Volume 63, Number 5 March 19, 2012 www.TML1.org 6,250 subscribers

BY CAROLE GRAVES

TML Communications Director

nessee local governments against

online travel companies, a U.S. Dis-

trict Court Judge ruled in favor of

behalf of 56 municipalities and 73

counties claimed that online travel

companies (OTCs) collect hotel

occupancy taxes from consumers

the online booking agencies.

In a legal fight that pitted Ten-

The class-action suit filed on

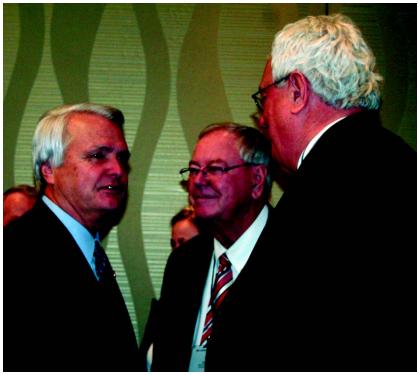


Photo by Victoria South

Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey speaks with Huntingdon Mayor Dale Kelley and Maryville Assistant City Manager Roger Campbell at the recent Tennessee Municipal League Legislative Conference. State and local leaders met in Nashville to network and discuss key legislation currently being considered on Capitol Hill.

TML's legislative event educates, advocates for local autonomy

BY CAROLE GRAVES and VICTORIA SOUTH

Acknowledging that many of the planning and zoning bills currently being considered by the Tennessee General Assembly are "controversial," Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey reassured city officials attending TML's Legislative Conference that he's working to find a compromise.

'The two major ones aren't going to pass," Ramsey said. "But I do believe we at least brought this up for discussion, brought this up to try to find some common ground. I understand that what works for Memphis won't work in Mountain City."

Lt.Gov. Ramsey explained that during his "red tape road trip" last fall, business owners said that they were frustrated with a lot of bureaucratic red tape.

"When a sign gets knocked down because somebody had a car wreck and they can't put that sign in and stand it back up, that's a problem," Ramsey said.

Ramsey says he would like to hold some of the legislation over for a summer / fall study committee and involve TML, TACIR, chamber of commerce members, and citizens. "It's a hot issue," he said. "We need to be talking about it as a group."

Public Safety Commissioner Bill Gibbons discussed Gov. Bill Haslam's 40-step action plan designed to improve public safety statewide.

He said that the main goals of the plan are to significantly reduce drug abuse and drug trafficking; curb violent crime; and lower the rate of repeat offenders.

To address the state's meth problem, he said that they are in the process of launching a major public awareness campaign, as well as developing a real-time database to track the purchases of pseudoephedrine products (commonly used to make meth). The plan also includes establishing a statewide meth lab clean-up system.

As part of the Governor's plan to crack down on prescription drug abuse, legislation is currently moving through the Legislature revises various provisions of present law regarding the controlled substance database. Pharmacies will be required to enter information into the database in a timelier manner within 24 hours of dispensing the drugs. And stiffer penalties will be handed down for those caught "doctor shopping" or selling prescription drugs on the

See **LEGISLATIVE** on Page 12

but only remit to local governments a fraction of the taxes collected. U.S. District Judge Aleta A. Trauger granted summary judgment

on the merits for the online travel companies, ruling that the "tourist accommodation tax" should be collected on the rates hotels charge and not the ultimate rates paid by consumers.

In her Feb. 23 opinion, she said it was up to the cities to rework the current tax laws if they want to be able to go after the companies for

"It is ultimately the role of the state legislature to enact revenue

statutes that clearly state the scope and application of the tax laws and, upon identifying any potential revenue shortfalls in their application, to address those perceived shortfalls by appropriate legislation," Trauger wrote.

Online travel agencies prevail against cities

Online Travel Companies including Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz, Priceline, and Hotels.com contract with hotels to control and sell hotel rooms over the telephone and Internet. The travel companies pay discounted rates to hotels that are not disclosed to consumers. The OTCs charge con-

sumers a full, marked-up retail rate and collect hotel taxes based on the retail rate. They also typically charge consumers a processing

The city of Goodlettsville was the lead plaintiff in the certified class-action suit, which claimed that OTCs only remit to taxing authorities hotel taxes based on the discounted rate. The travel companies then pocket the difference be-



tween the amount the consumer pays in taxes and processing fees, and the amount of occupancy taxes paid to the hotel.

"We are disappointed in Judge Trauger's ruling because we think the intent of the hotel-motel tax was that the amount should be based upon the rate paid by the person staying in the room and not the lesser See CLASS-ACTION on Page 5

Brentwood opens Tennessee's first Next Generation call center

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Communications Coordinator

Brentwood made history recently by becoming the first city in Tennessee to make a leap into the Next Generation. Around 60 people attended grand opening festivities for the city's new, fully-equipped Next Generation (NG) 911 emergency call center located at 5211 Maryland Way. The center includes state-of-the-art radio, telephone and power backup systems, all supportive of NG911 technology.

"This is digital 911," said Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB) Chair Randy Porter. "It's a major stepping stone toward a state-of-the-art network that will improve public safety. NG911 will replace the analog network and increase the reliability of the 911 system. The statewide deployment will provide all Tennessee citizens with a more responsive emergency communications system that will offer improved function in the case of disaster."

Similar to converting televisions from analog to digital, the state's conversion to NG911 requires that 911 trunks be converted from anti-



Brentwood's new Emergency Call Center is the first in the state fully wired for NG911, and will allow dispatchers to communicate directly with surrounding public safety agencies, while controlling city-wide traffic cameras along with other high-tech capabilities.

quated copper-wire technology to state-of-the-art digital capabilities. The digital version of 911 is then transmitted over Tennessee's existing statewide Internet Protocol (IP) network.

In the near future, NG 911 systems will routinely receive text messages, videos and cell phone pictures. Brentwood's 911 center has the capability of receiving data from multiple new telephone technologies. The NG 911 system will allow all of the state's 911 centers to accept calls from any type of phone. Connecting to a wide range of devices, the equipment identifies the See **NEXT GEN** on Page 5

Anti-Eminent Domain bill passes U.S. House, Senate consideration possible

BYMIKE WALLACE Nation's Cities Weekly

Seven years after the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of cities to use eminent domain to secure land for proposed private commercial development, and after more than 40 states that have reassessed and limited their own state eminent domain laws in response, a bipartisan group of federal lawmakers is still seeking to legislatively overturn the decision in Kelo v. City of New

On Feb. 28, the House of Representatives approved by voice-vote H.R. 1433, the Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2011. The bill would prohibit federal, state and local governments that receive federal economic development funds from using eminent domain to acquire land for economic development purposes. "Economic development" is defined in the bill as private, for-profit projects, or projects designed to increase tax revenue, the tax base or employment. The bill imposes punitive measures on governments for violating the ban and creates a cause of action

for landowners who have property

Housing and Urban Development Appropriations (THUD) bill that prohibits the use of federal funds on any project connected to the exercise of eminent domain unless it is exercised for a "public use."

Under the normal process, the House-passed eminent domain bill would be referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over the issue, and which is unlikely to consider eminent domain. However, in an effort to gain support and advance a difficult transportation reauthorization bill, Senate leaders have decided to permit a number of non-germane amendments on the transportation bill.

The first of those amendments is a controversial contraception measure. Waiting in the wings is an amendment submitted by Senator John Boozman (R-Ark.) that mirrors the eminent domain legislation passed by the House. If Senate leadership allows consideration of the Boozman amendment and it passes, the new eminent domain legislation could ride the higher-stakes transportation reauthorization bill to the President's desk and enactment.

NLC is urging Congress to pass a clean transportation reauthorization bill free of non-germane amendments and to oppose legislation that would usurp local control and further limit eminent domain authority.

Annual Conference to focus on making TN cities great

June 9 - 12 in Knoxville

How do we keep America great? Rick Baker, former mayor of St. Petersburg, Florida, will provide a compelling—and challenging—answer: by making American cities great! And great cities are built first of all through strong leadership.

Baker will serve as the keynote speaker at TML's Annual Conference, slated for June 9 - 12 in Knox-

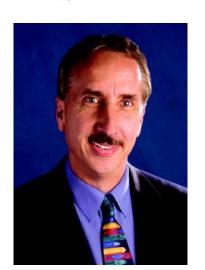
During his two terms in office, Rick Baker worked toward a clear, uncompromising goal: to make St. Petersburg the best city in America. He led a downtown renaissance, rebuilt the most economically depressed area of the city, attracted businesses, worked to reduce violent crime, and made public schools a city priority.

In this session, Baker will discuss how to find and implement the most effective solutions to a city's most challenging problems.

With a theme of *Charting a* Course for Local Progress, many of the conference workshops and speakers will focus on helping community leaders plan for a progressive future. Topics will include:

- The property tax relationship to efficient and responsive local government;
- Non-traditional revenue sources





Rick Baker

through public-private partnerships;

- Maturing of America: Preparing for the aging population; • Civility in government;
- Employee benefits & public pensions: • Urban revitalization;
- Solution for cities in addressing abandoned properties;

See CONFERENCE on Page 5

such as the construction of roads, hospital facilities, airports or military bases. Such authority would also be permitted in cases of developing public transportation systems or infrastructure, such as the proposed

Keystone pipeline, or to remove

threats to public health and safety. During House debate, the bill was championed by cosponsors Reps. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.) and Maxine Waters (D-Calif.). Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), ranking minority member of the House Judiciary Committee, was the sole speaker in opposition.

Although Conyers called protections against eminent domain abuse a laudable goal, he referred to the bill as a "one-size-fits-all, Washington-knows-best solution," and said that, "Congress should not now come charging in after seven years of work and presume to sit as a national zoning board, arrogating to our national government the right to decide which states have gotten the balance right and deciding which projects are or are not appropriate."

In 2006, an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House approved a stronger eminent domain bill, but it was never considered by the Senate. Instead, the Senate com-

wrongfully taken by a state or local government. promised with NLC and other state The bill creates safe harbor for and local groups advocating for local specific "public purpose" activities authority by inserting a new, permanent section in the Transportationthat necessitate eminent domain,

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BYTML STAFF REPORTS

ALCOA

A portion of the proposed Alcoa Parkway is a step closer to reality. Alcoa city officials learned the Tennessee Department of Transportation has accepted a new redesign for the plans they originally accepted for reworking the Hunt Road/Alcoa Highway interchange. The redesign would call for replacing the current Hunt Road bridge with one further south. City Manager Mark Johnson said a new bridge is needed because the stretch of Alcoa Highway between Hall Road and the bypass interchange will be expanded to three lanes each way and six lanes can't fit under the current bridge.

BRENTWOOD

A master grading plan for the 55 acres of land known locally as "the Cooper property" is on the agenda for the Brentwood Planning Commission developer PLC Properties is asking for permission to start grading work at Virginia Way and Granny White Pike, including a future office complex and 24 acres to be handed over to the city as a passive park. If the grading work is approved, that doesn't mean that office buildings could start sprouting on the land. Any proposed structures would face their own detailed site plans and final plat approvals from the Planning Commission at later meetings after grading is completed. Instead of a surface parking lot, developers will be asking for a three-story, 950-space parking garage in the southeast corner of the property.

