

Planning commissioners required to file financial disclosure statements

BY JOSH JONES
MTAS Legal Consultant

In 2006, the General Assembly passed the Comprehensive Governmental Reform Act. This broad piece of legislation made a number of amendments to the state's ethics provisions.

The act made changes to Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 8, Chapter 50, Part 5, requiring candidates and appointees to a number of governmental offices to file financial disclosure statements with the Tennessee Ethics Commission.

During the 2012 legislative session the General Assembly expanded the list of officers who must file these disclosure statements to include municipal and regional planning commissioners. Legislation introduced during the 2013 legislative session to remove planning commissioners failed.

Disclosure filings are due Jan. 31, and an official who fails to comply is subject to a civil penalty pursuant to T.C.A. § 3-6-205. This section authorizes the Tennessee Ethics Commission to levy a fine of up to \$25 per day, not to exceed \$750, for late filings and a fine up to \$10,000 for failure to file. During a recent meeting, the Ethics Commission waived penalties for late filers, while stating that those

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who failed to make any filing are subject to the maximum penalty.

There is no guarantee that any penalties will be waived in subsequent years.

To avoid any future penalties planning commissioners and all other required officials must ensure full compliance with timely filings. An electronic form and other information on statements of disclosure of interests can be found here: <https://apps.tn.gov/conflict/>.

Questions may be addressed to the Commissioner's office at (615) 741-7959 or e-mail at ethics.counsel@state.tn.us.

Oklahoma's emergency director has weathered 36 major disasters

BY DANIEL C. VOCK
Stateline.org Staff Writer

Albert Ashwood, Oklahoma's director of emergency management, was surveying the weekend's tornado damage with Gov. Mary Fallin on Monday morning (May 20), when he told her they had to leave immediately. The weather, he said, was getting worse, and the two of them needed to get to the command center.

Two hours later, a tornado with winds reaching 190 mph cut a 17-mile swath through the metropolitan Oklahoma City area, leveling hundreds of homes and leaving dozens dead.

Ashwood is the longest-serving state emergency management chief in the country. He has worked at the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management since 1988 and, after his work in the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, was appointed to lead it in 1997. He has served in that role ever since, under both Democratic and Republican governors. This is his 36th major disaster.

Oklahoma has been especially hard-hit in recent years when it comes to natural disasters, and experts in emergency management say Ashwood's long experience and innovative thinking have helped ease those recoveries.

"It makes all the difference," said Trina Sheets, executive director of the National Emergency Manage-



Photo by Sue Ogrocki/AP

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin, right, walks through a mobile home park with Albert Ashwood, director of the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, to survey the area hard hit by the May tornadoes.

ment Association. "Disaster victims can be assured he understands everything that needs to be done for recovery."

"A good emergency manager is more of a coordinator than a first responder, said R. David Paulison, a former administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "Oklahoma's response to the May tornadoes shows the state was well-prepared," he said.

The White House approved a presidential disaster declaration for Oklahoma just seven hours after the most lethal tornado touched down, and the declaration includes damages from tornadoes that hit the weekend before.

"That happened almost immediately," Paulison said. "That tells me Albert and his crew are right on top of things, and the governor has enough confidence in the emergency manager to know it's not a knee-jerk reaction."

Since Ashwood became chief of the emergency management agency, he has helped the state recover through 36 disasters that merited presidential disaster declarations.

Paulison also said the quick deployment of search-and-rescue teams showed Oklahoma was ready, because it did not take long for the state to ask for and receive out-of-state teams to assist in the effort.

See **TORNADO** on Page 4

Smarter development strategies can increase revenues and save money

BY BRIDGET JONES
Executive Director
Cumberland Region Tomorrow

Municipalities are constantly working to balance their budgets and services with their revenues while remaining economically competitive. Many also realize the value of reinvesting in and enhancing their communities' quality of life. One of the newer tools to achieve these objectives is called "Smart Growth." Cumberland Region Tomorrow's work builds upon similar Quality Growth Principles and Strategies that advance the same ideas and work towards the same outcomes for local governments and communities.

Sometimes municipal leaders believe any development is good but the opposite may be true. Not all projects improve public finances—and some may actually hurt—according to new research from Smart Growth America. Their research on three developments in Nashville shows not all of these provide the same fiscal benefits and that Tennessee municipalities can realize government savings and increase government revenues through smarter development strategies.

Nashville/Davidson County is currently underway with the Nashville Next community-driven process for creating a countywide plan which will guide Metro Nashville through 2040. In support of this effort, Smart Growth America examined the relative public costs and benefits of three development scenarios in Nashville/Davidson County: The Gulch, a smart growth oriented urban development project; Lenox Village, a smart growth style development in a 'greenfield' location; and Bradford Hills, a conventional suburban residential subdivision directly across the street from Lenox Village.

The study focused on the cost of providing ongoing city services to the residential component of each project, including police, ambulance and fire service costs. It also examined the tax revenue generated by each scenario as well as the overall impact to the county's general fund. Upfront infrastructure cost



Courtesy of Market Street Enterprises

In support of Nashville Next, a community-driven process for creating a countywide plan to guide Metro Nashville through 2040, Smart Growth America examined the public costs and benefits of three development scenarios in Nashville-Davidson County. Including The Gulch, a smart growth oriented development project in Nashville.

was not included in the analysis.

At \$1,300 per unit, the smart growth style Lenox Village had the lowest cost per unit for providing ongoing public services while the Smart growth option, the much more urban Gulch, cost slightly more at \$1,400 per unit. Bradford Hills, the conventional suburban

scenario, cost the most at \$1,600 per unit. Percentage wise, Lenox Village cost 20 percent less and The Gulch cost 13 percent less compared to Bradford Hills.

The study also looked at revenue to Nashville's general fund in the form of property tax and sales tax. See **STRATEGIES** on Page 8

Kingsport installs FHWA approved traffic signals

BY TIM WHALEY
Kingsport Community
& Govt. Relations Director

While motorists in the Carolinas, Kentucky, and elsewhere may have already seen the result of new Federal Highway Administration guidelines, the upcoming completion of the improved intersections of Clinchfield and Roller streets along Sullivan Street will mark the first "flashing yellow arrow" on Kingsport traffic signals.

The federal regulations provide for an alternative to the ubiquitous green ball in a five-section turn signal head used for years to signal permissive left turn movements against oncoming traffic.

"The new signals offer a safer, more efficient way to handle traffic turning left at busy intersections," Kingsport Traffic Engineer Tim Elsea said. "The signals are being introduced nationwide as a result of a national study, conducted for the

Federal Highway Administration, that showed they help prevent crashes, move more traffic through intersections and provide additional traffic management flexibility.

The signals are placed over left-turn lanes at intersections. One of the displays on the signal is a flashing-yellow arrow.

Other displays are a steady-green arrow, steady-yellow arrow and steady-red arrows, with the flashing yellow arrow replacing the now outdated green orb. The steady yellow displays just prior to turning to a red arrow.

"When the flashing-yellow arrow is displayed, motorists are allowed to turn left when there are gaps in oncoming traffic or no pedestrians in the intersection," Elsea said. "Motorists may also turn left as normally when a green arrow is displayed and oncoming traffic has stopped. They should not turn left when the red left-turn arrow is displayed."

Annexation, Business Tax, Health Care Reform updates offered at TML Conference

Feeling a little overwhelmed or confused by several changes in legislation that directly affects your city? Come to TML's Annual Conference in Memphis, June 22 - 25, and learn more about proposed changes to Tennessee annexation laws, revisions to the business tax, and the latest updates in healthcare reform.

Before the Tennessee General Assembly adjourned, among the last issues resolved was the bill on annexation (SB 279/ HB 475).

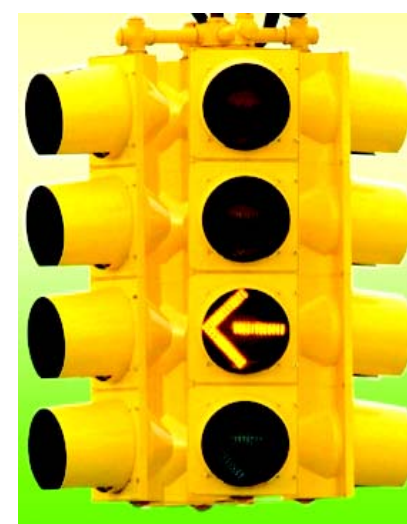
The final version adopted by each house imposed several provisions including a 13-month moratorium on any annexation by ordinance affecting residential or agricultural property (effective April 15, 2013, through May 15, 2014). It also requires TACIR to conduct a comprehensive study on the efficacy of current annexation related laws (PC1101) and report back to the speakers of each house its recommendation on or before Jan. 14, 2014.

TML staff will provide a brief overview of the current law and review possible changes currently being discussed.

Officials from the Department of Revenue will also be present at the conference to discuss changes to the business tax.

The Tennessee Legislature approved the "Uniformity and Small Business Act Relief Act of 2013." The new legislation, assigned Public Chapter 313, authorizes the commissioner of revenue to disclose to local government officials the amount of business tax credit claimed by a taxpayer for the purpose of allowing the local government to determine whether local taxes are being properly paid.

The Act restructures and revises the business tax; revises the distribution of the tax; revises various deductions, credits, and exemptions of the tax; and revises the minimum tax that would be applicable. It amends TCA Title 67, Chapter 4, Part 7. See **CONFERENCE** on Page 6



Studies prove flashing yellow lights prevent crashes, move traffic and provide traffic management flexibility. The signals are placed over left-turn lanes at intersections.



BRISTOL

Pfizer recently released about a fifth of its remaining local workforce, following a second recall of the drug Levoxyl. About 25 full-time workers were released in early May. Levoxyl is used to treat hyperthyroidism. In 2011, Pfizer announced that manufacturing would end at the Bristol operation in 2014. The company has issued two Levoxyl recalls in the past three months. About 90 people continue working at the Bristol facility, which manufactures and packages a variety of solid and semi-solid pharmaceutical products.

