, TREEDC president, updated newly-elected Fourth District Congressman Scott DesJarlais about the city’s efforts to reopen the old Dura site. Johnson also advised the delegation that Bledsoe County has abundant farm land to help grow energy crops such as switchgrass and canola for biofuels development.

Councilman Brooks recommended to the congressional delegation more income programs for area



Mayors and city councilmembers visited Washington DC to promote renewable energy opportunities for Tennesseans. Pictured: Jackson City Councilman Ernest Brooks, Memphis City Councilman Edmund Ford, MTAS Consultant Warren Nevad, Pikeville Mayor Greg Johnson, and Ducktown Mayor James Talley.

farmers seeking to diversify the usage of their farms. Brooks is also the founder of the Jackson Green Coalition.

The mission of TREEDC is to

promote and connect renewable energy with economic development for all cities and counties in Tennessee. For more information about the group, visit their website at [www.treedc.us](http://www.treedc.us).

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## NATIONAL BRIEFS

**U.S. homebuilders are coming off their two worst years in more than a half-century, and the outlook for this year is only slightly better.** Economists say it could take three more years before the industry begins building homes at a healthy rate. Meanwhile, the housing downturn is dragging on the broader economy, with one-quarter of the jobs lost since the recession began in the construction field. Builders normally help lead the economy out of a recession. Construction projects fuel growth, leading to more hiring. A year and a half after the recession officially ended, builders are struggling to compete in markets flooded with unsold homes — many of them foreclosures that are depressing prices. The Commerce Department reports homebuilders broke ground on 587,600 homes in 2010, just slightly

better than the 554,000 started in 2009, the lowest annual totals on records dating to 1959. People are buying fewer single-family homes, which represent nearly 80 percent of the market. Single-family home construction fell 9 percent to an annual rate of 417,000 units in December.

### Winter takes toll on local budgets

This winter’s long string of powerful storms is adding pressure to already strained local government budgets. Several big cities have already exhausted their snow-removal budgets and are scrambling for additional funds, and many other cities and towns aren’t far behind. The unexpected burden comes as local leaders are budgeting for the 2012 fiscal year, which for many municipalities begins July 1. It is expected to be the toughest in years, as federal stimulus programs expire while local

tax revenue, though recovering, remains below pre-recession levels. Cities are particularly stressed because states are seeking to balance their budgets by reducing aid to local governments, according to the National League of Cities (NLC). Most of the 214 city and 56 county governments recently surveyed by the League said they had cut jobs in that department, which is often responsible for storm cleanups.

### State tax revenue grows speedily

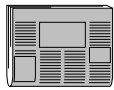
State tax revenue grew at the fastest rate in nearly five years during the fourth quarter, as the steadily improving economy and higher taxes in some states propelled stronger growth in income- and sales-tax collections. State tax collections increased 6.9 percent in 41 states that have reported their revenue, according to a report by the Nelson A. Rockefeller



Builders began work last year on the second-fewest number of homes in more than half a century.

Institute of Government at the State University of New York. If that pace holds once the rest of the states have reported, it would be the fastest growth in tax revenue since the second quarter of 2006, which was more than a year before the recent recession began. Income taxes climbed 10.7 percent across the 41 states.





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**CITYMANAGER**

GALLAWAY. The city is now accepting resumes for City Manager. Candidates must have a minimum of bachelor's degree, preferably a master's or advanced degree in Political Science and Urban Planning or Law and two years experience managing a business. Must be able to pass a background check. Starting salary between \$34,000 to \$42,000 depending on qualifications or at least five years of city management experience could be qualified without a degree. Please mail resumes to: City of Gallaway; PO Box 168, Gallaway, TN 38036.