CHARLESTON

Arch Chemicals recently completed a \$26.5 million expansion of its Charleston facility, creating 59 manufacturing and research and development jobs. Arch Chemicals Inc., now part of Lonza Group's Microbial Control business, is a global leader in providing innovative, chemistry-based solutions to selectively destroy and control the growth of harmful microbes. The business is focused on water treatment, hair and skin care products, wood treatment, preservation and protection applications.

CHATTANOOGA

American Tire Distributors (ATD), the nation's leading replacement tire distributor, announced plans to open a distribution center in Chattanooga, a project that will bring a projected \$10-20 million in investment and 40 new jobs with annual wages averaging \$50,000 to the area over a period of three years. ATD is expected to purchase a nine-acre tract situated directly across from eSpin on Enterprise South Industrial Park's Discovery Drive. The company submitted its proposal to the Hamilton County Commission at a public meeting March 15. ATD is a privately held company that serves more than 124,000 tire, wheel and automotive service retailers nationwide. The company's proposed Chattanooga facility will become ATD's fifth location in Tennessee, joining Johnson City, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville in distributing the company's products to the Southeast region.

CLINTON

Becromal of America Inc. is closing its Clinton plant and laying off 30 workers. The plant will close by the end of September. The closing is part of a streamlining of Becromal's global businesses. Becromal of America is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Becromal S.p.A., headquartered in Milan, Italy.

COLUMBIA

A proposal to form a metropolitan government for Columbia and Maury County failed in both voting jurisdictions, with 84 percent of county voters rejecting the plan and 68 percent of city voters.

ETOWAH

Etowah Utilities boasts the best-tasting water in Southeast Tennessee, according to a competition among water utilities conducted by the Tennessee Association of Utility Districts. In a taste test of water samples, by a three-judge panel, Etowah water was judged to be the best and its water utility will participate in a statewide competition with other regional winners in August. The statewide winner then will compete in Washington, D.C., for the "best tasting water in America" award.

FRANKLIN

Affinion Group recently announced it will add 150 jobs to two existing locations in Williamson County. The company currently employs 500 people and is expected to grow to 650 by year's end. Affinion Group is a worldwide customer service company and privately held by Apollo Management and General Atlantic Partners.

FRANKLIN

A joint venture between the city's Parks Department and the Franklin Baseball Club has facilitated upgrades at the concession stands at Jim Warren Park. New windows featuring exterior doors and glass windows with sliding panels will make the stands more energy efficient while offering an additional layer of protection against vandalism. Franklin Baseball Club covered the costs of the upgrades at approximately \$5,000 per stand. The Parks Department staff, Welding Unlimited and Lewis Glass did the installations. Just last December, vandals broke into several buildings at the park and caused thousands of dollars in damage.

JOHNSON CITY

Ground was broken recently on the future site of a \$69 million surgery tower at Johnson City Medical Center. Expected to be completed by the summer of 2013, the 156,000-square-foot addition to the JCMC campus will feature 16 operating suites — each 30 percent larger to house new technology and more space for patient care — along with 48 patient beds for pre- and postoperative care and a satellite pharmacy.

KINGSTON

Volkswagen Group of America will add to its Tennessee footprint by building a warehouse in Roane County, west of Knoxville. The German auto maker will invest \$40 million in the project, which will distribute domestic auto parts for its Passat sedan, which it began cranking out in Chattanooga last year. The 400,000-square-foot center, to be built in Roane Regional Business and Technology Park, is expected to open a year from now and employ up to 45 people by 2016. It will initially redistribute parts before expanding into a full-fledged distribution facility that will reach customers across the United States, Canada and Mexico.

KNOXVILLE

The University of Tennessee's Knoxville campus is gearing up for years of construction along Cumberland Avenue. The school plans to complete a \$130 million gothic-style University Center in several phases by 2016. Just across the street, a project to rebuild Strong Hall is slated for \$94 million in state funds under Gov. Haslam's current budget proposal. This year marks the first time in four years the budget proposal has included money for major capital investments at the state's higher education institutions.

MANCHESTER

VICAM recently held its official grand opening in Manchester. The company announced its plans to locate a facility in Coffee County in March 2011. The facility represents an investment of \$32 million and 70 new jobs. VICAM will produce polyethylene terephthalate (PET) stable carpet fiber by recycling PET clear bottles using Oyama Chemical's fiber technology. The carpet fiber will then be used in headliner, seat backs and door panels in the automotive industry. VICAM is a subsidiary of leading non-woven materials producer Japan Vilene Company and managed by VIAM Manufacturing. A leader in automotive floor mats and interior products, VIAM Manufacturing has been operating in Manchester since 1998, and became the North American headquarters for the company in

MEMPHIS

KTG USA plans to hire more than 100 new employees at its Memphis tissue mill this year as part of a \$316 million expansion project launched in 2011. The plant, which produces products like White Cloud bathroom and facial tissue, is doubling in size. Manufacturing capacity is also growing at the plant with the addition of new equipment.

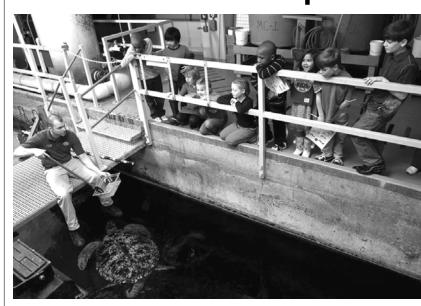
MEMPHIS

Oxford Diagnostic Laboratories plans to open a new laboratory in Memphis. The company will invest \$3 million and create 65 lab processing, medical technologist and management positions.Oxford Diagnostic Laboratories is the service laboratory division of Oxford Immunotec. Oxford Immunotec is a global immunology focused diagnostics company developing novel new tests for various diseases based on its patented T-SPOT® technology. The company's first product is the T-SPOT.TB test, a blood test for Tuberculosis (TB) infection.

MEMPHIS

A Nashville-based company that installs solar-panel systems is opening a branch office in Memphis. LightWave Solar is the same firm that is building the million-kilowatt solar farm at Agricenter Interna-

Keeper Kids Spring break at the Tennessee Aquarium



In Chattanooga, children will be soaking up free animal facts and habitat information during the Spring Break Keeper Kids Activities at the Tennessee Aquarium through April 8. The Aquarium is launching its new free-flight bird program in addition to its daily bird shows and animal encounters offered in the Ranger Rick gallery. Children, ages six and up, may choose two of the 19 different daily activities offered with Aquarium admission. Kids explore "Keepers Only" areas to meet penguin experts, feed feisty otters, make toys for playful parrots or discover what it's like to care for sharks, sea turtles or reptiles. To see the complete list of Keeper Kids activities, go to: http://www.tnaqua.org/SpringBreak.aspx

tional. Its Memphis customers will be residential as well as institutions, businesses and nonprofit groups.

MURFREESBORO

Middle Tennessee State University and Nashville State Community College will announce a new agreement to "strengthen ties" and afford students more academic options at each school. The agreement will allow students to enroll at both schools simultaneously, which could help NSCC students who need low-level major-specific classes that aren't offered at the community college level. Students wishing to participate in dual enrollment must meet MTSU's admission standard. Also, a new "reverse transfer" program will let former NSCC students enrolled at MTSU retroactively apply credits toward an associate's degree from NSCC. NSCC president George Van Allen and MTSU president Sidney McPhee signed the agreement on NSCC's campus. The two schools already have a dual admission program, which provides advising, registration priority, and admission to MTSU for NSCC stu-

NASHVILLE

Metro government has developed a deal to offer a 60 percent tax break on the water and snow park near the Gaylord Opryland resort, helping to fuel what amounts to a \$50 million investment by a pair of entertainment powerhouses. Legislation that Mayor Dean's administration has filed would provide the break on real and personal property taxes. If approved by the Nashville Metro Council, the deal would make way for a massive project that Gaylord Entertainment Co. and Dollywood Co. — a venture tied to country music icon Dolly Parton — announced previously. The tax break would extend over the course of 12 years. Officials estimate the park will ultimately provide \$60 million in annual economic output, 1,800 direct and indirect jobs and \$400,000 in sales taxes to Metro per year, according to the proposal. The output of the project itself would be \$100 million total and 1,900 direct

and indirect jobs, according to estimates in the legislation.

NASHVILLE

The University of Tennessee's solar-powered house is visiting Nashville. The 750-square-foot home will be on display at Nashville's Centennial Park through April 1. It showcases how solar technology can maximize energy efficiency and sustainability. Several educational events about the project are being held in conjunction with tours of the home. The house, called Living Light, was completed by the UT College of Architecture and Design in collaboration with nine UT academic disciplines. Collaborators include the Tennessee Valley Authority and other corporate and alumni partners.

NASHVILLE

Six mass transit projects with a heavy emphasis on technology are competing for \$1.65 million in federal funds to be awarded in Middle Tennessee this spring. The proposals include a smartphone app for bus riders, a computer system to match riders with carpools, Park-n-Ride lot improvements in Gallatin and Springfield, a short commuter rail siding line to increase train trips to and from Lebanon, and new busticket vending machines for the Music City Central station downtown. The Nashville Metro Transit Authority and Regional Transit Authority submitted four of the six proposals. Winning projects will be announced in May.

UNION CITY

Greenfield Products, LLC expanded its Union City facility. The company invested \$1 million and created 27 jobs. Positions included welders, machinists, painters/blasters, fabricators and engineers. Greenfield Products is a leading manufacturer of custom fork truck mounted attachments such as masts, carriages, steel handling attachments, concrete carriages and pipe handling carriages. The company is also a custom manufacturer of intermodal attachments such as container chassis shipping units, chassis rotators and bomb carts for port and rail.



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Gallatin site Tennessee's first transit ready development for proposed northeast corridor; project takes long-range view on city's, region's needs

Gallatin has the green light to become the site of the first Transit Ready Development (TRD) in Tennessee following an unanimously vote of the Gallatin City Council to approve a rezoning request for the development of 150 acres of land in Gallatin for the Greensboro North mixed-use community. It was also a signal that developers and municipalities are taking a long-range look at the importance of transportation options.

As a Transit Ready Development, Greensboro North will be developed as part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2035 Regional Transportation Plan that calls for a proposed Northeast Corridor transit line. Greensboro North will be one of 13 stations on the Northeast Corridor transit line.

Greensboro North is located on approximately 150 acres of land in Gallatin along both sides of GreenLea Boulevard, south of the CSX Railroad and adjacent to Volunteer State Community College. On Feb. 7, the Gallatin City Council voted to rezone the property from R15-PUD to SP Specific Plan District.

Greensboro North will be a mixed-used community including retail, commercial and office space, and a variety of housing options along with undeveloped, common green space; it will be a compact community connected by a walkable and bikeable street network

Gallatin Mayor Jo Ann Graves said, "This transit-ready development will provide our citizens with a new alternative in residential choices. The close proximity of mass transit provides opportunities for cost-savings and convenience to those who live there. Transit-ready developments are a quality-of-life issue for people of all ages and are the way of the future. Gallatin is excited to accept this development as evidenced by its unanimous support from the city council."

While there are other mixed-use communities are under development in the Nashville area that offer similar features, Greensboro North is distinctive because of its long-range focus on proposed transportation plans in the greater Nashville region. It is uniquely positioned to be the central transit stop in the Gallatin area due to its location near Volunteer State Community College and an overall vision that leverages its proximity to the future transit line.



