

Comptroller files bill to address invalid debt obligations by cities

BY KEVIN KRUSHENSKI
TML Government Relations

The Office of the state Comptroller has filed new legislation this year to address concerns about what they perceive as an increase in invalid obligations entered into by local governments.

Under current law, any local government entering into a short-term debt agreement must follow certain rules and regulations. If a local government fails to comply with these requirements, then the debt obligation is considered invalid. If an obligation has been declared invalid, the lending institution is required to forfeit any interest received in association with this debt obligation to the state's general fund.

The Comptroller's staff outlined a few issues they have encountered ranging from local governments not filing required state paperwork to failure to repay short-term obligations on time to entering into loans without proper authority.

The Comptroller's legislation proposes to amend current law relating to invalid obligations that includes four key changes:

1. The bill proposes that the State Funding Board, not solely the

Comptroller, be granted discretionary authority to levy penalties associated with invalid obligations.

2. The bill proposes that, in lieu of requiring the forfeiture of interest paid to date, the law be changed to allow the assessment of a monetary penalty against the local government, the creditor, or possibly both parties.

3. The proposed change in law would also allow the Comptroller to recoup the costs incurred for investigating, reporting and correcting the problem through the assessment.

4. Lastly, the Comptroller's bill would require that the comptroller or his designee would be required to attend a public meeting of the governing body and to report the details of the invalid obligations in this meeting.

A document detailing local government's requirements with regard to short-term debt and guidance on avoiding invalid obligations may be found on the Comptroller's website in the Office of State and Local Finance's section.

TML will post additional information and links to the list of the requirements for each debt type on its website, www.TML1.org.

Axed meth funding a lethal concoction for Tennessee?

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

Law enforcement officials say it could be the recipe for the perfect storm:

- Take 2,100 toxic meth labs;
- Add more;
- Remove federal funding;
- Training;
- Specialized equipment and Personnel for clean up and removal;
- Shake and Bake.

At the height of what's been deemed an all time high for meth lab seizures across Tennessee, five million in federal program funding for clean up and removal of the hazardous material waste associated with methamphetamine labs has been cut off igniting an explosion of concern among state and local law enforcement officials.

In an e-mailed statement, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) spokesperson Rusty Payne announced funding for meth lab clean up was exhausted, with future funding decisions resting in the hands of congress.

Tennessee is among the top five states in the U.S. for meth labs, with 2100 labs busted in 2010. The labs, which leave behind hazardous chemicals and toxins, have been on the increase since the popularity of the mobile Shake and Bake method,



which requires only a pop bottle and few cold pills containing Pseudoephedrine. The average cost of clean up is \$2,500 to \$3,000, according to the DEA.

"I've never been in a situation like this," said Tommy Farmer, director of the Tennessee Metham- See **Meth Funds** on Page 5

Annual Conference prepares city leaders for future challenges

There are no challenges quite like those facing leaders in local government. Whether an appointed or elected official, career professional, or mid-level manager, the issues of limited funding, growing public demand, aging infrastructure, and competing interests have combined to create enormously complex management issues. More critically, these converging variables will require very difficult choices for many years to come.

With a theme of *Rising to the Challenge*, many of the conference workshops and speakers will focus on helping community leaders plan for the difficult challenges ahead.

John Luthy is a nationally known public sector futurist who specializes in leadership and organization development with particular interest in strategic planning that



John Luthy

promotes economic growth, program performance, productivity, and broad-based community development. His keynote speech, *Leaving a Leadership Legacy while Planning for the Future*, will focus on helping community leaders plan for difficult challenges ahead. See **TML** on Page 6



Photos by Victoria South

City officials greet Gov. Bill Haslam following his remarks during the TML Legislative Conference. Among the topics the Governor discussed were educational reforms, creating new jobs, and his pledge not to hand down unfunded mandates from the state to local governments.

Municipal League's legislative event educates, advocates for local control

BY CAROLE GRAVES
TML Communications Director

Knowing firsthand of the difficult challenges city officials face on a daily basis, Gov. Bill Haslam told members of the Tennessee Municipal League that being mayor of Knoxville greatly prepared him for the job as governor.

"It's not all that different than what you do," Gov Haslam said. "The numbers are bigger – there are more zeros at the end – but the issues are mostly the same."

Haslam's remarks came during the League's recent Legislative Conference held in Nashville March 7-8.

He acknowledged that just as the state faces tough financial decisions that so, too, do municipal governments throughout the state.

"We are now working through a very hard budget – just like a lot of you are," he said. "Like you, we will have a lot less money; like you, we will be constrained on a lot of capital projects; and like you, we will have to look at cutting positions. It's hard to put the government on a diet without looking at employees. And that's a difficult process."

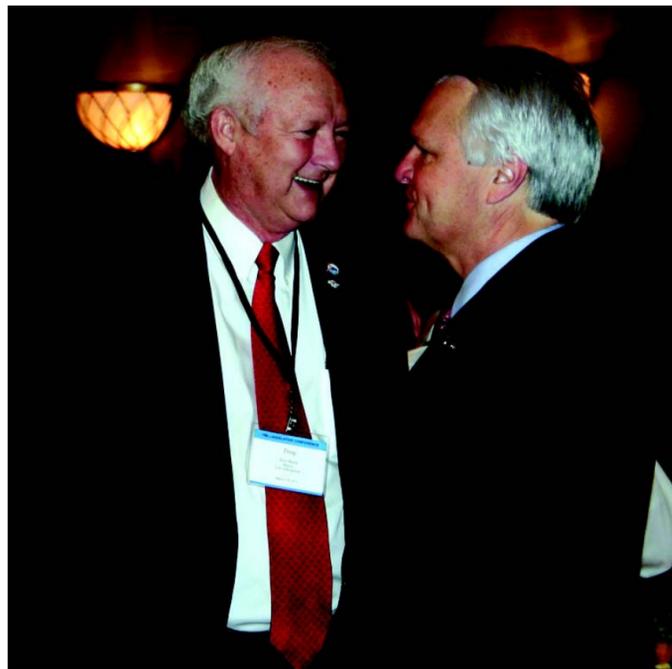
And despite the \$1.5 billion shortfall the state is facing, Gov Haslam pledged that his administration would not push any of the state's financial pressures down to the local level.

"If you truly believe that local government is the best form of government – and I do – it doesn't make sense to take money away from local governments and give it to the states."

Listed among his administration's top priorities are jobs and finding practical solutions to reform education.

Legislatively, he is proposing two education initiatives this year – raising the standards for teachers receiving tenure and increasing the number of charter schools so that parents can choose where their children go to school.

See **HASLAM** on Page 3



Kingston Mayor Troy Beets greets Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey



House Speaker Beth Harwell greets conference attendees

TML Risk Management Pool Board approves rate and dividends reductions for 2011-2012

The Board of Directors of the TML Risk Management Pool announced at its December 2010 board meeting that it would be returning a dividend of \$7.5 million for the 2011/2012 fund year.

Over the past 16 years, the TML Pool Dividend Program has returned more than \$76 million to its membership. While the last three years the Pool has returned more than \$8 million per year, the board approved rate reductions in 2008 have slowly reduced the annual profit levels and thereby the dividend amount available.

Dawn Crawford, president of

the TML Risk Management Pool, along with the finance team has worked closely with the Board of Directors to ensure the continued financial security of the TML Pool.

The February board meeting also generated positive news for Pool membership. The Board approved several rate reductions as well as policy clarifications for the upcoming policy period.

The rate decreases are as follows:

- Workers' Compensation -2.5% (except for Transits)
- General Liability -3.0%
- Errors or omissions

- 2.0%
- Auto Physical Damage -2.0% (except for Transits)

These rate reductions are the result of the quality partnership between the Pool and its members, both working to control losses. In addition, the policy clarifications serve to afford members coverage tailored to municipal needs. The Pool continues to advocate a risk management and loss control philosophy that not only saves insurance dollars, but helps each member better protect the safety and welfare of its employees and taxpaying citizens.

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

ALAMONT

The section of State Route 108 near mile marker 24 between the towns of Viola in Warren County and Altamont in Grundy County was reopened earlier than expected after a Feb. 20 rockslide resulted in an estimated 23,000 tons of sandstone rock falling onto the roadway. Originally the cleanup was scheduled to take three weeks, but the contractor worked around the clock clearing and repairing the roadway and stabilizing the slopes so the roadway could be reopened as quickly as possible. This section of roadway carries over 2,000 vehicles per day and is widely used by local residents as a route to McMinnville. Further lane closures will be necessary in the impacted area as a concrete cover to further stabilize the slope and placement of final pavement, striping and guardrail take place. But at least one lane of traffic will be maintained at all times while the work takes place. This project should take approximately four to six weeks to complete.

DICKSON

A plan to renovate a large portion of downtown Main Street is ready for construction. Work began March 7 and should be completed within eight months. Dickson's newly renovated downtown will be streamlined for more pedestrian traffic with the help of expanded sidewalks and a conversion from two-lane to one-lane traffic. Main Street, from the intersection of College to Walnut streets, will be converted to a one-way road, allowing for eight-foot sidewalks. Streets will be lit with uniform lighting from 16-foot poles featuring arms for seasonal banners. All lighting and other wiring will be underground.

JACKSON

Brooks Shaw & Son Old Country Store won the second annual statewide entrepreneurship video competition. The contest "What Makes You an Entrepreneur?" was sponsored by the Department of Economic and Community Development. The store will receive a \$500 cash prize and a professional marketing package valued at \$2,000. Department Commissioner Bill Hagerty said in announcing the winner that small businesses are the foundation of Tennessee and continue to help the state's economy. ECD will use the top entries to promote innovative entrepreneurs.

JASPER

The Marion County Commission unanimously approved the construction of a new 911 center on an unused impound lot behind the justice center in Jasper. The proposed 1,600-square-foot building will be completely funded through 911 fees. The building will be no cost to the county.

