



Photo by Alan Messer

Members of Tennessee's film community protest outside the state capitol for better tax incentives to draw more movies to Tennessee.

State's actors, film crews back script for incentives

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

TML Communications Coordinator

"These incentive programs, backed by \$10 million in funding under the Visual Content Act of 2006, will place Tennessee squarely among the most production friendly locations in the U.S.," predicted former Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Commission Executive Director Perry Gibson in an earlier press release. But the times, they are a changing, at least for the film industry, insiders say.

Cut to the state capitol, as an ensemble of Tennessee actors and film workers pitch what they consider to be the state's overall lack of support for the movie industry. Today's top film executives, lured by substantially more lucrative incentive packages, are continually choosing other states like Michigan, Louisiana and Georgia over Tennessee, protestors say, forcing the state's professional actors and film workers to relocate or commute long distances just to make a fair wage or find work in their field.

The days of home-grown hits with big name talent, such as Gwyneth Paltrow's "Country Strong," and Disney's "Hannah Montana" starring Miley Cyrus, have become a distant memory, is the common refrain, gone with movies like "Billy Graham, the Early Years," filmed entirely in Watertown, with a 95 percent crew from Tennessee.

"Even films about our state are routinely filmed someplace else," writes Steven Hale in *The Nashville Scene*. "Dirt-cheap backlots of Central Europe have subbed for Tennessee on multiple occasions," Hale writes. And once out-of-state jobs are secured, they may not be safe, as Tennessee's actors are often weeded from the script, when that state's incentive package hinges on using only local talent, laments a Nashville talent agent.

"I just knew we could never capture that sense of place anywhere else," writer/director Cameron Watson said, in *Hosting the Film Industry: Cities' Starring*. See **INCENTIVES** on Page 3

Hometown priorities receive support in President's budget

BY CAROLYN COLEMAN

NLC Government Relations

Last week, President Obama unveiled his fourth federal budget proposal, a \$3.8 trillion proposal that, among other things, would provide \$50 billion for immediate transportation investments, \$30 billion to modernize schools, \$30 billion to hire teachers and first responders, and \$2.9 billion to support workforce development training programs.

NLC said that city leaders are pleased with the overall direction of the budget, which tries to mix spending cuts with important investments in infrastructure and human capital. However, more can be done to give city governments the flexibility and resources to create opportunities at the local level.

For more details about the President's budget proposal, go to NLC's website, www.nlc.org/news-center/nations-cities-weekly/articles/2012/february/



Dynamic Annual Conference set for June 9-12 in Knoxville

Registration now available online!

There are no challenges quite like those facing leaders in local government. The issues of limited funding, growing public demand, aging infrastructure, and competing interests requires Tennessee cities to do more with less.

With a theme of *After the Storm: 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 through public-private partnerships;
- Preparing for the aging population;

lation;

- Civility in government;
- Employee benefits & public pensions;
- Urban revitalization;
- 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 attendees. See **CONFERENCE** on Page 6

Haslam releases top-to-bottom review of Tennessee government

BY KEVIN KRUSHENSKI

TML Research Analyst

Gov. Bill Haslam recently released his "top-to-bottom" review. The review was an introduction to the "new normal" of state government living within its financial means that the Governor promised in his first State of the State Address last year.

Each of the 22 state departments and the Bureau of TennCare conducted a review.

In a released statement, Gov. Haslam said he challenged each department to review their current structure and ask, "Is this department focused appropriately to accomplish its core mission?"

The departments were tasked to focus on what they are doing now; should they be doing it; and can they do it more effectively. The Governor stated that the departments solicited input from thousands of stakeholders during the review process.

All told, the top to bottom review resulted in 332 recommendations of how to "move Tennessee forward."

Notable recommendations from departments of municipal interest include:

Commerce and Insurance

• **Recommendation 8:** Ensure the Fire Prevention Division has comprehensive and accurate annual data of fire incidents by improving fire reporting and tracking.

Discussion: Tennessee has an unacceptable accidental fire death ranking. However, accurate information is critical to fire prevention planning initiatives. Increasing participation in the Tennessee Fire Information Reporting System (TFIRS), tracking death certificates, reviewing insurance reports and monitoring media reports are methodologies being used to accomplish this objective. *This recommendation has been completed.*

• **Recommendation 9:** Develop GIS maps showing predicted areas



where fire deaths are likely to occur and increase education and prevention efforts in these areas.

Discussion: In partnership with the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service (IPS), a state demographic analysis has been performed to allow for more focused fire prevention and education efforts. *This recommendation has been completed.*

• **Recommendation 10:** Distribute 10,000 smoke alarms to local fire departments and promote and track their installation.

Discussion: These smoke alarms have been distributed and approximately half of them have been installed in areas with the highest risk. See **REVIEW** on Page 5

The show's on the road in Franklin

Officials take trolley tour of city's top development projects



When it came down to studying the impact of the city's top 10 capital improvement projects, Franklin's Board of Mayor and Aldermen decided to take a front row seat this year, traveling directly to the sites by trolley. The group held an informal work session on the road, where they viewed, took notes and discussed the context of ongoing projects first hand, also taking in a few other developments in the area.

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

You wouldn't exactly call it the "Magical Mystery Tour," since all of Franklin's Board of Mayor and Aldermen are well acquainted with the city's top 10 capital improvement projects (CIP), but this year,

the group decided to dig a little deeper, opting to travel directly to the sites—by trolley. The idea, ignited by long-time resident and Alderwoman Margaret Martin, not only provided board members the opportunity to see the projects up

close, but to envision Franklin's future in a whole new light, according to City Administrator Eric Stuckey.

"You can look at it on paper, but seeing it in person really brings it to life," Stuckey said. "This board has

See **TROLLEY** on Page 5

Public Safety receives funding, spectrum for nationwide network

BY MITCHEL HERCKIS

Nation's Cities Weekly

When Congress passed the payroll tax cut extension and the President signed it into law last month, they paved the way for the creation of a nationwide public safety broadband network. Once fully implemented, the network will provide first responders across the nation with access to modern technologies most commercial customers take for granted. This not only means the ability to share pictures and videos in real time, but also the creation of applications that will allow for more effective and efficient use of public safety resources.

"Our nation's cities and towns thank Congress for providing us the spectrum, resources and framework for a public safety communications network," NLC President Ted Ellis, mayor of Bluffton, Ind., said in a statement following the bill's passage. "We also thank the White House and Federal Communications Commission for joining us in making it a national priority. Bipartisan agreements are rare and we commend both parties for their support."

The nationwide network will also solve a problem that has been

looming since the September 11, 2001, attacks — how to ensure police and fire services from other jurisdictions and states will be able to have their communications equipment seamlessly linked into local systems when responding to major emergencies and national crises.

Currently, state and local jurisdictions use a patchwork of voice-only first responder communications. The nationwide network will replace this patchwork with a modern nationwide 4G LTE wireless network dedicated and built specifically for public safety use.

In a meeting with law enforcement officials, firefighters and public safety groups, Vice President Biden said the legislation will "fulfill a promise made to first responders after 9/11 that they would have the technology they need to stay safe and do their jobs."

Building a nationwide public safety communications network was a major recommendation of the 9/11 Commission — one of the few never fulfilled by Congress.

The nationwide broadband network was a major victory for NLC and its allies that represent state and local governments, as well as the first responder community. The final compromise included reallocation

of the "D-Block" of radio spectrum, long demanded by state and local governments and first responders to ensure enough bandwidth for a quick, modern first responder network. The bill also commits \$7 billion for building and maintaining the nationwide network, and funding for Next Generation 9-1-1 technologies.

In addition, public safety will retain the nationwide public safety "narrowband" spectrum currently used for land mobile radio (LMR) communication. This ensures that first responders will be able to utilize both mission-critical voice and modern 4G wireless broadband services to communicate in almost every emergency situation.

A recent report from the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) estimates that beyond the importance to the safety of the nation, the funding and construction of a 20 MHz Public Safety Broadband Network will result in approximately "100,000 good-paying technology jobs, averaging a \$70,000 salary," as well as provide savings to state and local taxpayers of nearly \$2 billion per year. The TIA report suggests additional "indirect or spillover benefits of an estimated \$4 billion to \$8 billion per year" to the economy.

NEWS
ACROSS
TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

CHATTANOOGA

The city council has approved a projected \$75,000 study on the city’s gang problems. So far this year, city police have worked 12 gang-related shootings, four of them fatal.

CHATTANOOGA

Chattanooga Airport’s new energy-efficient 9,000-square-foot corporate flight center (FBO) terminal facility has been awarded platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification program. The FBO terminal, managed by Wilson Air Center, is the only aviation terminal in the world to receive platinum certification representing the highest possible level of energy and environmental performance. LEED certification of the terminal was based on a number of green design and construction features that positively impact the community. Almost 4,000 solar panels were installed just south of the terminal, generating more than one megawatt of clean power every year. The airport received a Voluntary Airport Low Emissions grant through the Federal Aviation Administration, which assisted in the development of the solar farm. The 12,000-square-foot aircraft hangar, which is co-located on the West Side Aviation Campus, was also certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as a LEED Gold facility.