Greensboro North will be a mixed-used community including retail, commercial and office space, and a variety of housing options along with undeveloped, common green space; it will be a compact community connected by a walkable and bikeable street network.

Recognition is growing that alternative solutions must be found to adding new roadway lanes to meet the increased demand placed on interstates and highways. The Greensboro North TRD is one of the alternative solutions.

"This action places the city of Gallatin in the forefront of preparing for a new era of transportation choices. I truly believe these choices will add to the quality of life for those who will live, shop, work or play in Greensboro North," said Ed Cole, executive director of The Transit Alliance.

Lee K. Zoller with Green & Little, L.P., developer of Greensboro North, explained that Greensboro North will be a village-style development with a mixture of retail, commercial, office and residential housing options. It will include approximately 1 million square feet of retail, commercial and office space, and approximately 2,000 residential units

"A minimum of 20 percent of the total property will be reserved for common, open green space," Zoller noted. "We appreciate the support and vision of the Gallatin City Council and the Planning Commission. It is clear that the Council and Planning Commission are looking to the future, focusing on quality-of-life and sustainability issues, and laying the foundation for growth opportunities."

The build-out for the property will occur in phases over a 20-30 year period, a timeframe that coincides with the projected development of the Northeast Corridor transit line. It is anticipated that the first phase of development at Greensboro North will focus on residential units which will include both single family homes and multifamily units.

"The MPO's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan rewards communities that find





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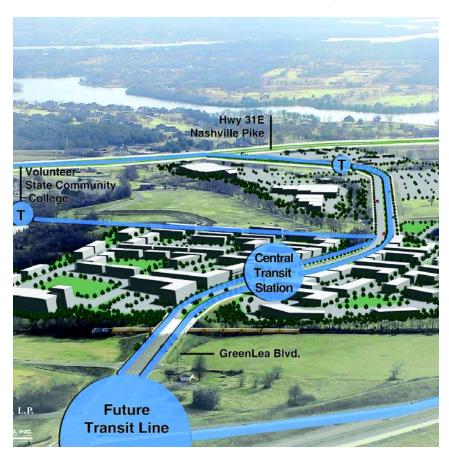
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Greensboro North will be a mixed-used community including retail, commercial and office space, and a variety of housing options along with undeveloped, common green space; it will be a compact community connected by a walkable and bikeable street network.

ways to reduce the burden that new growth places on roads, by providing funding for targeted infrastructure improvements in areas like Gallatin that are interested in creating walkable, mixed-use development patterns. These projects really can help to reduce driving and they should be considered a significant part of our strategic plan to keep the region moving," said Michael Skipper, executive director of Nashville MPO

Skipper added, "This transitready development is proof that private developers are seeing a shift in the market toward more sustainable housing and transportation choices."



As a Transit Ready Development, Greensboro North will be developed to take advantage of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2035 Regional Transportation Plan that calls for a proposed Northeast Corridor transit line. Greensboro North will be one of 13 stations on the Northeast Corridor transit line.

STATE BRIEFS

BYTML STAFF REPORTS

Employed figures on increase

State Labor officials say 2.8 million Tennesseans with jobs in January is the most since March 2008. Officials cited the figure as they announced a Tennessee unemployment rate of 8.2 percent, down from 8.5 percent in December. The national rate was 8.3 percent. "This month the numbers show an increase of 12,700 jobs so we are seeing positive growth in private industry," said Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Karla Davis. The state's number of unemployed persons, 257,500, was the fewest since November 2008 and below the U.S. rate for the first time since November 2010. From November to December, the biggest job gain in Tennessee was 3,900 in professional and business services.

Task Force tackles obesity

Tackling obesity will be the focus of Gov. Haslam's Health and Wellness Task Force. Haslam announced the 16 member task force last October and tasked them with developing an initiative to improve the state's health status. More than 1.5 million adult Tennesseans - or nearly 32 percent – are obese, according to the America Health Rankings report, and data from 2009 showed nearly 30 percent of K-12 schoolchildren surveyed are overweight or obese. Obesity adversely affects health, contributing to high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes, and it is a leading risk factor for Type II diabetes. Evidence also points to obesity as a risk factor for arthritis and some cancers such as breast, esophagus, and colon. Tennessee's status in the America's Health Rankings report has recently moved in a positive direction – from 42nd to 39th in the overall rankings. The task force will partner with and fortify efforts already underway by organizations such as the YMCA, the Coordinated School Health Program, the Tennessee Obesity Task Force and local health departments and encourage new efforts by the business community to bring coordination and consensus to these efforts.

TBI offers citizen's academy

Citizens get a chance for an inside look at the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The TBI, the state's lead investigative law enforcement agency, is now accepting applications for its citizens academy. The four-week academy, beginning May 1, will offer the public a look at TBI's investigations of crime scenes, cyber crime and terrorism information and other aspects of criminal activity. Classes will be held for three hours, one night a week. The academy will be limited to 15 participants. Applications are at www.tbi.tn.gov .

Walking path to honor Conte

Gov. Bill Haslam says the state will cover the estimated \$6,000 cost for erecting signs that name a walking path at Bicentennial State Park in honor of Andrea Conte, wife of former Gov. Phil Bredesen. The Haslam administration had initially issued a "fiscal flag" opposing the bill by House Speaker Emeritus Jimmy Naifeh to name the walkway in Conte's honor, citing the cost that was not included in Haslam's state budget plans. Naifeh said five friends and associates of Bredesen had told him they would put up \$750 each to cover the cost, but Haslam assured him that will not be necessary and the expense can be covered by the routine operations budget of the Department of Environment and Conservation, which oversees state parks.

March 29 Vietnam Vets Day

Gov. Haslam proclaimed March 29th as Vietnam Veterans Day, four years after Tennessee became the first state in the nation to designate a special day of observance in honor of veterans of the Vietnam War. "On March 30, 1973, the U.S. Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam. More than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives in Vietnam and more than 153,000 were wounded in battle. Upon their return home, many members of the United States Armed Forces who bravely served their country were not given the "Welcome Home" they so richly deserved.

American voters rank TN 3rd Over the course of four months.

leaders with Public Policy Polling asked American voters across the nation for their impressions of each state and Tennessee came in at No. 3. Public Policy Polling conducted four national monthly polls, surveying American registered voters through random automated telephone interviews conducted nationwide. This is the

first poll conducted by Public Policy Polling in which voters were asked their impression of all 50 states, and the project was not paid for or authorized by any campaign or political organization. Forty-eight percent of people said they have a favorable opinion of Tennessee, and 14 percent had an unfavorable outlook of the Volunteer State.

Voters say ID law confusing

Most Tennesseans think the state's new law requiring government-issued photo ID in order to vote is a "good idea," but many remain confused about what forms of identification are acceptable, according to a poll released by Middle Tennessee State University's College of Mass Communication. Eighty-two percent of 646 adults surveyed think the new law should be kept in place. Eleven percent consider the law a bad idea that should be done away with. The remainder aren't sure. However, while 93 percent know a current Tennessee driver's license is acceptable and 81 percent know a valid military ID will do, only 21 percent know that an expired Tennessee driver's license also will be accepted.

Lottery sees record sales in Feb.

The Tennessee Education Lottery Corp. reports record sales of \$130 million in February. Lottery officials said it was an 11.4 percent increase over the previous record of \$116.7 million last March. They attributed the record to strong growth in instant games, a restructured Powerball and new games. The lottery has been selling tickets since January 2004.

TN sees increase in expunged criminal records requests

More Tennesseans are filing to have dismissed and deferred criminal charges wiped from their records as jobs become scarcer and employers are able to be pickier. Tennessee has reported a 71 percent jump since 2007 in the number of people filing to have charges expunged. While most applications to expunge criminal charges are free, the state is looking to increase the cost for defendants who successfully finish a judicial diversion plan. A proposed law sailing through the state legislature would raise the cost from \$50 to \$350 plus a \$100 application fee, in order to raise funds for the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. Its sponsors expect it to raise about \$4.4 million each year, as opposed to about \$400,000 raised each year under current prices. Not everyone can get a charge expunged.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) announced today that state aeronautics grants totaling \$16,751,893 have been approved for 17 Tennessee airports.

Airports receiving grants in-

- clude:McMinn County Airport (Athens)
- Cleveland Municipal Airport
- Elizabethton Municipal Airport Sumner County Regional Airport
- Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge Airport
- McGhee Tyson Airport (Knoxville)
- McKellar-Sipes Regional Airport (Jackson)
- Charles W. Baker Airport (Memphis)
- General DeWitt Spain Airport (Memphis)

• Memphis International Airport

TN city airports receive grant funds

- Smithville Municipal AirportLovell Field (Chattanooga)
- Lovell Field (Chattanooga)Centerville Municipal Airport
- Dyersburg Regional Airport Arnold Field (Halls)
- Lebanon Municipal Airport
- Henry County Airport

 For more details on e

For more details on each of these grants visit:www.tn.gov/tdot

The grants are made available through the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Di-

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 expendi-

tures, grant applications are reviewed by the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission, which is a five member board charged with policy planning and with regulating changes in the state Airport System Plan. The board reviews all applications 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.

House Speaker Emeritus Naifeh won't seek reelection

Before a packed chamber, House Speaker Emeritus Jimmy Naifeh, D-Covington, announced he would not seek re-election to the House seat he first won in 1974. Naifeh, 72, holds the distinction of being re-elected a total of 18 times. The House elected him as its speaker, the chamber's powerful presiding officer, for nine terms from 1991 until 2009, making Naifeh the longest-serving House speaker in Tennessee history. During his career, Naifeh saw the Governor's office switch parties six times, beginning with Gov. Winfield Dunn in 1975 and ending with Gov. Haslam's administration in 2011.

Following a two-minute standing ovation from lawmakers across party lines, Naifeh, in making the announcement, was allowed to preside over the state House of Representatives one last time. "Governor McWherter, my mentor, always told me I would know when it was time to go home and I know that time has come for me to step aside for the next generation of leaders," Naifeh said.

"Whatever he told you, you could take it to the bank," said Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey. "Even though many times I disagreed with him, he'll be missed in this institution." Ramsey recessed the Senate so that members could attend Naifeh's announcement.

Naifeh's speech was followed



Jimmy Naifeh

by tributes from House Minority Leader Craig Fitzhugh; former Speaker Pro Tempore Lois DeBerry, the only member of the House who has served longer than Naifeh; and state Rep. Steve McDaniel, the longest-serving Republican in the House.

"Speaker Naifeh's door was always open to me and all those who wanted to talk with him," McDaniel said. "The man's heart has always been in the right place."

Naifeh helped shape the legislative agenda in Nashville for the better part of two decades. He listed his support for in-school health and maternity leave as among his proudest accomplishments, as well as persuading McWherter to fund a satellite campus for Dyersburg State Community College in Tipton County, which also bears his name.



PEOPLE



Rep. Eddie Bass is retiring from the General Assembly. Bass, a former Giles County sheriff, is leaving the Legislature to attend to



his growing private businesses. He is the eighth Democratic lawmaker to announce his retirement this year. Bass is serving his third term in the state House after first being elected in 2006.

Republican state Sen. Mike Faulk won't seek a second term in the G e n e r a l Assembly's upper chamber. The



Kingsport attorney Faulk said that he is retiring to spend more time with his ailing mother and to attend to his legal practice. Fifty-eight-year-old Faulk won the seat in 2008.