**CODES INSPECTOR/STORM WATERMANAGER**

LEWISBURG. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Codes Inspector/Storm Water Manager. The position is responsible to the city manager, but must work independently with others. Job functions include technical work in the enforcement of Planning and Zoning Codes and Storm Water management. The job requires a very dedicated self-motivated individual to implement policy and procedures. A bachelor's degree and/or five years of relevant work experience required. Successful candidate must have ability to obtain Storm Water Certification from State of Tennessee within 12 months of employment date. Applicant shall be proficient in Microsoft Office. This would include but not limited to Microsoft, Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Publisher and Word. Must also be capable of learning any other computer applications deemed necessary or applicable to the position. The successful candidate must reside within five miles of the corporate limits of the city of Lewisburg in Marshall County within 90 days from date of hire. The position has an excellent benefit package. Salary: \$25,000 - \$45,000 DOQ. The city is an EEO employer. An application, resume and salary requirements should be submitted to: City of Lewisburg, P.O. Box 1968, 131 East Church Street, Lewisburg, TN 37091 Attn: City Codes Inspector/Storm Water Manager Application/Resume must be received in Lewisburg City Hall by 4:30 p.m., Feb. 25, 2011.

**FINANCEDIRECTOR**

BARTLETT. The city is seeking applicants for the position of Finance Director. This position is the city's authority on all aspects of financial management and requires a comprehensive understanding of city government finance. The finance director manages the budgeting, accounting, accounts payable, debt service management and information technology functions of government and participates in the cash management, pension, investments, and certain aspects of the payroll process and purchasing. This position requires a bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, Public Administration, or closely related field, and seven (7) years of progressive experience with a minimum of five (5) years in a senior management role, preferably in the area of governmental accounting and budgeting. Candidate must have professional certification such as Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO), Certified Governmental Financial Manager (CGFM), Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) or Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Tennessee, in active status with a minimum of five (5) years of primarily governmental experience, with at least three (3) of those years in Tennessee, in order to comply with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Officer Certification and Education Act of 2007. Salary: \$96,159 - \$104,003 DOQ; comprehensive benefit package including the city of Bartlett Retirement Plan. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Submit a letter of interest, current resume with salary history and a list of at least three professional references to: Personnel Director, City of Bartlett, 6400 Stage Road, Bartlett, TN 38134. Email: pvoss@cityofbartlett.org. EOE

**FOREMAN II, PUBLIC WORKS**

UNION CITY. The city is seeking applications for the position of Foreman II for their Public Works, Water/Sewer Department. The salary range is \$13.55 - \$19.05. Applications and job descriptions can be obtained by mail at the City of Union City, City Hall, P. O. Box 9, Union City, TN 38281 or at 408 Depot St, Union City, TN 38261, phone 731 885-1341, fax 731-885-7598. The city of Union City does not discriminate based on race, color or national origin, age, sex or disability in its hiring and employment practices, or in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, and activities.

**POLICECHIEF**

GALLATIN. The city has an immediate opening for a Police Chief. The chief will assume responsibilities for a non-union department with 65 sworn officers and 23 civilians, a \$5.9 million budget, serving a diverse community. Salary range \$64,305 to \$102,801 with excellent benefits. Reporting to the city mayor in cooperation with city council, the chief will plan, organize, and oversee all police activities, develop annual budget and control budgeted expenses, formulate and implement police policies, manage employee relations, attend community meetings, and make presentations related to law enforcement activities. Qualifications include: any combination of education and experience equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, law enforcement, or

related field. Extensive work experience in Law Enforcement or a related field. Upper-level management experience preferred. Must possess a driver's license valid in the State of Tennessee and meet the minimum standards law (TCA 38-8-106) requirements for police officers and be able to provide documented proof upon request. Must be willing to meet residency requirements within 90 days of selection. Must have the abilities to perform all aspects of this executive position. To apply, please submit cover letter summarizing reason for interest and qualifications, a detailed resume including salary history, and three professional reference letters. Also, go to www.gallatinpd.org for further information about the police department, and under the contact site, download a city application, complete, and submit with the above documents. Mail to Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS), 226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 606, Nashville, TN, 37219, Attn. Gallatin Police Chief Search. All applications must be received by Friday, March 11, 2011. EOE.