CLEVELAND

The Cleveland Veterans Home project seemed like it was going somewhere when Gov. Haslam put several million state dollars into the project. But now the Veterans Administration has determined it’s not as much of a priority as three other projects in Virginia. Along with state money, an anonymous donor has pledged \$3-million for the project while Cleveland and Bradley County have committed four million. Local contractors donated the 28-acre parcel of land for the project. The last bit of funding needed was from the V.A., but back in October they decided to move the Virginia projects up the construction schedule.

CLEVELAND

A ribbon cutting and street dedication was on the list as the city celebrated one of its most famous former college students, the Rev. Billy Graham. An official dedication took place for “Billy Graham Ave.”

outside the Lee University Science and Math Complex. Graham came to Cleveland to attend Bob Jones College when it was located on the present site of Lee University. During his time there, he worked at a shoe store in downtown Cleveland and preached his first sermon at the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1936 in Charleston. The day was also declared “Billy Graham Day.”

ELIZABETHTON

Snap-on Tools has announced the expansion of its Elizabethton facility. Established in 1974, the Carter County location manufactures hand tools used primarily in the professional automotive repair industry. Snap-on Tools in Elizabethton produces various types of hand tools including wrenches and ratchets. The Carter County location is one of three U.S. hand tool manufacturing plants within the Snap-on Tools Group supporting automotive service technicians worldwide.

FRANKLIN

Connecticut-based Affinion Group is adding 150 jobs to two existing locations in Williamson County. The operation and call center jobs will be spread out between offices at Duke Drive and Corporate Centre Drive. The company currently employs 500 people in Williamson County, and is expected to grow to 650 by year’s end.

GATLINBURG

The unusually mild winter continues to translate into improved attendance figures for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Park officials said that nearly 266,000 people came to the park on the Tennessee-North Carolina border last month, compared with just over 214,000 in January 2011 — a 23.8 percent increase. The numbers continue a trend noted in December when visits jumped 37.7 percent, compared with the same month in 2010. The park entrance at Cherokee, N.C., led in traffic last month with a 44.7 percent increase. Park officials noted that U.S. 441 through the park was closed just six times last month, compared with being shut down on 17 days in January 2011.

JACKSON

The U.S. Postal Service says it is closing Jackson’s mail processing center along with Johnson City’s and Chattanooga’s. Jackson’s facility will move to Memphis after May 16. Johnson City’s mail processing operations will move to Knoxville and Chattanooga’s processing and distribution center will move to

Nashville. The move is part of the postal service’s effort to cut millions of dollars in expenses from its budget as the service struggles to end years of deep deficits caused by higher operating costs and lower first-class mail volumes. Once the transfers are completed, the mail processing operations at the closing sites will cease. There will be no change to any of the retail units, business mail entry units or vehicle maintenance facilities at these locations at this time.

LAVERGNE

Vester Waldron was elected as the first mayor of La Vergne on February 29, 1972. Upon his election, the city was formally incorporated. La Vergne is observing this date as the town’s 40th birthday. “Since La Vergne is a leap-year baby, we are really turning 10 years old,” said Mayor Senna Mosley. “In all seriousness, the town has survived a lot since the area was first settled in the 1700’s. We rebuilt after the Civil War. We rebuilt after two tornadoes nearly wiped out the town in 1900. And La Vergne continues to grow as a thriving community every day.” Cake celebrating the town’s “birthday” was served at City Hall, where everyone was welcomed to join the celebration. “We are looking forward to another 40 years of prosperity for our community,” said Mosley.

LEWISBURG

An .89-mile extension of the Lewisburg Walkway along Collins Creek to the Columbia State Community College campus on South Ellington Parkway should be completed by Christmas. Construction crews are to build a 4,733-foot concrete walkway that’s four inches thick and six feet wide along Collins Creek.

MEMPHIS

Nucor representatives announced the company’s plans for modernizing and enhancing its Memphis facility. The company will create approximately 27 new jobs. The company is the largest manufacturer of steel products in North America.

MEMPHIS

Oxford Diagnostic Laboratories will open a new 35,000 square foot laboratory facility 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, a global immunology focused diagnostics company developing novel new tests for various diseases.

MONTEREY

The town recently kicked off the



Citizens of Monterey are excited to celebrate the grand opening of the town’s new Depot Museum. Six years in the making, the museum is the first segment for a future WPA museum and native American museum, according to the town’s cultural administrator. The project is also part of a revitalization effort for the town’s downtown area.

grand opening of the new Monterey Depot Museum. There were local speakers and an excursion train arriving from Nashville, carrying members of the Tennessee Central Railway Museum. Monterey’s first depot was dismantled in 1973. Officials and citizens consider the depot important to the revitalization of Monterey’s downtown area, becoming a center point for the town to grow along with the state’s Rails to Trails project. The town has worked toward the project for six years. “We have worked with three mayors and three councils through the years,” said an excited Ken Hall, Monterey cultural administrator and museum curator.

NASHVILLE

Nashville-based Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) announced plans to build a new data center creating 155 new jobs over a five-year period. The new center built at The Crossings, in Antioch, a suburb of Nashville, will represent a total investment of more than \$200 million and will be a shot in the arm for the area, which has seen a glut of vacant storefronts and office buildings in the past decade, including the decline of the once-thriving Hickory Hollow Mall. HCA is the nation’s leading provider of healthcare services, comprised of 163 hospitals and 111 surgery centers in 20 states and England.

NASHVILLE

The 2011 Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl generated about \$22.2 million in economic impact for Nashville. The Dec. 30 game, which pitted Mississippi State vs. Wake Forest, drew about 55,208 fans, with a 3.07 national household rating delivering 4.2 million television viewers. A total of 25,805 hotel room nights were booked with about 37,000 out-of-town visitors attending the bowl. “The 2011 bowl game was another economic home run for Nashville,” said Brad Lampley, bowl chairman. “The bowl continued to exhibit the strong momentum it has

shown in recent years, based on attendance, ratings and economic impact.

NASHVILLE

City officials want Nashvillians to hop on the bus — for free, for a day. Mayor Karl Dean and Paul Ballard, CEO of the Metro Transit Authority, announced “Fareless Friday,” in an attempt to boost ridership by encouraging those who don’t normally ride public transportation to try unlimited free rides all day on Friday, March 9. The free rides will begin in the early morning when the first bus departs the MTA garage, and will end when buses complete their final runs late that night. According to MTA, ridership through the first six months of fiscal year 2012 is up 16 percent compared to the same time last year, with more than 4.6 million passenger-trips taken.

OAK RIDGE

Plans for an Oak Ridge railroad museum are back on track after being delayed for a decade due to security concerns and fundraising problems. The \$1 million Southern Appalachia Railway Museum will have a different design and location than originally proposed. The museum will be located inside the old K-25 site, an abandoned uranium enrichment facility being converted into an industrial park. The new location led to a design change, from a Victorian-era depot to a 1940s-style station. The project is also getting funding from the Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee. The nonprofit group is charged with finding new uses for old properties in Oak Ridge that belong to the Department of Energy

SMYRNA

Nissan’s first \$40,000-plus luxury Infiniti JX crossover has rolled off the assembly line and it’s just the start of a giant boost from the Asian carmaker’s plant over the next year. Total employment at the Smyrna plant could be pushing 6,000 workers — nearly double its current level — by early next year as workers build two new crossover utility vehicles plus batteries and eventually the Leaf electric car. Nissan said 1,000 jobs would be filled over the next year to staff a second shift on the plant’s truck line to assemble the JX, and a redesigned Nissan Pathfinder crossover that comes later this year. In addition, about 1,300 workers will be hired to make lithium-ion batteries for the Nissan Leaf electric car and to add Leaf production to the Smyrna plant in early 2013. The plant currently employs 3,500 workers.

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TN film workers seek better tax incentives

INCENTIVES from Page 1
Role, a 2008 TT&C story about the effects of the film industry upon Tennessee’s cities. Watson insists he wouldn’t have dreamed of shooting his film “Our Very Own,” about the life and times of former Shelbyville native and Hollywood actress Sondra Locke, anywhere else than his hometown of Shelbyville.

According to statistics from the state’s film commission, every dollar spent on incentives generates four dollars toward the local economy—like in Shelbyville, where the film company wound up spending more than \$1 million locally—according to former City Manager Ed Craig.

