



## Legislation filed to address synthetic drug problem

Over the past several years, a growing number of cities have become concerned about the sale and use of a controlled substance analogue, otherwise known as a "synthetic drug."

In recent years, the General Assembly has enacted bills that made it a misdemeanor to manufacture, sell or possess synthetic drugs. The law was based on the chemical compounds in the products, and drug manufacturers have managed to skirt the law by changing the chemical compounds slightly, making enforcement difficult.

TML has been in contact with the Tennessee District Attorneys Conference concerning the development of legislation and the formation of an alliance to address synthetic drugs. During those discussions, the Conference staff informed TML that they were in the midst of developing a legislative initiative.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Mae Beavers has agreed to sponsor the legislation, SB2172, which she developed in conjunction with Rep. Tony Shipley and the Tennessee District Attorneys.

The proposed legislation would tie regulation to the relationship to **See DRUGS on Page 6**



Beavers



Shipley

## New pension options offered to local governments employees

BY KEVIN KRUSHENSKI  
TML Research Analyst

In 1972, the state authorized local government subdivisions to participate in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System or TCRS as it is more commonly known. This move was mutually beneficial as it gave local governments a professional retirement manager and the state increased the fund size for their investments. As of June 30, 2011, 176 municipalities participated in the system.

However, recent economic conditions are driving up the contribution cost to many municipalities. Approximately 42% of local government participants will face contribution rates greater than 10% this fiscal year. According to the Department of Treasury, this increasing contribution is causing some municipalities to reevaluate their participation in the TCRS. In order to give local governments more choices for their employees' retirement plans, Tennessee State Treasurer David Lillard proposed several new options to state legislators for their consideration.

The proposed changes, which would require approval by the General Assembly, are optional for local governments and would only affect new hires. The proposed options do not affect any current local government retirees of TCRS.

"Our city and county governments across Tennessee have to balance the need to be good stewards of taxpayer money with the need to offer fair retirement benefits to their employees," Treasurer Lillard said. "The goal is to make sure pension benefits are affordable, sustainable and sufficient. That's why I am recommending some choices that would give local governments greater flexibility to meet

their specific needs."

The Treasurer presented the following options to the Council on Pensions & Insurance on January 23, 2012:

- local governments may take no action and remain in the current TCRS defined benefit pension plan with retirement generally at 30 years of service or age 60; or
- local governments may adopt a TCRS defined benefit pension plan with an annual service accrual rate of 1.4 percent, with an increase in retirement age, limits on cost of living adjustments, a cap on maximum allowed benefits and a revised employee contribution structure; or
- local governments may adopt a TCRS defined benefit pension plan with an annual service accrual rate of 1% to offer reduced pension benefits, but with a supplemental deferred compensation program; or
- local governments may decide to offer only a deferred compensation program as a stand-alone option.

The proposals were developed following open meetings held throughout Tennessee with more than 200 local government representatives last fall. Treasurer Lillard said that they are "offering these options because we want local governments to remain part of TCRS..." And, the Treasurer believes these options will make municipalities more inclined to stay within the system.

A caption bill, SB3216 (McNally) / HB3603 (Sargent) was introduced before the filing deadline, and a more detailed amendment that will make the bill will follow when the bill appears before committee.

For a copy of the local government pension option proposals and other documents, go to <http://treasury.tn.gov/tcrs> and look at the tab titled "Proposed Plans for Local Gov't."

## New form required for public debt report to Comptroller

The State Funding Board recently approved a revised form, guidelines and procedures for filing a Public Debt Report.

State law requires any public entity issuing debt to file a Public Debt Report (45 days of issuing or executing a debt obligation, with a copy (including attachments, if any) filed with the Director of the Office of State and Local Finance. Failure to file this report will result in the offending issuer being barred from entering into any further debt obligations until they have complied.

tions until they have complied.

A copy of the revised form, guidelines and procedures may be found on line with more information including instructions on how to complete and file the CT0253 form. Go to [www.comptroller1.state.tn](http://www.comptroller1.state.tn).

In addition, cities may complete the Public Debt Report form online and submit it by email to [LocalFinance.PublicDebtForm@tn.gov](mailto:LocalFinance.PublicDebtForm@tn.gov). If you have any questions, please contact TML or MTAS.

## Gov. Haslam to focus on job growth, education, efficient state government

Gov. Bill Haslam delivered his second State of the State address, offering a more detailed outline of his legislative priorities for the year. In the weeks leading up to speech, the governor has insisted his primary focus remains making Tennessee the No. 1 state in the southeast for high-quality jobs.

The Haslam Administration plans to move closer toward this goal by enhancing economic development efforts, making additional education reforms, improving public safety, and making state government more efficient and effective. In the coming weeks, they will introduce a legislative package that tackles those items by addressing these issues:

- Strengthening the Department of Economic and Community Development's FastTrack program by budgeting more for the grant program and giving the department more flexibility in utilizing those grants to attract and grow Tennessee jobs.
- Lowering the state portion of the sales tax on food from 5.5 percent to 5.0 percent over three years.
- Providing innovation opportunities to local school districts by eliminating the outdated requirement of state and local salary schedules based strictly on seniority and training.
- Taking a first step in reaching the governor's goal of raising the state's inheritance tax exemption from \$1 million to \$5 million by increasing it to \$1.25 million to lower the burden on family farmers and family business owners as these businesses span generations.
- Restructuring a number of state boards and commissions to eliminate duplicative functions and provide more accountability and oversight of these agencies.



Photo by Victoria South

Gov. Bill Haslam delivers State of State Address. See Page 9 for more photos

offenders.

- Updating and reforming the state's employment system through the TEAM Act (Tennessee Excellence Accountability and Management) by simplifying the hiring process, providing flexibility to retain and reward outstanding employees and streamlining the appeals process for employees.

## State's STEM Caucus makes grand debut

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

Old school clichés 'Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic' have been upstaged by a simple acronym—"STEM." The emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, took a major leap forward Jan. 23, as bi-partisan members of the House and Senate, along with leaders from a variety of sectors, joined together to launch the nation's first state-level caucus on educational issues, Tennessee's STEM Education Caucus.

Two years in the making, the caucus, co-chaired by Sen. Jim Tracy of Shelbyville and Sen. Reginald Tate of Memphis, and House leaders Rep. David Hawk, of East Tennessee and Rep. Brenda Gilmore of Nashville, will provide a non-partisan, bicameral forum for Tennessee legislators and outside businesses, science, technology, and education communities to discuss challenges, problems and solutions.

"We invite all members of the General Assembly to be involved in this," said Tracy, a former teacher



Sen. Jim Tracy, co-chair of the state's first educational STEM caucus, with Kathleen Airhart, deputy commissioner State Dept. of Education.

with a degree in Agricultural Education. "We have chairmen from both parties because this is not a partisan issue."

According to Tracy, one of the caucus' main purposes is to serve as an informational platform for the Legislature and the general public about trends in STEM policies and practices from a state and national

level. Another primary goal of the caucus is to develop strategy to increase the number of students pursuing careers in STEM fields in Tennessee and to improve the overall ability of the workforce to thrive in an increasingly STEM-intensive workplace. STEM knowledge is required for 27 of the top 30 fastest-  
**See STEM on Page 8**

## Study connects online sex trade, trafficking in Middle Tennessee

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

The scantily-clad girl in the classified ad is listed as 19 years-old. She could indeed be selling herself for cash, or she could be among the 27 million people across the globe enslaved in the brutal world of human trafficking. Reflected against the backdrop of the nation's fourth Human Trafficking Awareness Day, a new study, *The Nashville Backpage Report*, released by the advocacy group End Slavery Tennessee and Operation Broken Silence, not only calls for lawmakers to pass tougher penalties for those convicted of sex trafficking and promoting prostitution, it provides specific data about the local commercial sex industry, drawing connections between the industry and sex trafficking in Middle Tennessee.

Human sex trafficking became a more recognizable buzz word after a 2010 study, commissioned by the Tennessee General Assembly, examined the scope of trafficking across Tennessee. Undertaken by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and Vanderbilt University, TBI Director Mark Gwyn denounced the

results as "shocking," as he observed "Human trafficking and sex slavery in Tennessee is more common than previously believed possible," he said.

Focused specifically on victims between the ages of nine and 17, results from the 2010 study implicate that children are routinely moved from city to city across Tennessee for the sole purpose of human sex trafficking. The study cites 78 counties as reporting at least one case of human sex trafficking in a 24-month time frame.

In 2010, Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper, along with a group of 16 other state attorneys general, asked Craigslist to shut down the adult escort section of its website, considered by the attorneys to be a magnet for prostitution, sex trafficking and other related sex crimes. While Craigslist eventually conceded, a similar request by the group to Backpage.com has not



It is estimated that there are 100,000 children in the sex trade in the United States each year.

been as successful as the site continues to list the ads in their adult section.

Findings from the *Backpage* report reflect what the 2010 study suggests, that trafficking is not linked exclusively with certain demographics or certain geographic areas throughout Tennessee. Ads for commercial sex and online prostitution were listed not only in Nashville, but the surrounding suburbs of Brentwood, Cool Springs, Donelson and Hermitage. "Each of these suburbs of Nashville represents varying  
**See TRAFFICKING on Page 6**



NEWS  
ACROSS  
TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

BARTLETT

Bartlett officials headed out on an education field trip to the Tri-Cities with stops in Johnson City, Bristol and Kingsport, to get an inside look at the operation of schools similar in size to a potential municipal school district. Bartlett and the other Shelby County suburbs are studying whether to form their own municipal school districts to circumvent the unified school system that resulted from the Memphis Board of Education surrendering its charter.

CHURCH HILL

AGC Glass Company North America announced Monday it plans to restart an idled production line at its Greenland Plant in Church Hill and bring back 100 jobs once the line becomes operational. The G1 production line will manufacture float glass for the architectural and automotive markets. Construction on the line will begin this summer and is expected to be completed by the end of 2012.

CLARKSVILLE

Fewer than half of the students who graduated from a two-year chemical engineering program designed for Hemlock Semiconductor have been hired by the company. The program cost taxpayers more than \$6 million. Hemlock announced in 2010 it was bringing 500 new jobs to Clarksville, as the state gave Austin Peay State University \$6.4 million to develop a new program to provide an educated workforce trained with the special skills for the solar industry. But some students who graduated from the specially-designed program are disappointed they haven't been hired by Hemlock. So far, according to APSU, out of 84 students who have graduated in three separate classes, about 35 have been hired by Hemlock.

CLINTON

The closing of 25 Food Lion grocery stores in Tennessee and greatly reducing operations at a distribution center in Clinton is displacing about 1,100 workers. Belgian supermarket chain Delhaize said it is cutting almost 5,000 jobs in the United States. The closings in Tennessee include some stores in the Chattanooga area, Cleveland, Knoxville, Clinton, Crossville, Maryville, Morristown, Sevierville, Clarksville, Hendersonville, Lewisburg, Murfreesboro, Old Hickory, Smyrna, Sparta, Greeneville and Johnson City.

COLLIERVILLE

IndustryWeek magazine has just ranked the giant Carrier air-conditioning plant in Collierville as one of the 10 best manufacturing plants in the nation. Among the plant's achievements was a 60 percent improvement over the past four years for the assembly lines' "first-pass quality yield." Carrier Collierville is a 900,000-square-foot plant at the junction of Byhalia and Winchester roads that makes residential air-conditioners and heat pumps.