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

ATOKA. The town is accepting applications for the position of Public Works Director. This employee is directly responsible for the management of the Water and Wastewater Operations, Street Maintenance Operations, Park Maintenance and Garage Department Operations. This is a salaried position. Must be a High School graduate or equivalent. A bachelor's degree is a plus. A criminal record check, employment physical, and drug screening test will be required as conditions of employment. Must have experience in construction and maintenance equipment operation and/or related fields. Must be able to perform and/or manage multiple tasks, projects, and priorities concurrently. At least 3 years extensive responsible administrative and supervisory experience in the public works and public utilities field is required. Water distribution and wastewater collection certification by the State of Tennessee required within eighteen (18) months of employment. Employee must maintain an effective working relationship with the public and employees. For application and complete job description, visit Atoka City Hall, 334 Atoka Munford Ave, Atoka TN 38004. Deadline for acceptance is March 15, 2011 at 5 pm. For further questions, call 901-837-5300. Office hours: 8am to 5pm Mon-Fri.

**TOWN ADMINSTRATOR**

ATOKA. The town is accepting applications for the position of Town Administrator. The employee is responsible for effective and efficient operation of the municipal government activities and support services under the general supervision of the mayor and Board of Aldermen. This is a salaried position. A criminal record check, employment physical, and drug screening test will be required as conditions of employment. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree with a public administration background and minimum of 3 years experience, or 3 years experience with the understanding that a bachelor's degree must be obtained within 3 years of employment. Position requires membership certificate in Tennessee City Manager Association, or agreement to obtain a membership within one year of employment. Must have knowledge of budgetary principles, administrative skills, practices and procedures of public administration; and must establish and maintain an effective working relationship with the public and employees. For application and complete job description, visit Atoka City Hall, 334 Atoka Munford Ave, Atoka TN 38004. Deadline for acceptance is March 15, 2011, at 5 pm. For further questions, call 901-837-5300. Office hours: 8am to 5pm Mon-Fri.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The Town of Atoka invites sealed proposals from qualified companies interested in providing an upgraded, re-designed website. The prime contractor selected will be responsible for the design, development, implementation, and hosting of the town of Atoka website, www.townofatoka.com. Proposals will be received until 5 pm, Tues., Feb. 15, 2011 at the following address: Town of Atoka, 334 Atoka-Munford Ave., Atoka, TN 38004. Copies of the Request for Proposal are available in electronic or printed format by contacting Debbie Pickard, city recorder at 901-837-5300. Additional important information on the requirements for the proposal is included. It shall be the proposers' responsibility to determine method of transmittal. Proposals must arrive in the Town of Atoka's office at least five (5) minutes prior to the submission deadline. Proposals received after the scheduled submission deadline will be returned unopened. Fax bids will not be accepted. The Town of Atoka reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals. EOE.

# Public Works hit with cost of new sign regs

SIGNS from Page 1

road, according to safety research.

The National Safety Council reports that about half of traffic fatalities occur at night, yet only about one-quarter of travel takes place after dark. As the U.S. population ages, nighttime visibility is becoming even more of a safety concern. By the year 2030, about 19 percent of the U.S. population will be 65 or older, compared to 13 percent in 2010. In general, vision and reaction times decrease with age.

The sheeting used on traffic signs is "retro-reflective," which is designed so that light bounces back from the sign to enable nighttime visibility. Over time, the sign sheeting degrades.

Agencies have until January 2012 to implement a method for maintaining traffic sign retro-reflectivity at or above the minimum levels. Agencies can choose either an assessment method or a management method, or a combination of the two. The basic assessment methods are visual assessment or measuring sign retro-reflectivity. If an agency wants to avoid having to assess individual signs, they can have signs replaced under a management program.

Future phases of the required upgrading will include changing the lettering on street name signs from all capital letters to upper and lower case letters and making the letters larger where necessary.