“This is about creating jobs in Tennessee, not just for actors and film crews but carpenters, drivers, the hotel industry and stores,” Jan Falk, Association for the Future of Film & Television (AFFT) board member explained. Members of AFFT helped organize the rally at the state capitol, hoping to draw attention and support for last year’s failed incentives bill proposed by Sen. Mark Norris and Rep. Steve McManus, the state Entertainment Industry Investment Act, SB 0354/HB0555, designed to beef up Tennessee’s ability to compete for film projects.

Currently, Tennessee’s two incentive programs offer a combined cash rebate of up to 32 percent of the money a production spends in state. One is for up to a 17 percent rebate on in-state spending for production costs. The second offers up to a 15 percent rebate on \$1million in-state spending for companies headquartered in Tennessee. Under the proposed new legislation, a production shot in Tennessee would be eligible for transferable tax credits of up to 20 percent (with a cap of \$5 million) to projects spending a minimum of \$500,000 in the state. Because Tennessee lacks an income tax, the bricks and mortar for film incentives in other states, the credits under the act would be applied to sales and excise taxes.

The Film, Entertainment & Music Commission was recently folded closer into the day-to-day operations of the Department of Economic & Community Development (ECD) under Gov. Haslam’s Top to Bottom Review. According to the report, the commission, “despite its name, has focused almost exclusively on recruiting film and television productions to the state with minimal attention being paid to the music industry.” The plan of better integrating the commission into ECD includes:requiring the commission’s director to report directly to one of ECD’s assistant commissioners and recruiting five new board members along with creating a Director of Music and Business Development position focused on corporate relocation and expansion opportunities in the music industry.

Tennessee Town & City contacted ECD Assistant Commissioner Clint Brewer, the current spokesperson for The Film, Entertainment & Music Commission, for comment about the state’s current incentives and film recruitment efforts, but no comments were received as of press time.

Oscar night secret: Tax breaks for films go undisclosed in many states

BY WILL WILSON
Special to Stateline

Of the nine film productions up for best picture at Sunday’s Academy Awards, five received financial incentives from state governments. But if you want to find out exactly how much help the films got, only some of the states will come forward with the answer.

Hawaii is one that won’t — although it couldn’t be prouder of *The Descendants*, which was filmed on Kauai and Oahu and was based on a book written by a resident of Hawaii. In fact, Gov. Neil Abercrombie has cited the film’s success as a reason to make the state’s temporary film tax credit permanent. But when *Stateline* asked Georja Skinner, who oversees the tax credit program, how much Hawaii gave *The Descendants* to film in Hawaii, she wouldn’t say. “We don’t ever quote the exact amount,” Skinner says.

Texas is far more open about the tax incentives it gave the production company behind *The Tree of Life*, which was directed by native Texan Terrence Malick and filmed in Smithville, Texas, and other locations around the state. Ask Evan Fitzmaurice, the head of Texas’ film commission, and he reads out the number digit-by-digit, down to the cent: \$434,252.79. “When public funds are spent, that is a matter of public record,” Fitzmaurice explains. “We have always had the attitude that that dollar amount is a public dollar amount.”

About 40 states currently use taxpayer dollars to offer some form of tax credit, rebate or other financial incentive to film and television productions. The states aren’t just looking to bring home some Hollywood stardom; they’re also trying to create jobs for caterers, carpenters and others who support productions off-camera. Since Louisiana began offering film incentives in 2002 — following a similar move by Canada five years earlier — the tax-credit war among the states and a number of countries overseas has only



States are eager to use financial incentives to attract Hollywood productions. But they’re less enthusiastic about revealing which films got how much help.

grown more intense.

Industry wants privacy

The question of disclosure is a new front in that war. Generally, states will reveal aggregate figures showing how much in the way of incentives they gave the whole industry in a given year. And it is not hard to find out if a particular production got some help from a certain state. What is more shrouded in secrecy is the dollar amount for individual productions. According to Good Jobs First, a watchdog that maintains a database of state economic development subsidies, only one-third of the states that offer film incentives reveal how much they give to individual productions.

Many in the film industry view that information as a trade secret, one that states have no business revealing. Dama Claire, a consultant who works with producers to identify and acquire the best incentives for their films, says states that insist on disclosure could see productions go to states that don’t. “Disclosing the amount of tax credits may be akin to asking about a state tax return, which is privileged,” Claire says.

From the studios’ perspective, the argument against disclosure is simple. If it’s widely known how much an individual production re-

ceived in incentives, competitors can do a back-of-the-envelope calculation to figure out key details about the studio’s cost structure. As film executives see it, disclosure on a per-film basis would be like offering all automakers a tax break but then demanding specific information about how one make of car gets made.

“I can understand the interest in knowing who is doing business in the state and who is receiving benefits,” says Emily McNamara, an entertainment attorney who consults with productions in Massachusetts. “But when it gets into proprietary budget information that affects people’s ability to compete, or financial information they don’t want out there, then it is has to have more of a purpose. I haven’t heard an argument why it would be necessary to disclose at that level of detail.”

It’s not just an issue for large studios, McNamara says. Makers of independent films — those that are produced before they’re sold — don’t want their budgets disclosed, either. Having that information out in public weakens their leverage when it comes time to strike a deal.

The case for disclosure

In Massachusetts, state Senator Ben Downing has heard these

Almost all of the films nominated for best picture in Academy Awards received some government financial assistance, either from a state or from a country overseas.

- **The Artist:** Did not receive film incentives
- **The Descendants:** Received incentives from Hawaii, which does not disclose amounts for individual films.
- **Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close:** Received incentives from New York, which does not disclose amounts for individual films.
- **The Help:** Received a spending rebate of \$3,547,780 from Mississippi.
- **Hugo:** Received tax credits to film overseas.
- **Midnight in Paris:** Received tax credits to film overseas.
- **Moneyball:** Eligible to receive as much as \$5.8 million in tax credits from California, pending certification.
- **The Tree of Life:** Received \$434,253 in incentives from Texas.
- **War Horse:** Received tax credits to film overseas.

arguments and decided that the taxpayers’ interest in transparency matters more. Downing was the force behind a recent budget amendment that will require the state to disclose the identity of each recipient of tax credits, including film tax credits, and the amount received on a per-project basis. The change doesn’t take effect until May, so it won’t answer the question of whether Massachusetts gave tax credits to Moneyball to shoot at Fenway Park. But it will affect future film productions in Massachusetts.

As Downing sees it, states need to know exactly what they are getting for their money. Especially in these tight fiscal times, publishing the names and dollar amounts for each project will allow state budget writers to measure the impact of film credits, and allow them to compare the results with what they get from other economic development programs. Tax credits “don’t have to go through yearly appropriations process that direct spending items do,” Downing says. “We are scouring one side of our budget and too often we aren’t doing the same thing on the tax side.”

What’s more, recent scandals have shown just how film credits can be abused. In Iowa, a state film tax credit program was suspended after the state auditor documented misdeeds by both film producers and the head of the state film office. And just this past December in Massachusetts, movie director Daniel Adams was indicted for allegedly inflating his expenses for two films in order to boost the tax credit award he would receive from the state. The new disclosure rules in Massachusetts were passed before that case came to light.

“If you don’t have good disclosure, there can be some funny business behind the scenes,” says Phil Mattered, research director at Good Jobs First. “The more transparency, the less likelihood there will be abuses.”

Tennessee’s tax incentives to promote film and TV production

According to the state’s Film, Entertainment & Music Commission website, Tennessee has two incentive plans to create economic and community development and to promote film and television production in the state.

Incentive I

17 percent program administered through the TN Film, Entertainment & Music Commission (TFEMC).
• Minimum qualified TN spend of: \$150,000 for TN company (per production/per episode); \$500,000 for out-of-state company (per production/per episode);
• Payments made to TN vendors and TN residents, while filming in TN, are generally a qualified TN spend. (includes music and travel related costs.);
• Payments made to non-residents or non-TN vendors do not qualify;
• Only the first \$250,000 paid to each TN resident will qualify for

the incentive;.

• No expenses made prior to the date certification is issued will qualify for the incentive;.

• The state has some discretion with program criteria and can make exceptions when it is in the best interests of the state.

For more information, contact TFEMC at 615-741-3456 or tn.film@tn.gov

Incentive II

15 percent HQ program administered through the TN Dept. of Revenue (DOR).

• Minimum qualified TN spend of \$1 million;
• TN company must be registered as a HQ location with DOR;
• Out-of-state company can partner with a TN HQ company to access this program;

What expenses qualify?

• Payments made to TN vendors and




TN residents, while filming in TN, are generally qualified TN spend.

• Payments made to non-residents or non-TN vendors do not qualify.
• No “caps” for payments to TN residents.
• Generally includes P&A, music and travel costs.