KINGSPORT

Jobs are on the increase in Kingsport. Eastman Chemical Co. Eastman announced it is constructing a new acetylated wood facility that will create 50 to 60 new permanent jobs once completed next year. The new pilot plant will produce acetylated wood products for select test markets in the United States in 2012. The facility represents just one of several expansion projects at Eastman's Kingsport operations. Eastman is expanding its CHDM capacity by 25 percent in the next two years. CHDM (1,4-cyclohexanedimethanol) is a monomer used in the manufacture of copolyester for the specialty plastics segment. Eastman is also expanding its new Tritan copolyester business

in Kingsport. The company started up the Tritan monomer facility at the end of 2009 to support two 30,000 metric tons of capacity.

KNOXVILLE

If successful, Knox County Schools will be the largest school system in Tennessee to do a 'farm-to-school' program, which means using federal dollars to buy produce directly from local farmers for its National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. Knox County serves about 35,000 lunches and 12,000 breakfasts daily to its students. As part of the deal, Knox County Schools' new director of school nutrition and food services, Jon Dickl, hopes the farmers will come into the schools and meet students. Only 30 of the state's 200 school systems even attempt to buy local produce, said Phyllis Hodges, director of procurement for the Tennessee School Nutrition Program. It's more convenient to buy from a large distributor. Before the U.S. Department of Agriculture changed procurement rules in 2008, schools were not allowed to give preference to local farms.

MANCHESTER

VIAM Manufacturing Inc., announced plans to locate VICAM in Manchester. The company is a newly formed subsidiary of leading nonwoven materials producer Japan Vilene Company (JVC) to be managed by VIAM Manufacturing and utilize technology developed by Oyama Chemical. VIAM will build a facility for the production of a polyester-based carpet fiber that is expected to open in January 2012, and represents an investment of \$32 million and 70 new jobs when all phases of construction are complete. The plant will be located on a 12-acre site that will house a 44,000 square foot facility with the capability for a future expansion of 120,000 square feet. Future expansion plans include supplying PET stable carpet fiber to VIAM Manufacturing in their manufacture of automotive floor mats.

MEMPHIS

The owners of a new Mississippi River steamboat company may drop anchor in Memphis, bringing at least 250 jobs for their headquarters as well as maintenance and docking operations. The Great American Steamboat Co., which owns the vessels American Queen and Mississippi Queen, is considering sites in Mississippi and Tennessee. Previous owners of the vessels had been based in New Orleans before going into bankruptcy. But the new owners are looking for a different site. If Memphis is selected, the number of jobs gained by the city would be "maybe 250 to start, 500 to end with," Lendermon said. In addition to docking for overnight stops at the soon-to-be-completed Beale Street Landing, at least one vessel would

winter here. Memphis also would be the site for maintenance and renovation work and the base for employees.

MEMPHIS

The city has begun its new Employee Suggestion Program. City employees have been encouraged to suggest improvements that could save money, make city operations more efficient, increase revenue or improve safety. Cash awards for the best suggestions range from \$250 to \$1,000. The city council approved the program earlier this year. Mayor A C Wharton said the city wants to empower city employees to help improve government.

NASHVILLE

Developers of the \$250 million Nashville Medical Trade Center announced that a Beijing-based investment management company has reserved 10,000 square feet of space in the planned downtown Nashville development. Huida Investment Management Company will use medical mart space for a China Pavilion — a permanent showroom for displaying health care products and services from that country. According to NMTC developer Market Center Management Co., Huida is currently working with two medical associations in China to recruit companies for space in the pavilion, which should be "the first in a series of international showrooms" that will be located at the NMTC.

NASHVILLE

If flood-damaged Opry Mills ever reopens, it won't be for at least another year as the legal case over the mall's insurance coverage drags on toward a February 2012 trial date. The lengthy loss of the mall raises questions about the kind of retail development that could eventually emerge at the sprawling site — if and when it reopens — as well as renewing concerns about lost sales tax revenue for the city as consumers who used to go there spend dollars shopping in other counties.

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN

Work to begin widening and straightening U.S. Highway 27 from Interstate 24 to Signal Mountain Boulevard could begin by September. Tennessee Department of Transportation officials said the first phase of a three-phase project to widen the stretch of road that runs for three miles through downtown, across Olgiati Bridge and through Stringer's Ridge will begin in the fall. The highway will be widened from six lanes to eight. The first phase will be widening the 1.6 miles of U.S. Highway 27 from Olgiati Bridge to Signal Mountain Boulevard, a project estimated to cost about \$75 million. TDOT said completion of the project could take more than two to three years.



PEOPLE

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Gov. Bill Haslam has been elected Chairman of the Board of The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees. The governor says he plans to be an active participant of the board, and discussed his proposal to extend the HOPE Scholarship to summer school. Haslam also says he wants to find a way to provide faculty raises. "State employees haven't had a raise period for three years," he said. "I think that's a long time to go without a raise."



Haslam

Alexia Poe, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean's economic development chief, has been named the new communications director for Gov. Bill Haslam. Poe, 37, served as press secretary for former Republican Gov. Don Sundquist and has been a spokeswoman for U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander and former first lady Laura Bush. She also served as director of public affairs for Gaylord Entertainment and is a former morning anchor and reporter for WKPT-TV in Kingsport.



Poe

City Councilman **Ernest Brooks, II** has been appointed to the National League of Cities' (NLC) 2011 Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Advocacy Steering Committee. The committee is responsible for developing NLC federal policy positions in the areas of energy, clean air, solid and hazardous waste, water quality and supply, national wetlands, and endangered species.

Steven Mayer of Murfreesboro has been selected as La Vergne city administrator. He will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city, including financial, human resources, and public safety as well as public works, parks and recreation, city library, and the tax office.

Brock Hill has joined the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation as Deputy Commissioner for Parks and Conservation, effective immediately. Hill will oversee Tennessee's 53 award-winning state parks and 81 state natural areas. Hill served as mayor of Cumberland County for the past 16 years, and has spent more than 20 years as the operator of a family-owned small business in Crossville. As a long-time board member of the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation and an advisor to Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, Hill has a record of advocacy for parks, recreation and historical preservation.



Hill

After a nationwide search, Teach for America's Vice President of Public Affairs **Kevin Huffman** will serve as Gov. Haslam's Education Commissioner. Huffman previously worked as a Senior Vice President for Growth Strategy and Development for the organization. Teach for America works to recruit college graduates and young professionals to work in classrooms across America.



Huffman

Memphis Police Chief **Larry Godwin** has been named the deputy commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, under Commissioner Bill Gibbons, former Shelby County district attorney, starting April 18. The department oversees state law enforcement and homeland security issues and the Tennessee Highway Patrol. Godwin started his career with the Memphis Police Department in 1973 as an undercover narcotics officer and has been the director since 2004.



Godwin

Kerry Roberts wins seat vacated by Black in special state senate race

Republican Kerry Roberts carried Sumner and Robertson counties to defeat Democrat Ken Wilber in a special state Senate election to fill the 18th District seat vacated by U.S. Rep. Diane Black.

Roberts received 6,052, or 65 percent of Sumner votes, and 2,775, or 72 percent of votes in Robertson County. Wilber, mayor of Portland in northern Sumner County, received 3,215 votes, or 35 percent in Sumner, and 1,101, or 28 percent in Robertson.



Roberts

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State leaders say “No” to unfunded mandates; pledge cooperation

HASLAM from Page 1

“We need to look at the way tenure is given to teachers,” Haslam said. “If you’re going to give someone a job for life, I think they should have to wait more than three years.”

On the business front, he wants to address tort reform and eliminating bureaucratic red tape. “We want Tennessee to be the kind of state that businesses are attracted to,” Gov. Haslam said. “I’m convinced that businesses go where it’s easier to do business.”

One of the first actions his administration implemented was a 45-day hold on any new rules or regulations as part of top to bottom review of state government.

“Frankly, I was shocked at how many new rules were coming through the pipeline,” Gov. Haslam said. “Most made sense. However, some were driven by department needs to make revenue and it really wasn’t helping to attract new businesses. We’re in the process of sifting through all of that now.”

Haslam said he was committed to being the state with less red tape and regulations while at the same time keeping a careful balance of protecting the environment and the citizens of Tennessee.

City officials also heard from **Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey**, who echoed many of Gov. Haslam’s sentiments. He, too, wants to see less regulation and make Tennessee a more business-friendly state.

“My number one goal is to make Tennessee the best state in the union to operate a business,” said Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey. “We’re pretty good right now, but we still have some red tape that needs to be cut through on the state level – and maybe even on the local level. Everyday that it takes to get a permit, it’s day that someone wasn’t employed. It’s a day that some businessman is paying interest on his money. So we need to make sure we get things done as quickly as possible.”

Ramsey also pledged not to hand down any unfunded mandates to local governments and reminded everyone his stance in 2002 when part of local governments’ share of state-shared taxes was cut to help balance the budget. “If you remember in the 2002 through 2006, we took about 7 percent of state-shared taxes that should have been yours. I fought that we everything I had. And when I became speaker in 2007, I passed a bill and we stopped doing that and gave the money back to you where it should be,” said Ramsey.

House Speaker Beth Harwell assured city officials that they had a “friendly” General Assembly. “We want to make your life as good as we can and serve you as best as we can,” she said. “We hear you loud and clear – that the one thing that you don’t want to see us do is send you any unfunded mandates.” She spoke of the legislation introduced this year to do away with the Halls Income Tax and reassured everyone that the legislature would not do anything to harm local governments. “I know you rely on it as a funding source for a lot of good things that you do in your communities.”

Sen. Randy McNally, Finance Ways and Means Committee chairman, said “Not only have we felt the big dip, but we also lost growth in revenue,” as a result of the Great Recession. “It will take the state to about fiscal year 1213 to reach the revenue levels it received in the general fund back in 2008,” he said. With a \$31.2 billion budget, the state’s revenue has declined about \$2 billion. Additionally, there’s about \$1.2 billion in continuing expenses, such as education and statutory requirements “that puts us in the hole \$1.7 billion,” McNally said. The state had a structural imbalance of about \$185 million at the beginning of the budget year, but McNally said improving revenues will reduce that amount to about \$110 million. Future concerns for the committee include rising gas prices, housing, and the sluggish automobile industry. McNally stressed the importance of the state sticking with former Gov. Bredesen’s 5-year plan adding that Gov. Haslam is committed to keeping the budget balanced and restoring services as money becomes available.