COLLIERVILLE

A contractor for Electrolux will plant some 1,500 trees and restore wetlands near the city to compensate for environmental damage resulting from construction of the company's kitchen-appliance plant in southwest Memphis. The Corps of Engineers plans to issue a federal Clean Water

Act permit authorizing the filling-in of slightly more than an acre of wetlands for the Electrolux plant. The decision follows approval last year by Tennessee water-quality regulators of a plan to mitigate the wetland loss by restoring wetlands to a 3.5-acre parcel near the Wolf River Greenway trail north of Collierville.

COLUMBIA

Columbia State Community College has formally claimed land soon to be the new site of the college's Williamson County campus. Now that college officials have the land, they hope to get about \$1.8 million from the state this year to begin the design process for the campus on about 36 acres north of Williamson Medical Center, along with \$36 million the following year to begin construction. The current site near Franklin High School is one of five campuses in the system and the second largest after the main campus in Columbia. School officials say they outgrew the former Claude Yates Vocational Center years ago, even after reconfiguring and adding space to the current site and without this expansion, they could lose enrollment. Columbia State must raise a minimum of 10 percent of the cost to make the project go forward.

CROSSVILLE

Crossville recently received a \$7,000 grant from the Nissan Neighbors Foundation to expand its bio-diesel recycling initiative. The city is producing an average of 50 gallons a week of bio-diesel fuel for city transportation needs from used vegetable cooking oil. The grant will be used to purchase recycling containers to be placed outside school cafeterias.

DECHERD

Nissan and Daimler will produce Mercedes-Benz 4-cylinder gasoline engines together at Nissan's powertrain assembly plant in Decherd. Production will begin in 2014, with installed capacity of 250,000 units per year once full ramp-up is achieved. The Decherd facility will produce engines for Mercedes-Benz and Infiniti models. The collaboration marks the first production of Mercedes-Benz engines in the North America Free Trade region.

GATLINBURG

There's a thirst in the mountains for legal Tennessee moonshine. Developers of the Ole Smoky Distillery have bought the Legends Restaurant on the Gatlinburg downtown parkway and will distill different spirits there. Additionally, Ole Smoky partners have bought land in the Glades arts and crafts community to open a branch of the original distillery. Small distilleries have blossomed since passage of a 2009 statute that allows local county commissions to decide whether to allow them. Prior to the statute's passage, only Jack Daniel's and George Dickel whiskeys and Prichard's rum were legally produced — all in southern Middle Tennessee. Ole Smokey Distillery opened in Gatlinburg in 2010.

GREENVILLE

J&J Warehousing & Storage, Inc., plans to create dozens of new jobs over the next three years. The company was able to expand after another Greenville company outsourced its welding operations to J&J Warehousing, rather than send the jobs overseas. The company manufactures and assembles welded components for the automotive in-

dustry.

HARRIMAN

The city hopes that ghost hunters can raise enough money to restore a historic and reputedly haunted building. Ghost hunter Richard Ruland, of Southern Tennessee G.H.O.S.T. Paranormal, wants to use the 121-year-old Temperance Building, a former jail, to attract both tourists and paranormal enthusiasts to the city, which was founded by anti-alcohol crusaders in the 19th century. Ghost Hunters aired footage caught during a night spent inside the city-owned building on the web-based Paranormal Network. A council workshop met to consider Ruland's plans to conduct paid tours of the building, with half the proceeds going toward its restoration. Under Ruland's plan, ghost tourists would pay \$299 for all-night visits by up to six people and \$30 per person for three-hour tours. The three-story brick and stone structure was built in 1891 by the Tennessee Land Co. when it began developing what was to be the "Utopia of Temperance," about 40 miles west of Knoxville. The stately building later became Temperance University before serving as city hall, with a jail in the basement. Now it holds a few offices and the city museum.

JACKSON

State and local officials raised the University of Memphis flag in the historic quadrangle on the former Lambuth University campus to commemorate the deed transfer from the University board of directors to the state benefiting the University of Memphis. Lambuth University closed in June and filed for Chapter 11 protection to negotiate its debts with its creditors. The campus sold for \$7.9 million and the campus was turned over to the Board of Regents in December.

MANCHESTER

Batesville Casket plans to expand its facility, investing nearly \$7 million and creating approximately 35 jobs during a three-year period.

MCKENZIE

Jimmy Sanders, Inc., the Mid-South's largest locally and family-owned agricultural input supply company has expanded its retail operations with a new location in the McKenzie Airport Industrial Park. The facility will provide seed, fertilizer and chemicals to local farmers as well as precision agriculture services through Sanders' award-winning OptiGro Program. Through a web-based platform, OptiGro processes, stores and analyzes data across several million acres and assists growers in maximizing their return on input investment for each cropping season.

MEMPHIS

The largest steamboat in the world will soon be back in operation on the Mississippi River. The Great American Steamboat Company, newly headquartered Downtown in One Commerce Square, is planning to hire more than 300 new employees for "the grandest, most opulent riverboat in the world." The American Queen. A career fair held in Memphis, during the third week of February, is to prepare for the arrival of the revived steamer. Built in 1995 at a cost of \$60 million, the 418-foot-long American Queen enters service in April.

NASHVILLE

Nashville showed significant job and income growth during 2011, rising to 89th place from 163rd during 2007-2010 among the world's top 200 metropolitan areas in economic performance, according to rankings



Crossville recently received a \$7,000 grant from the Nissan Neighbors Foundation to expand its bio-diesel recycling initiative. Pictured L-R front, Crossville City Manager Bruce Wyatt and Ashley Pealer, community development director with Upper Cumberland Development District. Back row, Steve Powell, city of Crossville; Danny Wyatt, mayor pro-tem; Tom Breeden, Cumberland County Recycling Center, and Billy Loggins, marketing director.

by The Brookings Institution. In its Global Metro Monitor, part of the Washington, D.C., think tank's ongoing research project on metropolitan areas worldwide, Nashville's average per-capita income rose 1.8 percent last year, compared with a decline of 4.4 percent during the worst part of the recession. Employment grew by 1.2 percent, compared with a drop of 4.5 percent during the lowest point of the 2007-2010 period, the report said. The results put the Nashville metropolitan area in the middle for economic growth during 2011 for the top 200 world cities.

NASHVILLE

Gaylord Entertainment announced a partnership with Dolly Parton to open a family entertainment attraction that will be a water and snow park. The 114-acre park is projected to open as early as spring 2014 with an expected 500,000 visitors in the first full season. It's expected to hire 450 full and part-time employees in the first phase of development, said officials. It will join her theme park and a water park in Pigeon Forge, about 190 miles away in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains in East Tennessee. The planned \$50 million venture will be a partnership with Gaylord Entertainment, which owns the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center and the Grand Ole Opry country music show in Nashville.

NEWBERN

Power equipment maker Briggs & Stratton has announced a consolidation that will close the company's factory in West Tennessee. The Milwaukee-based company announced the closure of the plant in Newbern, laying off about 240 regular employees and 450 temporary employees. The plant makes walk-behind lawn mowers and snow blowers for the U.S. domestic market. The work is being moved to a Briggs & Stratton plant in McDonough, Ga. The company also is closing a Czech plant, sending that work to its plant in Murray, Ky., and ending 77 overseas jobs. According to the company, the Newbern plant will be shuttered by about May 15.

PIGEONFORGE

The city broke ground on Wear Farm Park, a 116-acre multi-purpose attraction with athletic facilities geared to expand participation in youth sports. A 40-acre site will comprise Phase 1 with five baseball/softball fields, a concession stand, football field with bleachers, a multi-purpose field, two playgrounds, two shelter buildings and a basketball

court. Phase 2 will cover 76 acres and feature a natural area complete with an interpretative center and a paved trail encircling the park.

ROGERSVILLE

A \$1.4 million expansion of the Ware Manufacturing plant in Hawkins County is expected to bring 33 manufacturing jobs. The Hawkins County Industrial Development Board approved the sale of 1.5 acres to Ware Manufacturing behind the pet product manufacturer's existing plant at the Phipps Bend Industrial Park. The expansion will increase the existing 107,000-square-foot facility by an additional 42,500 square feet. Ware specializes in manufacturing products for dogs, cats, small animals and birds — including chickens.

SHELBYVILLE


Century Mold Co., Inc., announced plans to expand its Shelbyville facility located at 508 Blue Ribbon Parkway. The company will invest \$4.2 million and create 58 manufacturing jobs. Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Century Mold Co., Inc., is primarily an injection molding supplier to the OEM automotive and heavy truck industry. The company's automotive experience has translated into new markets of consumer products, emerging energy, military and office furniture industries.

SMYRNA

Topre America Corporation will open a manufacturing operation in Nissan North America's Smyrna facility. The new location represents a multi-million dollar investment and the creation of 25 jobs. Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, Topre started out as a manufacturer of pressed components for automobile equipment. Since the company was inaugurated, it has been committed to world-class manufacturing and has gradually expanded the range of industries it serves to include refrigerating machinery, air-conditioning systems, electronic products and office automation equipment, in addition to automobile equipment.

UNION CITY

Titan Tire plans to create 300 jobs by year's end at its Union City plant at the location of the former Goodyear Tire & Rubber facility. The plant will produce and redistribute materials to other company facilities. The plant will squeeze rubber onto nylon and polyester and blend rubber and steel strands used as tire belts. Titan Tire purchased the Goodyear plant for \$9 million last September.



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## Make plans to attend Legislative Conference March 5-6 in Nashville

Make plans now to attend the Tennessee Municipal League's Annual Legislative Conference, slated for March 5 -6 at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown Nashville.

The two-day conference provides an excellent forum for city officials to interact with their legislators and to be updated on the many legislative issues currently being addressed by the 107<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly.

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

visit with their legislators.

The voice of Tennessee's municipal governments must be heard in the legislative process, and the Legislative Conference is a key opportunity to communicate that message.

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

To reserve a hotel room, contact the DoubleTree at 615-244-8200. To receive the special group rate, reservations must be made by Feb. 8.

## MTAS recognized by TNCPE

The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is one of four UT agencies within the Institute of Public Service (IPS) that has earned Interest Level Recognition in the annual Excellence in Tennessee recognition program administered by the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE).

TNCPE is the only statewide quality program and is patterned on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, the national standard for recognizing organizational excellence.

MTAS, along with the Center for Industrial Services, Law Enforcement Innovation Center, and the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership will accept the award at the 19th annual Excellence in Tennessee Awards Banquet on Feb. 22, 2012. The County Technical Assistance Service also submitted an application and is waiting for a site visit from TNCPE examiners.

"We are very proud of this next step and our ongoing efforts for continuous improvement at MTAS," commented Executive Director Steve Thompson.

The inaugural class of the IPS Leadership Academy took on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program application process as a group project and submitted Level I applications in August. The agencies that were already announced as Interest Award winners had site visits from examiners in the fall.

"We began the Baldrige application as a way to document the work our agencies do, because it's useful for the long term strategic direction of our agencies," said Dr. Mary H. Jinks, vice president of public service. "This process also allows for us to get outside feedback on our agencies from the examiners, and we value that."

Through an annual evaluation and assessment process, TNCPE recognizes high-performance organizations that exhibit continuous improvement and best practice processes. This year, TNCPE has named 28 organizations as 2011 award winners. They represent outstanding achievement in the follow-

ing industry sectors: health care, manufacturing, service, education, government and nonprofit.