For more information, contact Arnold Clapp at 615-741-2461 or arnold.clapp@tn.gov

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STATE BRIEFS

BYTMLSTAFFREPORTS

Park system celebrates 75 years

This year, Tennessee’s park system is celebrating its 75th anniversary. From the Mississippi Delta to the highlands of Southern Appalachia, Tennessee’s state parks reflect every facet of the state’s diverse landscape. The seeds for Tennessee’s state parks were sown in the early 1900s. According to Ward Weems, chief historian for Tennessee state parks, early state parks advocates recognized the need to preserve lands at the local level that could not become national parks. Tennessee’s park system was established by legislation in 1937.

Music special spotlights TN

A television music and travel series highlighting Tennessee, which was broadcast internationally, will air on Public Broadcasting Service stations beginning in April. “Music Voyager — Tennessee” takes viewers along Interstate 40, dubbed “the music highway,” from Bristol to Memphis. It is a four-part series representing the music of East, Middle and West Tennessee, and Nashville’s most prolific songwriters. The series will also air on in-flight television programming for 13 airlines and be available in-room at several luxury and resort hotels.

IRS holding 2008 refunds

As taxpayers prepare their income tax returns for 2011, the Internal Revenue Service is still holding millions that are owed to Tennessee residents from 2008. IRS spokesman Dan Boone said the funds can’t be refunded because more than 18,000 Tennesseans it should go to haven’t filed returns from three years ago. Refunds totaling \$16,130,000 await 2008 filings in Tennessee. Nationally, the estimate is more than \$1 billion for people who have yet to file for that year. Boone said the late filing can still be done without penalty if a refund is owed, but only until April 17. After that, the money is turned over to the U.S. Treasury. The IRS can still withhold refund checks for 2008 from taxpayers if they didn’t file returns for 2009 and 2010.

Jail overcrowding relief hampered by new influx of felons

State plans to cut costs by shifting state felons from local jails back to prisons are being stymied by an influx of new criminals, officials say. The state last year announced efforts to help alleviate overcrowding in local jails by releasing up to 2,200 inmates 60 days early through more liberal sentencing credits. Doing so would open up more prison beds, allowing counties to transfer more state inmates being housed in local jails back to state prisons. Dorinda Carter, spokeswoman for the Department of Correction, said that the release plan has seen some success in cost savings and in moving felons to the state, but she acknowledged that the number of felons moving into the system has been increasing faster than the system can take them. In January, there were 4,675 state felons waiting for a state prison bed.

Polled TN voters seek Ed reform

A majority of Tennessee voters support education reform and think the state is heading in the right direction, a recent poll found. A memo to state lawmakers from Mike Carpenter, Tennessee’s director of nonprofit StudentsFirst, showed its poll backed teacher tenure changes, new teacher evaluations and more charter schools. The poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, surveyed 600 likely voters and had a 4 percent margin of error.

New exhibit features War of 1812

The Tennessee State Museum in Nashville is commemorating the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 with a new exhibition. “Becoming the Volunteer State: Tennessee in the War of 1812” includes the sword presented to Andrew Jackson by the Tennessee legislature for his victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Jackson became a national figure during the war and later became president. So many Tennesseans volunteered for military service during the war that the state became known as “the volunteer state.” The free exhibit runs through June 24.

Report highlights kids, poverty

One in every eight Tennessee children is growing up in a high poverty community, according to a data snapshot released by the Annie E. Casey Kids Count project. “The

concern is there are reduced opportunities they have to be successful in school and in life,” said Linda O’Neal, executive director of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. The report — which highlights newly available national, state, and city data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey — found that one-fourth of Tennessee children live in poverty.

TN farmland draws top price

If you’ve got farmland to sell, chances are you’ll get a good price this year, says land management company Farmers National. Increased demand for top quality land is driving up sales prices in Tennessee and the rest of the Mid South region, the company said in a recent report on land values. “We have seen prices increase up to 30 percent on top land in some areas with no sign of a slow-down,” said Keith Morris, an area sales manager for Farmers National Co. “Product is getting harder to find, driving some buyers to look at poorer quality farms, with plans of upgrading them.” Top Tennessee farmland is selling for an average of \$3,500 per acre, according to Farmers National. To access and view the full report, visit <http://alberscommunications.com/media-center/farmers-national/>

Study on TN gender diversity

An annual report by Lipscomb University and Nashville CABLE, a diverse network of professionals, shows little progress toward gender diversity in corporate boardrooms across the state in recent years. Since 2007, when the university first researched the issue, women have held between 7.9 and 8.3 percent of the board positions for Tennessee public companies, the report says. The “Women in Corporate Leadership” study found that while 47 percent of the Tennessee workforce was female, in fiscal 2010, women held only 8 percent of the 566 public company board seats. Of the 17 new independent board directors appointed in Tennessee during fiscal 2010, only three were women. Sixty-five Tennessee public companies were included in the study. Of those, 29, or 44.6 percent, had all-male boards and ten of the companies had two or more women on their boards.

Henry Horton Park to offer community garden

Tennessee State Parks has announced plans to initiate a community garden at Henry Horton State Park and will hold a series of public discussions in March, designed to solicit input from local citizens and to engage participation.

“When you think of Tennessee’s state parks, ‘community support’ is top of mind due to the supportive role our local citizens play in our parks’ overall success,” said Deputy Commissioner Brock Hill. “Planting a community garden is an excellent educational opportunity and a fitting tribute to the surrounding Chapel Hill community, as it truly harkens back to a time when Henry Horton State Park served as a working farm.”

While the plot of land has been tentatively chosen, Hill added that local input is crucial before park staff implements next steps. “This is a community garden, so we want community input,” Hill added.

Because the program is in its initial planning stages, park officials are encouraging community members to provide input. To accomplish this, Henry Horton State Park will hold a series of public discussions in March to kick off the project and to garner public interest and participation. The focus of the March meetings will be to announce the anticipated location of the garden, get feedback on the proposed timeline and open up the project to volunteers for the various tasks that lie ahead. The goal is to begin planting the garden this spring. Those meetings are:

- **Tuesday, March 20, at 5:30 p.m.** This will be an open forum for members of the public to learn more about the Community Garden. This fact-finding meeting, which will be held at the Inn at Henry Horton State Park, will help park staff better understand the community’s needs, while allowing members of the public to share ideas.
- **Saturday, March 24, at 9 a.m.** This will be the second open forum opportunity at the Inn at Henry Horton State Park.

Some key discussion points at the two planned public forums will include the kind of garden the community desires. Will it contain vegetables or flowers or a combination of both? Who will the garden serve? What in-kind resources are available locally, such as tools, seeds or soil improvement/tilling? What will the garden be called?



Most participants say community gardens improve their quality of life through fellowship and unity, while the beautification of their neighborhoods serves as a catalyst for community development.

“Whether you are an avid gardener, have thought about growing your own vegetables but have never tried, or simply want to interact with your community, this is the perfect opportunity,” said Park Manager Randy Whitworth. “We would like to see a big turnout out at these discussion meetings so we can move forward and truly make this garden a collective effort. We also hope the idea takes hold and we get a large group of volunteers – both young and old – all ready to get started and to get their hands dirty.”

Partial funding for the Henry Horton Community Garden project

comes from a Healthy Communities grant given by the Tennessee Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Giving back to our area neighborhoods is crucial in strengthening the long-time local partnerships our parks have always enjoyed,” said Whitworth. “I can’t think of a better way to bring the community together than planning something that will be collective and sustainable, while promoting a healthier lifestyle.”

Additional information can be found at www.tnstateparks.com/HenryHorton.

Tennessee commemorates Civil War 150th at Shiloh

Tennessee’s Shiloh National Military Park, a masterpiece of Civil War interpretation and preservation, will hold the 150th commemoration of its strategic battle during a series of events taking place March 29-April 8.

The state’s 2012 Sesquicentennial Signature Event: “Invasions by Rail and River: The Battle of Shiloh” will be held April 4-5 at Pickwick Landing State Park in Pickwick Dam.

The Signature Event begins with the Looking Back project hosted by Tennessee State Library & Archives and also features a teacher’s workshop “Illuminating

the Battle” hosted by Middle Tennessee State University’s Center for Historic Preservation. There will be a red carpet film premiere of a state-of-the-art documentary The Story of Shiloh: Fiery Trial at 7 p.m. on April 4.

Official Opening Ceremony will take place at 9 a.m. April 5 and will feature a forum with America’s foremost historians on the battle of Shiloh, living history demonstrations, a special Sesquicentennial Civil War exhibit offering rare and unique artifacts from the Battle of Shiloh and a musical performance by The 52nd Regimental String Band. The event will kick off with the firing of an official Shiloh cannon at Pickwick Landing State Park.

Co-chairs of the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, Commissioner Susan Whitaker, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, and Dr. Carroll Van West, director of MTSU Center for Historic Preservation and Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, will host the event. Governor Bill Haslam has been invited to participate.

The symposium is jointly sponsored by the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Tennessee Historical Society and Shiloh National Military Park.