The new FHWA standard is contained in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), a compilation of national standards for all traffic control devices, including road markings, highway signs, and traffic signals. It is updated periodically to accommodate the nation's changing transportation needs and address new safety technologies, traffic control tools and traffic management techniques.



By the year 2030, about 19 percent of the U.S. population will be 65 or older, compared to 13 percent in 2010. In general, vision and reaction times decrease with age.



Language adopted in 2002 MUTCD update requires all road signs to have a minimum level of retro-reflectivity by a certain date for all agencies that own and maintain traffic signs. In recent years, signs that have been replaced will meet these new requirements, older signs will not.

Some notable deadlines:

- By January 2012, all agencies will have to establish and implement a sign maintenance program that addresses the minimum sign retro-reflectivity requirements
- By January 2015, all agencies must comply with the new retro-reflectivity requirements for most of their traffic signs they have installed (excluding overhead and street name signs)
- By January 2018, all agencies must comply with the new retro-reflectivity requirements for overhead guide signs and all street name signs.

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# CDBG program funding at risk; local officials urged to share success stories

**BY MICHAEL WALLACE**  
*Nation's Cities Weekly*

In January, NLC's leadership responded to reports that federal funding for local programs like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program might be at risk by declaring efforts to protect it a top legislative priority for the National League of Cities in 2011. This marks the fourth time in six years that protecting the program has risen to the top of NLC's annual legislative agenda.

Since its authorization by Congress in 1974, the CDBG program has been a favorite of city officials and the subject of occasional (and potentially growing) criticism from federal regulators and members of Congress of both parties. To protect this key program, NLC leaders are encouraging city officials to educate federal regulators, the White House, and members of Congress about the benefits of the CDBG program and the economic impact it continues to have in local communities.

The CDBG program has a long history. President Nixon created the CDBG program in 1974 by proposing a single block grant for cities and towns that combined seven then-existing, narrowly focused grant programs. Among other things, those seven programs focused on restoring urban neighborhoods through land acquisition, clearing blight, and encouraging private development as a means to improve neighborhood environments for families living at the low to moderate income level.

Today, by statute, state and local governments use CDBG to fund projects that serve at least one of three requirements: (1) activities that principally benefit low to moderate-income individuals; (2) activities that prevent or eliminate slums and blight in neighborhoods; and (3) activities to remedy urgent threats to the health or safety of the community.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the federal agency that administers the program, CDBG is most commonly used to support activities that have a direct bearing on the quality of life in the community: the acquisition of real property; demolition of property and family relocation; rehabilitation of residential and community structures; certain public services such as housing counseling; energy conservation and renewable energy resources; construction of public facilities and improvements such as water and sewer facilities and streets and sidewalks; and projects designed to assist small businesses that perform economic development and job creation/retention activities.

Municipalities are responsible for ensuring that CDBG-funded activities support community development functions and do not supplant local funds that provide for the operation of local government, even if those operations support community development. As such, there is a 20 percent cap on the amount of an individual CDBG grant that can be spent on administrative or planning activities. Moreover, HUD has identified several activities as generally ineligible for CDBG funds, including the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of buildings for the general conduct of government; political activities; certain income support activities; or the construction of new housing by local governments.

Today, CDBG is one of the largest federal direct block grant programs for communities. Although all municipalities are eligible recipients, local population levels determine whether a city or town receives a direct allocation from the federal government or from its state.

The federal government allocates 70 percent of the annual appropriation of CDBG funds by way of a formula directly to municipalities that meet one of three criteria: they are either a principal city of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) as determined by the U.S. Census; they are a city with a population of at least 50,000; or they are an urban county with a population of at least 200,000.

The remaining 30 percent of annual CDBG funds are distributed to the states who in turn determine eligibility criteria for grants to cities and towns that do not qualify for a direct allocation from the feds.

In 1982, just 732 municipalities received a direct CDBG allocation from the federal government; today, 1,209 cities qualify for the direct allocation, significantly diluting the size of a grant award since the total amount of funds available has not changed substantially.