As former Roane County Executive, **Sen. Ken Yager**, State and Local Government Committee chair, said he considered local officials “on the front lines,” of government and made it clear to conference attendees that unfunded mandates is, and will be, one of his committee’s most important issues. “It doesn’t matter whether the mandate is from Washington or Nashville, it hurts just the same,” he said. “I can assure you that we’re not going to unknowingly pass laws that create burdens on our local governments, which require them to make hard decisions...to choose between services at the local level or increasing the tax burden locally.” Yager said he, along with Rep. Vince Dean, have filed a bill (SB 1254) to protect local governments from the costs associated with unfunded mandates. The State and Local committee will consider 400 bills this session, while also overseeing 14 budgets.

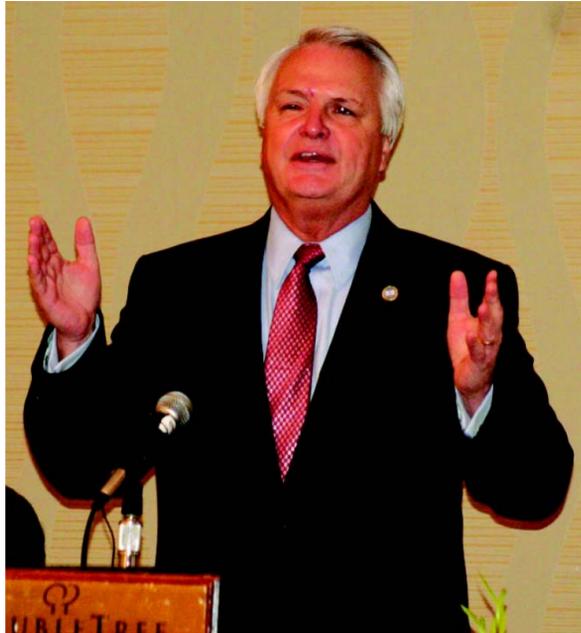
Rep. Bob Ramsey, chair of the House State and Local Subcommittee, said this year’s merger of the State, Local and Election subcommittees will bring a variety of hot topics for deliberation from alcohol to annexation. “We’ve been notified that we will receive not only 80 bills, but anything that has to do with immigration,” Ramsey said. Bills are assigned by the Speaker of House and the clerk. There is increased emphasis this year on cooperative deliberation between the House and Senate, according to Ramsey. As for next year, Ramsey said the committee will focus on redistricting along with comptroller and treasurer bills.

Rep. Charles Sargent, Chair of House Finance, cautioned that municipalities may end up paying as much as 20 to 25 percent for their employees with today’s retirement benefit plans. “Most of you are probably paying 12 to 15 percent, but if we don’t do something, most counties, even the state, won’t be able to afford it,” he said. Sargent suggested a long range study to look at defined contribution plans. He said the new plans, which would affect only new employees, would take a number of years to work out. Sargent also made note that last year’s budget cuts had not impacted cities and counties significantly and he does not foresee any negative impacts for municipalities following Gov. Haslam’s budget proposal. “I don’t want to pre-empt what the governor will say in his budget announcement. It may be another one percent cut, but I don’t think municipalities will even see that,” he said. “I’m constantly in touch with mayors and city managers to see how different bills affect local governments.”

New **TDEC Commissioner Bob Martineau** reported that last year Tennessee State Parks pumped more than \$725 million into local economies, according to a UT study. For every dollar spent from the General Fund to operate state parks, there is \$17 spent by park visitors in the park and surrounding areas. He also discussed President Obama’s proposal to cut to EPA’s base budget by 13 percent. Places where TDEC and local governments are most likely to feel these cuts include major reductions in the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving (SRF) Loan Funds. On the state level, Gov. Bill Haslam has asked all departments to cut their budgets by 1 to 2 percent. Commissioner Martineau pledged to work with Tennessee cities as part of a partnership in ensuring public health and a clean, safe environment for our communities.



Gov. Bill Haslam



Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey



House Speaker Beth Harwell



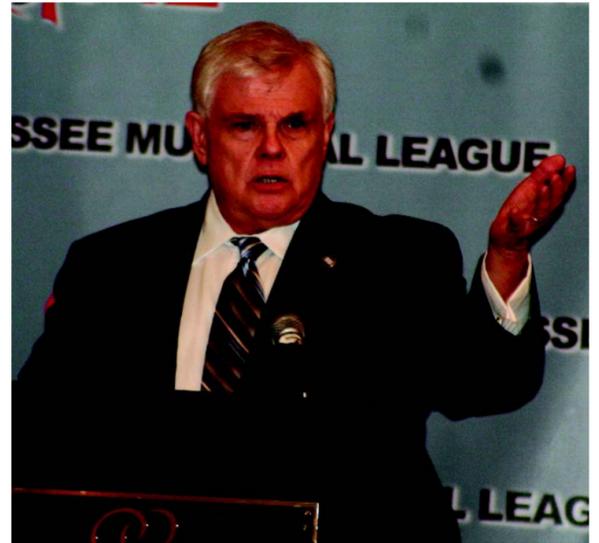
Paul Degges, TDOT engineer

Paul Degges, chief engineer with TDOT, discussed how TDOT works to balance funding across the state and that the state was evenly split between 50 percent urban projects and 50 percent rural projects. “In the urban areas, our main focus is on easing congestion,” he said. “In the rural areas it’s about access and jobs.” Degges said that the harsh winter weather has taken a toll on the state’s roadways as well as the department’s snow and ice budget with expenses (\$30 million) coming in twice as much as what was budgeted (\$16 million). He also explained that the department would need to wait until warmer weather to make the repairs.

Editor’s note: Victoria South contributed to this story.



Sen. Randy McNally



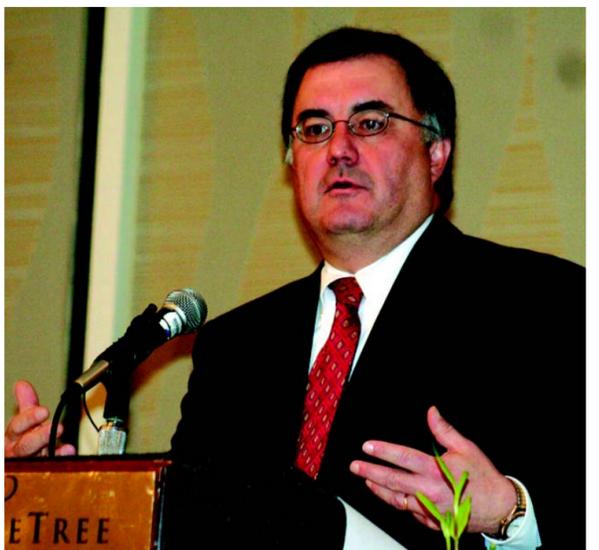
Sen. Ken Yager



Rep. Charles Sargent



Rep. Bob Ramsey



TDEC Commissioner Bob Martineau

Photos by Victoria South



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

TN ranks 4th lowest tax burden
Tennesseans bore the fourth-lowest combined state and local tax burden among states in fiscal year 2009 according to the independent Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan, non-profit tax policy research organization. The Foundation estimates the average total tax burden for residents of each state, including taxes paid in their home states and paid to other states by virtue of working in, traveling to, owning property in or buying products in them. The Tax Foundation method takes the point of view of the taxpayer, counting all state and local taxes no matter which state they pay them to.

Budget cuts threaten Port
Tennessee officials are moving quickly to protect a \$13 million federal grant for a port and industrial park project considered critical to northwest Tennessee and the state. Some believe that budget would threaten funding for the Port at Cates Landing project along the Mississippi River in Lake County. Concern for the project's future was prompted by the House-passed bill that would cut \$62 billion in federal spending for the rest of fiscal 2011.

The bill contains a provision promising to slash spending that would eliminate a \$600 million Department of Transportation program that was the source of the Cates Landing grant. The National Infrastructure Investments program was part of the fiscal 2010 federal budget and grants from it were announced last fall.

UT Extension faces more cuts
Less than a month after announcing the reduction of 60 agents and specialists statewide, the University of Tennessee Extension could be starting down an additional \$831,000 in federal cuts. The reduction was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives as part of its spending plan for the rest of Fiscal Year 2011. Dean of Extension Tim Cross said the agency could absorb the cuts this year if they are approved for this fiscal year but would have to re-examine staffing if the cuts become part of a permanent base budget. President Barack Obama, in his proposed 2012 budget released earlier this month, suggested a less-extensive cut of about half of the dollar amount in the House proposal. The cuts are slated to come out of Smith-Lever Act funding, which was part of the 1914 legislation that created state extension services through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

State enforces transfer credit
When students transfer from a community college to a state university in Tennessee, the credits they earned don't always follow. That's about to change. Starting this fall, the state is introducing a new academic blueprint for transfer students, the Universal Transfer Path. Community college students will be handed a list of classes tailored to their majors and the university they hope to attend. If they follow the blueprint, those classes will transfer with them to the university, and they'll enter as a junior with all their prerequisites.

911 operators face new training
The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board has voted to add new training requirements for 911 dispatchers who take calls about missing or exploited children. The board added five hours of training for all new dispatchers and two hours of continuing education every two years. The extra time is to focus on handling calls about such children. Current requirements mandate 40 hours of initial training and eight hours of continuing education every two years. According to state officials, Tennessee is one of only four states with specific training requirements for 911 dispatchers.

Websites provide free legal help
Free access to a lawyer in Tennessee soon will be as simple as printing out and sending legal forms. The state Supreme Court hopes two websites will combat the need for free legal help. Of the more than 1 million Tennesseans who meet federal poverty guidelines, 70 percent faced legal problems in a year's time, according to the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services. This spring, the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts will launch justiceforalltn.com, which will provide state Supreme Court-approved,

plain-language legal forms for civil issues such as divorces, wills and landlord/tenant documents. Also this spring, the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services and the Tennessee Bar Association will start a website that will allow people who qualify as low-income to post a legal question anonymously on the site.