The Shiloh National Military Park will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh with a “Grand Illumination” on the evening of April 7. Luminaries will be placed around the battlefield representing the 23,746 killed, wounded or missing at Shiloh. The illumination will begin at dusk and end at 10 p.m. Other special activities will take place April 6-8 including special ranger led hikes, at corresponding time and place, 150 years later. For more information on the events presented by The Shiloh National Military Park, visit www.nps.gov/shil/shiloh-150th-anniversary.html.

Other events not to be missed on March 29-31 are two reenactments that will feature more than 6,000 reenactors and more than 100 cannons. The action will unfold during these locally organized reenactment events coordinated and sponsored by The Armies of Tennessee and the Blue-Gray Alliance. The Armies of Tennessee reenactment will feature a march to Shiloh from Mississippi. The Blue-Gray Alliance reenactment will transport soldiers by rail and river, as they were 150 years ago, directly into the battle. To register for these two events visit www.150thcivilwarevents.com/ or www.armiesoftennessee.com/.

To download a complete Signature Event agenda, visit www.tncivilwar150.com Seating is limited, please register today to vionne.williams@tn.gov or call 615-741-2159. The Signature Event is free and open to the public.



Haslam releases top-to-bottom review of Tennessee government

REVIEW from Page 1

est risks. This effort was funded with a federal grant of \$241,000.

• **Recommendation 11:** Provide a new annual year-round guide, the “SFMO Monthly Fire Prevention and Public Fire Education Planning Guide.”

Discussion: This guide was released in October during Fire Prevention Week. It will highlight education activities of the State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO), including but not limited to the annual poster contest, the Fire Mortality Summit, “Get Alarmed Tennessee”, safe holidays, and set-your-clock-check-your-battery. Fire prevention messages will be added to all emails, letters, and vehicles and on the website. *This recommendation has been completed.*

ECD

• **Recommendation 16:** Launch a rural economic development initiative and create a new senior staff position to oversee this initiative.

Discussion: ECD’s Top to Bottom Review revealed that while the entire state had a very high unemployment rate, some rural counties were experiencing exceptionally high unemployment rates near or above 20 percent. To address the specific challenges in rural areas, ECD launched a rural economic development initiative in Fall 2011 focused on enhancing manufacturing, business services, agriculture, and tourism opportunities in rural communities. As part of this effort, ECD is currently developing a site certification program, which in part will help rural communities develop sites that can compete for large recruitment projects, and a rural business service initiative that’s goal is to increase the number of work-at-home customer support jobs available in rural communities. In addition, ECD is strengthening its partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Tourism and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to identify opportunities to enhance agriculture and tourism economic development opportunities in rural areas. ECD has created a new senior staff position to oversee this initiative.

• **Recommendation 19:** Eliminate ECD’s local planning office.

Discussion: At the start of the Top to Bottom Review, ECD’s local planning office accounted for approximately 70 of the 210 employees in the department. During the review, it became clear that the local planning office – while important to local communities – was not well aligned with ECD’s core mission of job creation. Moreover, a review of other states found that most local planning activities occurred at the regional or local level. As a result, ECD decided to eliminate its local planning office. To help with this transition, ECD provided approximately \$1 million in local planning transition grants to help regional and local organizations build out their local planning capacity. Qualitative evidence suggests most communities have found alternative ways to provide local planning services, most often by either sharing local planners across multiple communities, partnering with the local development district or contracting with private providers. *This recommendation has been completed.*

TDEC

• **Recommendation 8:** Increase communication and outreach with local governments.

Discussion: The department has many responsibilities that impact state and local governments ranging from regulation of environmental activities, resolving environmental issues, sponsoring activities at state parks, helping existing industries expand and recruiting new industries. To help local governments, and to improve our ability to keep existing industries and businesses as well as recruit new business and industries, the department must be able to provide accurate and timely information to businesses, industries, local governments and ECD. The department aims to utilize existing internal resources to implement an improved communication and outreach program. This includes utilizing the new Office of External Relations to coordinate efforts among the Environmental Divisions, the Department of Economic and Community Development, and local city, county and state government officials.

• **Recommendation 11:** Establish an effective organizational structure to ensure improved customer service; to help stakeholders and the public receive accurate, timely, and consistent information; and to promote a proactive understanding of environmental stewardship and the real value of sustainable practices.

Discussion: One of the most significant challenges identified in our organizational review was a perceived level of inconsistency regarding TDEC actions and communications with some stakeholders. Therefore, the department will be taking a series of actions to improve our coordination, communication and overall responsiveness. This effort will result in the creation of a dedicated External Affairs group and the creation a new position in each field office that will serve as the primary point of contact for the public and stakeholders in a particular TDEC region. These new department-wide positions will be responsible for outreach to local governments and municipalities, development districts, existing business and industry, potential new business and industry, ECD representatives, environmental groups and the general public. In addition, TDEC will also establish an Office of Sustainable Practices. This group will advance a culture of sustainability across the department, state government and with our various partners through an action-based approach to reduce the environmental impact of our own operations, coordinate with key agencies to improve overall government environmental performance, and support best environmental practices among external stakeholders. These key organizational changes are being made and supported by the reallocated existing department resources.

• **Recommendation 16:** Create a consistent and effective environmental investigation and clean-up program by consolidating all environmental investigation and remediation responsibilities, including Brownfield Agreements, into one division.

Discussion: Currently, the department has sixteen different environmental investigation and clean-up programs in three different environmental divisions. The department

will combine three different remediation programs currently under two different divisions into one consolidated unit. The Underground Storage Tank Division will remain a separate division within the department.

• **Recommendation 12:** Flatten the organizational structure of the Bureau of Environment.

Discussion: The Bureau of Environment currently has eleven environmental divisions. With the elimination of the Bureau of Environment Senior Directors and the need to have consistency across the water, land, air radiation protection and remediation programs, the department will consolidate the divisions within the Bureau of Environment. The department will combine divisions regulating similar media to consolidate its operations, insure consistency in its operation, improve communication between the Deputy Commissioner of Environment and the environmental division directors, improve communication between the department and the environmental boards, improve its relationship with industry, business and local and state government and improve its relationship with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Public Safety

• **Recommendation 19:** Develop a new database for more effective drug interdiction activities.

Discussion: As recommended in the Governor’s Public Safety Action Plan, a new database is being developed which will allow officers to (1) submit real-time information on traffic stops involving suspicious levels of prescription drugs and (2) query the database for prior suspicious stops involving the same suspects. The Fusion Center, a joint program between the OHS and TBI, will develop and maintain the database.

• **Recommendation 20:** Develop the expertise to handle identity theft investigations for law enforcement agencies across the state.

Discussion: As part of its ongoing efforts to increase communication and cooperation among the three main functional areas, the department has created an Identity Theft Task Force. The goal of the task force is to be able to handle requests from local law enforcement agencies regarding identity theft based on set criteria.

TDOT

• **Highlights:** Rebuild the core competency of TDOT professional and technical staff. By reducing dependency on consultants and increasing the number, skills and capabilities of TDOT’s professional staff, an estimated total of \$14,500,000: in the areas of project design/development (\$3,000,000); environmental inspection (\$3,200,000); and construction engineering & inspection (\$8,300,000), could be made available for reallocation over a period of years to additional road and bridge projects.

• Consolidate TDOT’s regional construction and maintenance divisions. The increased efficiency and effectiveness resulting from this initiative could facilitate the reallocation of approximately \$6,200,000 over a 3-5 year period to new infrastructure projects.



PEOPLE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Phillip Robinson

has been named judge of the Third Circuit Court for the 20th Judicial District. Robinson is replacing Barbara Haynes, who retired last year.



Robinson

The Third Circuit Court will likely be designated a new family law court for Davidson County. Robinson’s practice originally included domestic relations cases, personal injury and criminal and probate matters.

Former University of Tennessee

quarterback Peyton Manning

and his wife, Ashley, have added a “significant gift” to a scholarship program founded in his name in 1998.



Manning

Manning, who led the Indianapolis Colts to victory in Super Bowl XLI, chose not to disclose the dollar amount of his donation, which will increase the annual recipients from one student to two. The recipients, first-year students chosen based on academic achievement, leadership and community service, receive full tuition, room and board and are part of the Haslam Scholars Program, UT’s top specialized honors program.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol named Trooper **Dwayne Stanford** the 2011 Trooper of the Year at an award ceremony. This marks the second consecutive year Trooper Stanford, a third generation state trooper, has earned the honor. He was also recognized in Gov. Bill Haslam’s State of the State address in January. Trooper Stanford earned the honor after several significant events, most notably, a traffic stop in September 2011, where he was shot in the chest by the vehicle’s passenger.