From its inception, CDBG has been lauded as a program that offered an unprecedented degree of local control, with opportunity for public input, that gave city and county officials broad discretion to fund housing, economic development activities, social services and infrastructure. Over time, however, that flexibility has, in some ways, become an often-heard criticism.

Critics note that, despite significant population and demographic shifts, only two relatively minor changes have been made to CDBG over the 35-year life of the program, suggesting that it might be ripe for a significant overhaul.

The first was the addition of a second formula in the 1970s and the second was the decision in the 1981 to permit states, instead of the federal government, to award CDBG funds to cities and towns with smaller populations.

In addition to those criticisms, the flexibility of the CDBG program has drawn criticism from those unfamiliar with the requirements and impact of the program. Some mistakenly believe that the program has no accountability standards and can be used for almost any purpose with little oversight.

The scores of CDBG grant managers in municipalities nationwide who monitor the use of the funds would certainly disagree with that premise.

In addition, newly elected members of Congress, especially those with no background in local government and little understanding of the program, may be particularly susceptible to supporting CDBG's critics. In the current deficit-conscious environment in Congress, this criticism could prove to be especially damaging to local efforts to preserve CDBG funds.

That's why education and advocacy by local leaders will be essential to maintaining level funding of \$4 billion for this program in Congress this year.

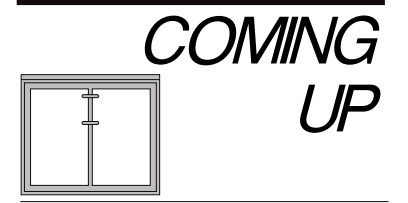
To help set the record straight on CDBG with Congress and the Administration, NLC is collecting examples of how city officials have invested CDBG funds to make a difference in their improve communities. Local officials are encouraged to send their CDBG stories, with photographs of the project, to NLC at wallace@nlc.org. Second, as cities celebrate achievements that have been accomplished with the support of CDBG funds, they should be sure to share the good news with their congressional delegation and HUD.



**Mar. 8-13: Pigeon Forge**  
*A Mountain Quilt Fest 2011*  
Held at the Music Road Hotel & Convention Center. a special showing of quilts, shop for unique items, Antique Quilt Bed Turning highlighting quilts made before 1961, Appraiser, Show & Tell, Instructors, classes and lectures; vendors and sponsors on hand for questions and to meet your quilting needs. Tues. First Night Sneak Peak held at 6 pm. Wed and Sat. 10 am, 1pm, and 4pm. Sun., 10am and 1pm. For more information, visit [www.mountainquiltfest.com](http://www.mountainquiltfest.com).

**Mar. 12: Franklin**  
*Main Street Brew Fest*  
Irish celebration in Historic Downtown. Sponsored by the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County. Tastings of more than 50 beers and a sampling of Irish whiskey in the Main Street shops from 6 to 9 p.m. Irish-themed food on 4th ave. including fish and chips, roasted corn and potatoes, Irish stew and kettle corn. For ticket information, visit the website [www.historicfranklin.com/events/feile-franklin](http://www.historicfranklin.com/events/feile-franklin).

**Mar. 19: Erin**  
*Wearin' of the Green Irish Day Celebration*  
Downtown. Parade travels north to south down Main Street ending at the Court Square. A plethora of food and crafts items, music, family entertainment, pony rides, petting zoo, inflatables. For more information, call 931-289-5100 or visit <http://www.houstoncoco-chamber.com>



**Mar. 1: TREEDC Sustainability Forum.** Sponsored by the city of Crossville, ECOTality and East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition (ETCFC). Free, 9 am to 12:30 pm. Participants will hear about municipal and county sustainable practices by TREEDC member cities such as Franklin, Jackson and Crossville. Stephanie Cox with ECOTality will provide an update regarding the statewide electric vehicle charging infrastructure project with Nissan. Jonathan Overly with ETCFC will share details about the Crossville truck stop electrification project. Please reserve your reservation by sending an email confirmation to [treedc08@yahoo.com](mailto:treedc08@yahoo.com) by Feb. 25, to ensure an accurate count for refreshments and lunch.