BROWNSVILLE

Two new energy-efficient homes for the elderly and disabled were revealed at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Brownsville. The homes were built to provide low-income affordable housing for the elderly and disabled. To make the project possible, a grant of \$300,000 was given to West Tennessee Legal Services Inc. under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rural Housing and Economic Development program. The houses have a Home Energy Rating System rating of 69 percent. To make each house as energy efficient as possible, contractors used structural insulated panels, which create one of the most airtight and well-insulated building systems available, thus lowering the monthly cost of utility bills by using less energy to heat and cool. The housing project is also a part of TennCare and will help elderly residents live outside of nursing homes for as long as they can. The three-bedroom homes are designed and equipped with assistive features for the elderly and disabled, including an accessible shower.

CHATTANOOGA

Nearly 500 new customer service jobs are being created in Chattanooga as Convergys Corp. expands employment at a call center. The move will bring company employment in Chattanooga to about 1,300 people by midsummer. Convergys site leader Wendy Matchett in Chattanooga said the employees will handle inbound customer service sales calls. The company is based in Cincinnati and has global employment of about 75,000.

COLLEGE GROVE

"Today" show Al Roker visited the Hatcher Family Dairy in College Grove recently as part of a contest series called "Wake Up With Al." Sharon Hatcher, store manager at the family dairy, was one of three winners in an NBC "Today" show contest in which Roker broadcasts his weather updates from each of the three winners' homes. The Hatcher farm was his first stop. More than 100 local spectators showed up to watch the popular TV personality air his broadcasts every half hour, and cheer him on, while Roker signed autographs and met residents between on-air shots. Five generations of the Hatcher family have farmed the land off Arno Road.

DAYTON

Goodman Manufacturing officials announced the air conditioning and heating equipment manufacturer will expand its plant. The expansion represents an investment of \$2 million and the creation of 200 new positions in Rhea County. The company produces residential and light commercial air conditioning and heating equipment.

ETOWAH

Etowah earned recognition from national nonprofit KaBOOM! as a 2013 Playful City USA community for the city's efforts to give children ample opportunities for play. Sponsored by the Humana Foundation, Playful City USA is a national program from KaBOOM! that celebrates and promotes local policies that increase play opportunities for children and is a key platform in combating the lack of play among children. Three years ago, in an effort to increase play opportunities for children, Etowah created a parks and recreation department, and in the past year has improved the overall safety and capabilities of local parks and offered summer camps for the first time. The city recently demolished a condemned building and is now working with a local college class to redesign the property into an inviting, accessible and enjoyable park for citizens.

GALLATIN

RTenn, a Middle Tennessee plastics injection molding company, plans to nearly double its workforce thanks to storage totes, drainage parts and a kitty litter system. The company's payroll will grow from 57 to more than 100 by the end of this year, as RTenn spends \$1.3 million to expand and add equipment to its production facility at 241 Commerce Way. The facility will grow from slightly more than 78,000 square feet to 101,000 square feet when the addition is completed early next month. About 20 of the 45 new jobs have been filled. The remaining positions will be filled as equipment is installed and production ramps up throughout the rest of the year.

JONESBOROUGH

More than a year in the making, Tennessee's oldest town has adopted a new tourism logo. The new logo features Jonesborough artist Bill Bledsoe's animated drawing of the 100-year-old county courthouse on Main Street above the words "Historic Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1779, Storytelling Capital of the World" in an historic font. In addition to its appearance on marketing materials, the logo's courthouse clock tower icon will appear on tourist way-finding signs to be placed on 11E and throughout the downtown historic district. A \$19,284 contract for the way-finding signs' production is to be paid for from a previous capital outlay for improvements to the downtown historic district. The logo package includes vertical, horizontal, black and white, full-color and blue- and burgundy-shaded variations as well as four special event renderings featuring Music on the Square notes, Jonesborough Days fireworks, a striped storytelling festival tent and Christmas lights and snowflakes.

KINGSTON

A ground breaking ceremony was held May 7 at the city's Water Treatment Plant to celebrate the installation of an electricity grid-connected photovoltaic solar power system. With a generating capacity rate of approximately 50kWdc, the project is the result of an agreement between the city of Kingston and Nashville's Energy Source Partners LLC.

LENOIR CITY

The Tennessee Association of Utility Districts (TAUD) held the Region Two "Best Tasting Water Contest" and Lenoir City Utilities Board was awarded the title for Region Two. The utilities from Region Two, which include Blount, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, and Sevier counties, submitted samples of drinking water for competition judged on clarity, bouquet, and taste. The winner of each region will participate in the statewide competition at TAUD's Business of Running a Utility conference August 8 in Gatlinburg.

MANCHESTER

Viam Manufacturing, a Japanese-based maker of floor, trunk and cargo mats, also announced plans for a \$9 million expansion of its Manchester, Tenn., plant. The addition to the 507,000-square-foot facility in Coffee County should add 75 jobs. Bill Hagerty, commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, said the expansions are part of the state's Jobs4TN strategy focusing on the automotive industry.

MT JULIET

Mt. Juliet High School and the Wilson County Election Commission recently joined to conduct the school's election for 2013-14 student body officers. About 600 students cast votes in the election with procedures similar to those used in federal, state and county elections.

NASHVILLE

Oreck Corp., a vacuum maker that couldn't turn widespread name recognition into higher sales, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The Nashville company said it would continue operating as usual, but will use the bankruptcy protection to get its finances in order while it looks around for a buyer. Oreck has about 325 employees at its 96 retail stores. It also has 250 workers at its factory and about 70 employees at its corporate office.

OAK RIDGE

A special \$120 million water treat-

ment plant is planned at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant to capture a lingering toxic legacy from the Cold War — mercury seeping from old buildings where it was used in the production of thermonuclear weapons. Sen. Lamar Alexander joined federal and state officials in announcing the project that will be constructed starting in 2017 in the heart of the Y-12 National Security Complex. It's expected to begin filtering 1,500 gallons a minute of water by 2020. The facility is intended to screen water emerging from the spring that's the head of East Fork Poplar Creek. The creek for years has been contaminated by seepage from three football field-sized buildings where mercury was used to separate lithium as part of the bomb-building process. Alexander said the planned treatment plant "is a major step" in addressing the ongoing mercury problem. It's an issue, he said, because mercury can get into the food chain and ultimately into people eating fish containing the toxic element. Mercury contamination can cause brain and nervous system damage, especially in unborn children. Once the water treatment plant is on line, work will begin on the demolition of the three buildings where mercury was used

SEVIERVILLE

Quality Solutions Group (QSG) plans to expand its operations. The expansion represents a \$1.5 million investment and will create 25 new jobs. QSG provides warehousing, quality inspection, packaging and fulfillment to the military and automotive and medical industries. QSG also supports businesses by providing them with lean manufacturing, custom built crates and pallets, dunnage washing and more. The expansion will add an additional 34,000 square feet to the existing 38,000 square foot facility. Once construction is complete, the company will shift focus and include light manufacturing in the new space.

UNION CITY

Williams Sausage Company officials announced the company will add 148 new jobs to its manufacturing facility on Old Troy-Hickman Road in Union City. Williams Sausage, an established food manufacturer, will create 148 jobs and invest \$3 million at its Obion County headquarters. The company is headquartered in Union City and began under the entrepreneurial spirit of Harold L. Williams in 1958.

News Across Tennessee is comprised from media reports from across the state and press releases from TN municipalities.

Maryville College receives TVA Green Power Award



College administrators and faculty, members of Maryville City Council, cut the ribbon to dedicate a solar array outside of Crawford House, one of the oldest buildings on campus.

The city of Maryville and TVA congratulated Maryville College for being awarded a Green Power Switch Leadership Award. The award is given to customers based upon the volume of Green Power Switch blocks purchased combined with energy efficiency projects, among other categories.

The college installed solar panels to generate electricity for Crawford House, one of the oldest buildings on campus. The building is in the process of becoming LEED certified and has purchased renewable energy through TVA's Green Power Switch Program since 2003.

The college also installed electric vehicle charging stations, picnic tables with built in solar generation for charging student's electronic devices and a added solar water heating system.

TVA launched Green Power Switch in 2000 as the first-of-its-kind program in the Southeast. It

allows consumers to help ensure that renewable energy from wind, solar and landfill gas is added to TVA's power supply.

Green Power Switch purchasers, in 2012, helped support more than 4,500 megawatt hours of solar power; 37,000 megawatt hours of wind power; and 36,000 megawatt hours of biogas. By supporting this much renewable energy, Green Power Switch customers prevented around 74,400 tons of CO 2 emissions, the equivalent of taking over 11,000 cars off the road for a year.

The city serves more than 20,000 customers and has been in the utility business for more than 60 years. Both residential and commercial may purchase Green Power Switch blocks of 150 kilowatts (about 12 percent of a typical Tennessee Valley home's monthly electricity use). Each block costs an additional \$4 on the consumer's monthly power bill.

"Today" show co-host broadcasts the weather from College Grove farm



The "Today" show's Al Roker visits the Hatcher Family Dairy in College Grove as part of a contest series called "Wake Up With Al."

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Nashville celebrates Music City Center grand opening

Where else can you find four-acres of undulating green roof complete with 845 solar panels, a 360,000 gallon rainwater tank, 14 varieties of vegetation, a two million dollar art collection, 20,000 meals a day and seating for 6,000 guests in what appears to be the wooden belly of an acoustic guitar? Nashville's crown jewel, the \$585 million Music City Center (MCC) delivers all that and more. Approximately fifteen thousand people came out to rock their approval recently with a two-day open house party complete with entertainers Sheryl Crow, Vince Gill, Phil Vassar, Mikky Ekko, MCC tours, a walk with the mayor, and a fireworks display.

Mayor Karl Dean stood on the Fifth Avenue and Demonbreun Street side of the six block long, 150 foot high behemoth, to host a ribbon cutting, and perhaps take a breather, before giving the 50th annual state of metro address. Dean lobbied tirelessly for the project's construction, winning approval in January 2010. Taking a little more than three years to complete, the 1.2 million square-foot development is the most expensive public project in Nashville's history, and the most unique, not only in design, but in function.

Touring the completed facility could only be described as an out-of-the-box experience for Dean, who showed reporters around before the epic celebration.

"One of the things I always was interested in was not seeing a box," he said. "And by not

having a box, I meant for the entire building. You see a lot of convention centers that have a lot of nice fronts, facades, and then they just turn into sort of a square. This building is not that."

To echo Dean's sentiments, the building's natural light, glass on all sides, limestone panels and rippled roof, running the three-block length of the building, virtually eliminates the boxed-in vibe of most convention centers, allowing fantastic views of the city amid practical function.