"Tennessee is competing not just nationally but internationally for new jobs, and each award recipient contributes to the state's success at the regional, national and international levels," Gov. Bill Haslam said. "Tennessee is a better place to live and work because of the commitment to excellence and continuous improvement embraced by these organizations. Strong organizations, such as these, bring in investment and resources, playing a critical role in making Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs."

Organizations like MTAS apply to the TNCPE program at one of four levels. As the levels increase, so do the depth and complexity of the applications. Since the program was founded in 1993, only 21 organizations have attained the excellence designation. While there will not be an Excellence Award presented this year, six organizations will be honored with the Achievement Award; 17 will be awarded a Commitment Award, and five, including MTAS, will receive Interest Recognition, which is the beginning level for organizations interested in adopting and applying performance improvement principles. A full list of winners can be found on the TNCPE website.

"This program takes a true commitment from leadership and dedication by the entire organization to refine their processes, delight the customers, engage their workforce and get real results," said TNCPE President Katie Rawls. "We are honored to work with organizations like the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service, as they pursue their journey toward continuous improvement and excellence."

TNCPE is a nonprofit, public-private partnership and is available to all businesses, educational institutions, health care organization, government agencies and other nonprofit entities.

To learn more, visit [www.tncpe.org](http://www.tncpe.org).

# South Fulton documentary to hit PBS airwaves in February

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

In some cities, the heart takes over when the funds run dry. That's what's happening in South Fulton, Tenn. and bordering state Fulton, Ky., as citizens fight to reclaim their community against a cruel economy and the ravages of time. Armed with donations, funding, labor, paint and supplies, the Twin Cities, empowered by a grassroots initiative sweeping the nation, are winning the battle through "Let's Paint The Town!"

The campaign was born in 2006 in Princeton, Ky. as Sam Koltinsky, owner of Marvo Entertainment Group, rallied his neighbors together, ultimately revitalizing 50 buildings within Princeton's downtown district at no cost to the business owners, except for the paint.

Today, working with such entities as PBS, the History Channel, and the Documentary Channel, Koltinsky, a veteran filmmaker, is bringing South Fulton and Fulton, Kentucky's story to life as the first of a series of 30-minute documentaries chronicling the *Let's Paint The Town!* movement across small town America. The documentary, *Let's Paint the Town, Twin Cities!* is set to air several times beginning February 26, on PBS affiliate station KET in Kentucky, and will be part of a series on PBS airing nationwide later this year.

A one-time picture of vibrancy, the heyday of the Twin Cities included a thriving downtown and bustling railroad. Ninety percent of the bananas from South America moved through the area to be distributed and sold. The subsequent International Banana Festival drew visitors from all over the world. Long-time community residents remember those days wistfully.

"The Illinois Central Railroad ran right through here," recalls local business owner Garrett Hutchins. "One thousand freight cars and 30-50 passenger cars a day. More than 1,000 passengers would disembark every day to shop and eat downtown." One such passenger was the legendary gangster Al Capone, who passed through frequently on the way to one of his homes in Miami.

"The railroad was the heart, bloodline, the brains; it was everything Fulton [The Twin Cities] had to offer," agrees local historian Bill Homra. "All bananas would come to Fulton before they were sold. They would come by ship from New Orleans loaded on un-refrigerated box cars. The train would stop in Fulton to ice down each car, and from Fulton, on to Chicago to be distributed throughout the U.S."

"When the festival was going on, it seemed like our town was on fire," Homra continues. "The international festival drew in all the south American countries that grew bananas. Celebrities like Miss Tennessee and Miss Kentucky would be here along with movie stars and country music singers. Every night a Marimba band from South America would play and there would be dancing in the streets..."

But like so many little towns across America, years of manufacturing layoffs, factory closures, and the downsizing of the railroad finally brought the close knit community to its knees. The days of growth and prosperity had been replaced by stark images of faded glory, over-



Volunteers from the Twin Cities, South Fulton and Fulton Ky. revitalize 46 buildings downtown as part of the *Let's Paint The Town!* initiative sweeping small town America. Their efforts have been captured on a video *Let's Paint The Town, Twin Cities!* which will be aired by the PBS network in February.

grown lots, crumbling buildings, for sale signs and peeling paint.

"With our community in shambles, politicians deadlocked over budget cuts and grant monies dried up, much of small-town America is literally fighting for its economic survival," said Jeff Campbell, project manager for the *Let's Paint the Town!* initiative in the Twin Cities. "When I left here 28 years ago, I left what I thought in my mind, was Mayberry. When I came back 18 months ago, the Mayberry I remember no longer existed. I saw a town in distress. I couldn't bear to see it that way, so, I decided to step up and make a difference."

In 2010, Campbell and Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Thea Vowell, posed an unusual suggestion, rather than wait around and hope, citizens would initiate a move to take back the community by joining the *Let's Paint the Town!* initiative.

Nearly 200 residents from the Twin Cities attended the first town meeting, and more than \$4,000 was collected in a single night. As donations began pouring in, that amount increased to more than \$5,500. Citizen volunteers of all ages, from local youths to the elderly, even neighbors suffering with cancer or other health issues, turned out faithfully each weekend to get the job done. Vowell, pregnant and expecting within days, was there too. "I'm a very determined person," she said. "And when people see the progress and excitement, they want to be a part of it too." Local business owners chipped in with labor, paint and supplies.

"We have restored and renovated 46 buildings in our community without a single dollar of government money," enthused Campbell. "Our mantra has been: our town, our pride, and our responsibility." *Let's Paint The Town!* is going to bring these two communities together and make everybody proud of the community as a whole," adds Vowell.

Residents are also hoping the effort will reflect community pride and re-awaken business opportunities throughout the area. So far, six new businesses have opened their doors since the Twin Cities took on the program 18 months ago, according to Campbell.

"Our local communities should be the laboratory for our national solutions," notes nationally-known economic development expert John Talmadge in a press release. "The

Twin Cities are certainly proving this to be the case as they take on economic development through revitalization."

What does the project hold for other small communities? While he can't disclose the details, Koltinsky said he was recently approached by a government agency in Washington, D.C., interested in partnering with *Let's Paint The Town!* "Money falls on the right mission," he enthused. "It certainly would provide easier access to state and Federal grants."

Volunteer efforts supported by grant money is indeed on the rise, as cities across the nation struggling to make ends meet, turn to volunteers to do jobs formerly handled by someone receiving a government paycheck, according to an article by *Governing Magazine* editor Tod Newcombe.

Eligible cities are receiving financing to hire service leaders to manage large groups of volunteers tackling local government problems, Newcombe notes, lauding a \$2 million grant from the Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Rockefeller Foundation and other groups, which helped create the Cities of Service program.

Starting in September 2009 after the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act challenged cities to think of new uses for volunteers, Cities of Service's purpose is to identify local community sectors that most need volunteers, match service programs with volunteers and share best practices. The program has grown to include 111 coalition members, including 20 cities that received grants to hire chief service officers.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, vice president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, joined by 20 other mayors, recently composed a letter urging their peers across the nation to adopt the Cities of Service model of impact volunteering and to establish or sustain a chief service officer in their administrations,

The DVD *Let's Paint The Town, Twin Cities!* is currently available for \$15 through the Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce. Contact Thea Vowell, executive director Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce, 270-627-1400 or e-mail [Twincitieschamber@bellsouth.net](mailto:Twincitieschamber@bellsouth.net).

For more information about the *Let's Paint The Town!* campaign or The Cities of Service initiative, visit [www.marvoentertainmentgroup.com](http://www.marvoentertainmentgroup.com) or [www.citiesofservice.org](http://www.citiesofservice.org)

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STATE BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

State announces new judge selection proposal

Gov. Haslam, Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey and House Speaker Beth Harwell announced a joint proposal to address how judges are chosen in Tennessee. The plan includes a resolution to amend the Tennessee Constitution that would apply to all Supreme Court justices and other appellate judges saying that they: Will be nominated by a commission based on merit; Be appointed by the Governor; and will be elected in a retention election as they are today. Legislation will be filed to extend the Judicial Nominating Commission and the Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission until at least 2015, which allows appropriate time for the constitutional amendment to be considered.

State’s unemployment rate falls

Tennessee’s unemployment rate in December fell to 8.7 percent, the lowest it has been since December 2008, according to the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. The state’s revised unemployment rate was 9.1 percent in November. The drop in Tennessee’s rate is largely due to a notable increase of 11,200 employed persons from November to December,” Karla Davis, commissioner of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, said

Revenue collections up for Dec.

Tennessee revenue collections in December were \$965.7 million, \$123 million more than the budgeted estimate, but the state finance commissioner said revenue in future months may not show the same growth. Finance and Administration commissioner Mark Emkes said that

business tax collections were \$114.5 million above the budgeted estimate in December. But he said typically a quarter of all franchise and excise tax collections are realized in the month of April, so future months could be negatively impacted. State tax collections were \$12.9 million more than the estimate for December and the year-to-date growth rate is 6.29 percent. Emkes also said while sales tax revenues reflect renewed consumer confidence, Tennessee is still not back to pre-2008 collection levels on sales taxes. traffic deaths in 48 years

Traffic deaths drop dramatically

Tennessee recorded the fewest traffic deaths in 48 years during 2011, according to preliminary figures released Thursday by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security. There were 947 traffic-related deaths last year on Tennessee roads. It was the lowest number of recorded fatalities since 941 in 1963. The 2011 dip was the third time in 48 years that crash-related deaths dipped below 1,000. Since 2006, fatalities have dropped 26.2 percent with truck-related fatalities falling 34.5 percent. Bicyclist deaths fell 28.6 percent. Motorcycle deaths dropped 19.1 percent and the number of pedestrians killed fell 4.5 percent. Department officials say 2011 arrests of impaired drivers rose 39 percent over 2010. Drunken driving deaths dropped 31.6 percent from 2006 to 2010. But officials said that seat belt usage remains a major concern. While data indicates safety-belt usage was 87.4 percent in 2011, 56.3 percent of people who died in vehicle crashes did not buckle up.

THP forms CargoNet alliance

CargoNet, a leading source of information about cargo theft risk, has

formed a strategic alliance with the Tennessee Highway Patrol to combat stolen goods in transit in Tennessee and surrounding states. State troopers will use the CargoNet system to disrupt cargo crime networks, increase recovery rates, and apprehend criminals associated with cargo thefts. State troopers will now have access to investigative support through the 24-hour CargoNet operations center and will receive theft alerts to patrol units. The CargoNet database will also allow highway patrol personnel to analyze shifting crime patterns; retrieve real-time theft trends; and access theft reports based on day, time, location, commodity, and other factors. Members of the THP and other law enforcement agencies will participate in a training program to further enhance their cargo theft interdiction skills.

State flunks no-smoking report

Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama flunked the no-smoking class. The three states racked up a row of F’s from the American Lung Association’s annual report card that grades states on their efforts to curb cigarette usage. The report looks at four categories: tobacco prevention, control and spending; state smoking restrictions; cigarette tax rate; and state cessation coverage. Out of the three states, Tennessee has the highest number of smokers — 20 percent of adults and high school students — and the highest number of deaths from smoking per 100,000 population. However, Alabama and Georgia are not far behind. Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama all spend only a fraction of the recommended funding for tobacco prevention and control spending. In addition, the three states have some of the lowest cigarette taxes in the nation.

Local airports receive TDOT Aeronautics Grants

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) announced that state aeronautics grants totaling \$209,500 have been approved for three Tennessee airports.