**April 27-29: The Tennessee City Management Association (TCMA) Spring Conference,** Franklin/Cool Springs Marriott Hotel.

## Transportation Authorization priority for Congress

As the 112th Congress gets underway, transportation leaders in the House and Senate are taking steps to restart the authorization debate. The current federal program expired in September 2009 and has been kept alive via a series of short-term extensions as Congress tries to reach consensus on a new program.

In the House, Rep. John Mica, chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has said he hopes to move a transportation authorization bill sometime this year. He announced his intention to hold field hearings outside of Washington, D.C., to learn more about local transportation concerns. NLC will keep you informed of such events when more details become available.

In the Senate, Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Sen. Barbara Boxer is working to find areas of agreement with both Sen. James Inhofe, the ranking Republican on the committee, and Rep. Mica on a new transportation bill. On Jan. 26, the committee held a hearing on surface transportation.

Transportation authorization is also on the Administration's radar, as the U.S. Department of Transportation has been working with the White House to flesh out priorities for a new bill, as well.

The authorization of a new transportation program is a top priority for 2011 for NLC. In support of a new program, NLC members recently reaffirmed a resolution calling for a comprehensive federal surface transportation program that requires collaboration between states and local governments, supports multi-modalism and local decision making, invests in outcome oriented solutions, and involves a strong federal role in transportation.

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

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



# Cities tap youth power for planning, civic engagement

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
Communications Coordinator

If you want to design a premium skate park facility, just ask a kid. The same goes for tracking legislation or promoting drug awareness. In 2011, the face of government is growing decidedly younger as cities and counties across the nation seek to engage youth in government processes. “By involving youths in local decision-making, they become assets and resources to elected officials who are seeking effective solutions to community ills,” stressed the National League of Cities (NLC).

Yet, the challenge for local governments is “moving beyond ‘token’ levels of youth participation in decision making, toward ‘authentic’ efforts that truly prepare and empower youths to be active, engaged citizens,” according to NLC. Authentic youth civic engagement, or AYCE, includes opportunities in which young people are seen as valuable participants in the work of local government; are prepared to take on meaningful roles in addressing relevant issues; and work in partnership with adults who respect and listen.

Interest in government is clearly on the upswing among youth in America’s cities. The Kingsport chamber’s summer program, Students Helping Others Understand Tomorrow, or SHOUT, has graduated 800 youths since 1989. In an all day session for high school sopho-

on experience with state government as part of their annual conference.

Students write legislation as bills, which are signed into law by a youth governor, who also has the task of passing a state budget.

“When you’re standing in the House or Senate chambers and presenting a bill, that’s a lot for a freshman in high school, but they’re so prepared,” said the center’s Executive Director Susan Moriarty.

“Young people want and deserve a voice in their communities. City officials make decisions that affect youth on a daily basis. Yet young people often have no direct role in shaping or influencing local policies and programs. Even well-intentioned efforts to work for youth – by ‘protecting’ them from perceived threats or by ‘rescuing’ those who already are in jeopardy – can prevent us from recognizing the importance of working with youth to identify positive solutions and build stronger communities.” — Promoting Youth Participation, National League of Cities

Students will experience the added thrill of meeting their real life counterparts, Gov. Haslam, Lt. Gov. Ramsey, Speaker Harwell, as well as the Commissioners on the Governor’s Cabinet, to exchange ideas as well as help each young leader fully understand his or her role. “Our governor’s cabinet is one of the most fascinating aspects of the conference,” said Moriarty.

Around 200 volunteers as well

youth power is. When municipal facilities were being damaged by young skate boarders, rather than chasing them away, city officials envisioned an opportunity to enlist the aid of those very same teens to help plan and design a new skate park.