A variety of music from George Jones to Madonna, not only wafts from every space in the building, but it's reflected in the architecture. From the air, part of the roof looks like an acoustic guitar body, with hints of a fret board. The exhibition hall measures eight acres and 350,000 square feet, there's a 57,000 square-foot grand ballroom, 18,000 square-foot junior ballroom and a loading dock capable of handling 32 semi-trucks simultaneously. A three-level parking garage holds about 1,800 vehicles and 60 meeting rooms occupy 90,000 square feet.

Dean expects the new convention center, adjacent to the new Omni Hotel, to transform the area south of Broadway in the years to come. "This whole area south of us is going to be a different place five years from now," he said. "Ten years from now it won't be recognizable to us."

One hundred twenty-three meetings repre-



Photo courtesy of Mayor Karl Dean's Office

Opening with a two-day celebration, Nashville's new Music City Center covers six city blocks and is 150 feet high. Customers are already booked through 2026.

senting more than one million room nights have already been booked at the convention center. Music City Center CEO Charles Starks said some groups have booked conventions at the site several years in advance. "We've got about 110 brand new customers that are already booked going out to 2026 right now," he told local reporters.

One of the most iconic developments about the center, is that city leaders are already looking at expansion possibilities. Planners have identified five options where future expansion could feasibly work. These include the city's Bridgestone Arena land, three private properties and the preferred option: building atop the existing center. Other possibilities identified for expansion in the form of a future exhibition or conference center are:

- Directly west of the center on a 12-acre site along Eighth Avenue, property where the United Methodist Publishing House operates, which would require a skyway over Eighth Avenue.
- South within a "series of parcels," totaling four to nine acres, between Fifth and Sixth avenues. This also would require a skyway.
- North of the center between Seventh and Eighth Avenues.

To the east, the center is blocked from expansion by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum and the adjoining Omni Hotel.

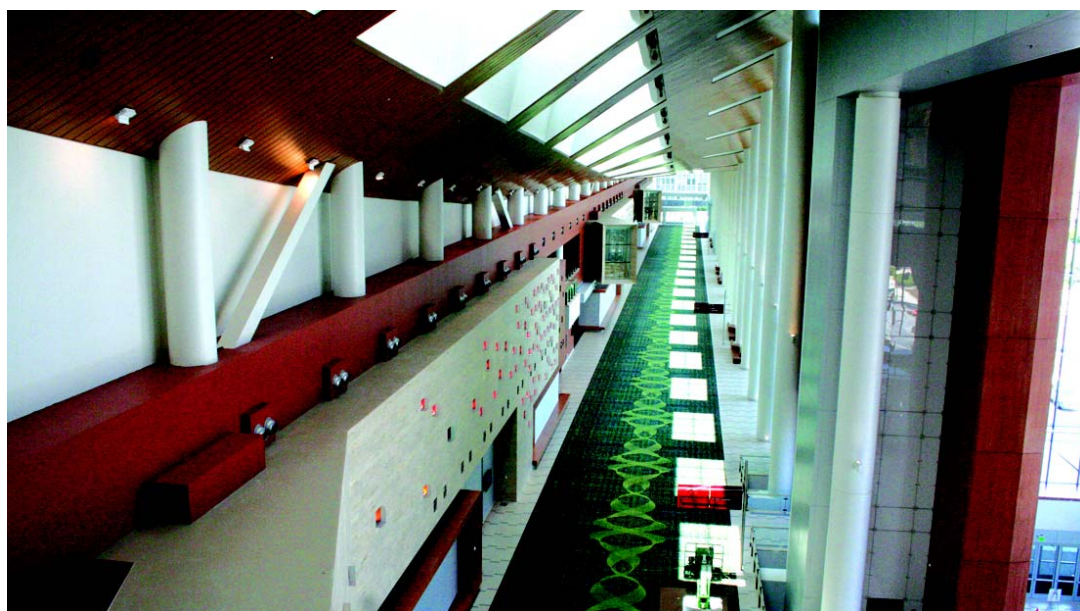
For more information about the Music City Center or to plan a meeting there, see visitmusiccity.com/Plan/lodgingfacilities/musiccitycenter.



Mayor Karl Dean and city dignitaries cut the ribbon on the new Music City Center.



Nashville Mayor Karl Dean conducts a pre-grand opening media tour of the Music City Center's interactive kiosks featuring segments of Music City history. The building houses The Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.



Skylights, glass walls, wood and modern architecture throughout reinforce the Music City Center's vibrant, creative theme.



The Music City Center's Executive Chef Max Knoepful, center, and his staff, are equipped to prepare up to 20,000 meals a day.



The Music City Center has a green roof spanning more than four acres. The roof sports a waterproof membrane and a 200 kilowatt solar panel grid and supports 14 varieties of vegetation along with other sustainable features.



A suspension of hand carved instruments is among the numerous commissioned pieces comprising the Music City Center's \$2 million art collection.



Inviting wood patio decks throughout The Music City Center offer birds eye views of the Nashville skyline.

Photos By Victoria South

STATE BRIEFS



Tennessee's unemployment rate returns to eight percent

The unemployment rate in Tennessee increased to eight percent in April, according to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, up from a revised March rate of 7.8 percent. The national unemployment rate for April was 7.5 percent, down from 7.6 percent in March. April marks the fourth month in a row that monthly unemployment has increased in Tennessee, though April's unemployment rate is the lowest for April since 2008.

State ranked tops for retirees

Retirees considering where to spend their golden years might want to consider Tennessee. That's according to Bankrate.com the personal finance website, that ranked Tennessee at the top of its list of the 10 best states for retirement. The site's analysts crunched numbers in several categories, including cost of living, taxes, health care, crime and climate. They combined all those results into a composite picture, and the state fared the best. The Volunteer State beat out competition from the likes of Louisiana, South Dakota, Kentucky and others on the Top 10 ranking. Information was compiled on subjects such as access to medical care, low taxes, cost of living, crime rate and the weather. Tennessee had the second-best cost of living in the country, and it was No. 3 in terms of low taxes.

TN 2nd most bicycle friendly

Tennessee was the second most bicycle friendly state in the Southeast region last year, while placing 17th nationally, according to the League of American Bicyclists. The state has improved its national ranking from 26th, the group's rankings show. Tennessee's ranking was based on a number of key indicators, including infrastructure and funding that provide on-the-ground bicycle facilities; educational programs that promote cycling, and passage and enforcement of bicycle friendly laws that increase safety for riders of all ages. The League of American Bicyclists commended TDOT for developing a statewide bicycle plan, and for including a bicycle safety emphasis in its Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The annual rankings are published and used to encourage states to improve their bike-friendliness.

TN unemployment payouts 6th lowest in the country

In Tennessee, you are less likely than jobless in other states to get a benefit check. And if you do, it will be for less money, according to federal data. In the past year, Tennessee's average weekly unemployment check paid \$235 — sixth-lowest in the nation — and just 17 percent of the state's unemployed actually got benefits, ranking fourth-lowest among the states. Experts say Tennessee's low payouts and strict eligibility requirements, coupled with mismanagement of the state's unemployment program, leave them questioning whether Tennessee's system actually assists laid-off workers and buoys the economy. The legislature tightened eligibility last year and recently eliminated

payments for dependents, which unemployed families had been getting since 2009. According to statistics from the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Tennessee has the second-lowest cost of living in the country. Among the 10 states with the lowest cost of living, Tennessee's weekly maximum check of \$275 ranks lowest. States set their own standards for eligibility, and Tennessee's are among the most restrictive. In the past year, the labor department approved 48 percent of initial claims, turning away about 66,000 people. Workers also lost more appeals than they won.

TN cities among *Forbes*'s best for jobs list

Tennessee cities were named among *Forbes* Magazine's "Best Big Cities for Jobs." Nashville/Davidson, Murfreesboro and Franklin was ranked No. 2 in the big metro ranking, which "reflects the power of economic diversity coupled with ample cultural amenities, pro-business policies and a mild climate." To come up with the rankings, *Forbes* analyzed short, medium and long-term employment performance, and took into account both growth and momentum, whether it is slowing or accelerating.

State to create nine new recovery courts

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) announced plans to create new recovery courts that will be instrumental in fighting the state's mental health and substance abuse problems. Recovery courts are specialized courts that make use of intensive judicial supervision, treatment services, sanctions, and incentives to address the needs of nonviolent drug offenders. The state has been approved with a budget of \$1.56 million to establish nine new recovery courts that will target juvenile and adult offenders. Effective April 1, health care providers are required to use the state's controlled substance monitoring database in an effort to fight prescription drug abuse. This move is in addition to the pain management clinic registry created last year. The recovery courts will combine the services currently found in mental health courts and veterans courts to address mental health, and veterans affairs issues in one location, as well as to maximize the allotted funds. TDMHSAS officials are currently working with community leaders around the state to determine the best possible sites for the new courts.

TN improves in small business

Tennessee appears to be improving as a state for small businesses, according to a national survey. The Volunteer State improved its grade from B- in 2011 to B+ in 2012 in a small business survey conducted by Thumbtack.com and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The rankings are based on a survey of more than 7,700 small business owners nationwide. Tennessee earned a pair of "A" grades from small businesses for the ease of hiring employees and for its business-

friendly labor laws. The state ranked among the top 10 for establishing a new business. It was ranked No. 5 for its online resources for those starting a company.

Leaders break ground on new state veteran's home

National, state and local leaders lined up behind a row of golden shovels and broke ground, at long last, on the soon-to-be-realized Montgomery County Tennessee State Veterans Home. The new state veterans home will be the fourth, joining existing homes in Knoxville, Humboldt and Murfreesboro and is promised to be the best, serving an area with one of the largest per-capita veterans populations anywhere in the nation. Located at 250 Arrowwood Drive, the project will begin construction in August and require about 18 months to complete, with an anticipated grand opening expected sometime in 2015. The city of Clarksville and Montgomery County each contributed \$750,000, with the county donating the \$475,000 Arrowwood Road site. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs contributed \$14.6 million, and the state of Tennessee contributed \$10.8 million, including the \$4.3 million in Haslam's fiscal year 2013-14 budget.