Stanford

State Sen. **Andy Berke**

announced he will not seek re-election to the District 10 seat he has held since 2007. Berke was first elected in a Nov. 2007 special election with 63 percent of the vote. He won re-election in 2008. Berke is currently working to secure support for small business owners and put unemployed Tennesseans back to work before his term ends in November. Berke said he is dedicated to growing jobs in the area and excited to continue to serve Southeast Tennessee, while looking forward to new challenges and opportunities.



Berke

Franklin officials visit projects via trolley

TROLLEY from Page 1

worked hard on prioritization of our major capital investment projects and we were looking at budgets and funding plans. We grew 49 percent the last census period. That’s a huge growth for a community to absorb. So we visited the areas impacted by the growth that has occurred, and projects that are going to be impacted by the growth that is coming.”

The tour, the “City of Franklin CIP Road Show,” took place on a Saturday and was advertised locally by public notice. “No one showed up but the board and some of our key staff, but we convened the meeting formally, then got on the Franklin Trolley and drove around,” Stuckey said. The board examined all 10 CIP projects along with a few others not initiated by the city, but nonetheless relevant.

“We looked at the new site acquired for the Columbia State Community College Campus in Williamson County and how it works with some of the projects we’re working on,” Stuckey said. The city’s not directly involved in that, but we’re cheering it on. We think it is going to be a great service to the community.”

Informational packets were prepared for the meeting highlighting the components of each project and allowing for board members to take notes and ask questions, according to Stuckey. “The packet information showed how the projects fit into the big picture for our transportation and plans for the future,” he said.

Examining the McEwen Drive improvement project, for example, which is nearing completion, the group discussed what a future phase



Franklin Alderwoman Margaret Martin listens intently as board members tour the city’s top CIP sites by trolley.

would look like there. “The extension of South Caruthers is also a project related to future growth,” said Stuckey. “We looked at the layout and phasing of that project. We also looked at the redevelopment plans for our historic park in the center of town. We’ve been converting that over the years with a master plan that we’re working on.” The former horse farm turned public park will be completed at an estimated cost of \$245,000,000.

“We’re working on the design of the access road to the Franklin Battlefield and hope to be building that soon,” said Stuckey. “Traffic has picked up tremendously in that area. I would encourage others to tour projects in this manner. It makes sense to see things together as a team.”

To view project slides from the city of Franklin CIP Road Show, visit www.franklin-gov.com/index.aspx?page=108

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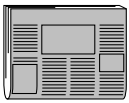
NATIONAL BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The U.S. Postal Service is pushing ahead with planned cuts to more than 260 mail processing centers around the nation, part of a billion-dollar cost-cutting effort that will slow delivery of first-class mail. The post office said it will move forward with consolidations involving virtually all of the 252 facilities on the list, as well as up to 12 new locations, beginning in mid-May. The consolidations are expected to result in a loss of roughly 35,000 jobs, which the post office hopes to achieve mainly through attrition. The agency described the move as a necessary cost-saving measure because of declining mail volume as people and businesses continue switching to the Internet in place of letters and paper bills. The estimated \$3 billion in reductions are part of a wide-ranging effort by the

Postal Service to quickly trim costs. It is seeking to close or consolidate more than half of its nearly 500 mail processing centers. Because the consolidations typically would lengthen the distance mail travels from post office to processing center, the agency also would lower delivery standards for first-class mail that, for the first time in 40 years and will eliminate the chance for stamped letters to arrive the next day. The Postal Service warned it will lose as much as \$18.2 billion a year by 2015 unless Congress grants it new leeway to eliminate Saturday delivery and raise the price of a postage stamp by as much as five cents. It is asking Congress for permission to make service cuts and reduce annual payments of about \$5.5 billion to prefund retiree health benefits. At the request of Congress, the cash-strapped agency agreed to wait until mid-May to begin closures so lawmakers would have time to stabilize its finances first.



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 VoorheesAssociates.com/currentpositions. For more information, e-mail Heidi Voorhees at HVoorhees@VAR.esume.com or call 847-580-4246.

CHIEF WASTEWATER PLANT OPERATOR

NIOTA. The city is accepting applications for the position of Chief Wastewater Plant Operator. This position will perform all duties of a Wastewater Plant Operator. Applicant must have a valid State of TN drivers' license, State of TN Class III Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators license. This employee is responsible for the daily operation, supervision, and maintenance of the wastewater treatment facility. The employee will assure the operations of the plant comply with state, local and federal occupational health and safety, and wastewater regulations. Applications may be obtained at Niota City Hall or fax resume to 423-568-3026 or mail resume to PO Box 146, Niota, TN 37826. Deadline for application is March 9, 2012. Interviews will start March 10, 2012.

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

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.

Making Great Cities Even Better



The town of Halls closed a \$400,000 loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to purchase sanitation equipment. Pictured are: Halls Mayor Eugene Pugh, City Recorder Vonda Shelton, and TMBF Representative Tommy Green.

Dynamic conference lineup set for June; registration now available online

CONFERENCE from Page 1
ference registrants.

Some of the workshops being offered are:

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

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

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

SUNDAY, JUNE 10

8 am Golf Benefit
9 am - 5 pm Registration
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 Reception

MONDAY, JUNE 11

9 - 10 am Workshops
10:15 - 11:15 am Workshops
11:30 - 12:15 am Business Meeting
12:30 - 2 pm Lunch
2:15 - 3:15 pm Workshops
3:30 - 4:30 pm Workshops
6:30 - 11pm Pool Party

TUESDAY, JUNE 12

8 - 10 am Awards Breakfast



TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

March 12: Monteagle

12th annual Taste of the Mountain Area Food Fair

Join the festivities and music at The National Guard Armory from 5-8 pm CST. Restaurants will prepare samples of their special cuisine and live musical entertainment will be featured. Tickets can be purchased from the Monteagle City Hall and the Monteagle Mountain Chamber of Commerce. For more information call: 931-924-5353 or email: mmtnchamber@blomand.net

March 17: Franklin

Franklin Main Street Brewfest

A free Irish street festival with a ticketed beer and Irish whiskey tasting in Main Street area shops. Lots of great Celtic entertainment. Try more than 50 beers presented by Lipman Bros. Held from 5 to 9 p.m. Tickets \$40 in advance, \$45 of the day of the event. Open to the public, but a ticket is required to participate in the beer tasting. For more information, contact Clark Shelton, Downtown Franklin Association, 615-591-8500, or e-mail cshelton@historicfranklin.com

March 17 - Bell Buckle

Daffodil Days

Celebrate spring on St. Patrick's Day with a Daffodil Flower Show, children's fashion show and Tree City USA festivities. For more information, call 931- 389-9663.

April 21: Chattanooga

Spring Fest

Held in Coolidge and Renaissance Parks from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Explore the area's outdoor amenities and shop for used outdoor gear at Outdoor Chattanooga's 6th annual Outdoor Expo and Gear Swap. The Office of Sustainability will host their 3rd annual Green Expo, focusing attention on ways to live, work and play with sustainability in mind. Chattanooga Parent Magazine's Summer Camp Expo will host family activities and offer information from camps around the region while the department of Education, Arts and Culture will offer music and family fun from the Coolidge Park stage. For more information, visit www.outdoorchattanooga.com/2865.htm



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Congressional City Conference to focus on local innovation, federal advocacy

Transportation Secretary Raymond H. “Ray” LaHood and Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis will speak to local officials at NLC’s upcoming Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C., during a general session on Monday, March 12.

NLC’s 2012 Congressional City Conference, taking place March 10-14, offers local officials opportunities to hear from respected national figures, network with other city leaders, participate in innovative workshops, learn new skills and lobby on Capitol Hill.

Much of the conference will center around NLC’s call for Congress and the President to take action to create jobs, grow the economy and invest in the nation’s infrastructure.

“The current economic conditions require all of us as city leaders to reexamine our focus and priorities. The speakers and workshops at the Congressional City Conference will help city leaders to find new innovations to grow the economy and bring our communities closer,” said NLC President Ted Ellis, mayor of Bluffton, Ind. “The conference provides an opportunity to interact with our federal counterparts to get a better understanding of federal requirements and also advocate for more effective policies that will encourage the economy to grow within our cities.”

LaHood is expected to offer his insights on efforts underway to reauthorize the federal surface transportation program, as well as tools to finance transportation infrastructure. Solis is expected to speak about the Administration’s views on how to accelerate economic growth and reduce unemployment, as well as the Department of Labor’s approach to reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act.

LaHood will address local offi-

cials as Congress continues to wrangle over reauthorization of the nation’s surface transportation programs. The current federal transportation program expires on March 31. The House and Senate are debating very different versions of long-term legislation for the program.

Solis’ speech will also be timely, as job creation and the unemployment rate are big issues for the nation, the Administration and cities and towns.

Other general session speakers for the Congressional City Conference include Ed Gillespie, former chairman of the Republican National Committee and former counselor to President George W. Bush, and Terry McAuliffe, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee and former chairman of Hillary Clinton for President, who will discuss the 2012 election, and David Brooks, op-ed columnist for The New York Times and commentator on “The PBS Newshour.”