Former Tennessee State Senator Rosalind Kurita of Clarksville has taken on a new job as Health Policy Advisor to the Commissioner of the Ten-



sioner of the Tennessee Department of Health, John
J. Dreyzehner. Kurita will be advising the Commissioner on policies
relating to health across the state.
Kurita said she was hired specifically
to put all of her time and energy on
what can be done to put new policies

in place to help Tennesseans to live in a way that doesn't continue the epidemic of obesity.

Clay Banks joins ECD as the new Southwest regional director. In his new role, Banks will serve as the primary point-of-contact for Southwest Tennessee companies seeking state assistance with expansion or with accessing state services in Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and McNairy counties. Prior to joining ECD, Banks served as the director of Economic Development for the Bartlett Area Chamber of Commerce.

Steve Bowers, communications manager of Jackson Energy Authority, was chosen as Jackson's "Man of the Year" by the Jackson Ex-



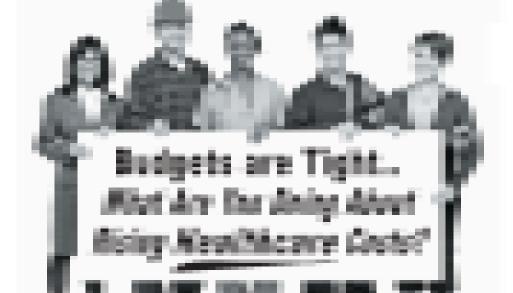
Bowers vinners of

change Club. Past winners of the award are not only leaders, but community servants who have given back to Jackson philanthropically. Bowers is a supporter of numerous causes, including the Boys and Girls Club, the Ayers Children's Medical Center, and the March of Dimes.

Longtime
Johnson City
building codes
inspector **Dave**Jenny has been
named the city's
chief building official. The post



was vacated a few years ago when Steve Shell retired.





Tennessee sales tax collections continue upward trend, \$20.2 million over budgeted estimates

Tennessee tax collections continued their upward trend in February. Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Mark Emkes today announced that overall February revenues were \$726.6 million, which is \$20.2 million more than the state budgeted.

"February sales tax collections, reflecting January spending, recorded the 23rd consecutive month of positive growth," Emkes said. "While we believe the healthy growth rate in sales tax collections for February is indicative of an improving economy in Tennessee, we are concerned that escalating gasoline prices will soon begin to erode the positive growth trend we are now enjoying.

"In the months ahead, we will monitor very closely our collections and expenditure patterns and work closely with the Legislature in order to end this fiscal year with a balanced budget as constitutionally required."

On an accrual basis, February is the seventh month in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

The general fund was over collected by \$23.5 million and the four other funds were under collected by

Sales tax collections were \$22.0 million more than the estimate for February. The February growth rate was positive 10.24 percent. The year-to-date growth rate for seven months is positive 6.98 percent.

Franchise and excise taxes combined were \$3.8 million above the budgeted estimate of \$36.0 million. For seven months revenues are over collected by \$148.4 million. The year-to-date growth rate for seven months is 21.45 percent.

Gasoline and motor fuel collections for February decreased by 4.06%, and were \$4.0 million below the budgeted estimate of \$70.8 million. For seven months revenues are under collected by \$3.6 million.

Tobacco tax collections were \$2.2 million under the budgeted estimate of \$22.1 million. For seven months revenues are under collected in the amount of \$11.0 million.

Inheritance and estate taxes were under collected by \$4.5 million for the month. Year-to-date collections for seven months are \$4.0 million more than the budgeted esti-

Privilege tax collections were \$2.4 million more than the February estimate, but on a year-to-date basis, August through February, collections are \$1.9 million below the esti-

All other taxes were over collected by a net of \$2.7 million.

Year-to-date collections for seven months were \$251.5 million more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was over collected by \$237.8 million and the four other funds were over collected by \$13.7

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

The State Funding Board met on December 9 and 14 to hear updated revenue projections from the state's various economists. The board met again on December 19 and adopted revised revenue ranges for 2011-2012. The revised ranges assume an over collection of \$187.8 million to \$220.5 million in total taxes and \$177.0 million to \$209.6 million in general fund taxes from the fiscal year 2011-2012 budgeted estimate.

Dynamic conference lineup set for June; registration now available online

CONFERENCE from Page 1

• Guarding your city assets; and Improved government operations through IT technology.

In addition, the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) will offer several conference sessions this year as part of the Certified Municipal Finance Officer program. Workshop sessions have been approved by the State Comptroller as continued education units (CEU).

Sessions are open to all conference registrants.

Some of the workshops being offered are:

- Outsourcing of public services Assessment of internal controls
- Tax increment financing
- Budgeting and economic fore-

Other conference highlights include a welcome reception Saturday night, a Sunday morning golf tournament to benefit the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service Scholarships, a full exhibitors' program, and a Host City reception.

The conference will kick off Sunday, June 10, with district meetings and the opening general session, followed by two dynamic work-

shops and the host city reception. An awards breakfast on Tuesday will conclude the conference.

To register, go to the League's website: www.TML1.org.

Schedule at a Glance

SATURDAY, JUNE 9 7 - 10 pm

Welcome Reception

SUNDAY, JUNE 10	
8 am	Golf Benefit
9 am -5 pm	Registration

e am -o pm	Registiation
11	Exhibit Hall Opens
12 noon	Lunch
1:30 -2:15 pm	Workshop
2:15 - 2:45 pm	District Meetings
3 - 4:15 pm	Opening Session
4:30 - 5:30 pm	Workshops
6:30 -8:30 pm	Host City
•	Reception

MONDAY, JUNE 11

9 -10 am	Workshops
10:15 -11:15 am	Workshops
11:30 - 12:15 am	Annual Busi
	Meeting
12:30 - 2 pm	Lunch
2:15 - 3:15 pm	Workshops
2.10 - 3.10 pm	vvorksnops

2:15 - 3:15 pm 3:30 - 4:30 pm 6:30 - 11pm

orkshops orkshops nual Business eting nch

Workshops

Pool Party

Tuesday, June 12 8 - 10 amAnnual Awards Breakfast

Brentwood opens state's first **Next Generation 911 Call Center**

NEXT GEN. from Page 1

location of the call, and recognizes the technology that is generating the call. Installation of an uninterruptible power supply is part of the project. "We upsized our generator for the building and now have a room dedicated to nothing else but a battery back up for the emergency center," said Kirk Bednar, Brentwood assistant city manager.

"Because of the digital network, if one 911 center is knocked out of service, a center from another location will be able to pick up the calls seamlessly. This function is expected to result in saving both time and lives," said Lynn Questell, TECB executive director.

The center's five answering points will allow for increased staffing during major incidents, such as the 2010 flood, while the adjoining conference room creates space for command staff to coordinate and direct responses during a crisis.

The new technology will also allow dispatchers to communicate directly with surrounding public safety agencies and control citywide traffic cameras. "That's a big point when we're tracking cars and bad guys on the loose, and having the capability of watching officers as they conduct traffic stops," Technology Director John Allman told news reporters at the opening.

"It's an amazing process," agrees Questell. "Not only will this network improve 911 operations, it will also save local Emergency Communications Districts millions of dollars a year in routing and trunking charges. We will be among the first states in the nation to have a truly statewide NG911 network.

The state completed the first phase of the NG911 conversion in October 2011, then testing the core technology before moving on to the second phase, connecting local 911 centers to the core. "We're excited to be moving forward with the Next Generation 911 project," said Questell. The TECB has carefully planned for the NG911 project and has partnered with the state's digital network, NetTN, and with industry leaders AT&T and Telecommunications System, Inc. to bring it to fruition. It's been a shared vision and we're going to do all we can to ensure we get NG911 right every step of the way. The citizens of



Brentwood's center is designed to receive data from multiple telephone technologies. Connecting to a wide range of devices, the equipment identifies the location of the call, and recognizes the technology that is generating the call.



One room contains the battery back up system for Brentwood's NG911 project, while a larger generator was installed for the municipal building.

Tennessee deserve nothing less." Next Generation 911 should be available statewide by 2014.

The upgraded 911 Emergency Center is part of a larger renovation effort of the city's municipal center at Maryland Farms. Built in 1987, the main lobby recently underwent a major transformation with the installation of new entrance doors, a receptionist station and two new service windows. A new computer server room was added to the interior to centralize the city's technology department, along with new office spaces and a more efficient heating and cooling system.

According to city officials, Brentwood has no debt on the property and the upgrades are being funded through the city's operating budget. "It all took about 18 months to complete," said Bednar. "We only occupied one end of the building in the late 80s and the rest was lease space. It was all a hodgepodge of where we could fit things and not very functional."

The end result is the emergency dispatch center modifications, now two and a half times what Brentwood had before.

Online travel agencies prevail in lawsuit

CLASS-ACTION from Page 1 wholesale amount paid by the online travel companies to the hotels," said Todd Moore, local counsel for

Goodlettsville. He said they are still reviewing their options with regard to a potential appeal.

"The hotel-motel tax was enacted before people booked rooms online and the court has ruled that it is up to the legislature to determine if and how the tax should apply to online hotel reservations," said Moore.

In Tennessee, there are approximately 129 taxing authorities that

collect hotel occupancy taxes and were identified as class members in the suit. Specifically, each class member's ordinance makes hotel operators responsible for collecting the tax from hotel guests and remitting it to the relevant tax authority. Each ordinance also states that the tax owed shall be calculated as a percentage of the rate that is charged by the operator.

Proceeds from the hotel-motel tax can be used for purposes authorized in the enacting ordinance. Many jurisdictions designate and use the tax proceeds for tourism development, such as the construction of convention centers or for historic preservation.

Tennessee was not alone in its battle; nor defeat. In the last month, various courts around the country have dismissed cases brought against online travel companies for avoiding hotel occupancy tax ordinances.

According to LegalNewsline, the Kentucky Supreme Court and a state appeals court in Pennsylvania all affirmed that local jurisdictions in those states cannot impose taxes on online travel companies for their reservation services.



COMING

March 28-29:UT MTAS hosts MunicipalCourtClerksConference held at the Marriott Cool Springs, 700 Cool Springs Blvd. in Franklin. Sessions include: a review of Municipal Court processes, court action reports, electronic submittal: time management and recovering money owed the court. For more information, contact the MTAS office at 865-974-0411.

April-May: The TML Risk Management Pool Free Regional **Workshops.** Designed to give Pool member municipalities/agencies the opportunity to better understand The Pool's liability, property, and workers compensation policies and coverage. The workshop will also focus on ways a strong risk management program in your entity will help reduce your risk exposures, improve safety for your employees and citizens as well as help reduce your premiums. Staff that work in your risk and insurance program, especially risk managers, are encouraged to attend. All workshops begin at 9 am and conclude at 2 pm. Lunch provided. Dates and locations: April 17: Jackson, UT West TN Research & Education Center, Room 150 - 605 Airways Blvd; April 18: Martin, First State Bank – 106 University St.; April 19: Germantown, The Great Hall & Conference Center - 1900 South Germantown Road; April 24: Springfield, Volunteer State Community College at Highland Crest – 150 Laureate Ave.; April 25: Cookeville, Leslie Town Centre -One West First St.; April 26: Brentwood, Brentwood Library – 8109 Concord Rd.; May 1, Alcoa, Alcoa Services Center- 725 Universal St.; May 2: Kingsport, Kingsport Center for Higher Education – 300 W. Market St.; May 3: Collegedale: Collegedale City Hall, 4910 Swinyar Dr.