TN veterans qualify for home loan discounts

Tennessee veterans and their families can now permanently qualify for discounts on home loans worth an average of \$100 a month. A state agency that promotes home buying has extended what was a pilot program to give military homeowners a break. Applicants would have to fall under certain income caps to get the half-percent reduction in their interest rate. Right now veterans could get loans as low as 3.1 percent. The Tennessee Housing Development Agency usually only works with first-time buyers, but it's waiving that requirement as well under a new program called "Homeownership for the Brave." According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Tennessee is home to more than half a million veterans. Active duty and Tennessee Guard are also eligible, as well as a surviving spouse.

U.S. Sen. Alexander "brokers" deal to save state's fish hatcheries

Sen. Lamar Alexander is again coming to the aid of fishermen. At a press conference, he announced that he "brokered" a deal to save the state's federal fish hatcheries. Federal budget cuts put three hatcheries in the state at risk, including one on Dale Hollow Lake, which produces more than 60 percent of all trout stocked in Tennessee annually. It is the only source for brown trout and lake trout in Tennessee — TWRA says its hatcheries do not have the water quality or space these species require. The \$2.7 million to keep them producing trout for three years is coming from the Tennessee Valley Authority. During this time, plans will be made to identify a source for long-term funding. Alexander also passed a bill out of the U.S. Senate that would put a moratorium on fishing restrictions below dams on the Cumberland River.

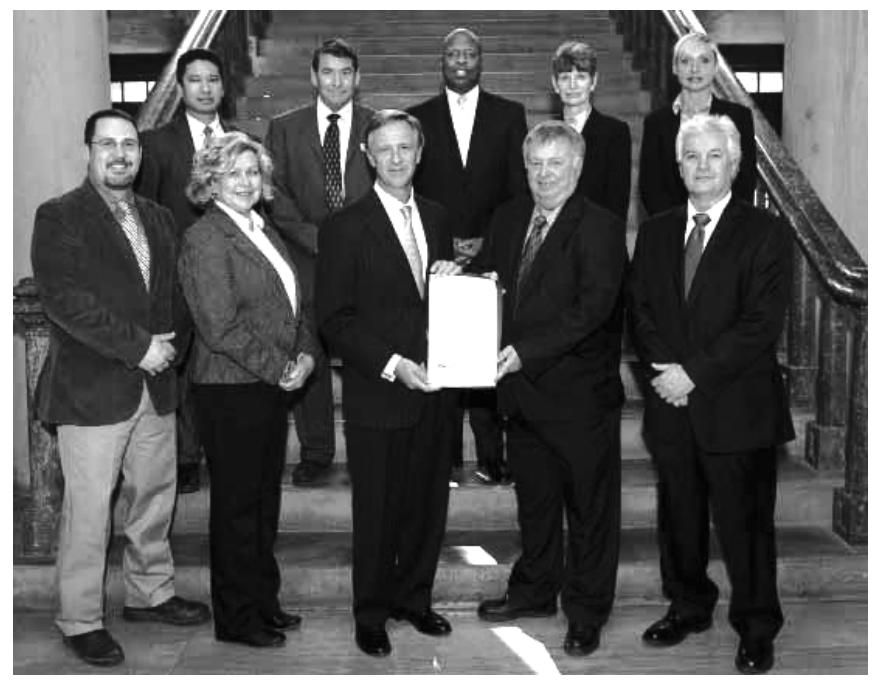
State Briefs are comprised from media reports from across the state and press releases from state agencies.



Photo: Philip Grey/The Leaf-Chronicle

National, state and local leaders broke ground on the Montgomery County State Veterans Home. Pictured from left to right: U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan, State Rep. Curtis Johnson, retired Command Sgt. Major Sidney Brown, State Veterans Commissioner Many-Bears Grinder, Gov. Bill Haslam, Montgomery County Mayor Carolyn Bowers, State Veterans Homes Director Ed Harries and other veterans home board members.

Gov. Bill Haslam proclaims May 19-25 Public Works Week



In attendance at the presentation of the proclamation for Public Works Week are front row, left to right: John Anderson, Stringfellow, Inc.; Loretta Hooper, Signal Mountain Public Works director; Gov. Bill Haslam; Ronnie Hammonds, Kingsport Streets and Sanitation manager; and Bill Yearwood, Bartlett Public Works director and president of the Tenn. Chapter of the American Public Works Association. Back row, left to right: Manny Belen, Memphis Streets Maintenance administrator; Guy Patterson, Goodlettsville Public Works director; Donald Reid, Metro Nashville Right-of-Way manager; Sharon Rollins, MTAS consultant; and Terri Troup, Metro Nashville technical specialist.

Oklahoma's emergency chief weathers 36 major disasters

TORNADO from Page 1

Even Gov. Fallin told reporters she deployed the National Guard before knowing what their exact mission would be after the storm.

At the briefing, Ashwood stood next to the governor behind a lectern, wearing a white shirt sleeve shirt with the logo of his agency. He fielded questions about funding formulas for safety rooms, which could protect occupants from tornadoes. But mostly he watched as the heads of state and local agencies updated reporters on relief efforts.

The county would be taking in loose livestock at the fairground. The insurance commissioner talked about providing mobile ATMs and protecting residents against fraud. The police, firefighters, school officials and utility executives updated residents on their progress.

"Ashwood is very much some-

one who prefers to be in the background, in support, allowing local elected officials and the governor to provide that very public and needed leadership. He will do absolutely everything that the state can to help disaster victims recover as quickly as possible," Sheets said.

Ashwood is well-known among emergency managers far from Oklahoma. He is a former NEMA president who is now leading the group's efforts to reform how federal disaster relief funds are administered. He is also known as a mentor and a coach, Paulison said.

"There's no secrets out there about who does well and who doesn't do well in these types of disasters," Paulison said. "He has a very calm demeanor. He doesn't run around with his hair on fire. He's very thoughtful about what he says. That commands a lot of respect."

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PEOPLE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The National Governors Association (NGA) announced Gov. Bill Haslam will serve as a co-chair of the new Health Care Sustainability Task Force. The Task Force will focus on state innovations that require the redesign of health care delivery and payment systems with the objectives of improving quality and controlling costs.



Haslam

Jim Henry has been appointed the permanent commissioner at the Department of Children's Services (DCS). Henry served as the commissioner of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities before he was appointed to interim commissioner of DCS in February.



Henry

Debra Payne will become the new commissioner of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD). Payne currently serves as deputy commissioner of program operations at DIDD, where she oversees two development centers, a statewide community-based service delivery system supported by more than 2,000 employees, 475 community providers and three regional offices.

A portion of state Route 266 will honor Mayor **Bob Spivey**. More commonly known as Sam Ridley Parkway West, a portion of the road, that runs from the Interstate 24 interchange east to Needham Drive, will be named the Bob G. Spivey Honorary Highway. State and local leaders say Spivey's leadership was instrumental in Smyrna's growth and retail development. Spivey served as mayor from 2001 to 2009.



Spivey

Brentwood's **Betsy Crossley**, will serve another term as mayor. Crossley served a two-year term four years ago. **Jill Burgin**, who was first elected as a city commissioner two years ago, will assume the title of vice mayor.



Crossley

Jeff McCormick, was recently named Goodlettsville's director of Community & Economic Development. McCormick is a community development professional, with more than 20 years experience. McCormick is currently the director of Economic Development for the McMinnville/ Warren County Joint Industrial Development Board.



McCormick

Dr. Jerald Ainsworth, dean of the graduate school at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga, has been named provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs. Ainsworth will assume his new responsibilities on June 1. He will work with interim Provost Mary Tanner on a transition plan for graduate school leadership.

Chris Dorsey will be the new Town Manager of Signal Mountain. Dorsey replaces Honna Rogers, who has accepted a position with the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. Dorsey formerly served as Red Bank city manager and is currently the budget director for Pasco County, Fla.



Dorsey

Bill Harpel is Clarksville's new chief of administration. The former bank employee is the twin brother of Phil Harpel, the current administrator of Montgomery County government, and has served on the Chamber of Commerce and Housing Authority.

David Bolling, town administrator of Newcastle, Maine, and former city administrator in Oliver Springs, has been hired as city manager of Kingston. He will replace Jim Pinkerton who retired in late April.



Bolling

Henry to retire senate seat

State Sen. **Douglas Henry**, 87, whose tenure goes back six decades, has decided to not seek re-election for his legislative seat in 2014, marking the end of an era for the Tennessee General Assembly.

The beloved Nashville Democrat was first elected to the state House of Representatives in 1955. He has held his current Senate seat since 1971.

"Sen. Douglas Henry is the type of legislator we all aspire to be," a joint statement from the House Democratic Caucus reads. "Through numerous administrations and changes in leadership, Sen. Henry has remained a stalwart advocate for fiscal responsibility and Tennessee values. There is no greater champion for the State of Tennessee than Sen. Henry."



Sen. Douglas Henry

First elected to the legislature in 1954 and a state senator since 1970, Henry said he looks forward to spending more time with his wife.

Alcoa's John Troyer receives prestigious ASPA award



The East TN Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration honored Alcoa Finance Director John Troyer as its "Public Administrator of the Year" at the Howard Baker Center. The ceremony was attended by elected and appointed officials, faculty and students and was held in conjunction with the University of Tennessee chapter of the Public Administration Scholastic Honor Society (Pi Alpha Alpha) induction ceremony. Pictured L-R are: Master of Public Policy & Administration Director Dave Folz, award recipient John Troyer, UT lecturer and Chapter President Joe Jarret.

Tennessee State Parks' Junior Ranger Program offers outdoor fun, adventure, educational opportunities

Do you know a child, age 6 to 14, who loves fun and adventure, exploring and discovering nature's secrets and spending time outdoors? The Tennessee State Parks' Junior Ranger Program offers excellent educational opportunities, designed to foster a love of nature and to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

There are two ways to become an official Tennessee State Parks' Junior Ranger. Interested kids ages 6-14 may attend a Junior Ranger Camp, slated for June and July at various parks throughout the state; or complete a series of activities found in the Junior Ranger Adventure Guide. To get started, sign up for a Junior Ranger Camp by con-

tacting the office of participating state parks. Free Junior Ranger Adventure Guides are available at any state park. To download a copy of the Adventure Guide or to find upcoming Junior Ranger Camps in your area, visit www.tnstateparks.com/junior_ranger.