Airports receiving grants include:

- Elizabethton Municipal Airport: \$100,000—\$90,000 state and \$10,000 local for airport layout plan and preliminary engineering for a pavement overlay project;
- Gibson County Airport: \$9,500—\$8,550 state/\$950 local for tree trimming and clearing;
- Tri-Cities Regional Airport:

\$100,000—\$90,000 state and \$10,000 local for Communication Center cab window replacement

The grants are made available through the Tennessee Department of Transportation’s Aeronautics Division. The Division administers federal and state funding to assist in the location, design, construction and maintenance of Tennessee’s diverse public aviation system.

Except for routine expenditures, grant applications are reviewed by the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission (TAC), which is a five member board charged with policy planning and with regulating

changes in the state Airport System Plan. The board carefully reviews all applications for grants to ensure that the proper state and local matching funds are in place and that the grants will be used for needed improvements.

The TDOT Aeronautics Division has the responsibility of inspecting and licensing the state’s 126 heliports and 75 public/general aviation airports. The Division also provides aircraft and related services for state government and staffing for the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission.

SEATOA hosts Chattanooga conference

From March 12-13, 2012, the SouthEast Association of Telecommunications Officers & Advisors (SEATOA) will hold its annual conference in Chattanooga at the Chattanooga Hotel.

The theme of this year’s conference is *Protecting Community Networks: Economic Opportunities for the Future*. Participants will have the opportunity to share local community stories on how to build community fiber platforms to reduce government expenses; to serve both public and private uses; to find out why SMART GRID is the biggest

fiber-app buzzword; to hear how to build, operate, and integrate social media into community video channels; and to learn how the country’s largest and fastest community-owned fiber network is unleashing innovation and jobs.

Deena Shetler, associate chief of the FCC Wireline Competition Bureau will serve as the keynote speaker.

Other conference sessions will include:

- Opportunities for public safety interoperable networks;
- A panel discussion on PEG pro-

Clean Energy Grant Program open for applications in 2012

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has opened the application process for the 2012 Clean Tennessee Energy Grant Program. The program will provide financial assistance to local governments, utility districts and private businesses and organizations in Tennessee for a variety of projects using innovative technology to reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Eligible categories include:

- **Cleaner Alternative Energy** – biomass, geothermal, solar, wind
- **Energy Conservation** – lighting, HVAC improvements, improved fuel efficiency, insulation, idling minimization
- **Air Quality Improvement** – reduction in greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, oxides of nitrogen, hazardous air pollutants

A total of \$2.25 million will be available in the first round of grants. The maximum grant amount per project is \$250,000. Grant applications are available on TDEC’s website at [www.tn.gov/environment/energygrants](http://www.tn.gov/environment/energygrants) and will be accepted until **March 30, 2012**. Recipients are expected to be announced by mid-May.

In addition to the energy grant program, TDEC announced a series of energy efficiency projects in state government. The state projects, as well projects for other public and private entities that will be funded through the grant program, are designed to both increase cost savings and decrease emissions.

Funding for the projects comes from an April 2011 Clean Air Act settlement with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Under the Consent Decree, Tennessee will receive \$26.4 million over five years to fund clean air programs in the state – at approximately \$5.25 million per year. In the first year, \$2.25 million will go to fund air quality grants for local governments, municipalities, utilities, other organizations and private entities. The remaining \$3 million will fund energy efficiency projects in state government.

The first round of state projects was announced today:

- **Nissan LEAF Purchases** – Tennessee will purchase five Nissan LEAF electric vehicles for the state fleet and will add two charging sta-

tions. The cars have zero emissions and are made in Tennessee.

•Tennessee Tower Window

**Film** – The Department of General Services will add reflective film to all exterior windows in the Tennessee Tower to reduce solar radiant heat gain, thereby reducing HVAC energy consumption and increasing occupant comfort. The upfront cost for the window film is \$610,000. With an estimated annual energy savings of \$362,000, the project is expected to pay for itself in less than two years and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,451 metric tons per year. The Tennessee Tower was built in 1970, and is the largest state building in Tennessee.

• TDEC Nashville Environmental Field Office HVAC

– TDEC will test, adjust and balance the existing HVAC system at its Nashville Environmental Field Office to correct deficiencies and optimize energy usage. The upfront cost for the project is \$39,000. With an estimated annual energy savings of \$11,100, the project is expected to pay for itself in approximately 3.5 years and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 metric tons per year.

• Fall Creek Falls Inn

– Tennessee State Parks will work with Tennessee Tech to install a heat recovery water heater system at the Fall Creek Falls State Park Inn and Conference center in Pikeville. A heat recovery water heater utilizes a dual cycle heat pump to scavenge heat from a recirculating chilled water loop to heat hot water, while simultaneously providing additional chilled water capacity. The upfront cost for the project is \$150,000. With an estimated annual energy savings of \$73,205, the project is expected to pay for itself in about two years and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 245 metric tons per year.

• Fall Creek Falls Cabins

– Tennessee State Parks will convert 30 cabins to utilize geothermal energy at a rate of 10 cabins per year over three years. The upfront cost to convert all 30 cabins is \$600,000. With an estimated annual energy savings of \$88,552, the total project is expected to pay for itself in just over 6.5 years and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 676 metric tons per year.

Firefighter hiring grant application period opens

On Jan. 30, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began accepting grant applications for the FY2011 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program. SAFER provides funding to assist communities in hiring new firefighters, retaining existing ones, and rehiring those who have been recently laidoff.

The grant provides funding over a two year period.

For FY2011, there are no limits on the annual salary of those hired, and no prescribed cost-share for localities. While there is no retention requirement, layoffs

of firefighters are not allowed during the grant period.

The FY 2011 SAFER Grant Program Guidance and Application Kit is available on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant website, [www.fema.gov/firegrants](http://www.fema.gov/firegrants). **Grant applications will be accepted through Friday, Feb. 24 at 5:00 PM EST.**

SAFER grants were created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations in order to help them increase the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) has announced **Tim Schwarz** as chief of communications and external affairs. Schwarz has 15 years of government affairs experience in Tennessee having worked most recently in the executive branch under the administrations of Governors Bredesen and Haslam. His primary focus will be to lead the TRA's legislative efforts as director of legislative affairs.

Professor **Matt Murray**, associate director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has been appointed



Murray

director of the Howard H. Baker Center, Jr. Center for Public Policy. Murray, the Ball Corporation Professor of Business, will begin immediately. He will take the place of Carl Pierce, who has directed the center since June 2009. Pierce, who is the W. Allen Separk Distinguished Professor of Law, will now focus on compiling Sen. Baker's papers and will eventually divide his time between the Baker Center and teaching in UT's College of Law. Murray's appointment as Baker Center director is for three years; he will continue to work with CBER during that time.

Former alderwoman, **Linda Carter**, is Millington new interim mayor. Carter replaces Richard Hodges, whose resignation became

effective Jan. 13. Carter said she plans to serve as interim only to the end of 2012.

Johnson City Police Chief **John Lowry** announced plans to retire from the force May 17. Lowry has been the city's police chief since 2003 and has served as president of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police, secretary/treasurer of the 911 Board of Directors, vice chairman of the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, and as a governance board member for the Tennessee State Fusion Center.



Lowry

Former Knoxville City Law Director **Debra C. Poplin** was sworn in as clerk of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee. Poplin, who replaces longtime clerk Patricia McNutt, has been a practicing attorney for 21 years. She served as the deputy law director for the city of Knoxville for more than nine years and in 2008 was appointed as the law director.



Poplin

Former Nashville Mayor **Bill Purcell** is starting a public policy practice in Nashville at Jones Hawkins & Farmer.



Purcell

Purcell, 58, is a former state House majority leader, and most recently served as a teacher and administrator at Harvard University. He will work with Jim White, former executive director of the legislature's Fiscal Review Committee, and Metro Nashville Councilman Jason Holleman. The group will offer strategic and legal advice but doesn't plan to lobby.

Former Dickson City Administrator **Tom Waychoff** has passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer. A former city councilman, Waychoff, served the city as mayor from 1983 to 1993 and city administrator from 2001 until 2011. He also was President/CEO of the Dickson County Chamber of Commerce from 1993-2000.

**Chris Bridgewater** has been named interim director of Franklin's Building and Neighborhood Services Department following the retirement of Gary Luffman, who served as director for more than 32 years. Bridgewater, who joined the city in 2007, has experience in historic preservation and is considered a Master Code Official with certifications in all of the building disciplines. He is state-certified to conduct building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical inspections and radon measurement and currently serves on the board of the Middle Tennessee Code Officials Association.



Bridgewater

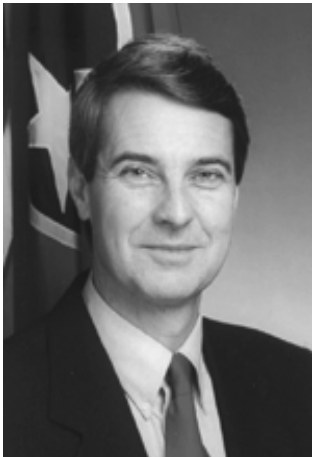
Herron, Tindell step down in 2012

Neither Sen. **Roy Herron** of Dresden or State Rep. **Harry Tindell** will run for office in 2012. Herron, 58, announced plans to lead the Ned McWherter Center for Rural Development in expanded efforts to help young people go to college and create jobs for Tennesseans. Herron will serve as president of the Center, a non-profit, non-partisan, charitable organization, that provides scholarships and educational opportunities for the state's students.

Herron, an attorney who had served as a special prosecutor, won then-Speaker McWherter's seat representing Weakley and Carroll counties in the Tennessee House of Representatives in 1986 when McWherter ran for Governor. In 1996, he ran for the state senate, where he continues to represent Lake, Obion, Weakley, Henry, Stewart, Benton, Henderson, Decatur, and Perry counties.

"I am blessed to represent the most wonderful people on earth. The people who have let me work for them as their representative and senator are my teachers, friends, and many are like family," Herron said. "I'm excited about working with them and other Tennesseans to help more young people go to college and help our state grow and gain good-paying jobs."

In a recent announcement, state Rep. **Harry Tindell**, announced his decision to retire. An 11-term law-



Herron



Tindell

maker, Tindell formerly chaired the House Budget Subcommittee. Tindell said he has commitments that won't permit him to devote the time and effort a reelection bid would require. The District 13 seat he now holds was recently transformed by a redistricting bill.

City officials to serve NLC

National League of Cities (NLC) President Ted Ellis, mayor, Bluffton, Ind., recently announced the chairs and vice chairs of NLC's standing committees and councils for 2012.

Farragut Mayor Ralph McGill has been appointed to the 2012 Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Steering Committee. The committee has the lead responsibility for developing NLC's federal policy positions on issues involving air and water quality, energy policy, national wetlands policy, noise control, and solid and hazardous waste management.

Farragut Vice Mayor Dot LaMarche has and continues to hold numerous leadership positions with NLC. She has been reappointed to serve as Vice-Chair of the Human Development Committee for a second year. LaMarche currently serves on the Steering Committee for Small Cities and the Board of Directors for Women in Municipal Government. She is one of the fewer than 210 NLC members to have reached the Gold level in the Certificate of Achievement in Leadership program since its inception in 1999, and is currently working toward the Platinum level.