Handguns at work approved
The Senate has passed legislation that allows individuals with handgun permits to carry their weapons where they work. The measure, sponsored by Sen. Mike Bell of Riceville, was approved 30-1. The proposal states that it's not an occupational hazard for employers to allow workers with handgun permits to carry their weapons at work. Sen. Beverly Marrero of Memphis, the only dissenting vote, says she believes there are employers and employees who don't want guns in their workplace. Faculty Senate members at the University of Tennessee unanimously agreed that they did not want guns on campus. The group passed an amended resolution at their monthly meeting supporting current laws prohibiting weapons at UT.

TN decreases unemployment
Tennessee fared better than most states in the country last year in terms of decreasing its unemployment rate. According to information by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Tennessee lowered its unemployment rate by 0.7 percentage points, tied with Vermont for the second-best improvement in the country. Minnesota and Michigan saw their rates decreased by 0.8 percentage points. According to the BLS, Tennessee ended 2010 with unemployment at 9.7 percent, 35th highest in the country. Tennessee ended 2009 with unemployment at 10.4 percent. Tennessee decreased its number of unemployed works by 20,000 last year, which put it in the minority of states. According to the BLS, 31 states saw their number of unemployed workers grow in 2010.

Tax refunds await Tennesseans
The Internal Revenue Service estimates \$17 million in tax refunds may be waiting for 17,200 Tennesseans



The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board has voted to add five hours of training for all new 911 dispatchers and two hours of continuing education every two years. The extra time is to focus on handling calls about missing or exploited children.

who did not file a federal income tax return for 2007. Some people may not have filed because they had too little income to file, even though they had taxes withheld from their wages or made quarterly estimated payments. In cases where a return was not filed, the law allows most taxpayers three years to claim a refund. If no return is filed within that time, the money becomes property of the U.S. Treasury. For 2007 returns, the window closes on April 18. Half the refunds are for \$633 or more.

Unemployment deemed stable
Tennessee Labor Commissioner Karla Davis says the state's unemployment rate for January was 9.5 percent, up 0.1 percent from the previous month. Despite the increase, Davis said that the state's rate has remained stable since last July and that it's "much improved from last January's 10.4 percent." The national unemployment rate for January was 9 percent, 0.4 percent lower than the December rate. State officials said there were job gains in transportation, machinery manufacturing, wholesale electronic markets and primary metal manufacturing. There were job losses in professional and business services; leisure and hospitality; and trade,

transportation and utilities.

Loss plagues TN pensions
State Treasurer David Lillard recently told legislators that the \$32 billion Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System ranks among the best-funded and best-run pension plans in the nation. But Lillard's report was tempered with some bad news. The plan has been fully funded since its creation in 1972, but two years of bear-market losses in its investment portfolio — minus-1.2 percent in 2008 and minus-15.3 percent in 2009 — left it with a \$2.7 billion unfunded liability on paper that the state will amortize over 20 years. That number could be reduced if investment earnings average better than the projected 7.5 percent. (Earnings rebounded to 10 percent in fiscal 2010 and 13 percent the first half of fiscal 2011.) The \$2.7 billion is far less than a \$30.5 billion shortfall attributed to the Tennessee plan by the conservative American Enterprise Institute and \$23.2 billion claimed by a pair of Northwestern University economists whose analysis Lillard said was flawed. Both claims have been used by a coalition of "free market" groups campaigning to end pensions for public workers.

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2011 Partners Workshop: Critical Issues in Local Government Risk

— Presented by the TML Risk Management Pool —

The TML Risk Management Pool is sponsoring regional workshops for its members in March and April 2011.

The workshops are designed to give TML Pool partner municipalities and agencies the opportunity to better understand TML Pool liability, property, and workers compensation policies and coverage. The workshop will also focus on ways a strong risk management program in your entity can help reduce your risk exposures, improve safety for your employees and citizens, and help reduce premiums. Your entity's administrative staff that work in your risk and insurance program, especially risk managers, are encouraged to attend.

Nine regional workshops are planned from March 21st through April 25th at the

following locations: Spring Hill (March 21st), Cookeville (March 22nd), Jackson (March 28th), Martin (March 29th), Bartlett (March 30th), Collegedale (April 1st), Alcoa (April 4th), Johnson City (April 6th), and White House (April 25th).

"As the TML Pool moves towards a new level of service and transparency for the future, we are working to better inform and educate our members," said Dawn Crawford, TML Risk Management Pool president. "It is through efforts like the 2011 Partners Workshop that we can all work more closely together and the TML Pool can continue to provide the absolute best in

risk management products and services with absolute integrity. We look forward to your attendance and participation in these informative workshops."

All workshops will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 2:00 p.m., with lunch provided. Registration forms as well locations and directions can be found at www.TMLRMP.org under the Partners Workshop link. Please register at least seven days prior to the respective workshop date you desire to attend.

Mail, fax, or email your registration form to: Attn: Jeanette Davis, 5100 Maryland Way, Brentwood, TN 37027, Fax: 615-377-3067, Email JDavis@tmlrmp.org. For questions please contact Halie Gallik, client services representative, at (615) 371-0049 or (800) 624-9698.



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The city of Lebanon closed a loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund for \$1.6 million to be used for water and sewer upgrades. Pictured are Lebanon Mayor Phillip Craighead (left) and Finance Commissioner Russell Lee.

Tennessee participating in new approach to land use, transportation planning

Tennessee is participating in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) Policy Academy on Shaping a New Approach to Transportation and Land Use Planning.

The state will develop a Corridor Management Agreement in one of the state's urban areas that will later be applied to other transportation corridors across the state. The goal is to create a system that helps local planning agencies learn how to make land use decisions that better coordinate with transportation decisions made at the local and state level.

Colorado, Maryland, Washington and West Virginia have also been selected to participate in the program.

Through the Policy Academy, Tennessee and the other selected states will work over a 10-month

period to:

- Establish new governance models that work to align infrastructure development and state goals;
- Create a new planning framework that addresses the state's unique needs and concerns for mobility, accessibility, emissions, financial stability, demographics, climate and topography;
- Adapt new funding and financing approaches that better reflect user costs and benefits, manage demand and help pay for transportation system management and maintenance; and
- Develop enhanced goals and metrics that best reflect the state's transportation goals.

More information about this initiative can be found at the NGA Center Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Division

Axed meth funding a lethal concoction for Tennessee?

Meth funds from Page 1
phetamine Task Force (MTF). "It's just going to be another burden that we place on the backs of our state and local agencies." For many of those agencies, the cuts pose a dilemma as to what to do with the lab once the area has been secured. "We have law enforcement agencies, when the word came down about the funding, that were sitting there with a meth lab and not exactly sure how they were going to dispose of it," said Greene County Sheriff Steve Burns, president of the Tennessee Sheriff's Association.

In the past, the MTF has provided assistance for law enforcement officials working to secure the scene of a meth lab, supplying training, gear, equipment a meth intelligence system, overtime pay and support trucks stocked with everything from oxygen masks and bio-hazard suits to ion scanners and bottled water. Funded by a federal grant, the program carries an operating budget of about \$3 million per year.

"It's not just sheriffs, but all law enforcement that have to respond to meth labs," said Burns. "This funding allows the truck to come and take possession of the chemicals and take them for disposal. We still have the capability of doing our part, it's just a matter of where it's going to go and who's going to pay for it."

According to Farmer, lack of funding creates not only public safety challenges, but opens up liability issues as well. "We are trying to get out short term recommendations to our state and local agencies about what they need to do, to not only protect their communities, but to protect their law enforcement and their agencies from liability," he said.

Farmer agreed he's heard talk of some agencies just leaving the labs intact. "I have cautioned so many chiefs and sheriffs and law enforcement officials to not do that," he stressed. "You jeopardize the public safety and risk civil and criminal liability against you from state, federal and civil litigation. We are both civilly and criminally liable with a duty to protect citizens. Under state law, failure to do so is a criminal offense, not only can you

be civilly sued, but you can also be criminally punished."

Sheriff Wayne Anderson in Sullivan County announced plans to place liens on properties where such operations are discovered, forcing the owners to repay local expenses before a quarantine is lifted. To have a lien lifted under Anderson's plan, offenders would have to pay the bill for removal of the lab and hire a company to properly decontaminate the residence. "If they were going to do something like that, they wouldn't be cooking meth," countered Burns. "You can't seize a motel room from someone that's innocent as far as the owner goes."

"If you were to seize the property and excise your authority in asset forfeiture, or place a lien, it does not relieve the responsibility of remediation because you're a city, county or local agency," said Farmer. "You can do it, but follow the same guidelines for cleaning up that property. If the property is worth more than the clean up costs would be, it is definitely a means of recovering damages or losses."

"No doubt that one of our recommendations to cities and counties comes in the form of restitution, Farmer continues. "We've got a provision in our law already for innocent victims. It's primarily been utilized in the form of the innocent land or property owner requesting restitution or reimbursement for the clean up costs. Now it takes a different step; it actually elevates to the city or county or police agency. They are actually becoming the victim for having to extend so much money in clean up costs."

While Farmer said he believes the MTF can make cuts that will stretch funding throughout the remainder of the year and possibly a portion of next year, he warns law enforcement officials that the worst case scenario could lie ahead. "I want to notify and caution that wave two is imminent, the task force losing its funding," he said. "We have no new money coming down the pipe line for the first time in 10 years."

The lead agency in Education and Awareness programs for the MTF is already taking a major hit. The Tennessee National Guard has

conducted drug and awareness training and education sessions for more than 35,000 people across the state, including schools, faculty, students, first responders, civic groups, health care workers, social workers, and community-based organizations. "I've got 28 people on orders for the whole state right now" Lt. Col Gene Reece told local media. "We'll be down to four people from 86 in October." "The cuts to the National Guard is already being felt across the state," Farmer said. "It was a huge setback to us. Our proposed cuts include elimination of some training and schools. We're going to try to run two schools. We've got 405 police officers signed up for our first school with only 50 slots. We're getting calls from other states that want to send their people to us and we can't take them."