Participants can choose their own path and set their own pace. Junior Rangers, along with their families, can enjoy exploring parks, touring visitor centers, attending park programs, hiking the trails and more.

The Adventure Guide is divided into four steps. Each step covers different topics and offers a selection of fun, hands-on activities.

Upon completion of each activity, the child gets one step closer to becoming a Junior Ranger. Topics in the initial two steps include safety, history, plants, wildlife, astronomy and water.

Step three involves the creation of a stewardship project. In step four, the adventure guide is taken to the park ranger or park office. Upon completion of the program, participants will take the Junior Ranger pledge, receive a badge and are sworn in as official Tennessee State Parks' Junior Rangers.

For more information about Tennessee State Parks, visit www.tnstateparks.com.

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Tenn. April revenues up 9 percent over last year

Tennessee revenue collections continued their positive growth trend in April with a net growth of 9.31 percent over April collections one year ago. Finance and Administration Commissioner Mark Emkes reported today that overall April revenues were \$1.5 billion or \$160.9 million more than the state budgeted.

Total collections in April marked the ninth consecutive positive growth month this fiscal year. Corporate Franchise and Excise taxes and collections from the Hall Income Tax contributed substantially to the large over collection in April. Sales tax collections, however, recorded the second negative growth month this year.

"We expect one very large Franchise and Excise tax month remaining in this fiscal year, but with sales tax collections performing below budgeted expectations, we need to closely watch our revenue and expenditure patterns," Emkes said. "National economists are warning states not to get overly confident during peaks of the slow recovery, so we are going to continue conservative budgeting to maintain stable financial conditions."

On an accrual basis, April is the ninth month in the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

The general fund was over collected by \$142.8 million, and the four other funds were over collected by \$18.1 million.

Sales tax collections were \$5.8 million less than the budgeted estimate for April. The April growth rate was negative 0.70 percent. For nine months revenues are under collected by \$38.9 million. The year-to-date growth rate for nine months was positive 1.48 percent.

Franchise and excise taxes combined were \$111.3 million above the budgeted estimate of \$360.8 million. For nine months revenues are \$267.8 million over the budgeted estimate. The year-to-date growth rate August through April was positive 13.42 percent.

Hall Income tax collections for April were \$46.6 million more than the budgeted estimate. For nine months collections are \$49.3 million above the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for the nine month period was positive 46.29 percent.

Inheritance and estate tax collections were \$2.3 million below the

April estimate. For nine months collections are \$10.5 million above the budgeted estimate.

Privilege tax collections were \$7.9 million more than the April budgeted estimate, and for nine months collections are \$25.7 million above the budgeted estimate. The year-to-date growth rate for the nine month period was 15.67 percent.

Gasoline and motor fuel collections for April increased by 6.69 percent, and were \$0.6 million more than the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for nine months was negative 0.49 percent, and collections are \$14.6 million below the budgeted estimate of \$631.0 million.

Tobacco tax collections were \$3.8 million over the budgeted estimate of \$22.3 million. For nine months revenues are under collected in the amount of \$6.9 million.

All other taxes for April were under collected by a net of \$1.2 million.

Year-to-date collections for nine months were \$288.1 million more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was over collected by \$284.4 million and the four other funds were over collected by \$3.9 million. The FY 2013 revised budget assumed an over collection of \$305.9 million in General Fund Taxes. Therefore, the amount of under collection, August through April, compared to what's in the revised FY 2013 budget is \$21.5 million (\$284.4 million minus \$305.9 million).

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2012-2013 are based on the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation of Dec. 19, 2011 and adopted by the second session of the 107th General Assembly in April 2012. They are available on the state's website at www.tn.gov/finance/bud/budget.html.

The State Funding Board met on Dec. 14, 2012, to hear updated revenue projections from the state's various economists. The board met again on Dec. 19 and adopted revised revenue ranges for 2012-2013. The revised ranges assume an over collection from the July 2012 budgeted estimate in the amount of \$203.0 million to \$287.3 million in total taxes and in the amount of \$224.2 million to \$305.9 million in general fund taxes for the current fiscal year.



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CITY ADMINISTRATOR

MUNFORD. The city is seeking resumes for the position of City Administrator. This position is under the general guidance of the Mayor and, more broadly, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. This position is responsible for overseeing an annual budget, exercising responsibility for planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (through department managers) the activities of all employees providing a broad range of services for the city through the following departments: Finance & Administration, Police, Fire, Public Works, Recreation, Human Resources, and Customer Service. Responsible for the development and implementation of operating policies and procedures and for monitoring compliance. Insures that city programs operate within state and federal laws. Works with the mayor and aldermen in overall program planning and policy development for the city. Must be able to positively interact with community leaders, the public, media and a variety of governmental boards and organizations. Requires a minimum B.S. or M.S. in Public Administration or a related field plus 10 years of successful experience in a senior management position, such position having had fiscal responsibility, human resource responsibility, and long range planning responsibility. Looking for accomplished assertive and forward thinking individual; strong emphasis on current knowledge of issues; strong interpersonal and communication skills. Requires proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Publishing, etc.). The city offers competitive salary and a full benefit package, including health, dental, and life insurance, retirement, vacation, and sick leave. Candidate must pass a physical and post-employment offer drug screen. Resumes may be sent to Mayor Dwayne Cole, City of Munford, 1397 Munford Avenue, Munford, Tennessee 38058 or e-mail to dcoble@munford.com. The deadline will be at the close of business (4:00 p.m.) June 14, 2013. The City of Munford is an EEO/Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion, color, disability, or national origin.

CITY MANAGER

CROSSVILLE. The city is seeking resumes for the position of City Manager. This position is under the general guidance of the Mayor and four member city council. Position is responsible for overseeing an annual budget. This position exercises responsibility for planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (through department managers) the activities of 165 full-time employees providing a broad range of services for the city through the following departments: Finance; Administration, Police, Fire, Public Works; Recreation; Human Resources, and Customer Service. Responsible for the development and implementation of operating policies and procedures and for monitoring compliance. Insures that city programs operate within state and federal laws. Works with mayor and council in overall program planning and policy development for the city. Must be able to interface with industry heads, the public, media and a variety of governmental boards and organizations. Requires a minimum B.S. or M.S. in Public Administration or a related field plus 10 years of successful experience in a senior management position, such position having had fiscal responsibility, human resource responsibility, and long range planning responsibility. Looking for accomplished assertive and forward thinking individual; strong emphasis on current knowledge of issues; strong interpersonal and communication skills. Salary is market competitive (range minimum \$72,933 to a maximum \$109,400). Salary negotiable DOQ. The city of Crossville offers a full benefit package, including health, dental, and life insurance, retirement, vacation, and sick leave. Candidate must pass a physical and post-employment offer drug screen. Moving expenses nego-

table. Resumes may be sent to Sally Oglesby, City Clerk, City of Crossville, 392 N. Main St., Crossville, TN 38555 or emailed to sally.oglesby@crossvilletn.gov. The deadline will be at the close of business, 4 pm, June 14, 2013. The city of Crossville is an EEO/Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion, color, disability, or national origin.

CITY MANAGER

EAST RIDGE. The city is accepting qualified applicants for the position of City Manager. Required qualifications are a bachelor degree in Public Administration and a minimum of three years municipal government experience. If applicants do not have the degree and municipal experience, they need not apply, as this is a city charter requirement and cannot be waived. Proven management and leadership, team building, communications skills, municipal finance and economic development experience preferred. City offers competitive salary and excellent benefits package. Closing date is July 1, 2013. Send resume to: City Attorney Hal North, Chambliss, Bahner, & Stophel, P.C., Liberty Tower, 605 Chestnut Street, Suite 1700, Chattanooga, TN 37450 or hnorth@cbslawfirm.com. EOE and TN Drug Free Workplace. The city website is www.eastridgetn.org.

CITY MANAGER

FOREST HILLS. The city, located within Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, is seeking applicants for City Manager. The current manager has announced his pending retirement. Experience in budgeting and budget management, legislative issues, planning and zoning, historic preservation and storm water management are high priorities. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a record of achievement and innovation that will allow the city to build upon its strong tradition of providing superior services to its residents and customers. The ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Management or a related field; a master's degree is preferred. Candidates will have substantial experience as a city manager or assistant city manager in a similarly sized community, with preference given to applicants with five years of municipal experience with broad and complex management responsibility. Candidates must be certified, or be willing and able to become certified, as a certified municipal finance officer and city recorder. Resumes, along with a cover letter and three professional references will be received at: The University of Tennessee, Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 226 Capitol Blvd., Nashville TN, 37219-1804, Attn: Dana Deem. The city has a competitive salary and benefits package; including retirement, health and life insurance, depending on qualifications. This position will remain open until filled.

CODES ADMINISTRATOR

MILLERSVILLE. The city has an immediate opening for a Codes Administrator to manage the operations of the Codes Department, including the enforcement of building and zoning codes and city ordinances. The employee shall keep and manage all departmental records and communicate with other city, state and federal departments to coordinate community development, stormwater program and floodplain maps. The employee must use independent judgment and must have strong verbal and written communication skills and the ability to work well with the public. The preferred candidate will have experience with the review and issuance of building permits and have a strong understanding of zoning and code regulations. Building inspector certification is preferred but not required. Duties also include other support services under the general supervision of the city manager. See job openings at www.cityofmillersville.com for more information. The position offers a competitive salary and benefit package that includes health, dental, and life insurance, paid holidays, vacation and retirement plan. A city application is required and is available at city hall or at www.cityofmillersville.com. Send application, resume and cover letter to: City of Millersville, 1246 Louisville Hwy., Millersville, TN 37072. EOE

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

LA VERGNE. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Director of Human Resources. The position reports to the mayor and city administrator and is responsible for all strategic human resources functions for the city. The HR Director works closely with the city administrator, the mayor and department heads and performs a variety of complex administrative, technical and professional work in directing and supervising the personnel systems of the organization, including classification, compensation, coordination of benefits and insurance administration, recruitment, selection, labor relations, employment law, compliance, training and development and performance review administration. Detailed job description and benefits information found by applying online at the city website www.lavergnetn.gov

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BRISTOL. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Economic Development Developer. The position will promote Bristol and plan strategies to identify, target and attract new business as well as assist existing business in operations and expansions within the city. The position, reports to the city manager, will manage the Economic Development Divi-

sion and be responsible for the city's economic development activities, including coordination of efforts and associated grant activities with various economic development partners including the countywide economic development agency; chamber of commerce, convention and visitors bureau; local, state and federal agencies; and private enterprise. A Master's degree in economic development, business administration, public administration, or related field is preferred; CECD certification desired. The candidate should have a minimum of seven years of relevant experience, preferably with a city government; however any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience, which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for the position, will be considered. Competitive salary and excellent benefits. Send resume and application immediately to City of Bristol, Attn: Human Resources Director, P.O. Box 1189, Bristol, TN 37621-1189 or electronic submissions may be emailed to hbale@bristoltn.org or be faxed to 423-968-7197. The position is open until filled. See www.bristoltn.org to download an application and review a summary of benefits. The city of Bristol is EOE.