Farragut Alderman Ron Honken has been appointed to the 2012 NLC Leadership Training Council (LTC) and the NLC Community and Economic Development Steering Committee. The mission of the Leadership Training Council is to provide guidance and direction for NLC's Leadership Training Institute, which includes leadership training seminars offered each year. The Community and Economic Development Steering Committee is responsible for developing policy positions on issues involving



McGill



LaMarche



Honken



Dean

housing, community and economic development, land use, recreation and parks, historic preservation, and international competitiveness.

Nashville appointments include: Mayor Karl F. Dean and Ronnie Steine, councilman at-large, who will serve as co-chairs for the Council on Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Council). The council guides and oversees the YEF Institute's work. The council, is composed of not only local elected officials, but also youth members and representatives from major national organizations concerned about children and families. The National League of Cities is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance.



Stein

NATIONAL BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**All 50 states and the District of Columbia have built digital warehouses and filled them with academic data for every public school child.** However, many states are not adequately sharing the information with teachers and parents or using it in sophisticated ways to improve classroom learning, according to a new study by the Data Quality Campaign, an advocacy group funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The study found that nearly all states and the District have assigned a unique identification code for each student and collected student-level enrollment, demographic and curriculum data, as well as high school graduation data and college-readiness test results. Nearly all states also can track academic growth from year to year using students' test scores and audit their data for quality. But just a handful of states are sharing that data with parents, and many have not trained teachers and principals in how to use it to improve classroom learning. Some analysts say the digital warehouses lack important privacy protections. "This is a set of data meltdowns waiting to happen," said Joel R. Reidenberg, who founded the Center on Law and Information Policy at Fordham University's law school. He said most of the about students that could easily be ob-

tained by hackers or others without a legitimate claim to the data. The Obama administration has encouraged states to build data warehouses by awarding more than \$500 million in grants through stimulus spending and other funding sources. Federal officials envision data systems that can track student performance from pre-kindergarten through college. Some teachers worry that an emphasis on data ignores other progress that can't be measured on a test, such as emotional and social development. Others are concerned that the data could be used against them.

**After most economic indicators remained fairly flat throughout 2011, there appears to be some hope that 2012 will bring progress on all economic fronts.** Some signs are beginning to bring hope to the unemployed and economists when it comes to 2012's job market. According to a survey from CareerBuilder, nearly one in four hiring managers plan to hire full-time, permanent employees in 2012, similar to estimates from 2011; however, CareerBuilder said those numbers will translate to a better 2012 than 2011. Economists are watching applications for unemployment benefits, which remain below 400,000. At the end of 2011, unemployment had also dropped below 9 percent, where it had been

stuck for more than two years. The National Association of Realtors has predicted the relatively flat commercial real estate market in 2011 will give way to a more positive trend in 2012. Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist, said that though there is little change in most of the commercial market sectors now, it will come. The commercial real estate market is expected to closely follow the general economy's recovery, the NAR said. The NAR is also forecasting "gradual improvement" for 2012's residential housing market. Home sales should be stronger because of pent-up demand. Mortgage interest rates should gradually rise from recent record lows and reach 4.5 percent by the middle of 2012. Existing-home sales are forecast to edge up about 1 percent in 2011 and then rise another 4 to 5 percent in 2012. New-home sales are expected to be a record low 302,000 in 2011, rising to 372,000 in 2012. Housing starts are forecast to rise to 630,000 next year from 583,000 in 2011. With falling inventory, the median home price should also rise in 2012, the NAR said. The Consumer Confidence Index, a survey by private research group The Conference Board, rose to its highest level in December since April and neared a post-recession high in February. December's jump was the second month in a row the index has seen a big increase

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# Study links online sex trade, trafficking

**TRAFFICKING** *from Page 1*

socioeconomic demographics [which] helps dispel the misconception that trafficking and prostitution are regulated only to lower income and ethnic communities,” the report reads.

Other report findings include:

- Over the course of three weeks, 2,051 unique “sex for sale” ads were posted in the Nashville area;
- The average cost of sex that is purchased through Backpage in Nashville is \$154 for “in-calls” and \$216 for “out-calls” and
- 136 area codes were recorded in the ads representing states from Florida to California to New York.

According to the report, the adult section of Backpage.com is a hodgepodge of commercial sex ads, those for willing prostitutes run alongside others featuring victims of human slavery and sex trafficking. Although the site includes a disclaimer advising users to report suspected exploitation of minors and/or human trafficking to the appropriate authorities, creators of the *Nashville Backpage Report* protest it’s not nearly enough.

## Legislation tackles synthetic drugs

**DRUGS** *from Page 1*

illicit drugs and ban any substance that has “a similar effect on the central nervous system as controlled substances.

A summary of SB2172 / HB2218 follows:

- The bill defines a controlled substance analogue (synthetic drug) as any substance the chemical structure of which is a derivative of, or substantially similar to, the chemical structure of a controlled substance or any substance that has a stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic effect on the central nervous system substantially similar to or greater than the effect of a controlled substance.
- Under SB2172, it is an offense to knowingly manufacture, deliver, dispense, sell a controlled substance analogue (synthetic drug). It is also an offense to possess for the purposes of manufacturing, delivering, dispensing or selling a synthetic drug. Violation of the above offenses would be punishable by the same fine, mandatory and discretionary, and would be classified, for purposes of sentencing, the same as: (1) The controlled substance to which it is a derivative of, or has a substantially similar chemical structure as; or (2) the controlled substance with which its stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic effect on the central nervous system is substantially similar to or greater than.
- In addition, the bill makes it a Class A misdemeanor to possess or casually exchange a synthetic drug. Similarly, it would be a Class A misdemeanor to represent, advertise, infer or intend that any substance is a derivative of, or substantially similar to, a controlled substance or has a stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic effect on the central nervous system substantially similar to or greater than a controlled substance.
- Any sentence enhancement authorized by present law for the manufacture, delivery, or sale of a controlled substance; the possession of a controlled substance with the intent to manufacture, deliver or sell such substance; or the simple possession or casual exchange of a controlled substance, that is based on a specified number of prior convictions, the offense being committed in a specified location or involv-

“While Backpage.com professes to have taken efforts to limit advertisements for prostitution on its website, particularly those soliciting sex with children, such efforts have proven ineffective,” the report states. Examples included within the report are: a Massachusetts man forcing a 15-year-old girl into a motel to have sex with various men, all solicited through a photo of the girl placed on Backpage.com., and a case in Washington State where two teen girls say they were coerced, threatened and extorted by two adults who marketed them on the site.

It is estimated that cases often are not reflected in police statistics because the crimes go unreported or are categorized differently by law enforcement, according to those who study sex trafficking.

In a Metro Nashville Police Department sting aimed at advertisements on Backpage.com., an 18-year-old man was arrested in August 2011 after allegedly forcing four women to travel with him to Nashville from Atlanta to engage in prostitution. At the time, MNP

that all four women were suspected victims, but the Davidson County grand jury indicted the man along with a 24-year-old woman who originally portrayed herself as a victim, according to MNP

“We are not concerned with the trade in legitimate goods and services that are offered by Backpage,” the report continues. “We are concerned with the rampant use of Backpage.com as a haven for the advertisement of commercial sex, especially when it was forced.”

Pending legislation in the state House and Senate presented by Sen. Beverly Marrero and Rep. Jim Coley, directly targets trafficking in commercial sex acts. SB2371/HB 2493 goes as far as to describe the commercial sex acts that constitute a crime. Another proposed bill directs for a plan to be developed to help and rehabilitate victims of human sex trafficking —SB2370/HB2492. While another bill creates civil right of action for victims of trafficking offenses—SB2369/HB2489. SB2368/HB2488 enhances penalties for forced involuntary labor servitude upon victims under the age of 13.

In testimony before the subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Luis CdeBaca, President Obama’s Ambassador-at-Large to Combat Human Trafficking, swiftly defended the rights of sex trafficking victims, shutting down any public perceptions that sex trafficking is a crime only if a victim is unwilling. “We know that sex trafficking victims may not all be saints, may not understand that they are victims, and may consider our help unwanted interference – but that does not make them any less deserving of a compassionate response,” he said.

In June 2011, Gov. Bill Haslam signed into law three key pieces of legislation that greatly increases the penalties for human trafficking and raises awareness about the impact of the crime in Tennessee. The legislation enhances the penalties for patronizing prostitution and promoting prostitution of minors or persons



Pending legislation sponsored by Sen. Beverly Marrero and Rep. Jim Coley, moving through the Tennessee House and Senate specifically targets trafficking in commercial sex acts.

with intellectual disabilities and HB 35 specifically provides immunity for minors arrested for prostitution.

A 53-year-old Memphis man was recently sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for driving a teenage girl to Arkansas to have sex for money at a truck stop. He pleaded guilty of transporting the girl, 18, across state lines in August of 2010 for prostitution after using threats of force and violence. “It does not matter if a victim once consented to work for their trafficker,” Cdebaca explains. “It does not matter if the victim returned to their trafficker after he or she was freed; It does not matter if the victim’s enslavement was through chains of mental dependency or psychological manipulation as opposed to being physically locked up; if that adult was held for labor or sex through force, fraud, or coercion, they’re a trafficking victim.”

The man brought the young woman to Memphis from Knoxville, forced her to engage in prostitution and in return kept her high on drugs. He also told her he slept with a gun under his pillow and that he had an ax under the seat of his truck that he would use to cut her head off. In the complaint, several other young women came forward telling officials the man was their pimp and that he threatened and physically abused them and, in some cases, told them he would kill them if they tried to leave him.

“In the case of minors, there is no requirement to show force, fraud, or coercion,” Cdebaca said. “No child can consent to being sold into commercial sex. If a pimp used a child for commercial sex, that child should be treated as a victim, not a criminal.” Tennessee law HB 172 requires certain establishments to post a sign with information regarding the national human trafficking resource center hotline, 1-855-55-TNHTH.

A pre-trial hearing at the federal courthouse in downtown Nashville, featured 28 defendants, all associates or members of gangs such as the Somali Mafia, the Somali Outlaws and the Lady Outlaws. It is “one of the more significant cases investigated in recent memory,” according to John Morton, director of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. According to the federal indictment, the defendants are charged with transporting pre-teens and teens between three states and forcing them to engage in commercial sex acts. A myriad of costly legal, technical and logistical issues must be decided over the next seven weeks before the mega trial, where 1,200 motions, orders and other court proceedings have already been filed in the past 15 months.

For the full version of *The Nashville Backpage Report*, visit [www.operation\\_brokensilence.org/?p=7062](http://www.operation_brokensilence.org/?p=7062)

## \$1.6 million awarded for Safe Routes to School

Gov. Haslam announced Safe Routes to School funding totaling \$1.6 for 10 municipalities. The funds will be used to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, signs and safe walking and biking educational activities. The Safe Routes to School Program is a statewide initiative designed to make bicycling and walking to school a safer, more appealing and healthier alternative for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Cities funds are:

- Dyersburg: \$239,525 for improvements at a local middle school;
- Fairview: \$176,380 for improvements near two local schools;
- Hendersonville: \$192,555 for improvements near two local schools;
- Jackson: \$21,006 for a new program at an area middle school;
- Kingsport totaling \$46,200 for improvements at eleven local schools;
- Lenoir City: \$116,343 for improvements at a local elementary school;
- Lewisburg: \$186,602 for improve-

- ments near two local schools;
  - Tullahoma: \$223,360 for improvements near a local elementary school;
  - Woodbury: \$223,250 for improvements near a local elementary school; and
  - Anderson County: \$206,994 for improvements at two local schools.
- To learn more about the program, please visit [www.tn.gov/tdot/bikeped/saferoutes.htm](http://www.tn.gov/tdot/bikeped/saferoutes.htm) .