U.S. Rep. Phil Roe pledged to work on reinstating the funding, labeling the move another unfunded mandate (for local law enforcement). Roe said he is talking with U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, a Kentucky Republican who chairs the powerful House Appropriations Committee, about continuing DEA funding but had no timeline to address the issue.

"We think the prevention solution is prescription only pseudoephedrine products," said Farmer. "Tracking systems do not prevent labs." In the meanwhile, a controversial bill proposed by Sen. Mae Beavers, Mt. Juliet, and Rep. Debra Maggart, Hendersonville, (SB0325 and HB0234), to establish a statewide, industry-funded electronic tracking system for purchases of cold and allergy medicine containing pseudoephedrine has brought a third proposal from Gov. Bill Haslam. "Approval of the tracking system legislation now, but also have the Legislature enact a bill authorizing the state health commissioner to order the drugs sold by prescription only after consulting with the commissioner of mental health," Haslam said. Haslam's administration has introduced a bill that would grant such authority to the health commissioner (HB1990). If they (commissioners) feel like the database isn't working," Haslam said, the next step would be to mandate sales by prescription only.

Good Risk Management is just Good Management



Cities and municipal agencies have joined together to create in the TML Pool what has grown to be the largest municipal insurer in Tennessee. The extent of the coverage provided for municipal exposures is staggering.

The Pool insures:

- 40,575 municipal employees for workers' compensation representing more than \$951.7 million in annual payroll exposures;
- 18,960 municipal vehicles with total insurable values of some \$350 million for liability coverage; and provides
- general liability coverage for 16,407 miles of streets.



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ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ASSISTANT III

The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Administrative Support Assistant III in our Nashville office. This position serves as general office manager and administrative assistant to consultants based in the Knoxville, Nashville and Johnson City offices. Orders office supplies and maintains inventory of equipment and its condition. Coordinates facility and service needs. Key detailed information into learning management system, GML (Lotus Notes database). Excellent customer service skills are required as well as the ability to plan and process projects and handle inquiries. Position requires expertise in Micro-soft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook). This position requires at least two years of college education or additional office experience evidencing writing and analytical skills. A high level of cognitive or intuitive skills are necessary to fully understand, design and implement successful solutions to municipal problems. Position is open until filled. Please send application and resume to: UT OHRM; 600 Henley Street, Suite 221; Knoxville, TN 37996. The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.

CITY RECORDER

GOODLETTSVILLE. The city is seeking applicants for the position of City Recorder. This position will be responsible for the maintenance of official public records; preparing and reviewing agenda documents and recording / transcribing meeting minutes, ordinances, resolutions and public notices; and administrative support of the City's five-member Board of Commissioners and City Manager. The position reports directly to the City Manager. Qualifications for the position include: a High school diploma (or GED) required. Bachelors or Associates degree preferred; three to five years professional office experience, preferably in local government; any combination of education and experience equivalent to items 1 & 2; proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationship with employees and the public; ability to communicate effectively and tactfully, both verbally and in writing; current Municipal Clerk and Recorder Certification from the State of Tennessee is preferred. Certification must be obtained within three years from hire date. Benefits include: group medical, dental, life and long-term disability insurances; paid holidays, vacation and sick leave; Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) and voluntary deferred compensation plan; Education assistance plan; Annual base \$45,000, salary is dependent on qualifications and experience. Qualified applicants, as determined by initial screening of resumes, may be invited to participate in an interview process that may consist of written and oral components. Appointment will be made based on results of the interview process. The successful applicant must be available for work on April 11, 2011. All interested applicants should submit a resume with cover letter along with five personal and five professional references to: Human Resources, City Hall; 105 South Main Street, Goodlettsville, TN 37072, no later than March 18, 2011. www.cityofgoodlettsville.org. *Information contained herein is subject to change without notice.* The City of Goodlettsville does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, color, national origin, religion or disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities, nor does it discriminate in its hiring or employment practices.

CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL

JOHNSON CITY. The city is looking for an innovative and committed professional with proven technical and leadership skills, to serve as Chief Building Official (CBO). As CBO, you'll plan, direct, and lead the city's Code Enforcement division activities and programs, within the Public Works department, while actively and visibly supporting the city's vision. The CBO will work with 12 staff members to provide efficient administration of all provisions of the municipal building codes, property maintenance codes and zoning ordinances. The CBO will administer the activities of the Board of Building Codes and Board of Dwelling Standards and Review. Candidates must have: strong interpersonal and communication skills (both verbal and written); demonstrated leadership ability; and at a minimum, a bachelor's degree; and/or 10 years previous experience in any combination of code enforcement; design, construction or inspection of building structures; or structural engineer-

ing or architecture. Salary range: \$49,227 to \$64,620 depending on experience. Position open until filled. For an application or city information visit www.johnsoncitytn.org. Apply to: Department of Human Resources, City of Johnson City, 601 East Main St., P.O. Box 2150, Johnson City, TN 37605. EEO/AA.

DIRECTOR PARKS & RECREATION

MILLERSVILLE. The city has an immediate opening for Director of Parks and Recreation. The director will assume the responsibilities for maintaining the new Community Center, Park and Playground facility. This position is funded, in part, by the Tennessee Recreation Incentive Program. Education requirements must include a B.A. in Parks and Recreation, or related field. A minimum of three years experience in parks and recreation employment is preferred. Experience with marketing, event programming, and event planning is highly preferred to facilitate the rental of the building's unique performance venues. This is a salaried position. Benefits include: paid vacation, holidays, state retirement, and insurance. Please submit a completed application (available from City Hall), along with resume to: City of Millersville, 1246 Louisville Hwy, Millersville, TN 37072. Applications will be accepted through the end of March, 2011. EOE.

FINANCE DIRECTOR

BARTLETT. The city is seeking applicants for the position of Finance Director. This position is the city's authority on all aspects of financial management and requires a comprehensive understanding of city government finance. The finance director manages the budgeting, accounting, accounts payable, debt service management and information technology functions of government and participates in the cash management, pension, investments, and certain aspects of the payroll process and purchasing. This position requires a bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, Public Administration, or closely related field, and seven years of progressive experience with a minimum of five 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 years of primarily governmental experience, with at least three 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 Retirement Plan. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Submit a letter of interest, current resume with salary history and at least three professional references to: Personnel Director, City of Bartlett, 6400 Stage Rd., Bartlett, TN 38134. Email: pvoss@cityofbartlett.org. EOE

POLICE CHIEF

OAK RIDGE. The city is seeking a new Police Chief. Qualifications for the position include a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Public Administration, Management or a related field; ability to be certified by the Tennessee POST Commission within six months of hire; ability to obtain a valid Tennessee driver's license; and evidence of continued professional development through participation in professional association activities at the state and national levels and attendance at seminars and workshops in the law enforcement management field to stay abreast of changes in the field. Graduation from the FBI Academy or Southern Police Institute would be a plus. Please see the Recruitment Brochure at www.mercergroupinc.com for other requirements. The Oak Ridge Police Department is responsible for enhancing the safety and security of all residents and other persons working in or visiting the city. Starting salary will be market competitive, DOQ/E plus an automobile, benefits and reasonable relocation expenses. Brochure at www.mercergroupinc.com. Resumes by close of business March 18, 2011, to James Mercer, The Mercer Group, Inc., 551 W Cordova Road, #726, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Voice: 505-466-9500; Fax: 505-466-1274, e-mail: jmercer@mercergroupinc.com; website: www.mercergroupinc.com. In accordance with the Tennessee Open Records law, all application materials are subject to public disclosure. Please contact James Mercer if you have questions about this law and its requirements. EOE.

CITY MANAGER

EAST RIDGE. The city is accepting qualified applicants for the position of City Manager. Bachelor Degree in Public Administration required. A minimum of three to five years municipal government experience required. Also requires proven management and leadership, team building, communications skills and economic development experience. City offers competitive salary and excellent benefits package. City website is www.eastridgetn.org. Send resume to: Trish Perry, Human Resources, at pperry@eastridgetn.org or City of East Ridge, 1517 Tombras Avenue, East Ridge, TN 37412. EOE and TN Drug Free Workplace.

TML Annual Conference Murfreesboro, June 12-14

TML from Page 1

Workshops will also focus on leadership skills and planning for the future. Topics will include:

- Retail Retention & Economic Development
- Entrepreneurship for Rural Communities
- Community Branding
- Leadership & Communication Excellence
- Civility in Government
- Regaining Public Trust
- Employee Benefits & Public Pensions
- Fuel Stabilization
- Sign Reflectivity Regs
- City Best Practices

Other conference highlights include a mobile workshop to city's state-of-the-art public works facility, a welcome reception Saturday night, a full exhibitors' program with dynamic vendor presentations, and a Monday night party hosted by the TML Risk Management Pool.

The conference will kick off Sunday, June 12, with registration, vendor presentations, and the opening general session followed by the host city reception. An awards breakfast on Tuesday will conclude the conference.

To register, go to the League's website: www.TML1.org. To register for the TML Annual Conference, go to TML's website to download a registration form. Or contact Sylvia Trice at (615) 425-3903 or by e-mail at strice@TML1.org.

Prior to the kick off of the conference, the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) will host several pre-conference sessions as part of the Elected Officials Academy program. The sessions offered will be part of Level II of the academy. The sessions will take place in the conference hotel, the Embassy Suites. To register for the academy, contact Kurt Frederick at 615-253-6385.



SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

SATURDAY, JUNE 11	
7 - 10 pm	Welcome Reception
SUNDAY, JUNE 12	
9 am - 5 pm	Exhibit Hall / Registration
11-11:45 am	Vendor Workshop 1
12 noon	Lunch
1 - 1:45 pm	Vendor Workshop 2
2 - 2:45 pm	District Meetings
3 - 4:15 pm	Opening Session
	Keynote John Luthy
4:30 - 5:30 pm	Concurrent Workshops
6:30 - 8:30 pm	Host City Reception
MONDAY, JUNE 13	
8 - 8:45 am	Breakfast
9 - 11:15 am	Mobile Workshop: Murfreesboro Public Works Facility
9 - 10 am	Concurrent Workshops
10:15 - 11:15 am	Concurrent Workshops
11:30 - 12:15 am	Annual Business Meeting
12:30 - 2 pm	Lunch
2:15 - 3:15 pm	Concurrent Workshops
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Concurrent Workshops
6:30 - 11pm	Pool Party
TUESDAY, JUNE 14	
8 - 10 am	Annual Awards Breakfast

Municipal Administration Program April Schedule

Planning and Zoning

Planning is a process that seeks to guide the future. Decisions regarding land development and conversion, infrastructure planning and standards along with the impacts of density and other growth issues directly affect landowners, neighbors, and the entire community – often with significant impact on property values, community character, and quality of life – and especially the municipal budget.

This course will address the following topics:

- Legal Basis for Regulating Land Divisions, including definitions
- Infrastructure Planning and Standards
- Planning Implications of Poor Subdivision Control

Instructors
MTAS Training Consultants

Time

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

Dates and locations

April 7	Athens
April 13	Knoxville
April 14	Johnson City
April 20	Franklin
April 23	Jackson

Training Facilities

Athens, Conference Center, 2405 Decatur Pike

Franklin, Williamson County Ag. Expo Park, 4215 Long Lane

Jackson, West Tennessee Center for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Public Service, 605 Airways

Johnson City, Johnson City Municipal Building, 601 East Main Street

Knoxville, University of Tennessee Conference Center, 600 Henley Street

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The registration fee for MAP courses for Tennessee city officials is \$25 each. A fee of \$55 is charged for non-city officials. Registration is required. Seating is limited at all sites, so please register in advance. Submit payment with your registration.

MTAS will need to receive payment in order to confirm your attendance for the class. For more information, contact Kurt Frederick at 615-253-6385 or Elaine Morrissey at 865-974-0411.

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Emerging Issues: A unique time in municipal finance; not for hunkering down

 BY BILL BARNES
Nation's Cities Weekly

Michael Pagano says that we are in a "unique time in the history of public finance," a time when leaders and citizens can and should broach fundamental issues.

Pagano knows a thing or two about finance — the "lifeblood of municipalities." He speaks from more than a quarter century of widely respected scholarly and practical work in this field and from amidst his own budgetary turmoil as a dean at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

In recent presentations to an NLC Staff Seminar and to workshops at the NLC Congress of Cities in Denver, Pagano said that the recession and financial fiasco and the political responses to them have combined with, exacerbated, and highlighted long-term trends in the basic "architecture of public finance." The result is a combustible and excruciating situation that will linger for at least several more years.

He predicts that, to cope responsibly, communities will have to negotiate "new social compacts" upon which city finances can be re-constructed.

This will not be easy, especially in the current, nasty environment. Responding to the horrible shootings in Tucson, NLC President James E. Mitchell Jr., councilmember, Charlotte, N.C., said that "we cannot let fear limit the openness of public discourse" because "the open exchange of ideas in public settings ... is, in fact, at the heart of our democratic system."

A New Play Book

Similarly, Ronald O. Loveridge, mayor of Riverside, Calif., and now immediate past president of NLC, told delegates at the NLC conference that this is "not the time to hunker down or to withdraw within our city limits." He called instead for "a new play book" for municipal strategies.

He also cited author Richard Florida's claim, in "The Great Reset," that we are in midst of one of

the nation's "broad and fundamental transformations of the economic and social order." City governments will need to understand what that means for them — what their new normal can be and will be — and then adapt and lead accordingly.

Elsewhere, URBACT, a consortium of cities and researchers in the European Union, observes that, because EU member states are financially debilitated, "The downturn has empowered local communities." Moreover, the situation "pushes on habits and overcomes taboos"; it "is raising questions that, by habit, we have not asked in a long time."

Fundamental dollars and cents challenges lead directly to fundamental governance challenges, including questions that may not be part of the normal budgetary discussions. However diverse the focus in the variety of localities, the underlying commonality is that these are wicked policy/political matters, not easily subject to technical/administrative standards.

What kinds of questions are at issue here?

By way of example, Pagano mentioned the fairness of revenue systems; the pro-cyclical nature of local budget practice; accumulated long-term liabilities (pensions and infrastructure); definition of "core services;" pricing infrastructure and services; and partnerships in service delivery.

That's a daunting list and thoughtful officials will formulate more items. What, indeed, are "core municipal functions?" If "public safety" and "economic development" and "strengthening families" are among them, what do we really mean by those concepts?

Loveridge suggested that the 21st century will be "the century of regions." Are there steps cities can take that are useful in the budget crisis and that also build a capacity for inter-local collaboration and shared services?

President Obama has called for fundamental federal tax reform (not just tax cuts.) Is it also time for

fundamental municipal tax reform (not just tax cuts)?

Are tax exemptions for non-profits, especially the big institutional ones, appropriate? Some cities are already grappling with this.

Are we yet past the "do more with less" mantra? What will it mean to do less with less or to do differently with different?

And what about the even deeper issues, questions of purpose and values? What will be the mix in city budgets of investment versus current consumption? Who will pay and who will benefit? Will budgets facilitate economic growth? Stable neighborhoods?

Whether or not these and other questions are posed publicly and explicitly, the process will willy-nilly result in answers. And the effects will re-shape the future.

Public Deliberation

So, leaders may as well frame and pose such questions and try to debate the answers thoughtfully and in public. Does the government have a relationship with the residents and stakeholders of the community that will allow for and support such discussions? Do all the potential participants have the skills to take part effectively?

The view that government is *per se* bad is "not a useful place to start," such public discussions, says Pete Peterson, Director of the Davenport Institute at Pepperdine University.

It's important for officials to accept that "everything we're doing now is the right thing" is also not a useful place to start.

"The key question facing city leaders," observes Christopher Hoene, who analyzes public finance conditions as NLC's director of research and innovation, "is when do they move from managing cutbacks to rethinking the work of cities?"

The answers that evolve to such underlying questions will constitute a new normal or a new social compact. More prosaically, they will be new rules of the game about how the community is going to solve its problems and seize its opportunities.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

A generation after record levels of youth crime spurred a nationwide movement to prosecute more teenagers as adults, a consensus is emerging that many young delinquents have been mishandled by the adult court system. Last year, Connecticut stopped treating all 16-year-old defendants as adults, and next year will do the same for 17-year-olds. Illinois recently transferred certain low-level offenders younger than 18 into its juvenile system. And in January, lawmakers in Massachusetts introduced a bill to raise the age of adulthood in matters of crime, and their counterparts in Wisconsin and North Carolina intend to do the

same. The changes followed studies that concluded that older adolescents differed significantly from adults in their capacity to make sound decisions, and benefited more from systems focused on treatment rather than on incarceration.

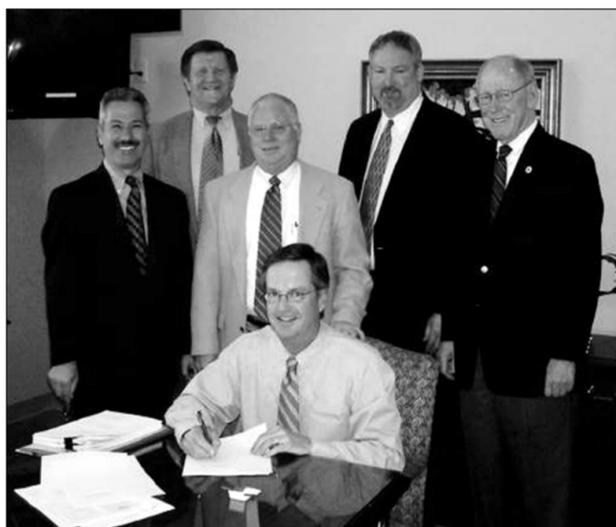
Businesses across the country plan to increase hiring in the second quarter, an indication of growing confidence in the recovery, global staffing firm Manpower Inc. said. Employers in all 50 states report positive hiring intentions and 33 out of 50 states anticipate considerable increases, according to the quarterly Manpower Employment Outlook Survey. This was the sixth straight quarter of projected national employment growth.

In Knoxville, 18 percent of the area employers surveyed said they plan to add workers from April to June, while 6 percent plan to cut jobs, and 73 percent plan no change in employment levels. Second-quarter plans reflect an improvement from the first quarter, when 15 percent of employers said they would be hiring and 8 percent planned job cuts.

Local pharmacists are coping with the worst drug shortage in their memories. The shortages are rooted in consolidation among drug companies, leaving fewer alternatives for a particular drug. A bill has been introduced in Congress to require more notice from manufacturers when a drug shortfall is anticipated.

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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.



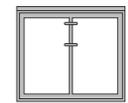
March 19: Bell Buckle Daffodil Day Festival
 Held at the Bell Buckle Banquet Hall behind The Cat's Meow. Vendors, a beekeeping seminar, container gardening, certified organic products from Readyville Mill, bake sale, The Daffodil flower show, free tree seedlings given away all day. Join the Arbor Day ceremony and visit our unique shops. For a full schedule of events, visit www.BellBucklechamber.com

March 19: Linden The Blooming Arts Festival
 An outstanding slate of family friendly educational events and interactive exhibitions including fire, glass, wood, molten metal, paint splatter, and modern dance. For more information, visit the website www.bloomingartsfestival.com.

March 25-26: Lobelville Buffalo River Springfest
 Held in conjunction with the TSSAA High School Girl's Softball Tournament at Lobelville's City Park, the events kick off Fri. night with softball and music. Sat. plans include live music performances all day, free kiddie rides, a surprise visit by T-RAC (the Tennessee Titans mascot), and a visit by several Tennessee Titans cheerleaders. For more information, call Lobelville City Hall at 931-593-2285.

March 31 -April 3: Columbia Mule Day
 Maury County Park. A tradition for nearly 170 years. Arts & Crafts, flea market, log loading competition, mule driving show, mule pulling contests, live music, entertainment, clogging, parade, gospel singing and food galore. For a full schedule of events and more information, visit the website at muleday.org or call 931-381-9557.