PERSONNEL OFFICIAL

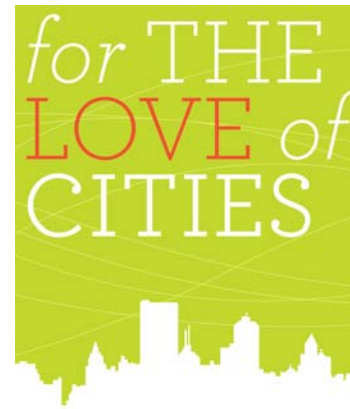
GALLATIN. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Personnel Official. The city employs approximately 350 full-time and an additional 150 seasonal and part-time employees. Reporting to the Mayor, the Personnel Official oversees the city's personnel management programs including classification and pay, employee relations, affirmative action, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, and benefits administration; should be proficient in developing policy and procedures; does related work as required; attends all City Council meetings. Minimum qualifications include any combination of education and experience equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university. Applicant must possess a driver's license valid in the State of Tennessee. Current salary range is \$53,145 - \$84,960 with excellent benefits. A detailed job description can be obtained by emailing: rosemary.bates@gallatin-tn.gov. To apply, please submit cover letter summarizing reasons for interest and qualifications, detailed resume including salary history, and three professional references. Applications will be received through June 26, 2013. Send applications to: Rosemary Bates, Special Projects Director, Mayor's Office, 132 West Main Street, Gallatin, TN 37066 or rosemary.bates@gallatin-tn.gov. Phone: 615-230-7953. The City of Gallatin is an EOE, drug-free employer with policies of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or military service.

TAEDC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The TAEDC Executive Director is a full-time position that reports to the Board of Directors of the Tullahoma Area Economic Development Corporation (TAEDC) under an agreement between the TAEDC and the city of Tullahoma. This position is directly responsible for the recruitment, retention and growth of all of the diverse economic sectors within the city. The Executive Director is a full-time position which performs a variety of administrative, technical and professional functions in the administration, management and implementation of the plans and programs of the TAEDC. Annual salary is within the range of \$57,211 - \$85,817. Please forward a resume with a letter of interest to Ms. Casta Brice, Human Resources Director, City of Tullahoma, P. O. Box 807, Tullahoma, TN 37388 or email to cbrice@tullahomtn.gov by close of business June 13, 2013. For more information, go to the Employment section at www.tullahomtn.gov. A job description is available upon request. EOE

POLICE CHIEF

NEWBERN. The town is accepting resumes for the position of Police Chief. Applicants should have a minimum of eight (8) years police experience, with a minimum of three (3) additional years of command experience. The applicant must be POST certified, possessing a degree in criminal justice, or a related field, preferable but not required. Successful applicant must satisfy all the requirements of the Charter of the city of Newbern. Salary range \$45,000-\$50,000, depending on experience and qualifications. Applications accepted until July 1, 2013. No phone calls please. Only successful candidates will be notified on or before July 15, 2013. Resume's should be sent to: "Resume" - Mayor Olen Parker, Town of Newbern, P.O. Box 460, Newbern, TN. 38059. EOE



TML Annual Conference June 22-25, 2013 Memphis, TN

CONFERENCE, from Page 1

regarding business licenses; and makes other revisions to present law regarding business taxes.

Mark Morgan, president of SHERRILL MORGAN, will present an informational workshop featuring the latest updates in healthcare reform. With so many aspects of health care reform unknown and the rules constantly changing, it is all but impossible for employers to stay up to date. Morgan will take you on a crash course of everything you need to know including hot topics such as "Pay or Play penalties," SBC requirements, and Exchanges.

Other conference sessions will focus on performance based budgeting, the "dos and don'ts" of grant writing, and how to successfully recruit retail to your community.

The conference kicks off Saturday evening, June 22, with a Welcome Reception in the exhibit hall. Sunday, June 23, will feature the opening General Session, along with district meetings, workshops, and the Host City Reception. Monday, June 24, will be a day filled with educational workshops, and will wrap up with The Pool's fun-filled party complete with food and music. The Tuesday morning Awards Breakfast will bring the conference to a close.

To register for the conference or for more information on other workshops and speakers, go to TML's website, www.TML1.org.

Schedule At-A-Glance

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

8 - 3 MTAS / EOA
6:30 - 8 Welcome Reception

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

9 - 5 Registration
11 - 5 Exhibit Hall Open
11:30 - 12:45 Lunch / Exhibit Hall
1 - 1:45 District Meetings
2 - 3:30 Opening Session
3:45 - 4:45 Workshops
5:30 - 8:30 Host City Reception

MONDAY, JUNE 24

8 - 2 Registration
8 - 2 Exhibit Hall Open
7:45 - 8:15 Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 Workshops
9:45 - 10:45 Workshops
11 - 12:15 Second General Session
12:30 - 2 Lunch / Exhibit Hall
2:15 - 3:15 Workshops
3:30 - 4:30 Workshops
6:30 - 11 Pool Party

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

8 - 10 am Awards Breakfast

City Shirt Day

Sunday, June 23

TML is encouraging city officials to show their city's spirit by wearing shirts with their city logos on Sunday, the opening day of the conference.

Casual attire is recommended for Sunday's host city reception. Business casual is recommended for the conference.

Looking forward to seeing you in Memphis!



For the most up-to-date information, be sure to check our website www.TML1.org



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Dale Kelley (2010) Mayor, Huntingdon
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Tommy Green (2007) Mayor, Alamo
Tommy Bragg (2006) Mayor, Murfreesboro
Bob Kirk (2004) Alderman, Dyersburg
Tom Rowland (2002) Mayor, Cleveland
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ASSOCIATE PROFILE

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term returns on your investment?

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About Stacy Clayton and Jon Lancaster

After a recent life experience that altered her whole life's perspective, Stacy vowed to be a part of a company that offered a benefit of promoting family with the ability to make memories that last throughout multiple generations. With that unique concept she knew that she would have to help create this opportunity. Stacy asked a business man named Jonathan Lancaster to join her in making this concept a reality. Jon has more than 15 years in banking and financial planning. He knows firsthand from personal and professional experience the importance of planning for the unexpected life events that can affect your cash flow and your family's budget. He



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knows it's not always the major events that can be so devastating, but it could be a minor event without any financial protection that could destroy years of hard work.

As they collaborated, they had to look at the problems that decision makers were having in their organizations and what could be done to save money, build employee loyalty, and increase profit margins while the workforce is stressed, tired, and wanting to escape the daily chores of life. Also the employer has to find a way to offer a solution to absenteeism, employee engagement, while recruiting new employees.

For more information visit us at booth 607/609 at the TML conference and register for our Cancun Hotel stay. Or visit our website at ClaytonLancasterBenefits.com; or contact us at Stacy Clayton 901-268-4270, or Jonathan Lancaster 901-233-3704.

June 21-22 Elected Officials Academy Level II

TML Pre-conference Sessions at the Memphis Marriott Hotel

The UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) will host pre-conference sessions this year at the Tennessee Municipal League Annual Conference in Memphis. The sessions offered are part of Level II of the Elected Officials Academy program. Each session is designed specifically for the elected official and allows time for networking and sharing ideas with others.

These sessions will be informative for both seasoned and newly elected officials in Tennessee. Participants will also earn hours toward completing Level II of the Elected Officials Academy program. If all five sessions are completed, a Level II certificate will be earned.

Cost
\$200 per person. This one-time fee includes registration for Elected Officials Academy Level II. Meals and snacks will be provided both days.

Schedule of sessions
June 21: 4 -5pm
Municipal Human Resources
June 21: 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Municipal Water & Wastewater Operations
June 22: 8 -10 am
Municipal Fire Service Review
June 22: 10:15 am -12:15 pm
Municipal Public Works
June 22: 1 pm-3 pm
Municipal Police Review

To register, go to the website, www.mtas.tennessee.edu and click "register for a class." MTAS needs to receive payment in order to confirm your attendance for the class. For assistance with registration or payment, contact MTAS at 865-974-0411.

For more information, contact Kurt Frederick at 615-253-6385 or e-mail kurt.frederick@tennessee.edu



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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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TN Arts Commission reinstates Arts Build Communities Grant Program

The Tennessee Arts Commission has reinstated its popular Arts Build Communities (ABC) grant program. The ABC grant category is designed to provide support for arts projects that broaden access to arts experiences, address community quality of life issues through the arts, and enhance the sustainability of asset-based cultural experiences.

Through the ABC grant program, the commission seeks to build communities by nurturing artists, arts organizations, and arts supporters in each of Tennessee's 95 counties. ABC grants will be coordinated through a decentralized decision-making and distribution process in partnership with regional designated agencies.

A list of designated agencies is available online at: www.tn.gov/arts/guidelines/fy14/guidelinesabcfy14.pdf. "During the year that the Arts Build Communities program was on hiatus, the Commission received overwhelming feedback from past grant recipients and community members statewide about the value of the program," says Anne Pope, executive director of the Tennessee Arts Commission. "It reinforced our understanding about how important ABC has been in helping local communities preserve and grow their cultural assets."

According to Shannon Ford, director of community arts development for the Commission, awards will range from \$500 to \$2,000. The funds may be used for a variety of quality arts projects. Ten designated agencies administer the ABC program statewide on behalf of the Tennessee Arts Commission in 66 coun-

ties. For the 2013-2014 grant cycle the Commission will administer the program directly in 29 Middle Tennessee counties.