Register on line at http://www.ThePool-TN.org/WorkShopRegistration.html Or print a PDF of the registration form and fax to Lynn Bates at 615-377-3067. Find the form at: http://thepoology.html

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April 3-5: Local Government Corporation Annual Conference, "Resource 2012" Held at the Murfreesboro Embassy Suites and Conference Center, 1200 Conference Center Blvd. Early registration from 5 - 6:30 p.m. April 3. this will be registration only. Classes will be held April 4-5. 2012 marks LGC's 35th year in business. We will celebrate this milestone with a 35th anniversary dinner on Wed. night at 6 p.m. For registration and conference information, visit the website www.localgovcorp.com.

April-May: workshop series: Restoring the river system affected by the 2008 Kingston Fossil Plant coal ash spill. Hosted by TVA and the Environmental Protection Agency, workshops will be held at Roane State Community College, 276 Patton Lane in Harriman, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Information will be provided on the River System Evaluation and Cost Analysis Report on the effort to clean up the Emory River and surrounding countryside. Workshop dates and topics are: April 5: nature and extent of residual ash in the river system; April 19: presentation of data on fish, birds and frogs; May 3: presentation of data on turtles, mammals, plants and other organisms; May 17: ecological risk assessment process and development of general response actions; and June 7: evaluation of removal alternatives. The workshops are open to the public. For more information, call TVA's Community Outreach staff at 865-806-7688.

Crime labs struggle with DNA test demands

BY MELISSA MAYNARD Stateline Staff Writer

Twelve years ago, Congress passed a bill aimed at bolstering the capacity of state and local crime labs. It was known as the "DNA Backlog Elimination Act." The ensuing effort now bears the more modest title of "DNA Backlog Reduction Program." But even with the new name, it is an ambitious venture. Since 2006, Congress has poured \$785 million into helping to fix the logjam in DNA evidence collection at the state and local level through this and other programs.

There's no question that a serious problem exists. Recent advances in science and technology have made DNA a more useful tool for convicting the guilty and exonerating the innocent, but major backlogs persist, despite broad acknowledgement that delays in processing DNA evidence are keeping criminals on the streets. "A lot of it is supply and demand," says Kermit Channel, director of the Arkansas state crime lab. "Because the technology offers so much more today than even five or six years ago, law enforcement is asking for more and more from us.'

Federal help is making a difference. Between 2004 and 2010, the Backlog Reduction Program, run by the National Institute of Justice, has funded completion of 172,761 cases and significantly increased state and local DNA laboratory capacity. Channel credits federal funding with dramatically reducing the Arkansas backlog — which peaked at 18,000 in 2005 — to 4,200 now.

"Without those funding sources, we wouldn't be anywhere near where we are today," Channel says. Federal grants have allowed the state to invest in more sophisticated equipment that sorts through evidence faster, as well as nine additional staff members to process the evidence.

Still, while the crime lab is now able to stay up to date with homicides and sexual assaults, property crimes remain a major driver of the state's persistent backlog. Processing evidence of property crimes is critical, Channel says, not just for solving those offenses, but also for

investigating others that may have been committed by the same person.

More data

This is because in addition to analyzing DNA evidence recovered from crime scenes, crime labs are tasked with maintaining databases that hold DNA profiles of certain convicted offenders. State and local DNA databases and the national DNA database, connected through the FBI-run system CODIS, have become important tools for solving crimes in cases for which there are no suspects. As of January 2012, CODIS had led to 171,800 "hits" or matches and assisted in more than 165,100 investigations, according to the FBI.

As the utility of DNA databases in solving crimes has become apparent, state policies have expanded to require that more and more DNA be collected and processed for inclusion in those databases. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is pushing a bill that would require DNA from any person convicted of any crime to be included in a database, and about half of the states now include DNA from arrestees who have not been convicted of crimes. While inclusion of additional offenders and arrestees has made CODIS a more useful tool, it has also clogged crime labs and raised major concerns about privacy for individuals who have not been convicted, says Sara Katsanis, a researcher at Duke University's Institute for Genome Sciences & Policy. "The presumption is that if we had the whole population in there then it would work best," she says.

When states expand requirements to include more offenders and arrestees, Katsanis adds, they often fail to consider the impact on their existing crime lab capacity. "There's not a lobbyist for the rape victims who aren't getting their samples processed," she says.

The federal connection

Crime labs have become highly reliant on federal funding. A recent report by the Congressional Research Service notes that 83 percent of state and local crime labs say they would see an increase in DNA casework backlogs if federal funding



One way that states have tried to minimize backlogs is to work more closely on the front end with law enforcement officials.

were to disappear.

But the federal rules lead to a bit of a conundrum: While the core backlog reduction program is formula-based and available to states that do not have backlogs, other funds give priority to states that have documented large backlogs. That gives them less incentive to get the problem fixed. "It makes you more competitive if you have an existing backlog," admits Sheila Jerusalem, a spokesperson for the National Institute of Justice.

Some state officials concede that the promise of federal support can provide a perverse incentive. "It's kind of just an accepted problem now," says Adam Horst, director of the Indiana Office of Management and Budget. "The fact that we have federal funding streams that encourage you to have [a backlog] may be part of the reason why states have them."

Horst experienced this as he pushed the Indiana state crime lab to eliminate its backlog, which it finally did in 2009. It now maintains an average turnaround time of 30 days for processing DNA samples, well within federal guidelines. "I literally would have conversations with people about eliminating the backlog where they'd say, 'You know we're losing federal money," Horst recalls, "and I'd say, 'Well you know what, maybe that's OK.' Maybe the federal government needs to change their policy."

New technology

Still, funding from the National Institute of Justice has helped state and local labs bolster their capacity so that they can sustain higher workloads on their own. Investments in technology and robotics and improvements to workflow processes have enabled some states to process higher volumes of DNA more quickly in ways that aren't reliant on ongoing federal support.

After seeing a 48 percent jump in DNA requests over the course of one year, the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory used federal grants to implement more advanced technologies and hire management experts to evaluate and overhaul workflow processes.

The result was a significant improvement in lab productivity, from 32 completed DNA requests per month in 2007 to 175 per month in 2011. Average turnaround time went from 287 days to 59 days. Process improvements included everything from eliminating unnecessary procedural steps to removing doors to make it easier for staff to move around. Spaghetti charts mapping the travel time around the lab showed that staff had to walk a total of 2.4 miles just to process evidence from a typical sexual assault case. About a mile was eliminated from

Another way that states have tried to minimize backlogs is to work more closely on the front end with law enforcement officials — the ones submitting the evidence — to ensure that the right evidence is being tested. "Our contributors sometime watch too much CSI and they don't realize it takes so much time to conduct these tests," says David Coffman, chief of forensic services for Florida's state crime lab.

Florida and many other states have raised acceptance thresholds so that, for property cases especially, they aren't testing DNA from doorknobs or other places where samples from multiple people are likely to be found. Still, says Coffman, "there's a way to ask us to bend the rules depending on the nature of the case." When there is lots of evidence — a trail of blood, for example — Florida now works with law enforcement to pick the five best samples first, and then will go back and test more as necessary.

State crime labs don't typically charge local law enforcement agencies for their services, but Arizona experimented with this approach as a way to reduce costs and provide an incentive to law enforcement not to submit unnecessary evidence. The legislature passed a law in 2007 requiring it but reversed course in 2009 because of pushback from local jurisdictions.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

State Unemployment Rates for January 2012

Unemployment rates decreased in 45 states and D.C. in January 2012. The rates remained unchanged in four states; only one state and Puerto Rico saw unemployment rise for the month. Compared with a year ago, unemployment has declined in 48 states and Puerto Rico, risen in one state and D.C., and remained unchanged in one state.

The positive report was aided by significant job growth in many states. Texas added more than 67,000 new jobs during January, followed by New York with 44,600 and Ohio with almost 33,000 new jobs. In percentages, New Hampshire experienced the largest job growth, with employment rising by more than 1.0 percent, followed by Colorado, Kansas and Maine, where employment rose by 0.9 percent in January.

Nevada again led the states with the highest unemployment rates, at 12.7 percent for January 2012, but that is a significant improvement compared to a year ago when Nevada's unemployment rate for January 2011 was 14.2 percent.

California and Rhode Island had the second highest jobless rates for the month, each with 10.9 percent unemployment. North Dakota continued to experience the lowest unemployment rate among the states, at 3.2 percent.

Michigan saw the largest overthe-year decline in unemployment, dropping 1.9 percentage points from the unemployment rate in January 2011. Utah also saw significant improvement over the year, with unemployment falling by 1.8 percentage points.

State unemployment figures for February 2012 will be released on Friday, March 30, 2012.

As state funding has dwindled, public colleges have raised tuition and are now resorting to even more desperate measures — cutting training for jobs the economy **needs most.** Technical, engineering and health care expertise are among the few skills in huge demand even in today's lackluster job market. They are also, unfortunately, some of the most expensive subjects to teach, partly because of equipment and safety precautions. Because these skills are in such high demand, professors also have more opportunities in the private sector and so can command higher pay. As a result, some state colleges have eliminated entire engineering and computer science departments. At one community college in a state with a severe nursing shortage — nursing program applicants so outnumber available slots that there is a waiting list just to get on the waiting list. This squeeze is one result of the states' 25-year withdrawal from higher education. During and immediately after the last few recessions, states slashed financing for colleges. Then when the economy recovered, most states never fully restored the money that had been cut. The recent recession has amplified the problem. State appropriations for colleges fell by 7.6 percent in 2011-12, the largest annual decline in at least five decades, according to a report from the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University. Since 1985, the average amount that public institutions spend on teaching each full-time student over the course of a year has barely budged, hovering around an inflation-adjusted \$10,000, according to a State Higher Education Executive Officers report. But in the same period, the share of instruction costs paid for by actual tuition — not the sticker price, but the amount students actually pay after financial aid — has nearly doubled, to 40 percent from 23 percent. State laws usually bar colleges from charging different tuition amounts for different undergraduate subjects, regardless of costs. Traditionally the higher cost of technical training has instead been subsidized with state funds. Many state colleges have been leaning more heavily on the federal government, including through expanded Pell Grant funding and Recovery Act money. President Obama recently proposed a \$8 billion federal package for community colleges to provide additional job training.