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# Time of transformation in housing, transportation

BY JAMES BROOKS  
*Nation’s Cities Weekly*

People who earn large cash profits from developing residential and commercial real estate suggest that retiring baby-boomers and young couples with or without children want to live in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. “We in real estate are fundamentally re-tooling how we design, plan, regulate and finance to serve this pent-up demand,” says land use developer and strategist Chris Leinberger.

The evidence points to a willingness for many to give up thousands of square feet of living space and open land in exchange for more compact residences close to shopping, dining and entertainment. The trend also suggests that people will pay higher prices for housing in denser communities in exchange for reductions in time, distance and costs associated with traveling by car to reach a job.

The trend is moving in the direction of urban community models. Over the next decade or two, this shift will represent the most dramatic change in land use, housing and transportation patterns since the completion of Levittown in 1951.

The impact of this trend on local governments will be as unique as each community’s geography, demographics and capacity to manage change. But one thing is clear: some cities will benefit from this new development trend and other cities will suffer as a result. The difference will come in how city and town leaders choose to view and respond to this change in living, working and traveling patterns.

While there are many factors that drive land use and housing trends, the most important ones now and in the future include the need for a broad array of housing and transportation choices to fit the diverse needs and circumstances of a growing and changing population.

### Housing

A principle factor driving the supply and demand expectations about housing is simple demographics. Eighty million Americans make up the baby-boom generation (born 1946-1964), and, as of Jan. 1, 2011, 10,000 baby-boomers are reaching age 65 each day. This will continue until Dec. 30, 2030. These retirees are living longer, healthier and more active lives than their predecessors. For them, retirement is about continuing an “active lifestyle,” which by definition requires easy access to shopping, dining, entertainment and portals to global destinations.

This translates into decisions by many to swap the 3,500-square-foot detached single-family house in a first- or second-tier suburb for a smaller townhouse or condominium nearer to the urban core.

At the other end of the age spectrum are the singles and couples in their 20s. Many are college graduates or have earned Master’s degrees. At present, this group makes up a large portion of the unemployed or underemployed, which is particularly unsettling given that many also are carrying considerable student loan debt and have little if any savings. As a result, Generation Y has been slow to form new households. However, as employment of this group increases, these young people will gravitate to the employment centers that offer the complete package of work, live and play. They will want access to public transit and bike lanes and prefer walkable lively streets with a suitable mix of retail and social venues all interconnected with Wi-Fi. What they will need in the immediate future is solid, safe, affordable rental housing.

Other large segments of the population also will need rental housing. One analysis by researcher Joel Kotkin anticipates that the U.S. will attract 100 million new immigrants by 2050. Also, several million former homeowners impacted by foreclosure will be in the rental housing market for several years as they rebuild their damaged credit ratings.

For decades, transportation policies have focused on development of a highway network that supports automobile transportation, often to the detriment of the other modes that comprise the total surface transportation system. However, the costs of solo driving, Americans’ true national pastime, are accelerating. High gas prices are

a contributing factor that is altering the urban housing markets by reducing demand for outside of metro areas and increasing demand in areas closer to the urban core.

Thus, the principles of “smart growth” continue to gather greater attention. Accelerated by economic pressures the new pattern of land use characterized by fewer and shorter automobile trips, lower energy consumption and reduced greenhouse gas emissions has spurred planning that accommodates mixed-use development and transportation investment that provides more travel options.

### Resources for Local Leaders

In the area of housing and neighborhoods, strong emphasis in the near-term is being placed on housing preservation and rehabilitation as key aspects of neighborhood stability. Subsidiary issues include maintaining and reusing vacant property, invigorating community life at the sidewalk level and expanding housing and mobility options. For the long term, projects will evolve beyond stabilization to supporting responsible housing and neighborhood reinvestment and revitalization. Activities will stress:

- Deliberate citizen inclusion to help shape problem assessments and sustainable outcomes;
- Mixed housing options (ownership, shared-equity, rental);
- Mobility strategies that reduce automobile dependence; and
- Employment and entrepreneurship opportunities that retain money in the community.

Land use and regional transportation systems, a watershed moment occurred when federal cabinet departments and agencies (HUD, DOT, and EPA) embraced the livability, sustainability and multi-disciplinary regional planning approaches incorporated under the rubric of smart growth.

This shift means that cities need to focus on issues that impact the many ways that regions approach integration of land use and transportation. These include mixed-use zoning and form-based building codes, infill development, growth management and transit-oriented development.

## Municipal Administration Program February Schedule

### Stormwater Administrative Hearings

How do you defend and collect penalties? How do you avoid problems if a decision is appealed? This class provides municipal/county attorneys, public officials and municipal staff an understanding of administrative law and the fundamental components of administrative hearings, as well as how to better present evidence to boards. Instructors will discuss procedures of particular hearings such as: stormwater, water and wastewater and property maintenance. During this highly interactive class, participants will view a video of administrative hearing procedures and witness a mock session that will illustrate the dos and don’ts of administrative hearings.

**Who Should Attend?**  
This important class is recommended for elected officials, appointed officials, city attorneys, city recorders, codes enforcement officials and utility and public works directors and managers.

**Dates and locations**  
Feb.15 Goodlettsville  
Feb.22 Bartlett

**Time**  
Public administration courses are held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Training Facilities**  
**Goodlettsville, Goodlettsville Fire Department, 105 S. Main Street**  
**Bartlett, Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center, 3663 Appling Road**

## COMING UP

**Feb. 24-25: MTAS Elected Officials Academy Level II in Jonesborough.** Held at the International Storytelling Center, 100 West Main Street.

### Schedule of Courses

**Feb. 24-** 1 p.m. – Overview of the EOA; 1:30 p.m. – Municipal Human Resources; 3:30 p.m. – Municipal Risk Management; 6 p.m. – Water and Wastewater Operations. **Feb. 25-** 8:30 a.m. – Municipal Police Review; 10:30 a.m. – Public Works. Registration deadline is Feb. 17. Cost is \$200. This one-time fee includes registration for Elected Officials Academy Level II. Meals and snacks provided both days. MTAS has changed to a new training registration and tracking system to better meet the needs of our customers. A new online registration system will accept registration and payment by credit card through your Solution Point account. You must register for each session individually. For online course registration, visit <http://www.solutionpoint.tennessee.edu/TPOnline/TPOnline.d11/MTASHome>. For assistance with registration or payment, call 865-974-0411.

**March 10-14: NLC’s 2012 Congressional City Conference** held in Washington, D.C. at the Marriott Wardman Park hotel. Registration is open. Agenda information will be posted as available. For more information go to [www.NLC.org](http://www.NLC.org)

**April 30 - May 3:** The 6th annual Tennessee Basic Economic Development Course (TBEDC) held in Nashville at the Downtown Homewood Suites by Hilton. Economic and Community development at local, state and federal levels. Sponsored by the UT Center for Industrial Services. Payment must be received no later than April 26. To register, visit [cis.tennessee.edu/train/programtraining/Pages/TBEDC.aspx](http://cis.tennessee.edu/train/programtraining/Pages/TBEDC.aspx). For questions, call Dr. Andre Temple, 731- 425-4740 or [andre.temple@tennessee.edu](mailto:andre.temple@tennessee.edu)

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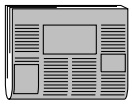
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The city of Murfreesboro closes a \$103 million loan, the largest in TMBF history.

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





## CLASSIFIED ADS

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### CITYADMINISTRATOR

**WHITE HOUSE.** The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of City Administrator. The city administrator shall be the chief administrative officer of the city. A Bachelor's degree in Public or Business Administration or a related field is required. A Master of Public Administration, Business Administration or related advanced degree is preferred. Evidence of continued professional development through active participation in professional membership associations and activities preferred. An ICMA Credentialed Public Manager would be a plus. Five years of progressively responsible experience as a city or county manager, deputy city or county manager or assistant city or county manager or related experience in a comparably sized or larger, full-service city is required. Experience in planning and development issues, economic development, wastewater and infrastructure development and citizen outreach is required. Experience in Tennessee and familiarity with Tennessee laws, especially the Tennessee Open Records law, would be a plus. Salary range is expected to be \$66,222 and \$92,711 per annum, depending on experience and qualifications plus benefits. For additional information, contact James Mercer, The Mercer Group, Inc. at 505-466-9500; jmercer@mercergroupinc.com. Brochure at [www.mercergroupinc.com](http://www.mercergroupinc.com). Confidential resume by COB, Feb. 17, 2012, to James Mercer, The Mercer Group, Inc., 551 W Cordova Road, #726, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505. Voice: 505-466-9500; Fax: 505-466-1274. E-Mail: [jmercer@mercergroupinc.com](mailto:jmercer@mercergroupinc.com); Website: [www.mercergroupinc.com](http://www.mercergroupinc.com). EOE.

### CITYMANAGER

**OLIVER SPRINGS.** The town is accepting applications for the position of City Manager. The city manager is hired by the town council and serves under the general supervision of the mayor. The position is responsible to the town council for the administration of the following departments: Fire, Library, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Water, and for carrying out the policies adopted by the council. Responsible for personnel management, purchasing, management of property and resources, the financial operations and budgeting for the departments under his authority, and other duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Town Charter, or as requested by the council or mayor. Minimum Qualifications: College degree in municipal management, public administration, business administration, planning, or comparable experience required. Water/waste water experience a plus. Must possess good written and verbal communications skills, computer proficiency, and management skills. Salary dependent on qualifications. Deadline for applicants is Feb. 10, 2012. Send letter of interest, salary requirements, and resume to: City Manager David Bolling, P.O. Box 303, Oliver Springs, TN 37840, by fax to 865-435-4881 or email to [oscitymanager@comcast.net](mailto:oscitymanager@comcast.net). EOE.

### ECONOMICDEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

**BRISTOL.** The city is seeking an Economic Development Professional. The successful candidate should hold a B.S. degree in planning, business administration, marketing public administration, or closely related field and a minimum of two years related experience, preferably in municipal government. Competitive salary and benefit package. To apply please submit an application along with a resume, and introductory cover letter to: City of Bristol, H.R. Department, P.O. Box 1189, Bristol, TN 37621-1189 or electronic submissions may be faxed to 423-968-7197. Position open until filled. See our website to download an application and review summary of benefits: [www.bristoltn.org](http://www.bristoltn.org). EOE

### PARKS&RECREATION DIRECTOR

**MCMINNVILLE.** The city is accepting applications from qualified individuals for the position of Director of Parks and Recreation. The ideal candidate will possess highly developed technical, presentation and communication skills and will have in-depth knowledge and experience in management of parks and recreation. The candidate will have significant operational experience, and will be responsible for the general administration of the department's operating budget and enforcement of city policies regarding employees, facility use and overall supervision of the activities of the Parks and Recreation Department. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to, preparing operating budget, working with the city administrator and Park and Recreation committee to develop capital plan and budget for the department, overseeing and coordinating the various programs offered at city facilities, and the ability to plan, organize, delegate, supervise and inspect work of subordinates. Will have a minimum of five years of progressively responsible supervisory or administrative experience in recreational facilities' operation and management. The minimum training and education requirements include a Bachelor's degree from an accredited four year college or university with a major in Parks and Recreation or a similar degree. The successful candidate will be examined by city physician to determine if applicant can perform all essential duties required of this position. Residency within the city is required within 90 days of employment. The full job description can be viewed at <http://www.mcminnville.tenn.com/>. The salary for this position is dependent on experience and qualifications. The salary range is \$45,801 to \$85,092. The city offers a progressive benefit package that includes paid vacation, paid holidays, an extensive benefit package that includes; health insurance, dental, vision etc., and contributions to the state of Tennessee retirement plan. Qualified persons should submit an application, a resume of experience and qualifications, letter of interest, salary history and professional references to: Jennifer Riggsby, Human Resource Administrator, City of McMinnville, PO Box 7088, McMinnville, TN, 37111. Closing date for applications is Feb. 17, 2012.