"ABC grants provide innovative arts experiences that are new or unfamiliar to community residents, and allow for the development of arts programming that strengthens social networks through community engagement," says Ford. "ABC grants also offer training for emerging artists and arts administrators to develop entrepreneurial skills or innovative strategies for building sustainability."

All events sponsored in part or entirely with ABC funds must be open to the general public. Community involvement is an important component in the planning and implementation of ABC projects.

Applications must be submitted online through the Tennessee Arts Commission's eGrant system by 4:30 p.m. (CT) on July 1, 2013. The ABC online application can be accessed beginning at 8 a.m. (CT) on May 31, 2013 at www.tn.gov/arts. Once there, scroll over "Grants" on the left side of the home page, and click on the eGrant button to access the ABC application. Faxed, mailed, or hand delivered applications will not be accepted.

Prior to submitting an application, qualifying organizations should discuss the program or project proposal with the designated agency, or the Tennessee Arts Commission representative.

For more information on the ABC grant program contact Shannon Ford, director of community arts development, at 615-532-9796 or e-mail: Shannon.ford@tn.gov.

Smarter development strategies can increase revenues, save money

STRATEGIES from Page 1

likely to be generated by the project's residents. At \$3,370 per unit, The Gulch generated more than double the revenue of Bradford Hills (\$1,620/unit) and two-and-a-half times as much as Lenox Village (\$1,340/unit).

The Gulch project also provided the greatest fiscal surplus of the three scenarios, generating \$115,720 per acre in net revenue compared to the net revenue generated by Bradford Hills of \$100 and the net revenue of Lenox Village (\$780).

"This research shows that smart growth development pays back its investment far better than conventional suburban development," said William Fulton, Vice President of Policy Development and Implementation for Smart Growth America. "Leaders across Tennessee and across the country can use this strategy to improve public budgets for decades to come."

Tennessee towns and cities focusing on downtown and neighborhood redevelopment are creating new opportunities for public and private reinvestment and similar fiscal advantages. In CRT's ten-county Middle Tennessee region, every county seat and many smaller towns have redevelopment efforts underway that are geared to make the most of their community's character and assets in support of their residents' quality of life and local economies.

This study shows that these same efforts support sound municipal fiscal management and provide for long-term financial returns for local governments, as well as property owners and taxpayers. Choosing and supporting financially responsible development types will be a crucial component of municipalities' future fiscal health and overall economic success in tourism, small business development and related economic development efforts.

Nearly all of Tennessee's economically successful places use these reinvestment strategies. Think of Franklin, Chattanooga, Covington, and Nashville as a few examples. These cities are building in a way that will benefit them for the long term. That's the basis of



Lenox Village, a smart growth style development in a 'greenfield' location, at \$1,300 per unit, had the lowest cost per unit for providing ongoing public services.



In the Smart Growth America study, Bradford Hills, a conventional suburban residential subdivision scenario, directly across the street from Lenox Village, cost the most at \$1,600 per unit.

Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Quality Growth work, in helping more leaders figure out how to use these same strategies in their communities in support of their financial objectives.

The Nashville findings were included in a national report by Smart Growth America entitled *Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development* released earlier this week.

The report compares development scenarios from across the country and quantifies how much municipalities can save, on average, by using smart growth development strategies. The report also examines how much revenue smart growth development generates compared to the alternatives.

Read the full report at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/building-better-budgets.

TVA develops innovative strategies to avoid federally imposed debt ceiling

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has developed a number of innovative financing methods in order to stay within the \$30 billion debt ceiling imposed on it by Congress in 1980. These include the use of sale-and-lease back and lease-and-lease back arrangements.

A sale-and-lease back arrangement between TVA and an Electric Generation & Transmission Cooperative could affect the distribution of PILOT funds and negatively affect county and city funds, as was the case in Mississippi following the sale of the Southaven plant. Under that arrangement, TVA operates the plant and all sales of electricity produced are through TVA. Revenues are counted as TVA revenues and subject to the PILOT allocation to states. Although the fact that TVA doesn't own the Southaven plant doesn't affect the PILOT allocation across states, it does affect the PILOT distribution to the state of Mississippi.

With a sale-and-lease back arrangement, the amount of the TVA PILOT that goes through any particular state's own allocation formula would decrease to the extent that the new plant owners must pay taxes to the state or local governments. For Mississippi this was a reduction of \$6.0 million in its allocation for 2012.

So far, generating expansions in Tennessee have been through lease-and-lease back agreements. An ex-



The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has developed a number of innovative financing methods in order to stay within the \$30 billion debt ceiling imposed on it by Congress in 1980.

ample is the natural gas combined cycle plant built in 2010 in East Tennessee and leased to a private company in January 2012. The company paid TVA \$1 billion for the lease and leased the plant back to TVA for 30 years. The plant is managed by TVA. This lease arrangement changes neither the ownership of the property nor TVA revenues and so has no effect on the PILOT across states or with Tennessee.

The Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Rela-

tions is charged with monitoring the effects of the Electric Generation and Transmission Cooperative Act and recommending changes as appropriate and reporting annually to the Tennessee General Assembly. In this year's report, the Commission noted that TVA's estimated payments in lieu of taxes for the region for federal fiscal year 2012-13 are \$43 million less than the \$579 million in actual payments for federal fiscal year 2011-12.

This is only the second time since 2000 that a decrease from one year to the next has occurred. The estimated decline in payments results from the loss of one of TVA's largest customers and the continuing slowdown in economic activity stemming from the recession, as well as other factors.

This estimated decline amounts to approximately \$1.5 million in distributions to Tennessee county governments and municipalities, and approximately \$2 million to the state and its agencies. While the report noted some future concerns, the commission sees no immediate need for further legislative changes.

The full report is available on TACIR's web site at www.tn.gov/tacir/pubs_by_date.html.



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In Morgan County yellow school buses can also be green

BY JAN COMPTON
TDEC Sustainability Office

In August 2012, Morgan County Schools became the first school system in Tennessee to use compressed natural gas (CNG) and propane, also referred to as liquid petroleum gas (LPG), to power three school buses. The project required preparation and planning to determine which buses to purchase, as well as identifying fueling options, driver training and other logistics.

School buses that use alternative fuels are a growing trend nationally and Morgan County chose to set the standard in Tennessee. They overcame these challenges to create a great pilot project which demonstrates environmental protection, decreased dependence on foreign oil and improved safety for students, bus drivers and the general public.

Morgan County, with a population of just over 20,000, has approximately 3,300 students enrolled in the eight schools within the district. They currently have a fleet of 45 buses that travel almost 556,000 miles per year. Director of Schools Dr. Edd Diden, along with other past and present school leaders, was influential in scoping out the new project to make the school system more sustainable. Project planning began in 2009 when Dr. Diden and former bus maintenance supervisor, David Armes, contacted East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition (ETCFC) Executive Director Jonathan Overly to learn more about alternative fuel options.

Determining fueling infrastructure options prior to purchasing the buses was vital. Citizens Gas Utility District, Morgan County's local natural gas utility, had conveniently started plans to install a public CNG station to fuel local fleets, and the logistics were worked out for fueling the CNG bus there. Citizen's Gas also helped determine that placing a tank at the school maintenance facility would be best for convenient propane refueling. The county was also able to initiate a project to build a new maintenance and facility building. The new building made it much easier to plan and develop the bus technology.

Morgan County purchased one large bus that runs on CNG and two smaller buses that run on propane. The large bus is a Type D or flat-front rear-engine bus which is one of the largest school buses on the market. The large bus is used to transport students grades K-12 from the south-



The Morgan County School system, with a fleet of 45 buses that travel almost 556,000 miles per year, contacted Jonathan Overly, East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition (ETCFC) executive director (left) to learn more about alternative fuel options. Also pictured is Morgan County Director of Schools, Dr. Edd Diden.



ern parts of the county to several schools in and around Wartburg. The smaller buses are Type A buses consisting of about 20 seats and are used to transport special education students. These buses cost \$34,000 more than their traditional counterparts, but approximately \$1.50 less per gallon to fuel. The return on investment is estimated to be approximately 5-6 years for the propane buses and 8-10 years for the CNG bus. They are used for 17 years, allowing 7-12 years for reaping financial benefits following the payback period. The Alternative Fuel Excise Tax Credit, which covers infrastructure and fuel costs, was extended through this year and is retroactive for 2012. Operators can receive 50 cents per gallon in tax credits for using propane and CNG. On Saturday, Nov. 10, 2012, Morgan County Schools invited the public to see the new transportation and maintenance facility and buses to learn more about them. School leaders, bus drivers, news media and others were able to tour and learn more about the project and the advantages of cleaner air in their community. Morgan County Executive, Don Edwards, said, "We are proud of and excited for the initiative that our schools, through the leadership of Dr. Diden, has taken. Dr. Diden is a visionary, not only in the academic strategies that push our schools to higher levels of achievement, but also in the practical aspects of running a school system. The CNG in-

vestment will help Morgan County and our country operate in a cleaner, more efficient manner."

One advantage to the project is improved air quality, which is very important not only for the safety of residents but also to strengthen ecotourism, a large contributor to economic development in the state. The Crab Orchard Mountains comprise a large area of Morgan County, which includes Frozen Head State Park and Lone Mountain State Forest. Case studies have shown that school buses fueled by propane emit 20% less nitrogen oxide, 60% less carbon monoxide and up to 18% fewer greenhouse gases than similar petroleum-fueled models. Buses fueled by natural gas demonstrate reduced greenhouse gas emissions and about a 90 percent reduction in particulates. The effect of older diesel bus emissions on children's health is creating a growing sense of urgency among parents, educators and school districts. Last year, the World Health Organization (WHO) opted to classify diesel fumes as a human carcinogen, which increased concern about children being exposed to the fumes while waiting at the bus stop or riding the bus.

Another advantage of using alternative fuel options is the reduction of dependence on foreign oil. Both propane and CNG are efficient, relatively inexpensive and domestically produced with comparable performance to traditional fuels.

Safety is very important for all

vehicles but schools have added responsibility for safe buses. Constructed to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, the buses have propane fuel tanks made of high strength steel. Another very important safety feature is the reduction in noise of these buses compared to traditional diesel engines. Drivers reportedly can hear what students are doing on the bus and can also be more alert to road conditions, hazards and traffic. Morgan County had to train their drivers as the new buses are set up a little differently, but the transition was very easy for them.