The conference kicks off on Saturday, March 10, with Leadership Training Institute (LTI) seminars and NLC governance activities. These seminars go in-depth on a wide variety of topics and carry an additional fee. LTI seminars continue on Sunday, March 11. Check the Congressional City Conference page on the NLC website for more information on LTI offerings.

The NLC Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Policy and Advocacy committees will meet on Sunday. Some committees, councils and constituency groups will also meet that day. The New Member and First-Time Attendees Orientation will take place from 5:15 to 6:45 p.m.

Monday, March 12 begins with the Celebrate Diversity Breakfast, where the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials will hand out the Annual City Cultural Diversity



Transportation Secretary Raymond H. “Ray” LaHood

Awards.

General sessions will be held in the morning and the afternoon on Monday. In between, workshops will feature real solutions, best practices and updates on what’s happening in Washington.

Workshops will cover topics such as local innovation, job creation and training, transportation and infrastructure, civic engagement, housing, public safety and meeting the needs of families.

Tuesday, March 13, features morning workshops and a Delegates Luncheon and General Session. Tuesday afternoon is set aside for committee and constituency group meetings.

Attendees of the Congressional City Conference will have the opportunity to view a special performance by the Capitol Steps political satire group on Tuesday evening.

Wednesday, March 14, is dedicated to lobbying for city interests on Capitol Hill and with federal agencies.

For more information on the conference, visit NLC’s website, www.NLC.org.

COMING
UP

March 21-23: TAMCAR Certified Municipal Clerk Institute, Master Municipal Clerk Academy, held at the Murfreesboro Embassy Suites, 1200 Conference Center Blvd. Participants will develop a background in municipal organization and procedures, current opportunities and problems, and future trends in government. You do not have to be a member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) or the Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Records (TAMCAR) to participate. For registration information, visit <http://mtas.tennessee.edu/Training/TAMCAR/TAMCARsingles.pdf>

March 28-29: Annual Municipal Court Clerks Conference: held in Franklin at the Marriott Cool Springs, 700 Cool Springs Blvd. Registration begins March 28 at 10:30 a.m. For more information, contact the Municipal Technical Advisory Service at 865-974-0411.

March 22-23: Grant Writing Class hosted by The Department of Economic and Community Development Research and Planning Division, William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower, 312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 11th Floor, Media Room in Nashville. Beginning and experienced grant writers from city, county and state agencies, encouraged to attend. Time: 9am-4 pm. For more information, visit <http://GrantWritingUSA.com> or contact Client Services at Grant Writing USA, 800.814.8191 or e-mail cs@grantwritingusa.com.

April 11-12: The 17th Annual Rural Development Conference held at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville. Hear from experts on topics such as main street revitalization, business retention and expansion, site selection trends and much more. For questions about the conference, call USDA Rural Development at 615-783-1300 or email ra.tnrddatedirector@tn.usda.gov.

Municipal Administration Program
March Schedule

Planning and Zoning Course

Time

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

Dates and locations

March 14 — Jackson
March 15 — Bartlett
March 21 — Knoxville
March 28 — Franklin

Training Facilities

Jackson, *West Tennessee Center for Agricultural Research, Extension and Public Service, 605 Airways Boulevard*
Bartlett, *Bartlett Performing Arts Center, 3663 Appling Road*
Knoxville, *University of Tennessee Conference Center, 600 Henley Street*
Franklin, *Williamson County Agricultural Expo Park, 4215 Long Lane*

Who should attend?:

Municipal elected officials and municipal staff who have planning and zoning responsibilities.

TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE STAFF

Margaret Mahery, Executive Director
Chad Jenkins, Deputy Director
Mark Barrett, Legislative Research Analyst
Carole Graves, Communications Director & Editor, *Tennessee Town & City*
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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.

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TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL BOND FUND

House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick’s interest in politics was sparked in high school

BY GAEL STAHL

House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick is a sixth generation Tennessean. Like his ancestors over the past two centuries, he moved around the state before settling down in Chattanooga. His McCormick ancestors left North Carolina in early 1800s for West Tennessee before Memphis was a city. Born in Jackson Feb. 22, 1962, McCormick grew up in Memphis and Germantown, went to UT Knoxville where he met his wife, Kim, and spent two years in Nashville where he was a graduate student at Vanderbilt University in 1990-91. They have lived in her hometown, Chattanooga, ever since. On Feb. 14, they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary and eight days later his 50th birthday.

McCormick was in the 130th RAOC the National Guard unit in Smyrna south of Nashville in 1990 when he was called up by the U.S. Army during the first Gulf War. He served in Dhahran in Saudi Arabia doing nuclear/biological/chemical defense work. When the SCUD missiles were launched from Iraq, most of them landed in the Dhahran area. He saw plenty of SCUD missiles and Patriot missiles in action.

While in the military, his oldest daughter Cooper was born. Five and a half years later their second daughter Scottie was born in Chattanooga. Cooper is now a senior at UT Knoxville and Scottie is a 10th grade cheerleader at Baylor School in Chattanooga. Kim got a doctorate in education, taught high school and is currently in administration at Chattanooga State Community College.

In Germantown, McCormick attended Riverdale Elementary and Germantown High School where he graduated in 1980. A history teacher encouraged an interest in politics and urged him to participate in the Close Up program that took high school kids to Washington, DC, to learn about government and meet people like Sen. Howard Baker and Rep. Harold Ford Sr. It was Ford’s youth that impressed McCormick. In his 30s, Ford told them not to wait until they were older to get involved because there is room for young people too. Ford’s son won his father’s seat in Congress at age 26.

During high school McCormick worked at his father’s supply firm, Pumps and Piping, which sold pumps, piping, fire hydrants, water meter boxes and other water related products. He also worked a couple of years for a Gulf service station pumping gas, working on cars, and selling service station items back before convenience stores came along. All through his teens in the 70s he was an avid concert fan. A lot of good concerts came through Memphis and Elvis Presley was the first star he saw in concert at age 12. He later saw the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, ZZ Top, and Bruce Springsteen.

In college during the early to mid-1980s he worked for the UT Athletic Department feeding athletes at the training table. He often saw the likes of Coach Johnny Majors and football great Reggie White. He got to eat well with them and feel a part of the athletic program. He majored in political science. Dr. Douglas Carlisle, who was his advisor, started TISL (Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature), which is still active. Participating in TISL further inspired McCormick toward elective office as did Professor T. Mac Simpson whose specialty was state government.

After college and military service, McCormick began a career in real estate. He worked first in the office of the local Assessor of Property in Chattanooga/Hamilton County, then got his real estate license and went to work for the Raines Group owned by Bill Raines, a retired general from the U.S. Army Reserves. From there he went to work for Fairway Outdoor Advertising, a big billboard company and served as their real estate manager for Southeast Tennessee in the north Georgia branch office. He enjoyed the real estate area of the billboard business, kept his real estate license current and then transitioned back into the commercial brokerage business four years ago when he went with Fleetwood Development LLC. It is a brokerage firm involved in real estate development projects such as a shopping center currently under construction and the renovation of a set of 100-year-old buildings in downtown Chattanooga where they lease office space and rent apartments. During legislative sessions McCormick gets that work done on Monday mornings, Thursday afternoons, and Fridays.

His interest in political affairs led him to be appointed to serve on the County Planning Commission. He was also vice chair and Finance chair of the Hamilton County Republican Party. While at UT, he had been president of the college Democrats and ran a legislative campaign in 1992 as the Democratic nominee to the state legislature in a Chattanooga district. He lost that race but was welcomed into the Republican Party by his congress-man, Zach Wamp, and became a Republican. He served as campaign manager for Rep. Bobby Wood twice and when Wood retired in 2004, McCormick won the primary over one other candidate and the general election over a Democrat and an Independent to win the seat. In the House, he quickly earned a reputation for being a steady, clever, creative, and decisive House member. He was appointed to major House committees (Finance is important but State & Local has become his favorite) and after four years he was elected assistant majority leader for 2009-10, then majority leader for 2011-12. As such,



House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick

“We have to resist the temptation to make promises at the state level that our local governments have to pay for.”



McCormick in the well on the House floor.

he has carried Gov. Bill Haslam’s legislative package in the House with the responsibility of shepherding Haslam’s bills into law.

For 10 years he was the play-by-play announcer at Ooltewah High’s football games. His wife was a teacher there and his oldest daughter a cheerleader, so when a good friend, the football coach, asked him to do the Friday night announcing, he found he enjoyed it. Fans loved it, too. His style was to spare the young players any negativity. He would never say, for instance, the quarter-back threw an interception but that a defender made an interception. When his wife, Kim, went on to become assistant principal at Hixson and then vice president of Academic Affairs at Chattanooga State, McCormick gave up the mike.