**MS4STORMWATEREQUIPMENT OPERATOR**  
**SPRING HILL .** The city is accepting applications for the position of MS4 Storm Water Equipment Operator. This position will perform all required duties as Storm Water Crew Member to include but not limited to, safe operation of the Jet-Vac Truck Dump Truck, Back Hoe, Mini Excavator, Skid Steer, Bush Hog Equipment and Equipment Trailer. Applicant must possess a CDL (Commercial Driver's License) in the State of TN or equivalent. This employee must maintain a minimum Level 1 EPSC Erosion Prevention Specialist Certification by the State of TN or equivalent. This employee will also be responsible for all needed inspections, maintenance and repair actions on the MS4 Storm Water Infrastructure in accordance with State of TN guidelines and procedures. Must perform all other associated non-specific duties that may be required of the department as they arise. Application may be obtained at Spring Hill City Hall, 199 Town Center Parkway, Spring Hill, TN 37174, or on website: [www.springhilltn.org](http://www.springhilltn.org). Specific questions regarding this position may be directed to: Steven Warf: 931.486.2252, ext. 239. Applications or resumes should be sent to: City of Spring Hill; Attention: Shelley Taylor, HR Director; MS4 Storm Water Equipment Operator; P.O. Box 789; Spring Hill, TN 37174. Deadline for applications is: February 15, 2012. Applicants will be considered on basis of qualifications, experience, and suitability for position, without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The City of Spring Hill is an EEO/AA/Title VI Employer.

## State's STEM Education Caucus

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growing occupations for 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Key problem-solving skills, an understanding of scientific and mathematical principles, and a working knowledge of technology and computers are critical for most jobs. STEM careers currently in high demand include: actuaries, chemical engineers, chemists, computer software engineers, and electrical engineers. "Educators K-12 to college level have told me in the last three to four years how important STEM education is in the competitive world that we live in," Tracy said. "Sen. Ketron and I have been involved in a group of about 20 different industries in Rutherford County. We were shocked because they want to hire, but people are not qualified to work. This may mean we'll have to retrain people already out of school, but our first initiative is to figure out ways to make STEM interesting to students at an earlier age to be ahead of the game."

To help generate student interest in STEM, caucus members are suggesting unique learning opportunities, such as studies in forensics or crime scene investigation, similar to popular TV programs CSI or NCIS. "We're going to provide ideas to the local schools and hope to have participation from different folks in the community," said Tracy. "Lincoln County has a very good STEM program in relationship with NASA out of Huntsville. I'm going to visit their program in the next few weeks."

Memphis City Schools is launching a virtual science and engineering program at no cost to parents. In February, about 70 ninth graders began a four-year program taking principles of engineering in a virtual classroom. Students earning a B+ or better will be admitted to the virtual STEM school and to a \$700,000 physics lab under construction at East High expected to open in March. After two courses, students will be allowed to choose one of four engineering tracks to pursue, including civil engineering and biomedical-chemical engineering. The program is part of a state effort to pump up STEM education through \$14 million in Race to the Top funds.

Statistics provided by Tennessee's new Deputy Commissioner of Schools, Dr. Kathleen Airhart, paint a grim picture for the state's workforce. Many of Tennessee's elementary students score below the basic level in science as determined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, aka the Nation's Report Card. "Test scores across the state dropped approximately 30-40 percent, specifically in the math and science content area," said Airhart, who served as the former director of Putnam County Schools.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute recently gave Tennessee a grade of "D" in science, stating that Tennessee's science standards are clearly written but the wide selection of high school courses makes it tough to determine what students really know about the subject when they graduate. "There is a huge disparity between content knowledge of our teachers and what they are expected to teach," said Airhart. "Several years ago, this became increasingly apparent as we upgraded our standards to be more in line with national standards." According to Airhart, deficits in teaching STEM subjects are connected with teacher licensure. "Teachers are licensed as generalists," she explained. "We have no specialists leading up to grade eight." The caucus plans to address the lack of teacher specialists in Tennessee by promoting the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers into STEM education.

A non-lobbying advisory committee composed of state and federal leaders in STEM education will work with the caucus to help develop content and make arrangements for caucus events. Its purpose is to organize events in conjunction with the caucus and to discuss activities and the STEM environment, both inside and outside the legislature. "This effort is also about making sure that our nation is secure; that our energy resources are secure and independent and our healthcare is secure," said Eric Fingerhut, Battelle's new vice president for Education and STEM Learning. "For those reasons, we must have the workforce that this state and nation needs. Business and technology moves fast, education moves slow."

Core advisory committee members include: the American Chemical Society (ACS), the STEM Innovation Network, TN Organization of School Superintendents, UT Battelle, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, TNSTEM Education Leadership Council, TN Chamber, TN Science Teachers Association, TN Business Roundtable, Center of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Education, ETSU and TN Independent Colleges and Universities Association.



## TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

### Feb. 11: Kingsport

**11<sup>th</sup> annual Chocolate Festival**  
Sponsored by Panara Bread. Held at the Meadowview Conference Center, 1901 Meadowview Parkway from 9 am to 3 pm. The fundraising event provides ticket holders with a bite-size sample of the best chocolate treats in Northeast Tennessee. Chocolate Festival ticket holders may attend WKPT Radio's 50 Plus Expo for free. Silent auction. All proceeds benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation of East Tennessee. For more information, or to order tickets by phone, call 423-989-9474.

### Feb. 22-26: Pigeon Forge

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Saddle Up!**  
The four-day festival features great entertainment, including concerts by western musicians and cowboy poets. "Stories & Strings" is a new concert that features some of country western's finest performers Stop by the Buckeroo Roundup for some great cowboy-themed activities and chow down at the Chuckwagon Cook off. Dance the night away at the Cowboy Dance. For more information, visit [http://www.mypigeonforge.com/events\\_winterfest\\_saddleup.aspx](http://www.mypigeonforge.com/events_winterfest_saddleup.aspx).

### March 1 - 4 : Nashville

**Nashville Lawn & Garden Show**  
Held at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds, 500 Wedgewood Avenue in Nashville. One of the largest gardening shows in the South. Produced by the Horticultural Association of Tennessee, the centerpiece is a naturalized presentation of more than 20 outstanding live gardens created by professional landscape designers. See exhibitors, lecture series, floral displays and much more. For more information, visit [www.nashvillelawnandgarden.show.com/](http://www.nashvillelawnandgarden.show.com/)

### March 10-April 21: Cowan Smithsonian Exhibit "The Way We Worked"

Cowan Center for the Arts Theater, 301 Montgomery St. next to the CSX Nashville-Chattanooga mainline downtown. Wed.- Fri. from 4 - 7 pm ; Sat. from 10 am to 4 pm and Sun. 1 to 4 pm. Free admission, but donations appreciated. For more information, visit the website [www.cowanrailroadmuseum.com](http://www.cowanrailroadmuseum.com) or call 931-967-3078.

### March 14-17:Pigeon Forge

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain Quiltfest**  
Smoky Mountain Convention Center, stoplight #1, Henderson Chapel Rd. between stoplight #8 and #10, behind KFC and Krispy Kreme. Network with expert quilt makers, see the show and quilting classes for all levels. Quilters compete in more than 10 categories for more than \$20,000 cash and prizes. For more information or to register, visit [www.mountainquiltfest.com/](http://www.mountainquiltfest.com/).

### March 17<sup>th</sup> – Bell Buckle

**Daffodil Days**  
Celebrating spring with a Daffodil Flower Show and Tree City USA Festivities. For more information, call 931-389-9663 or email [info@bellbucklechamber.com](mailto:info@bellbucklechamber.com) or visit the chamber website at [www.bellbucklechamber.com](http://www.bellbucklechamber.com)



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# Legislators, officials attend 2012 State of the State address



Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, Sen. Speaker Pro Tem Bo Watson and House Speaker Beth Harwell



Rep. Dennis Powers and Sen. Ken Yager



Rep. Craig Fitzhugh and TN Supreme Court Justice Gary Wade



Sen. Steve Southerland and Rep. David Hawk



Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and State Treasurer David Lillard



Rep Richard Floyd



Sen. Bill Ketron



Bill Gibbons, Public Safety commissioner, and Secretary of State Tre Hargett



Rep. Lois DeBerry



Susan Whitaker, Tourist Development commissioner



Rep. Mike McDonald and Sen. Douglas Henry



Rep. Charlie Curtiss and Sen. Charlotte Burks

*Photos by Victoria South*



# Senate Speaker Pro Tem Bo Watson learned to communicate at the dinner table

**BY GAEL STAHL**

A high achiever and fluent communicator, Bo Watson is in the second year of his second term in the state Senate this year and serving in a major leadership role as Senate speaker pro tem.

He grew up in a traditional American family in North Chattanooga, the youngest child with four older sisters. The children credit much of the success they've experienced to their parents. Their father always stressed that to whom much is given much is expected and they all went on to be heavily engaged in community activities in the Chattanooga area where they still live.

Born in 1960, Watson's fondest memory of family life is of his father who traveled each week for Provident Insurance Company coming home on Friday to enjoy a family dinner. He went around the dinner table having each child, starting with the oldest, tell about their week. Any and all topics were allowed. His eldest sister Anna was a McGovern supporter, his father a Nixon supporter. It made for interesting conversations. Family discussions about current events taught him how to express himself civilly and cogently. "Dad was teaching us listening and communication skills," Watson says. He notes that in a large family you've got to express yourself to be noticed or you'll be left dangling at the dinner table. It carried over to his adult life. He says politics is a lot about human relationships.

In school he became interested in how government operates, thanks to an eighth grade civics teacher at The Baylor School, a college prep school. That led him to study American history and the people who founded this country and it fed his later interest to pursue political office. His primary interest in school was science and after Baylor, he studied biology and chemistry in college, and graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in biology. He then completed his physical therapy training at the University of Tennessee Center for Health Sciences in Memphis and became a physical therapist.

His athletic career in high school football, wrestling, and track was a major influence. He often makes reference to wrestling when speaking on the Senate floor. In his senior year at Baylor, he was the 1979 TSSAA 155 lbs State Wrestling Champion. He also wrestled for the state championships in his junior year and he's as proud of finishing second as he was of being champion because in 1978, he was wrestling in the 147 lbs level when the team's 169 lbs wrestler was injured. The coach said that as a team player he should compete in the 169 lbs weight class. Despite giving 20 lbs to every opponent – "they were huge" – he still won the district and regional championships before losing to the defending state champion 8-6. Overcoming such incredible odds toughened him physically and mentally and he won the state championship the next year in his own weight class. For him it was an important lesson that victory can emerge from defeat.