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TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY (ISSN. No. 0040-3415) Publication No. 539420 Official publication of the Tennessee Municipal League. Publisher: Margaret Mahery (mmahery@TML1.org); Editor: Carole Graves (cgraves@TML1.org; Phone: 615-255-6416. Advertising: Publisher reserves the right to reject any advertising deemed unacceptable. Fax classified ads to TT&C: Attention Mona Lawrence at 615-255-4752, or e-mail mlawrence@TML1. org. Fax advertising copy to TT&C: Attention Debbie Kluth at 615-255-4752, or e-mail to dkluth@ TML1.org. Opinions expressed by non League officials or staff do not necessarily reflect policies of TML. Tennessee Town & City is published, semi-monthly, 20 times per year at 226 Capitol Blvd., Suite 710, Nashville, TN 37219-1894. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, TN. Subscription rates: \$6 per year to members, \$15 to nonmembers, \$1 a copy. Postmaster: Send changes of address to Tennessee Town & City, 226 Capitol Blvd., Suite 710, Nashville, TN 37219-1894.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertising: \$9.25 per column inch. No charge to TML members. Send advertising to: TT&C Classified Ads, Mona Lawrence, 226 Capitol Blvd. Suite 710, Nashville TN 37219; e-mail: mlawrence@ TML1.org; or fax: 615-255 4752.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

FAYETTEVILLE, NC. The city is seeking candidates for an Assistant City Manager position. One of two ACM positions reporting directly to the City Manager, the vacancy was created by the resignation of an ACM who accepted a city manager position in another state. The Assistant City Manager will serve as an ambassador, facilitator and representative of the city manager's office. The successful candidate will have a commitment to teamwork and professionalism, outstanding supervisory, budgeting, and administrative skills, the interests of the entire community at heart, highly developed communications and listening skills and a demonstrated record of successfully managing and completing complex projects and assignments. The candidate will hold a Bachelor's degree in business, public administration, political science or a related field. A graduate degree in business, public administration or a related field is preferred, but not required. Ten years of progressively responsible municipal work experience, with three years service as a city manager, assistant city manager or the equivalent is required. Starting salary range is \$100,000 to \$130,000 annually depending on qualifications, with an excellent fringe benefit package. Interested candidates should apply by March 23 to Heidi Voorhees at Voorhees Associates.com/currentpositions. For more information, email Heidi Voorhees at HVoorhees @ VAR esume .com or call 847-580-

CITY MANAGER

MT JULIET. The city is accepting applications for the position of City Manager. The position is responsible to a five member commission, for the day-to-day administration of all city services and departments. Individual must have demonstrated ability to motivate and delegate responsibility, ability to identify long term goals and issues for the commission's consideration. Candidates must have demonstrated ability to deal with the public, and able to be articulate and interactive with the community, and community groups. Experience in budgeting, control of expenditures, management of multiple departments, legislative issues, economic development, and planning are high priorities. The ideal candidate will have: a bachelor's degree in public administration, political science, or business management, a master's degree would be preferred, and will have five to seven years of experience as a city manager or assistant city manager in a similar sized community; or will have more than ten years of experience in a management role in municipal government or another related field. Salary: DOQ, EOE. Letters of application, Resumes and 3 professional references will be received at: City of Mt. Juliet, attn: City Manager Search, P.O. Box 256, Mt. Juliet, TN 37121, by April 20th.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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. To download an application and review summary of benefits, go to www.bristoltn.org. EOE

FINANCE DIRECTOR

PORTLAND. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Finance Director. This position has responsibility for all aspects of financial management and requires a comprehensive understanding of city government finance. The finance director manages the budgeting, accounting, accounts payable, debt service management and participates in the daily cash management, pension, investments, and certain aspects of the payroll process and purchasing. This position requires a bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, or closely related field, and five years of progressive experience in the accounting/finance field, preferably in the area of governmental accounting and budgeting. Candidate must have professional certification, or be able to obtain such within two years of employment date, such as Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO); Certified Governmental Financial Manager (CGFM); Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO); or Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Tennessee, in active status with a minimum of five years of primarily governmental experience, with at least three of those years in Tennessee, in order to comply with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Officer Certification and Education Act of 2007. Salary: DOQ; comprehensive benefit package including the city Retirement Plan. Applications will be accepted until April 5, 2012. A background investigation and pre-employment physical will be required. EOE/DRUG FREE WORKPLACE Submit a letter of interest, current resume with salary history and at least three professional references to: UT - MTAS, attn.: Portland Finance Director; 226 Capitol Blvd. Suite 606, Nashville, TN 37219.

ENGINEER BRENTWOOD. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Engineer. The position will perform site inspections of commercial and residential construction and also monitor storm water drainage systems and erosion control for compliance with municipal regulations. This position has the responsibility to coordinate new developmental construction with existing developments; coordinate construction activities with departmental maintenance activities and with other governmental agencies. This position requires a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering or related field with at least two (2) years of experience as an engineer knowledgeable in residential/commercial construction, storm water management, and general construction inspection. The starting salary for this position is \$46,400 DOQ plus excellent benefits. More information and applications are available at www. brentwood-tn.org. Submit applications to City of Brentwood, Attn:

Human Resources, 5211 Maryland

Way, Brentwood, TN 37027.

FIREFIGHTER

FRANKLIN. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of firefighter. Under general supervision, performs all duties of a firefighter which includes fighting fires, salvage and rescue work, and administering minor first aid. Completes regular training sessions and performs some maintenance work on the fire station and vehicles as required. Reports to the Captain and/ or Lieutenant. HS Diploma (or GED), 21 years of age, the ability to work under stressful and dangerous conditions, active EMT Basic (minimum) license required, active Paramedic license preferred, a valid TN driver's license, and a record free from habitual use of drugs or intoxicants, felony convictions & misdemeanors involving dishonesty or false statements. Applicants will be pre-screened for training, education, and experience. Highest-rated candidates will be invited to written test and pass-fail physical agility test (date yet to be determined). Must score 63 or higher on written test. As a condition of employment with the City of Franklin Fire Department, all firefighters must attend and successfully complete Franklin Fire Academy training school as specified by the Franklin Fire Department. Must work a 24 hours-on/48 hoursoff shift (average 56 hours week), and live within 45-minute drive of Fire Department Headquarters within twelve (12) months of employment. May be subject to callback 24 hours a day. Please submit applications online www.franklintn.gov/jobs. EOE/ Drug-free Workplace.

POLICE CHIEF

JEFFERSON CITY. The city is accepting applications for Chief of Police. Current chief is retiring with 25 years of service in the position. Seeking a well-rounded individual with proven leadership skills; strong interpersonal, organizational, supervisory and decision making skills; ability to interact and communicate

effectively with local, state, regional and federal law enforcement personnel, local officials and the public; extensive knowledge of criminal and civil law. Position requires a team player who can work well with other city departments, the city manager, the city council and outside agencies. POST certification and a Bachelor's degree with a major in criminal justice, law enforcement or closely related field required. At least ten years in the profession with extensive supervisory and command experience. Resume, cover letter and application to: Jefferson City Manager, John B. Johnson, P.O. Box 530, Jefferson City, TN 37760, no later than April 10, 2012 or until filled. EOE.

RISK MANAGEMENT ANALYST CLARKSVILLE. The city seeks

qualified applicants for the position of Risk Management Analyst. Incumbents plan, coordinate and implement a comprehensive risk management program. Responsibilities may include evaluating risks and identifying and implementing appropriate responses; determining the need for third party or self insurance; selecting third party insurers; investigating, evaluating and monitoring liability claims; compiling and analyzing financial information; inspecting city facilities for risks and liabilities; and developing and presenting loss control training. Supervises lower level staff. Qualifications include: Bachelor's degree in risk management or a related field and five years experience in risk management, safety and loss control, or a closely related field; a juris doctor or masters degree is strongly preferred; or an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job. Typically requires reaching, standing, walking, hearing, seeing, talking, grasping and other repetitive hand motions. Exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects, including the human body. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time. May be subjected to travel. The salary range is \$52,151 - \$73,011. Application available at the Career Service Center of TN, 350 Pageant Lane, Clarksville. Or send a resume to recruiter@cityofclarksville.com. Position open until filled.

Department of Labor announces 2012 Summer Jobs Program

BYNEIL BOMBERG Nation's Cities Weekly

Cities and towns across the United States can become part of a solution to put America's young people to work by participating in Summer Jobs+, a White House initiative that is being implemented by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Governments, along with nonprofits and businesses, can help put young people to work by choosing at least one of the following three pathways to employment for low-income youth:

- First, cities and towns can provide youth with "life skills" training — work-related soft skills, such as communication, time management and teamwork, through coursework and experience. This includes resume-writing or interview workshops and mentorship programs.
- They can also provide "work skills" training — insights into the world of work that prepares youth

for employment through job shadowing and internships.

• Or they can provide young people with "learn and earn" training, more commonly known as onthe-job training.

No matter which approach or approaches a city adopts, it can make a huge difference in the lives of young people by providing them with a summer experience and income that is likely to positively impact their understanding of the world of work.

Details: A city or town interested in becoming part of this national movement to put hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged young people to work this summer should go to the Department of Labor's website at www.dol.gov/

summerjobs/Employers.htm for more information. There, city leaders will find a listing of those governments that have committed to providing jobs, and a toolkit that can help implement the program at

Tennessee's cities receive Recreational trails grants

Gov. Bill Haslam and Environment and Conservation Commissioner Bob Martineau awarded \$565,000 in Recreational Trails Program grants to recipients across Tennessee. "These grants help local governments and organizations enhance or expand community amenities such as trails, greenways and recreational facilities," Haslam said.

The Recreational Trails Program is a federally-funded program established to distribute funding for motorized, non-motorized and diverse recreation trail projects. The funds are available to federal, state and local government agencies, as well as non-profit organizations that have obtained IRS 501(c)(3) status and have a written trail management agreement with the agency that owns the property where the trail project is located.

Cities receiving grants include: Athens: \$120,000, for the development and restoration of Mouse Creek Trail, including ADA access; Newport: \$89,600, for the acquisition and development of a park and float facility on the Pigeon River. Proposed improvements include an



access road, parking lot, small greenway trail, boat-launch area and restroom facility; Memphis Community Development Council: \$88,400, for the provision of a 12foot-wide hard surface, non-motorized, multi-use trail from Overton Park to the pedestrian-signaled intersection at East Parkway and Sam Cooper roads, and Unicoi: \$105,000, for improvements to the Pinnacle Tower trailhead, including the installation of a bathroom facil-



Tennessee Municipal League 2011-2012 Officers and Directors

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New research shows cities still working through recession, recovery; jobs number shows there's more work to be done

Report: National League of Cities' Local Economic Condition Survey

Today's jobs numbers, while showing improvement, do not show sufficient enough growth to propel the nation to full economic recovery. New research from the National League of Cities (NLC) shows that the nation still has a considerable way to go before the recovery will find its way into every community.

In an NLC survey, city leaders report that individual families continue to feel the pain most acutely. In addition to the high unemployment numbers, residential property values are still down and in many cases have continued to drop (36 percent of cities). Demands by families for safety net services, such as local food banks, have increased significantly in the past year (31 percent of cities).

Despite this, there are signs of some improvement. Mirroring the positive news at the national level, 57 percent of community leaders report modest improvements in unemployment and in the retail sector (57 percent). In the survey, which was sent to lead executives in cities, the data shows 45 percent of city leaders say that their commercial property vacancies are improving. Cities are also seeing modest gains in business permits/licenses with 43 percent saying that the situation is improving in their community.

Cities derive their revenue from sales taxes, income taxes, and for the majority of cities, property taxes. As city revenues remain stagnant, it places a greater strain on cities when responding to the increased demands for city services.

"Our latest numbers point to

improving local economic conditions," said Christopher Hoene, director for the Center for Research & Innovation at the National League of Cities. He continued, "But, we're a long way from recovery. It's clear that cities and city residents will still be confronting the impacts of this past recession for a while longer."

Evidence that cities are not out of the woods yet includes 39 percent reporting decreases in city personnel. Cities have been eliminating personnel since the summer of 2008 in order to balance budgets in response to the recession.