Prior to that, skate boarders were performing stunts on stairs, bleachers and rails at schools, city hall, and even

the police station. After conducting outside research on skate parks and visiting a park in Nashville, Franklin Parks Director Lisa Clayton interviewed the skaters to see what they would want in a community skate

park. The city organized a public forum at one of the local high schools, where more than 200 young people turned out, and formed a planning task force that included 15 teens.

“There’s a language in skateboarding, and these particular athletes wanted particular things that they could communicate to the architect,” Clayton explains. Meeting monthly, the task force was involved in the grant application process from the state parks and recreation fund, and charged with sending out an RFQ for skatepark designers. “We explained the budgetary process to them, and they were involved all the way,” Clayton adds. “They spoke directly to the architect. We really relied upon them for guidance.”

A growing number of California cities routinely engage youth in land use issues and planning processes as local officials discover the value of youthful insights. Teen members may choose to research their city’s General Plan or other plans to familiarize themselves with the long-term goals and policies that guide land-use decisions.

The process of learning about planning departments and land use “helps councils and commissions understand local government’s roles and functions and how public input is received and decisions made,” said Terry Amsler in *Western City*. “If a city wishes to do more to engage young people in planning, but does not have a youth commission, planning staff may want to explore what other cities have done,” Amsler notes.

One of the most effective methods of facilitating youth civic engagement for mayors, governors and legislatures across the country, youth councils or commissions are representative bodies whose composition, functions and structure are often set by law. According to the guide “Building Effective Youth Councils,” by The Forum for Youth Investment, challenges in creating youth councils range from “outreach to funding to staffing to the selection of an administrative home. Yet, strong youth councils are governed by two simple, but essential ingredients: a solid foundation and an unwavering belief that youth en-



Photo by Victoria South

Franklin’s Parks and Recreation Department solicited the input of local teens when planning and designing a new skatepark in 2006.

agement in government is good for government.”

In a case study brought to light by the Transforming Local Government organization, the city of Novi, Mich., is highlighted as a community that’s getting it right. In 2005, the Novi City Council adopted a policy resolution to encourage youth to become civically active within the community. Since then, the 19-member Novi Youth Council (NYC) has taken the city by storm, promoting drug prevention initiatives within the schools; bridging the gap be-

Novi Youth Ambassadors in the annual Memorial Day Parade. More than 150 students have marched as future Novi leaders, and the program is expanding to include elementary school children.

The council is designing a coloring book to educate the children about the city. The additional reward is that many of these young people move on to public service careers, working on presidential campaigns and volunteering for the city.

Reinforcing his dedication to America’s youth, during his tenure



Six Springfield High School students were elected by their peers to serve as officers at this year’s YMCA Youth In Government conference. Pictured: Taylor Odle, National Affairs Alternate Delegate.

mores and seniors, local government officials arrive to speak on various topics, and students participate in other workshops such as Leadership Skills and Team Building. “We had such a large turn out last year for the government program, we had to divide it into two sessions,” said Vicki Snodgrass, Kingsport Chamber of Commerce.

In Nashville, visitors at the State Capitol may have to look twice this spring, as students replace real government officials serving as senators, representatives, justices, lawyers, department commissioners, lobbyists, even press corps members.

The YMCA Center for Civic Engagement, Youth in Government, (YIG) program offers high school and middle school students a hands-

as school advisors work with students year round to help prepare them for the experience. “They’re like sponges,” Moriarty said. “And I think that some of our state and local officials are missing the boat. They put students on boards, which is great, but sometimes not as voting members. From what I’ve seen, I think students would make such a difference, because they are knowledgeable and very passionate about government. They should have a role.”

Open to any student, this year’s 58th Annual Tennessee YMCA Youth In Government conferences will be held March 24-27, April 7-10, and April 29 and May 6 for Middle School students.