Watson spent his first college year at the University of the South at Sewanee. He found it much like the Baylor private school cultural experience so he transferred to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where 21 members of his family have attended or graduated. He wanted exposure to a wider variety of people and had some excellent professors with whom he's maintained contact. He attended UT-Memphis because at the time it was the only school that offered physical therapy training, a career choice just beginning to emerge. Watson says he's been in the service industry ever since. That includes his political career because "in the General Assembly, I use my ability to represent the people and make sure their voice is heard, and in health care, I'm an advocate for my patients."

He met his future wife, Jill Lippse, in ninth grade at a Tyner track meet. He didn't date her until they were in class together at UT Chattanooga. They married in 1983 just before he finished at Memphis.

He graduated from Memphis in 1985 and joined a private practice for two years with offices at Erlanger Medical Center. When their son Grey was born a year later, Watson had a yen to go where nobody knew them. They chose Kingsport in east Tennessee, where for eight years, he worked at Holston Valley Medical Center and participated in the Leadership Kingsport program. When Grey was ready to move from elementary to middle school they moved back to Hixson where Watson

has worked at Chattanooga's Parkridge Center ever since. Grey also graduated from Baylor and UT Chattanooga and carved out a career that has made his parents proud.

Watson's political philosophy is that the family is the foundation upon which all government is built. His family has stayed very close. Except for Anna who died two years ago, his sisters all live within 10 miles of him and within four miles of their father. His mother died in 1999.

**TT&C: Five years after returning to Chattanooga you were a member of the Tennessee House? How did that happen?**  
**BW:** All my life, even when we were 180 miles away in Kingsport, I'd stayed in touch with my closest childhood friends, some of them from first grade. We'd have dinner together just about every weekend and I talked about wanting to participate in public service. I told Jill that when Grey got out on his own, I would run for a community office. One day, a close friend called to say he'd heard Rep. Jim Vincent wasn't going to run for re-election to the House. He said if I was ever going to run for office, this was a great opportunity. Since Vincent announced after the filing deadline we had only two days to get our petitions signed and my name on the ballot. We also scrambled to talk to people in the community with influence over others and asked for their blessing. One man said he'd never heard of me and while I seemed like a nice enough fellow the other guys running had been involved in lots of different things, some had run before, and though this would be a good experience for me, he said there's no way I could win.

We walked out to the parking lot, my friend completely dejected. I said we're not going to let some old guy tell us whether we're going to win or lose. We worked hard, saw as many people as possible and won the Republican primary election by 90 votes over seven opponents. Being an outsider, that was to my advantage. It was a great experience, a fun campaign, hard work. I was elected to the House in the general election and two years later, Sen. Fowler, my predecessor, told me he was going to retire. He said I would make a good senator. So, I decided to run.

**TT&C: You were chairman of the Government Operations Committee when you were chosen speaker pro tem last year?**  
**BW:** One of the rites of passage in the House is for incoming freshmen to be placed on the Committee for Government Operations because that committee has oversight over 272 governmental agencies and introduces you quickly to all the tentacles of government. I try to be a good student and researcher and studied the committee's responsibilities. After reading the statutes for the committee, I said at meetings that I didn't think our committee was exercising its full potential. Being a freshman in the House minority, I had little influence but when I came over to the senate, I talked with leadership about the many more avenues we could pursue.

When Jack Johnson was named the first Republican chairman of Government Regulations, we started working more closely with the various agencies. We came to realize nobody seems to pay attention to rules and regulations even though they have the full force and effect of law. We started making agencies explain rules and regulations in the same way we require legislators to explain legislation. During the time Sen. Johnson and I were chairs of the committee, we also caught up on the two or three years backlog of committee work we were behind on. I chose to stay on Government Operations as speaker pro tem because I think that along with Finance it is one of the most important committees in the legislature.

**TT&C: How does it feel to give up a committee chair to become speaker pro tem?**  
**BW:** The speaker pro tem works for the entire Senate, not for a particular caucus or committee. The speaker pro tem fundamentally has one job: to stand in the dais when the speaker can't. The lieutenant governor was good to give me latitude to explore and carve out a niche within the body as have the other members. I spent the summer and fall studying other states' ideas of what this job entails. A large part of the job is coordinating the activities of the Senate, making sure the committees are operating properly and that committee analysts are helping committee chairs and members to get a full understanding



As Speaker Pro Tem, one of Watson's main responsibilities is to stand in the dais when Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey cannot.



of the legislation. For us who work in the General Assembly it is an intellectual exploration. The legislature is the battlefield of ideas so a major challenge is effectively communicating with all the members. I've become somewhat famous for my white board charts. Visitors to my office find I'm constantly working with my white boards, breaking things down to their component parts to see how the government really operates and is properly structured for committees.

**TT&C: How would you describe your relationship with Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey?**  
**BW:** Excellent. The lieutenant governor, Chairman Jim Tracy, and I share an apartment while in Nashville, so we communicate quite a bit. I have a lot of respect for the lieutenant governor and for his effective management and leadership style. He is a calm leader, a strong personality and has a down home connectedness with people. He knows the legislative process incredibly well and understands people whether they agree or disagree. That is so important to those in leadership. He understands organizational behavior, is very conversational, and all topics are on the table. Strong leaders are visionaries to a degree and so they point out directions to the group that they may not have been thinking about. That requires a strong personality and a great voice for what he does.

*"Diversity is the great strength of this nation. Local governments are key components. If the family or local governments are weak, we as a state can't do well". - Sen. Bo Watson*

**TT&C: What does it mean for the Republican Party to have a majority in both chambers as well as the governor's office?**  
**BW:** Obviously, as a Republican I think it's the greatest thing. It changes things dramatically. Last year, particularly, there was a positive direction in economic growth and development. We think our ideas enhance education and health care. Naturally, after roughly 150 years of Democrat majorities there will be substantive changes and some of those changes that are unfamiliar to people will be uncomfortable for them. But the state is well positioned for great things. We managed our way through difficult economic times even though we're not a wealthy state and don't have some of the resources other states have. We are considered the best financially managed state in the union, in the top two or three states for business recruitment and for limited regulation on business activities. We are a No. 1 state for educational reform and have improved our healthcare rankings from the upper 40s to the lower 40s and upper 30s. We have made a substantive difference.

**TT&C: In your eight years in the legislature, what were your main accomplishments?**  
**BW:** When I first got here, I saw how many laws there are on the books. I wasn't sure adding more laws would solve the problems. Sometimes implementing what we have is what solves problems. I think going to the

legislature for help can be like going to the doctor for a cold. Your doctor knows there is nothing to take to hasten the end of your cold. After 7 to 10 days you will feel better. But since you spent the time and money to come, they feel obligated to give you something, a harmless medication.

In like manner, people want their legislator to accomplish A B or C so the legislator feels obliged to introduce a bill to make it happen. Some legislators file dozens of bills. I don't. I try to limit myself to about 35 bills. As chair of Government Operations, I carried a lot of committee bills but they weren't really mine. I am a team player. I like to co-sponsor bills and see others take credit for the work they do. Over the years, the two things I'm most proud of are having been part of educational reform and overhauling Governmental Operations, putting accountability back in state government.

**TT&C: You are the sponsor of a top TML priority bill that proposes any rule or regulation of the state that fiscally impacts local governments must include a written justification, fiscal note, and cost-benefit analysis. Why is this important for you?**  
**BW:** In my study of the operations of government, I've found that rules and regulations often impact a local government more than the law that fathers the rules. Rules and regulations are the mechanisms by

which the law affects local governments or business so there should be an explanation of the rules the body is bringing it to bear — especially the financial impact which is usually what local governments are most concerned about.

My bill requires that any governmental board, commission, or agency that imposes a new rule or regulation must justify it and explain the cost and impact of it so local governments can react to it. I realize some rules and regulations are federally mandated on departments by our friends in Washington, DC. While they are stuck in a bad position, they should still explain the rules and the public should know the cost and the impact.

**TT&C: You also support a measure to allow local governments the choice of publishing public notices not only in newspapers but also on a city website.**  
**BW:** Nowadays, more people are getting more information through digital technology than from newspapers or television by using a cell phone, I-phone, I-pad, laptop, or a standing PC. Government has to communicate effectively to our citizens because inherently all power is in the people. There was a time when you tacked up notices at the courthouse. The printing press replaced that, and newspapers published public notices when almost all people read newspapers. Now more people use other sources. The print media may not like it but change

is going to happen. Digital costs much less than print and reaches more people. Public notices in newspapers are expensive. Most newspapers and magazines now have their own websites, too. The main thing this bill does is to start a discussion.

The second thing it does is to try to drive more internet connectivity. Everyone needs to have access. Not everyone has access to a newspaper, either. You have to pay for that service. While I don't think the bill will pass this session, ConnectedTN reports that we are having a larger internet penetration. There is a tipping point in the near future. That's when government will communicate with its citizens electronically.

**TT&C: A bill that TML wishes you didn't support is Gov. Haslam's initiative to change the process of selecting members to key regulatory boards and commissions. Your bill would eliminate the nominating authority of stakeholders like TML and give it to the governor. Why do you think this change is necessary?**  
**BW:** If a board or commission is an entity of state government, any citizen of Tennessee who meets certain criteria should be eligible to serve on that board. Currently, certain special interest groups make the appointment to the boards and if you are not a member of that group you'll never have an opportunity to serve on that board even though you may have the best skill set to do it. Those special interest groups are not part of state government or answerable to the taxpayers of Tennessee. TML is a great organization but it is a member organization. A non-member citizen may be very skilled but because TML names the person, that person would never have the opportunity to serve. I think that's unfair. However, TML and others could contribute to the governor's decision on who will be the right person and could help establish criteria for those who serve. But the governor is elected by all the voting citizens of the state and has the right and privilege to select people who meet the proper criteria to carry out the policy wishes of the legislature and governor. A citizen should not be required to join some organization to serve.

**TT&C: What are the major challenges facing Tennesseans?**  
**BW:** We're coming out of a recession but if you ask people out on the street they might not say they've seen a difference. We have to continue to pursue economic development and job opportunities for Tennesseans. When people are not working or fully employed, it creates challenges for society. To create economic growth we need to develop a well educated work force. The world of 2012 is dramatically different than the world of 1950 and 1960 when a high school graduate could find a career in a company for 40 years and make a good income. That no longer exists. Now, we have to provide Tennesseans with an opportunity to get a skill set and they in turn have to take advantage of it. Education is fundamental. Only 23 percent of our citizenry have bachelor degrees. Many jobs in the economy of the future will require at least bachelor level training. Most businesses and industries need people with at least a two-year degree. Without a college educated work force, business is going to look elsewhere to find their well-trained, well-educated workforce.

Thomas Jefferson's grave maker doesn't mention that he was the U.S. president but that he was the founder of the University of Virginia. Jefferson understood that a democratic republic needs a well educated citizenry to govern it.

**TT&C: What is local government's role in solving those challenges?**  
**BW:** Based on my philosophy that the foundation of all government is the family, you've got to have a strong family structure and strong local communities that administer to those families and provide them with the tools to make needed decisions. Local communities need to be somewhat independent. They have their diverse ways of doing things within the context of the U.S. Constitution and with the Tennessee Constitution. They have their own personalities. Diversity is the great strength of this nation. Local governments are key components. If the family or local governments are weak, we as a state can't do well. Strong local governments are essential.