What with family, real estate work and being part of the legislative leadership McCormick has little time for hobbies and diversions. He says that besides going to work every day he enjoys reading history and just tries to keep up with his kids and family. He keeps a book handy at all times. A recent favorite was “Fortunes, Fiddles, and Fried Chicken” by Bill Carey, a history of Nashville business. He recommends it highly to Tennesseans for its lively background about business history in middle Tennessee.

TT&C: What do you view as the major challenges facing Tennessee in 2012 and beyond?

GM: We in the state legislature always have to focus on financial issues. Our constitutional duty is to pass a balanced budget every year and make sure that the chickens won’t come home to roost five or 10 years from now from bad decisions we have made. Past legislatures under both parties have done a good job being fiscally responsible short term and long term, and we’ve got to carry that on.

We need to keep increasing the amount of money in our rainy day fund. That’s how we maintain good bond ratings to keep our borrowing costs low, which saves taxpayers millions of dollars. State Treasurer David Lillard, Comptroller Justin Wilson, and Gov. Haslam and his administration feel the same way.

Beyond fiscal issues, the governor is focused on civil service reform [to give the executive branch broader authority to hire and fire state workers]. Just about everyone in Tennessee would say that the 1939 civil service system is outdated and needs to be worked on. It’s a work in progress and I think you’ll see

good things come out of that reform to benefit taxpayers.

The governor has proposed a crime bill this year that should be helpful. It will be somewhat expensive due to increased costs of incarceration. That’s just one of the things we have to set our priorities on and spend money on at times. I think this is one of those times.

Another challenge is making Tennessee have an even better business environment than it already has. We have low taxes, no income tax, right-to-work laws, and we recently passed a tort reform plan that is helpful to our business environment. We need to keep welcoming people to come here to create jobs and help the people already here create more jobs so they don’t go somewhere else.

TT&C: You personally played a role in tort reform limiting non-economic awards to \$750,000?

GM: I was involved in the negotiations between the business community and the legal community and the governor’s administration. Herbert Slatery led that effort, and I tried to be helpful at a lot of meetings. At the end I think we got a good product. Not perfect. Not everyone was happy with it, but that’s often a sign of good legislation. We may need to continue to work on it and make more improvements.

TT&C: When you, Gov. Haslam, and Speaker Harwell were all elected to new leadership positions last year, you had backed Zach Wamp and Glen Casada over them. How are your working relationships going?

GM: Very well. After Gov. Haslam and Speaker Harwell were elected we immediately decided we’re all on the same team and we have worked together well ever since. Speaker Harwell is a nice person, easy to get along with, and doing a good job. Since the primary, I’ve gotten to know Gov. Haslam over a couple of years and I admire him and respect him more and more. He’s off to a good start and is going to be a great governor. Since I carry his legislative package as majority leader I meet with him and his staff a couple of times a week.

TT&C: Local governments are interested in some bills you carry for the governor, specifically his public safety plan to address meth issues, synthetic drugs, and gang violence because they would impose tougher sentences for certain types of gang-related crimes. Chattanooga also filed legislation to address the city’s growing gang-related activities.

GM: Those meth issues seem to keep changing as amateur drug manufacturers adapt well when we change laws by moving to new products that are dangerous. With regard to the governor’s efforts to deal with gang-related issues, local government budgets are affected whenever we deal with crimes where people have to be incarcerated. The governor is sensitive to that cost for you and wants to help pay for some of that. Local governments want to rid themselves of crime as much as state government does so I think they’ll work with us to find ways to pay for some of these programs. On the gang issue, some of it is punishment, some is prevention, and part of it is education. I think we’ll work toward all three. It is going to cost local governments money but we want to be helpful.

I support Mayor Littlefield’s plans but the first step is to pass the governor’s program. The increased incarceration costs make that imperative. Maybe we can work in some of Mayor Littlefield’s ideas. Chattanooga is helping move the process along and can help us get a good solution.

TT&C: Does the House have legislative priorities different than the governor’s and the lieutenant governor’s?

GM: I don’t know that our priorities are all that different. The leadership of both parties get together at least weekly. The Senate may concentrate on an issue one week and the House on a different one. In the end it will all be tied together. Sometimes the administration, Senate, and House argue a bit, but that’s just a healthy way to use creative tension to find the best ideas for good legislation. It helps that the budget reflects the priorities of all the people – not just one or two decision-makers. Sometimes it looks messy but debating the details helps us end up with a better final product.

TT&C: Does any specific, differing House priority come to mind?

GM: Some of the issues about the judicial nominating commission and the judicial reviews and disciplining of judges are more driven from the Senate side than from the House side. Other than that I don’t know of anything. We have to pass a budget and work on the governor’s proposals and review the thousand of bills that have been introduced, but the governor drives the agenda. That’s the way state government is set up. We react to his budget and legislative package. We have our own interests too, but the governor has the full-time staff to really push an agenda. We’re not really set up in the legislature to do those detail type things.

TT&C: Which priorities will be doable this year and which will be difficult to achieve?

GM: The No. 1 doable priority with the exception of the budget is civil service reform. It will be successful in the end. On the less doable side, some of the educational plans the governor planned gave the perception we’re possibly going too fast and too far. They appropriately backed off on some of those out of respect for the misgivings of education officials.

TT&C: TML’s two biggest legislative priorities pertain to unfunded mandates and the fiscal impact of state imposed regulation. The first bill would provide that any legislation enacted with a cost to local governments that’s not fully funded would give local governments an option whether or not to implement the unfunded mandate.

The second bill provides that any rule or regulation proposed by the state with a fiscal impact on local governments must include a written justification for the regulation, a fiscal note, and a cost-benefit analysis. What is your view on these?

GM: The second one we could do and do quickly. It’s reasonable to look at the fiscal impact on local governments when we pass bills at the state level. The first proposal might be more difficult. The constitution requires us to at least help pay for any mandates we put on local governments, and we certainly need to help pay, though maybe not 100 percent of it. The state has a more stable and better ability to collect revenue than local governments do. It’s a balancing act. I wish we’d never put anything on local governments that costs them money. I don’t know if it’s realistic that we could cover 100 percent all the time, but we are generally sensitive to our county and city mayors and commissioners and councils, listen to them and are very appreciative of them. They let us know if we go too far with unfunded mandates.

TT&C: How do you view the relationship between the federal government and the state?

GM: Probably similar to how local government people feel about the state. We get huge federal mandates handed down by the federal government. The national health act if implemented will cost the state hundreds of millions annually. The EPA hands down mandates that are expensive such as emissions testing on cars. That unfairly affects poorer people with older cars that have more difficulty passing those tests. Federal government involvement with the state and local level has gotten considerably out of balance. I’m not sure what we can do about it except keep an eye on those we elect to Congress and the U.S. Senate and the presidency. It’s grown over the years and we just have to do the best we can.

TT&C: What do you see as the proper relationship between the state and local governments?

GM: We have to work as partners as much as possible. Local governments are the creations of the state, and we all have to work closely together for our policies to be implemented at the state level. We have to resist the temptation to make promises at the state level that our local governments have to pay for. In Hamilton County we stay in close communication with our county and city mayors and council people and commissioners. We also have the newspaper TML puts out, *Tennessee Town & City*. The legislators read it. It’s a valuable tool that goes well with direct communication with local officials. We’re all in this together.

I have had a wonderful relationship with Collegedale Mayor John Turner and Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield and the city council. I called the mayor twice yesterday. We’re in close contact. I know all our county officials personally. It would be difficult to do my job if I didn’t keep in touch with those folks. They know what people would like us to do in Nashville.

TT&C: You were part of the state and local team that brought two major economic development projects to the Chattanooga – the Volkswagen facility and Amazon. What went into bringing them in and what do they mean for your city and the state?

GM: I’m very excited to have two of the biggest investments ever in our state located in my district. At the legislative level we’re interested in providing a good business environment as are the Economic and Community Development folks at the state. For Chattanooga and Hamilton County, our local chamber of commerce is our economic development agency. Their job is negotiate specific deals, and our job is to help them keep their promises.

Gov. Bredesen and his administration along with our local chamber and other Chattanoogaans worked hard to get Amazon to consider Chattanooga. Amazon did decide to come to Hamilton and Bradley counties in Southeast Tennessee. We legislators fought off efforts of those who didn’t want to see Amazon not have to collect sales taxes because Bredesen promised Amazon that in return for their huge investment and the hiring of thousands of people they would not be required to. Some wanted that to start earlier and make the state break its promise. We cannot have the reputation of breaking our promises to people who invest here. So the legislature kept our promises to Amazon, which so impressed them that they decided to expand to other counties in the state and to start collecting sales taxes in 2014 – a win-win scenario.

There’s also room for VW to expand and I hope they’ll do that. We’ll encourage it. We hope to see more of that all across Tennessee in years to come.