"The unemployment numbers are nothing to cheer just yet," said Ted Ellis, mayor of Bluffton, IN and president of NLC. He continued, "Both the federal government and local officials need to find ways to partner that will lay down a framework to allow for local growth and to make the nation competitive for years to come."

Mayor Ellis recently joined nearly 2,000 city leaders in Washington, DC, for the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference. During the conference, Ellis and other NLC leaders met with White House Administration and Congressional leaders to discuss the role local governments are playing in rebuilding the nation's economy and what the federal government can do to help.

As part of the briefing, the officials exchanged ideas with city leaders on strategies to develop regional economies that leverage local skill sets and the need for greater infrastructure investment. The speakers also emphasized the need for all levels of government to support small businesses which are key to job Street economies.

"Thanks to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs for facilitating such a valuable forum for open discussion with White House policy makers," said NLC President Ted Ellis. "President Obama and his team have a firm understanding of the needs of cit-

- David Agnew, director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Brad Cooper, executive director, Joining Forces
- Greg Nelson, deputy director, White House Office of Public Engagement
- and Competitiveness
- Jason Furman, principal deputy director, National Economic
- Karen Mills, administrator, Small **Business Administration**

for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million

creation and the recovery of Main

The city officials also received a briefing on First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's Joining Forces Initiative and the need for cross-sector, community-based support including education, training and health care for returning veterans and military families. Both city officials and the Administration acknowledged that chief among the challenges for the nation and for cities and towns is to develop private business capacity for hiring veter-

Speakers included:

- Don Graves, executive director, White House Council on Jobs
- Council

NLC is a resource and advocate Americans.

TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

April 13 - April 15: Franklin

9th Annual Bloom 'n' Garden Expo Held at 4215 Long Lane, the Expo is a one-stop-shop for all things gardening, and a must see for casual and serious gardeners alike. For more information, call 615-973-2112.

April 14: Knoxville

Marble Springs Storytelling Festival.

A Dogwood Art Festival event held from 1 pm - 8 pm at the Marble Springs State Historic Site, 1220 West Gov. John Sevier Hwy. Free parking and food on site. Festival seating, bring chairs and blankets. Professional storytellers, liars concert, Appalachian folk tales, fairy tales & myths, historic & life stories, For more information, call 865-573 5508 or e-mail

marble springs@gmail.com

April 20-21: Winchester

25th High On The Hog Festival Carnival, world-class horseshoe pitching contest, BBQ contest, free concert. For more information call, Brenda Long at 967-7879 or 607-

April 19-21: Clarksville

Rivers & Spires.

Grammy and CMA nominated country music vocal group Little Big Town will be the featured headliner. Jazz n' Wine, Kidz Zone, Teen Area and Green Zone. For more info, visit www.riversandspires.com.

April 21: Red Bank

Jubilee Parade and New Moon Pie Festival.

Parade, featuring the biggest Moon Pie, starts at 10 a.m. with the festival activities starting immediately following. The festival will include craft and food vendors, entertainment and Moon Pie games. craft vendors with unique, hard-to-find items, children's activities and entertainment.

April 28: Lynchburg Spring In The Hollow.

Held on the Lynchburg square. For more information, visit the website www.lynchburgtn.com

April 28: Franklin

29th Main Street Festival. Features more than 200 high-quality arts and crafts vendors, superb entertainment, great food and fun for the entire family. Opens at 10 am. For more information, visit http:// festivalnet.com/cgi-bin/subs/ subsdb

April 28-29: South Pittsburg National Cornbread Festival

Arts & Crafts, carnival, kids corner, cornbread cookoffs, live entertainment, exhibits, call 423-837-0022 or visit www.nationalcornbread.

Municipal Administration Program April/May Schedule

How to Improve Your ISO Rating

This class is designed to give the participant an overview of the ISO rating system. At the conclusion of the class, participants will know the various factors that go into an ISO rating; how the ISO rating impacts their community; and how to develop a plan to improve the ISO rating intheir city. The course material will cover communications, water supply, divergency factor, and other fire department components.

Who should attend?:

Elected officials, fire chiefs, deputy chiefs, assistant chiefs, and ranking staff members charged with master planning, and all others in city government who have a desire to understand the details of the ISO rating.



Municipal Technical Advisory Service

Time

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

Dates and locations April 26 — Knoxville

May 10— Franklin May 17— Jackson

Training Facilities

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

Knoxville, *University of Tennessee* Conference Center, 600 Henley

Franklin, Williamson County Agricultural Expo Park, 4215 Long Lane

To better meet the needs of our customers, MTAS has changed to an online registration system effective Jan. 1, 2012, and will accept registration and payment by credit/debit card through a Solution Point account. You must register for each session individually.

Online registration for any MTAS course is available at: http:// www.solutionpoint.tennessee.edu/ TPOnline/TPOnline.dll MTASHome.For assistance with registration or payment, call 865-974-0411. The registration fee for MAP courses for Tennessee Municipal employees is \$40/person/ class. A fee of \$55 is charged for non-city employees. For more information, contact Elaine Morrisey at 865-974-0411.

No loan is too large or too small



The city of Dyersburg closed a \$4.5 million loan to use on various municipal projects.

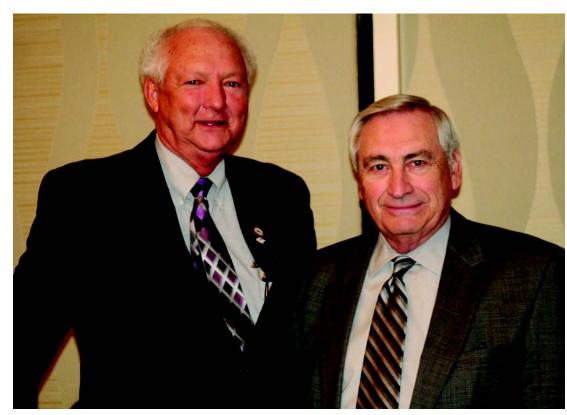


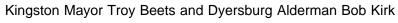


The town of Cumberland Gap closed a \$5,000 Highway Safety Grant Anticipation Note.

See us for your special projects needs. (615) 255-1561

Legislative Conference: Educates, advocates for local autonomy







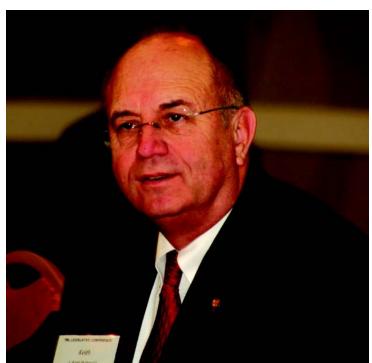
Huntingdon Mayor Dale Kelley and Elkton Mayor Carolyn Thompson



Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero

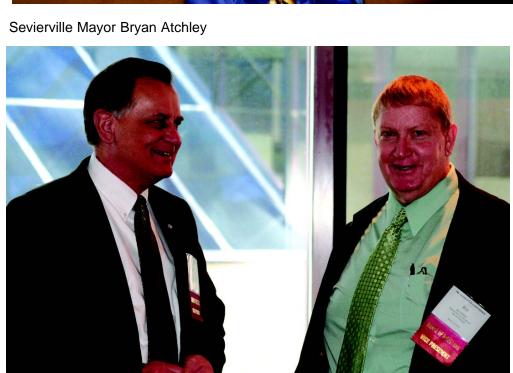


Bristol Councilmember Margaret Feierabend



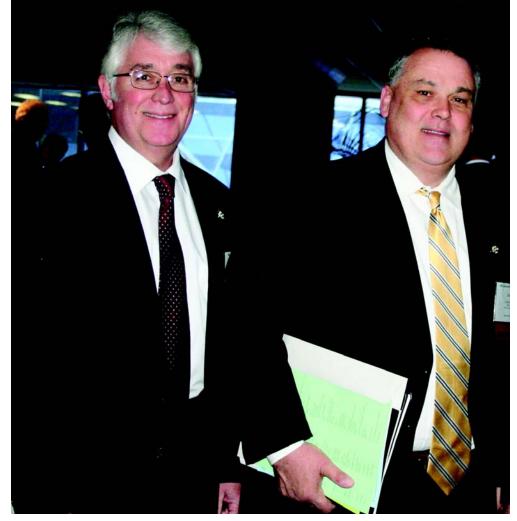
Bartlett Mayor Keith McDonald





Humboldt Mayor Allen Barker and Portland Mayor Ken Wilber





Dyersburg City Recorder Bob Jones and Dyersburg Mayor John Holden



Above: Linda Russell with TN Department of Homeland Security, Crossville Mayor J.H. Graham III and Livingston Mayor Curtis Hayes

Far left: Athens Vice Mayor Bo Perkinson and Cleveland Councilmember David May

Photos by Victoria South

Legislative Conference: Educates, advocates for local autonomy



 $Knoxville\ Downtown\ Coordinator\ Rick\ Emmett\ and\ Farragut\ Vice\ Mayor\ Dot\ LaMarche$





TML Executive Director Margaret Mahery and Brentwood City Manager Mike Walker



Collierville City ManagerJames Lewellen (right) and assistants to the Town Administrator Janet Geyer and Josh Suddath



Jason Mumpower with the State Comptroller's office and MTAS Executive Director Steve Thompson



Oak Ridge City Manager Mark Watson and Oak Ridge Mayor Tom Beehan



TN Municipal Bond Fund President/CEO Charles "Bones" Seivers and UT-IPS Assistant Vice President Chuck Shoopman



Brownsville Mayor Jo Matherne and Brownsville Alderman Leon King





Far left: Columbia Mayor Dean Dickey, Columbia Councilmembers Mike Greene, Debbie Matthews and Mark King

Right: Brentwood Councilmember Betsy Crossley

Legislative Conference: Educates, advocates for local autonomy



Oak Ridge Government & Public Affairs Coordinator Amy Fitzgerald and TML President Kay Senter, Morristown Mayor Pro Tem





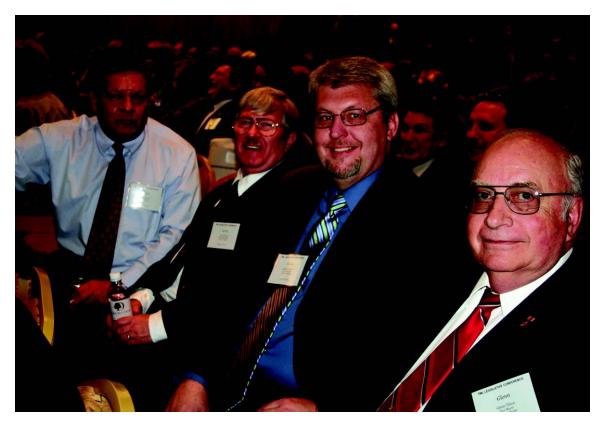
Memphis legislative liaison TaJuan Stout Mitchell, Oak Ridge Councilmember David Mosby and Columbia Councilmember Carl McCullen



Shelbyville Councilmembers Jo Ann Holland, Kay Rose and Jean Pruitt



White House Alderman Farris Bibb and White House Police Chief Gerald Herman



(L-R) Unicoi Vice Mayor Doug Hopson, Unicoi City Recorder Larry Rea, Erwin City Recorder Randy Trivette and Erwin Vice Mayor Glenn Tilson



Alcoa Mayor Don Mull and Alcoa Commissioner Vaughn Belcher



Above: Coopertown Building Commissioner Vicki Bumgardner and Coopertown City Recorder Cathy Smith



At left: Trenton Mayor Tony Burris, Medina Mayor Vance Coleman, and Savannah City Manager Garry Welch

City leaders updated on key happenings on Capitol Hill

LEGISLATIVE from Page 1 street. Gibbons said part of the plan also includes building alliances with

other states to tackle prescription drug abuse.