COMING UP



April 14-16: The 2011 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Forum titled *Building Connections*, hosted by the department's Recreation Educational Services Division and the Commissioner's Council on Greenways and Trails. The forum will be held in Murfreesboro at Patterson Park Community Center. Features expert presenters from across the country. Educational sessions will highlight the impact greenways and trails have on our communities. For more information and online registration, visit www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/.



TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL BOND FUND

The Tennessee Municipal League's 2011 Legislative Conference



Paris Mayor and TML President Sam Tharpe



Morristown Councilmember Kay Senter and Athens Vice Mayor Bo Perkinson



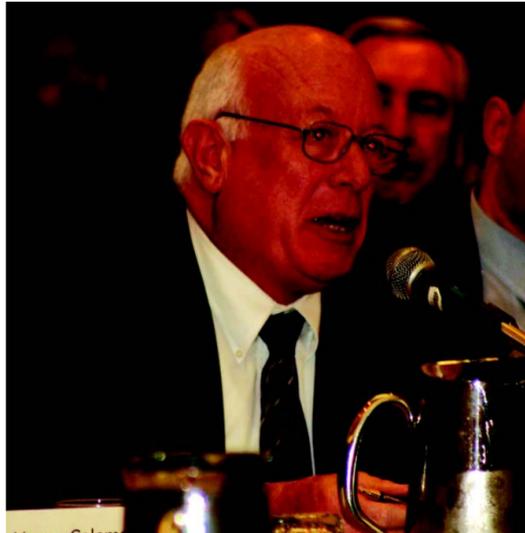
Oak Ridge Mayor Tom Beehan



Farragut Vice Mayor Dot LaMarche and Bartlett Mayor Keith McDonald



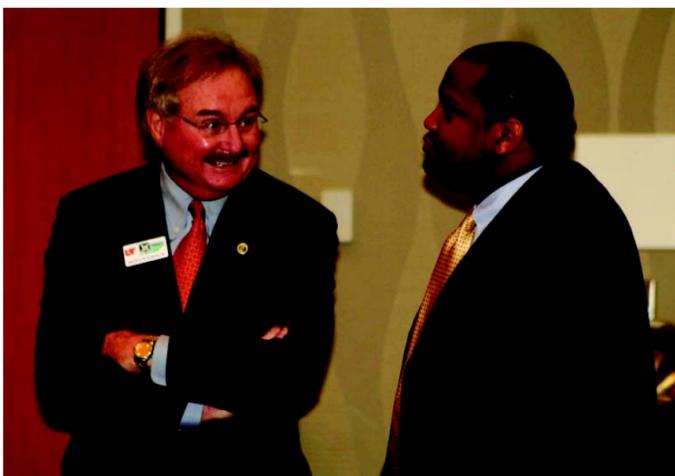
Knoxville Interim Mayor Daniel Brown



Covington Mayor David Gordon



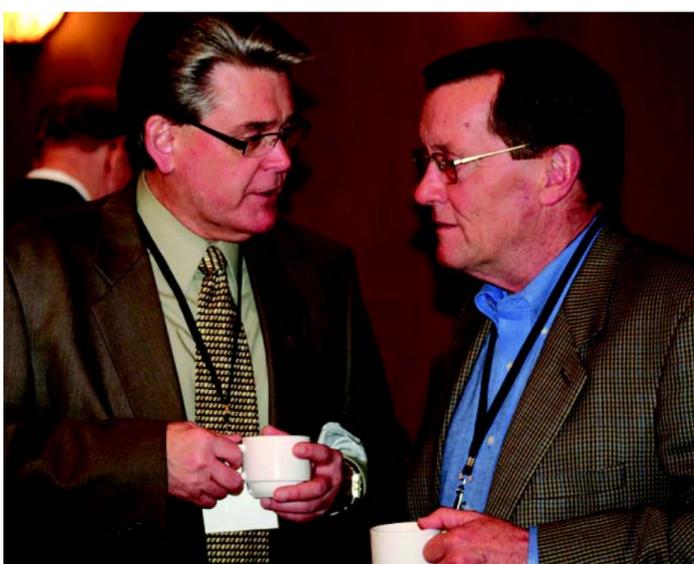
Humbolt Mayor Alan Barker



Crossville Mayor J.H. Graham, III, and Livingston Mayor Curtis Hayes



White House City Administrator Angie Carrier and Brentwood Mayor Betsy Crossley



Pictured bottom left: Sevierville Vice Mayor Dale Carr and Mayor Bryan Atchley



Bottom right: Arlington Alderman Hugh Lamar and Lakeland City Manager Bob Wherry

The Tennessee Municipal League's 2011 Legislative Conference



TML Vice President Kay Senter conducts Tuesday's session.



Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey is welcomed to the conference by TML Deputy Director Chad Jenkins.



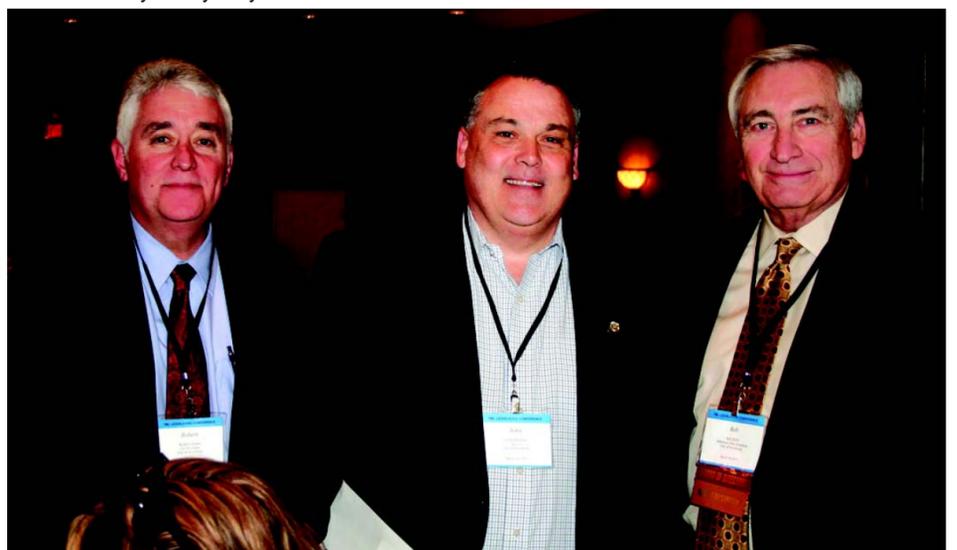
Paris City Manager Carl Holder and Paris Mayor Sam Tharpe



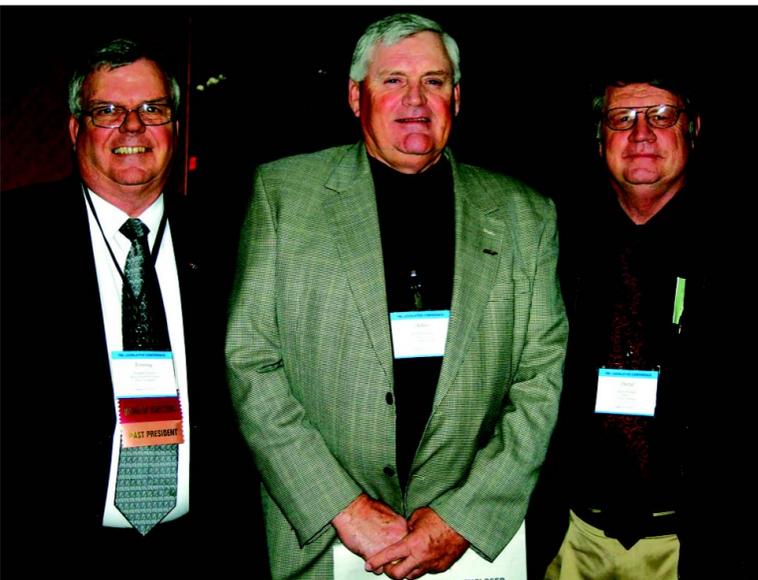
Red Bank Mayor Monty Millard, East Ridge City Manager Eddie Phillips and Soddy-Daisy Mayor Jim Adams



Marianne McGill and Farragut Mayor Ralph McGill



Dyersburg City Recorder Robert Jones, Mayor John Holden and Alderman Bob Kirk



Alamo Mayor Tommy Green, Brownsville Alderman John Simmons and Atoka Mayor Daryl Walker

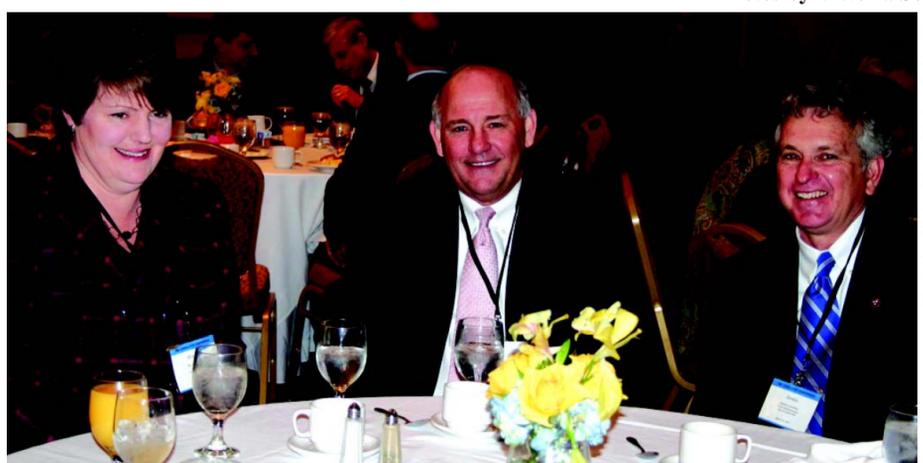


Brownsville Alderman Leon King, Vice Mayor Carolyn Flagg, Mayor Jo Matherne and Alderman Tom Averyheart

Photos by Victoria South



Fairview Mayor Beverly Totty and Commissioner Patti Carroll



Pictured at left: Collierville Alderman Maureen Fraser, Mayor Stan Joyner Jr. and Town Administrator James Lewellen

West TN regional college program "REDI" for success

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Communications Coordinator

"With the neatly typed resume in hand, the Washington interviewer studied the strapping young man over her reading glasses. He was applying for a government relations position with a new industry opening up in Mississippi along the port. "Hmm...City Council...local Mayor...very impressive," she thought. Finally, she spoke. "There's absolutely no doubt that you can do this job." She paused. "But... you don't have a degree. Her voice softening, "you see, I must tell you, the résumés are divided into two stacks, those who have degrees and those who don't. We have construction jobs. If you want to apply for a construction job, we have an office for that right down the hall..."