In 2006, the city of Franklin, discovered just how invaluable



The Youth Council in Novi, MI partners with the city police department in project “Sticker Shock,” placing more than 6,000 stickers on multi-packs of alcoholic beverages warning purchasers of the dangers of contributing to underage drinking. The campaign is conducted during prom, graduation, and homecoming season annually.



The Novi Youth Council foster lifelong relationships with senior citizens, hosting the first ever “Senior to Senior Prom” in partnership with a local senior living facility. More than 100 Novi seniors were treated to an evening of sharing and socializing with council members over dinner and dancing.

tween teens and senior citizens; and creating awareness of teen depression and suicide.

To accomplish their goals, the council partners with local businesses, schools and civic organizations hosting events such as “Addicted to Movies, not Drugs” or placing warning labels on packaged alcohol products in convenience markets. As an effort to enhance the relationships between teens and seniors in the community, the council organized and hosted the first ever “Senior to Senior Prom” through a partnership with a local senior living facility. In 2009, the group hosted the Youth Hope Convention to combat teen suicide and depression, in which more than 500 high school students attended.

The NYC has raised more than \$20,000 for drug prevention education with the funds going back into local schools and the council keeps an eye on the future, meeting with middle school students to educate them about Novi City government, and inviting them to participate as

as NLC President, James E. Mitchell Jr., councilmember, Charlotte, N.C., developed an opportunity for ten college juniors to participate as his policy advisory group. Responsibilities for the students include ob-

Nothing is more important to the health of our democracy than the active engagement of young people in representative government at the local level — The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

serving and following

NLC

policy development and providing valuable input regarding the impact of policies locally from their perspective. The selected cabinet members will be involved through December 2011 with activities that include: attending the NLC Board of Directors Strategic Planning Meeting in Washington, D.C., the NLC Congressional City Conference in March in Washington, and the NLC Board of Directors meeting in July in Charlotte, N.C.

For more information about NLC’s efforts to engage youth in government, visit [www.nlc.org/iyef/youthdevelopment/index.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/youthdevelopment/index.aspx).

## How can city governments move beyond “token” levels of youth participation in municipal planning and decision making?

### Form a Youth Council

The Forum for Youth Investment, defines a youth council as a formal body made up of youth, typically ages 16-18, who advise high-level decision makers and elected officials. In some cases, councils are formed directly by the mayor’s office, in others through a city-school, or city-county partnership. According to NLC’s Institute for Youth, Education and Families, successful councils share common elements:

- Youth are involved from the outset in leading, planning, gauging youth interest and recruiting participants;
- The council’s structure, composition, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in bylaws or a city ordinance;
- Partnerships with school districts and youth-serving agencies ensure that a diverse group of youth from schools and city neighborhoods are represented;
- Both youth and adults, including staff support, receive training on

how to work together effectively;

- Local elected officials create an environment in which youth perspectives are listened to and respected;
- Youth market to the council to their peers and lead all youth council projects;
- The time, location and format of meetings are youth-friendly.

### Create:

- A setting in which the civic climate of the community is welcoming and inviting to youth, acknowledge their role in public policy, planning and decision-making;
- A structure in which the organization and system that supports authentic youth civic engagement (AYCE meets both the needs of the local government and the interests of the young people);
- A strategy that offers a wide range of activities and provides youth with a breadth and depth of meaningful opportunities for participation in local government; and
- Support from adult allies; both

within and outside local government, which enables the young people involved to have a real impact on issues that concern them.

Data from The National League of Cities: *Nations Weekly*

### Resources

- The Forum for Youth Investment Guide “Building Effective Youth Councils.” Visit <http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/node/127>
- NLC’s Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF) Institute Guide: “Authentic Youth Civic Engagement.” Visit [www.nlc.org/IYEF/youthdevelopment/youth\\_participation/resources.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/IYEF/youthdevelopment/youth_participation/resources.aspx)
- The YMCA Youth In Government program. Visit the YMCA Center for Civic Engagement web site at [www.yig.org](http://www.yig.org).