Other parts of the Governor's crime package include imposing tougher sentences for certain types of gang-related crimes; and mandating incarceration time for repeat domestic violence offenders.

State Comptroller Justin Wilson reminded city officials about the state's debt management law that requires that any city wishing to issue debt, or borrow money after Jan. 1, 2012, must have a locallyadopted debt management policy in

"There's no requirement to file copies of the debt policy with the state — although most cities have," said Wilson. "But when a city submits a request to borrow money or to issue debt, it must also provide a copy of its debt management policy."

Wilson advised that cities follow four principles when issuing debt: know what you are doing; let your citizens know what you are doing; don't have any conflicts of interest; and know what type of rates you are paying. "I don't think that's an unreasonable request," he said.

Wilson concluded his remarks by briefly talking about his tax increment financing (TIF) legislation. He said the purpose of the legislation is to provide more transparency and accountability when seeking to utilize TIF revenues. His legislation requires that his office or the ECD commissioner make a determination that the project is in the best interest of the state when seeking to finance a project for more than 20 years or for privately-owned sites, equipment or facilities.

Sen. Ken Yager

As chair of the State and Local Committee, Sen. Ken Yager provided an update for local officials on some of the major bills he is sponsoring. With 550 bills under consideration this year, the committee is scheduled to shut down its work April 3.

One bill is designed to provide counties relief in the reimbursement it receives from the state for the care of inmates. The current figure is \$35 per day. "We've been unsuccessful in getting that number changed for a long time," said Yager. "We plan to take the current rate of pay indexed with the cost of living. There is a large fiscal note attached. We plan to run the bill and see what happens. Another major bill Yager is sponsoring is for TML. SB1254 asks that any legislation enacted that has a cost to local governments in excess of \$100,000 be matched by a dedicated state appropriation.

"We're looking at the merits of the bill in my committee, where I think I can get majority support, and then get it to the Finance Committee," Yager said. "Like most bills of this magnitude, it might take a year or two to get through. This is a huge bill with possible significance of changing the policy and also the dollar amount. I'm happy to carry this bill. We should work with local govern-

ments to avoid unfunded mandates." Yager also made note of a rash of bills dealing with planning and zoning issues. "I think bills that change the current planning and zoning laws should be looked at with great scrutiny," he said. "I'm not saying that we won't change them, as I understand your situation."

Speaker Pro Tem Judd Matheny

Bright spots are visible on the horizon of Tennessee's economic future, according to House Speaker Pro Tem Judd Matheny, including the restoration of some axed programs and the replenishment of monies into the state's reserve fund. "I've been here 10 years and this is probably the easiest budget process I've been through," Matheny said. "Revenues and expenses are beginning to match up. And Gov. Haslam's done a terrific job of going back and renegotiating some of our state lease and vendor contracts. He's also been able to capture fed-

Matheny stressed that the current administration intends to facilitate changes through slow, incremental steps. "We all want to remove inheritance taxes, death taxes, gift taxes, the Hall income taxes in the state, but we're very concerned about cash flow," he said. "We realize that rolling back these taxes is going to be a great job creator and great attractor for wealth in our state, but we can't just cut the head

eral money owed to us in the past."

off those revenue forces right now because city officials are probably going to feel it faster than anybody."

Matheny said some of the biggest changes will occur from within the state administration itself. "We're looking at consolidating one hundred plus boards and commissions to make sure there's no redundancies we can't fix," he said. "We want to make sure that people still serving on those boards and commissions are there for the original purpose of those entities and that they are truly professionals in those fields, not appointed for political reasons. We're moving slowly and methodically until we get something less than an asymmetric clutter of regulations. This is a subculture change and the authority that we would be giving supervisors and commissioners in the future, will be much more than they have now."

As a House sponsor of the prescription drug database bill, Matheny said the bill, currently moving through the senate, will take aim at doctor shopping and the selling of prescription drugs on the street, a legitimate concern for local officials throughout the state. "We want to put a system in place where law enforcement can more readily identify targets out there in the drug industry," Matheny said.

State Treasurer David Lillard

While The Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System's (TCRS) assets are the highest they've ever been for the plan, paying about \$1.6 billion a year in retiree benefits to Tennesseans, today's tough economy still presents significant challenges for both TCRS and the state of Tennessee. Among those challenges, 54 out of the 481 local government entities currently participating in TCRS pay an employer contribution rate of 15 percent or greater of payroll, State Treasurer David Lillard informed attendees.

"In the last two plan years, we have had several local government entities either withdraw or give notice that they planned to withdraw from TCRS due to changes in market conditions," Treasurer Lillard said. "This cost pressure has led us to propose additional options for pension plans for local governments, to give them an option that might be more cost efficient from their standpoint."

Using the input received from more than 200 local government representatives, who participated in regional meetings held across Tennessee last fall, and in consultation with pension planning experts at the state's financial advisor, Public Financial Management, a formula for the Treasury Department's proposed new retirement options for local government entities was presented to the General Assembly. The options include:

• 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; · 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; • local governments may adopt a TCRS defined benefit pension plan with an annual service accrual rate of 1percent to offer reduced pension benefits, but with a supplemental deferred compensation pro-

• local governments may decide to offer only a deferred compensation program as a stand-alone option.

gram;

The options do not apply to state employees, K-12 teachers or Higher Education employees, nor do they affect any current retiree of the TCRS, according to Lillard. "I'm a great believer in local government autonomy in decision making," Lillard said. "If you're satisfied with what you're doing now, that's fine. The choices are optional and do not force any local government to change anything."

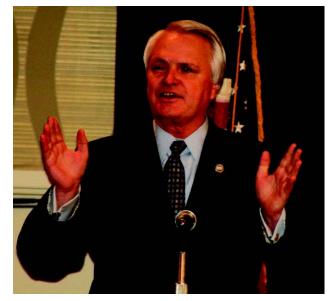
According to Lillard, the goal is to make sure pension benefits are affordable, sustainable and sufficient. "That's why I am recommending some choices that would give local governments greater flexibility to meet their specific needs," he said. Lillard said the options would apply to new hires after the proposed effective date of July 1, 2012, and only for those local governments that elect to adopt

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."

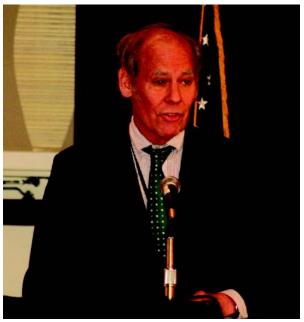
TDEC Commissioner Bob Martineau

Announcing the 75th Anniversary of the State Parks System, TDEC Commissioner Bob Martineau reminded conference attendees that the state's outdoor parks system not only figures prominently into the health and fitness goals of all Tennesseans, it contributes to the economic vitality of Tennessee.

"For every dollar spent on trips to Tennessee State Parks, an additional \$1.11 of economic activity was generated throughout the state," he said. When the direct and indirect expenditures were



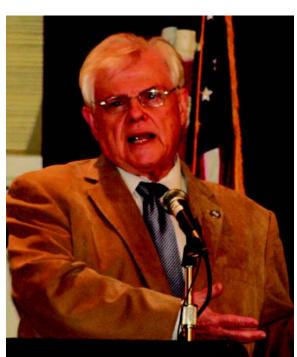
Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey



State Comptroller Justin Wilson



State Treasurer David Lillard



Sen Ken Yager

combined, the impact of Tennessee State Parks to the state's economy was \$1.5 billion in total industry output. Supporting more than 12,000 jobs, about 40 percent of visitors are from out of state, Martineau advised, channeling tourist dollars directly into local communities.

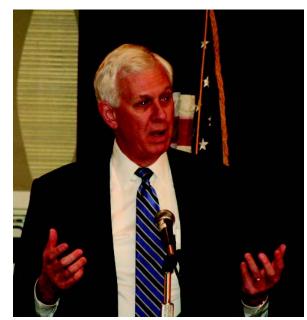
As a component of the Haslam administration's Top to Bottom review, Martineau said he conducted an outreach initiative to meet with local and county officials. The effort, he said, revealed a need to do a better job in relating and communicating with external stakeholders, whether it's local governments, citizens or regulating industries. "We are partners with you in providing fresh drinking water and wastewater and share a unique relationship with you as cogovernment entities, while you also have your own operating facilities, so it was important for us to get that feedback," he said. "We also conducted surveys on what we're doing and how we can do it better as a department in the most efficient cost effective way to serve our citizens."

As part of the state's reorganization effort, Martineau said an Office of External Relations has been created and each TDEC regional office will have a director of regional relations to act as a liaison for local entities. Additionally, an Office of Sustainable Practices has been created. "I know that communities are looking at ways to further their sustainability effort to promote green communities," Martineau said. "Our office is there to be a resource and share best practices across the state, help you develop ideas and look at grant opportunities for funding initiatives— all which can help save operating costs for local governments."

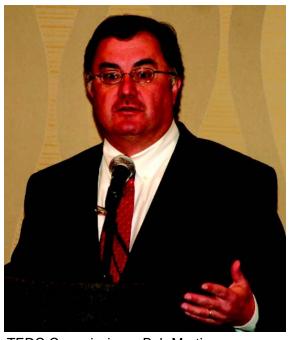
According to Martineau, TDEC is learning how to apply Lean initiatives to help streamline processes such as turnaround times for parks and recreation grants and to eliminate departmental waste. "In Lean



Speaker Pro Tem Judd Matheny



Public Safety Commissioner Bill Gibbons



TEDC Commissioner Bob Martineau



ECD Assistant Commissioner Kingsley Brock

exercises we reduced our state operating permit process by one-third of the time," he said.

Asst. ECD Commissioner Kingsley Brock

ECD Assistant Commissioner Kingsley Brock provided an in-depth look at Gov. Haslam's Jobs4TN plan that includes four key initiatives for economic development. By restructuring its field staff, ECD established a "jobs base camp" with nine regions across the state. Each base camp will work with local partners to develop and/or revise a regional economic development plan and align existing federal and state resources around that plan. A key function of the jobs base camps will be reaching out to rural counties to incorporate them into broader regional economic development strategies that leverage existing resources and maximize the assets of rural communities. A newly-created position of Assistant Commissioner of Rural Development will help lead this effort.

'One of the Governor's key initiatives was to identify all our top industries in Tennessee, the top CEOs and presidents of those companies, go out and meet with them to say thank you, and to talk about competing if they have an expansion in mind," said Brock. "The Governor's administration is also focused on feedback about business regulation from industries, to identify issues and problems around the state that make it hard for companies to do business in Tennes-

"Another strategy is focused on assets in Tennessee; how to tap into those resources, promote research and development, develop new ideas and promote small businesses," Brock said. The final goal is to identify red tape, the federal regulations that federal and local governments have to deal with in addition to state regulations. "We're making progress," said Brock. "We had a record year for job announcements, 18,300 jobs with 80 percent of that as existing businesses."