It was Joe Barker's initiation into a new world, the one where education opened the employment doors far beyond his rural roots in Savannah, Tenn., and his family's 40-year farm equipment business.

"I went home that day, gathered my kids together and said "If you get a degree, it doesn't mean you're smarter or better than anyone, but I found out today, it will open doors for you," Barker recalls. As the youngest boy of seven, he had always wanted to study law, but in 1972, his life took a different turn.

When he was 21, and a student at UT Martin, Barker's father was seriously injured in a boating accident at the family's lake home in



Any person living in one of the REDI counties who has obtained a regular high school diploma or G.E.D. is eligible to participate.

Savannah. "I was beginning my senior year and it was decided that being the youngest boy, and not married, that I would come home to help with the family business," he muses.

With his dad in a Memphis hospital, Barker's family thought he would only miss a quarter of school at best, but his father's health never returned well enough to return to the business and Barker never returned to school. "I never left. I got married and had four children and never graduated from college," he said.

Barker became increasingly active in state and local government

and rural economic development, serving on the city commission, and becoming mayor of Savannah and Hardin County Mayor for eight years.

In 2002, former Gov. Phil Bredesen came calling and Barker became an Assistant Commissioner with the Department of Economic and Community Development focusing on rural economic development as a public-private partnership. As Executive Director of the Tennessee Tomorrow program, he oversaw three pilot projects across the state with the foundation of college access.

"When we looked at the need in those areas, it all came back to the quality of the workforce," he said. "These rural areas had plenty of buildings, land, and lots of other things to recruit jobs, but at the end of the day, they didn't have the type of workforce to recruit the type of industry they really wanted."

Today as Executive Director of the Southwest Tennessee Regional Economic Development District in Jackson, Barker's not only in his element, but he's working to ensure

The economic environment today is markedly different than it was 50 years ago. Good jobs for those with only a high school degree have become scarce. You can find a job; but the pay is low, and there is no health insurance or long-term security. Better jobs go to those with a better education.—*Education Crossroads*

that high school students across a 12-county region of West Tennessee reach their's through the REDI Initiative, a four-prong, college ac-

It doesn't matter if you're a city of 800 or a county of 12,000, if your part of this, then you automatically become stronger."

While college access/workforce development is the foundation of the REDI program, three other areas, technology development in the region, capacity building with primary elected officials and entrepreneurship, working with rural communities to help them grow their own businesses, round out the initiative.

In 2009, Barker pushed REDI



Susan Cowden of the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation presents an award for \$200,000 toward a Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) in rural West Tennessee. REDI is the only program in Tennessee to have received the "2010 Innovation Award."

Business Day at the State Capitol, Gov. Bill Haslam emphasized education as the road to improvement for the state's workforce. "We really do have to change our whole culture around education," he said. Haslam also announced plans to focus on rural economic development because "that's where unemployment has hit the hardest."

"Gov. Haslam is very supportive of our project," said Barker. "He realizes unless we build that foundation, true economic development is not going to happen in the rural areas."

After only a year in progress, the program has received a 4-year, \$1.5 million College Access Challenge grant from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission toward nine additional staff members. "What the grant allows us to do is hire seven more people who actually work in the schools and two to work at Jackson State and Dyersburg State to help students transition from high school to community college and then on to a 4-year university," said Barker. "It's one thing to get them in, it's another to get them to stay there."

forward after a three-day conference with 13 invited communities and their representatives showed considerable interest in a college access program in West Tennessee. Meeting with the county mayors and cities, he asked each community to contribute \$15,000 seed money to help bring the project to life. The call did not go unheeded.

"As soon as I heard about REDI it really touched a heartstring with me," explains Pat Riley, general manager of the Gibson Company Utility District, a \$5,000 contributor to the program. "Growing up, my brothers and sister and I had a hard way to go. This kind of help would have been very beneficial. For me it's almost my patriotic duty to get involved. If we can get more students into college, we'll get more mathematicians, better teachers and engineers."

Riley joins a cast of 400 REDI volunteers, who provide free college admission mentoring to 1,900 high school seniors from 22 high schools with advice on how to register for college courses online, to writing letters of intent and completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

"We're trying to change the education culture in our region because the days of graduating from high school and going to work in a factory—those days are gone," said Lisa Hankins, REDI Initiative director. "You can't have a qualified workforce today if you're not educated."

In his keynote address for Small



Joe Barker, former Savannah and Hardin County mayor, has channeled his energy as executive director of the Southwest Tennessee Regional Development District into the REDI Initiative, a 12-county regional college access program.

looking into scholarships."

As part of the entrepreneurship component, REDI is launching a digital factory pilot program in Par-



Currently 1,900 high school seniors have applied for college access mentoring assistance through the REDI Initiative in Southwest Tennessee.

A college-transfer bill the Tennessee legislature passed in 2010, allows community college students to transfer after two years without having extra credits that don't count toward their majors or burden students with thousands in extra cash or debt.

According to Barker, four REDI Initiative counties offer some form of Last Dollar Scholarships, intended to fill the gap between students' financial aid and the real costs of college, such as computers, books and supplies, room and board and even graduation expenses.

"Each individual county sets their own criteria for the scholarship, whether it be grade point average or something else," said Barker. "For some communities, local governments put funds into the scholarship, in others, it's the private sector. Our hope is that we can find an entity that wants to put some dollars into the regional program where we can provide the scholarships for everybody."

For Haywood High School senior Tonya Elrod, a future psychology student at Austin Peay State University, her sessions with Ms. Gail Chapman have made all the difference between going to college and not. "Getting ready for college takes a lot of preparation, and if you have no experience, like me, it would be extremely difficult without a mentor. Without Ms. Chapman's assistance I wouldn't have motivated myself to apply. She makes sure I have everything ready such as applying for the school, for housing, getting my ACT score higher and

sons within the next 60 days," according to Barker. The project will offer a single educational track in customer service representative training. "Our goal is to have a digital factory in all our regional counties," Barker said.

"Children need to understand that, maybe college isn't for everyone," Barker summarizes. "But if you have the ability and means to do it, in this day and time, you will have the opportunity to be successful."

Participating counties in the REDI Initiative are: Lauderdale, Tipton, Gibson, Crockett, Haywood, Fayette, Hardeman, Chester, McNairy, Henderson, Hardin and Decatur. For more information about the REDI Initiative, visit www.swtd.org.

Resources for Education

The National College Access Network (NCAN) represents 250 organizations that are serving thousands of low-income students and their families in 44 states, the District of Columbia, Ontario and Quebec improving access to and success in postsecondary education for disadvantaged, underrepresented, and first-generation students. NCAN supports a network of state and local college access programs; provides leadership and up-to-date tools and resources, technical assistance and helps establish new college access programs. For more information on NCAN, visit www.collegeaccess.org.

tnAchieves: a home grown effort turns regional

Initially started in Knox County in 2008 as KnoxAchieves, with Gov. Bill Haslam, former Knoxville Mayor, on the Board of Directors, tnAchieves is a college access, Last Dollar Scholarship program designed to provide an opportunity for Tennessee public high school graduates to receive up to \$3,000 annually for community college tuition. The name has been changed to tnAchieves because the initiative is expanding statewide.

"We received nearly a million dollar grant from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to take our model to whatever communities would like to jump on board," said director Krissy DeAlejandro. "We offered the program to 14 communities, and everyone's happy to help their students in any way possible."

At the recent TML Legislative Conference in Nashville, Gov. Haslam announced his goal to bring the various regional college access programs in Tennessee together into a statewide network to better facilitate the secondary education dream.

"In one generation, America has slipped from 1st to 9th in the number of people with a degree, Haslam said. Our promise with KnoxAchieves was the push for someone who didn't think they could go to college to think, maybe I can. You apply for all the scholarships and we'll give you a mentor to help you and hold your

hand and let you know how to do all that and we'll pay the last dollar. We've seen increased interest and growth in the number of people who are applying, and going to community college."

tnAchieves could soon operate in 15 counties including Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Grainger, Jefferson, Loudon, Morgan, Roane, Sevier and Union. Along with Knox, tnAchieves will fully fund programs in Fentress, Hancock, and Scott serving 45 high schools in the fall of 2011.

Two hundred and seventy five volunteers from across the state, not only donate funds to provide a college education for students who would otherwise lack the opportunity, they serve as mentors for tnAchieves. The program has accepted almost 1,100 students from the Class of 2011 with preference given to first generation college attendees.

"People are starting to understand the importance of a strong regional work force and working together," DeAlejandro continues. "Whether it be economic or developing and maintaining a strong work force, it doesn't stop at municipal lines."

According to DeAlejandro, "the beauty of the program" is that prior to getting the grant, KnoxAchieves



was completely and privately funded. "Randy Boyd, the chairman of the board, and other board members are committed to raising funds privately," she said.

While students are not required to meet G.P.A. or ACT components to qualify for scholarships, the program asks that recipients "give back" to their communities by performing eight hours of community service per semester.

"These are the kind of students that when one thing pops up out of the ordinary, they give up or say it's too hard," said DeAlejandro. "I think sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement to get a family or student beyond all the intimidations associated with college access; someone to say you're doing this right. I think our mentors serve as someone who can help push them over the hump." For further information about tnAchieves, visit www.knoxachieves.org