School districts nationwide are increasingly looking to propane as an option as they are motivated to reduce emissions and costs. Portland (Oregon) Public Schools began converting its bus fleet to propane in 1983 and currently has more than

300 buses operating on propane. Northside Independent School District near San Antonio, Texas, has operated propane-fueled buses for 32 years and has a current fleet of 355 propane buses. The successes of these projects have sparked new projects across the country.

Given the significant budgetary challenges schools face, being able to introduce a cleaner, money-saving option when purchasing new equipment clearly can make a real difference in terms of better air quality, enhanced health and safety, and economic viability. Dr. Diden and current transportation supervisor Keith Duncan have been contacted by other schools that are interested in alternative fuels for buses. Morgan County was the first to make this commitment in Tennessee, and they hope to increase their efforts for sustainability in the future.

Free workshop for small water systems operators in Tennessee

In an effort to create innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and improvement, The Environmental Finance Center at the University of Louisville, is working on a one-year project to promote sustainable financing and management for small water systems—or systems with 10,000 customers or less. As a result, under a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the center is hosting free one-day workshops in each state. The topic and location of the workshops will be determined by each state's Division of Water. Leadership workshops will also be hosted in each of the 10 EPA regions.

All costs of workshop attendance and materials, minus travel and food costs, are free, covered under an EPA Small Systems grant. Tennessee currently has workshops scheduled for June 13 in Knoxville and July 18-19 in Chattanooga. The schedule is as follows:

June 13: Knoxville, Financial Management and Planning Workshop from 9 am – 5 pm at the Tennessee Water Resources Research Center, University of Tennessee, Room 400A, U.T. Conference Center, Suite 311.

This workshop is for small water systems serving 10,000 or fewer people and is best suited for individuals who make financial decisions on behalf of water systems. Community and non-transient, non-community water systems of this size owned by governments, associations, private companies, subdivisions, mobile home parks,

schools, etc. are welcome to attend.

Topics will include rate setting, capital planning, affordability, and available loans and grants. To download the workshop flier or to register, visit: <http://efcnetwork.org/knoxville-tn-finance-workshop/> **July 18-19:** Chattanooga, EPA Region 4 Leadership Workshop held at Tennessee American Water, 1101 Broad Street. * Lunch will be provided for this workshop courtesy of Tennessee American Water. Times are: July 18, from 10 am – 5:30 pm and 8 am – 1:30 pm on July 19.

This workshop provides tools and approaches to assist local elected officials, clerks and other municipal staff to make effective short term and strategic long-term decisions that engage multiple stakeholders on complex topics. Also offered are communication techniques to build public support, project and fund development and training on environmental infrastructure and management topics in your community.

For a listing of scheduled topics, or to register for this workshop, visit <http://efcnetwork.org/chattanooga-water-leadership-workshop/>.

The University of Louisville's Environmental Finance Center is a member of the Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN), a university-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and improvement. The EFCN works with the public and private sectors to promote sustainable environmental solutions while bolstering efforts to manage costs.

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TDOT's three-year comprehensive transportation plan includes focus on safety, priority, planning

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

Somewhere in Tennessee, there's a brand new school by a railroad track, but students struggle to get there on time. The scenario was part of a broader discussion about the Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT) objectives and vision, as TDOT Commissioner John Schroer keynoted the recent POWER OF TEN summit in Nashville.

Fresh from rolling out the state's three-year, \$1.5 billion Transportation Improvement Plan, under the new federal MAP-21 funding bill—safety, project funding and prioritization, along with smarter transportation and land use actions, are at the forefront of Schroer's conversation.

Deemed a "thoughtful, balanced approach to transportation," by Gov. Haslam, the three-year multi-modal program features 80 projects in all in 47 counties, and 15 statewide programs, and funds several improvements to the interstate system, including the addition of truck climbing lanes, interchange projects and the construction of a three-mile stretch of interstate 69.

The plan's projects not only allow for improved community access, such as the diverging diamond interchange on I-40 at SR 66 in Sevier County, but provides opportunity for economic vision in the much anticipated interchange on I-65 at Highway 109 on the Robertson County-Sumner line. The project is part of a bigger plan to widen Highway 109 between Lebanon and Portland, where from I-65, drivers will be able to bypass Nashville and connect to I-40 and Highway 840 in Wilson County. The new plan also forges strong partnerships with local governments with the U.S. 51 (Elvis Presley Boulevard) in Memphis and SR 218 in Henry County.

But Schroer's primary attention always returns to the safety element. "I think safety is a critical issue and is our absolute No. 1 criteria for everything we do," he said. "It ranks higher than any other function. We're happy that MAP-21 did that for both big and large safety projects. We are concerned about the fatalities on roads and trying to make sure we cut them down. In 2012 we went up from 2011 and are trying to trim them down again this year."

The plan includes an expansion of TDOT's Intelligent Transportation System, with added camera and Dynamic Message signs on I-24 over Monteagle Mountain and on I-65 north and south of Nashville. "The state got an additional \$100 million for two safety projects, and since we're not building these super projects, safety projects can go a long way to help citizens," Schroer said.

Always a bright side

Although MAP-21 places a greater emphasis on high volume roads and modifies how transportation dollars are allotted to Tennessee, challenging the state's ability to deliver anticipated projects, there's a difference in the number of project coding options, which Schroer said can be beneficial.

"We had 107 different funding codes that we had to put projects in, which really made it difficult," he said. "A lot of the codes were like earmarks. We had to build the project to a specific code in order to get our dollars. Now, it's really about four to five codes that have significant dollars and our projects fit into those codes a lot better."

Federal funding is committed through Sept. 30, 2014. After that, Schroer concedes even he won't know the federal financing score until Oct. 1, 2014.

"The first year, we get the legislature to commit. The second and third years are instruments of what we want and where we think we will go, depending on funding and other things," he said. "MAP-21's push is for the national highway system. They've taken more dollars and put them toward the National Highway Performance Program. A lot of our dollars that were available for state projects, even though they are federally funded, have stayed with the federal highway. And that's not just interstates, there are federal roads that are not interstates."

Prioritizing a long range plan

One of Schroer's first tasks as transportation commissioner was to develop a process to prioritize the agency's projects. "Frankly, we

didn't prioritize projects before I got here," he said. "They were subjective in how projects were picked. What I wanted to do is make it very objective and tie it into our long range plan."

The department has since done weights and measures of all criteria, according to Schroer, with both senior staff and regular staff working together on rating projects according to importance.

"Now we have a good rating structure on our criteria, and apply that to every project to help us determine, on a more objective level, how our prioritization works. It all stems back to our mission statement, our strategic plan and long-range plan, even our freight study plan, to make sure we're going at things that we think are critical as we go forward." **Office of Community Transportation**

It takes Schroer back to the high school with the road problem and TDOT's new Office of Community Transportation (OCT). The office is intended to connect transportation and land use actions and instill smarter infrastructure investment practices at every level of Tennessee government.

"How I look at this department is that we need to be involved with our local communities and partners and understand what their needs and wants are and they need to understand ours as well," Schroer said. "We want to be involved in their long-term planning because a lot of times, communities don't look at the long-term implications of what they're doing as it relates to transportation. We want to work with them, talk about their long-range plans, and show them if transportation will be an issue, what we can do to help them. And if they make a bad decision, they need to know it will be on their shoulders."

Describing a typical scenario his department has faced before, Schroer described how a local community found the cheapest piece of land to build a new school, but they didn't think about future transportation issues.

"The school was built on land with a four-lane state highway right in front, except the school is on the other side of a railroad track that has little access, a two-lane road," he explained. "They needed to expand (the road) and wanted us to help by giving them the money. We couldn't, because it wasn't on the state highway system. Now, they're in a position where they can't get people onto the four-lane road, because the backup's horrendous. They're going to have to spend a lot of money crossing two railroads, to build a bridge. They would have been better off if they had picked a better piece of property with better access."

With both community planning and regional planning offices, the school scenario and other situations local governments encounter every day is what the new OCT office is all about. OCT representatives have a set goal to attend planning commission and school board meetings and meet with MPO's and RPO's.

"Right now, we have two OCT people in every region, and they're all planners by trade," he said. "They're going to be 100 percent of our first contact with communities."

That gas tax thing

As for the state's transportation plan, Schroer notes that the state funded portion should be pretty constant because it's purely from gas taxes — as long as the amount of miles vehicles travel doesn't change significantly.

Short-term, it's not a huge problem, but in the future—it's sure to change. In the 21st century, where "old" is the new "new," thanks to heightened interest in revitalization projects—it's an iconic twist for a nation to be saddled with an outdated transportation funding system. Today's planning efforts revolve around transit-oriented communities, and mileage, the cornerstone of gas taxes, will be a disappearing commodity, as the nation's cars get better miles per gallon, more electric vehicles hit the road, and more people decide to take the commuter rail, bike, or walk everywhere.

"How we fund transportation in general has to be looked at from a federal, national and state standpoint," Schroer said. "Just the fact that we're funding transportation on the amount of gallons we're burning in gasoline is really a dysfunctional, archaic way of funding."

A Congressional Budget Office report advised Congress to break its 20-year time warp with gasoline taxes at 18.4 cents per gallon, by 10 cents per gallon. However the inflation defying gas tax lived to see another year, as lawmakers chose to transfer \$41 billion from the federal government general fund to cover surface transportation expenses.

Reality paints the bleak picture of a broken Federal Highway Trust Fund, set to go bust by 2015, flanked by a nationwide momentum to change how transportation projects are funded on state and federal levels.

For the second year in a row, the nation's largest housing and transportation advocates backed the National League of Cities and other local government groups, to make their wishes known to Congress in regard to a funding increase for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). A letter, co-signed by 188 national and 2,234 state and local groups, including numerous cities and towns, pushed for "an increase to the 302 (b) allocation to the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) to the highest possible level in fiscal year (FY) 2014."

According to NLC, "THUD yields high return rates both socially and economically, promoting the well-being of communities by providing essential seed capital and program funding to enable public and private partners to carry on with critical transportation infrastructure, and to spur economic development.

"THUD has helped more than five million people: seniors, those with disabilities and everyday families afford stable housing," NLC said. "Yet, sharp cuts, even before sequestration, put more than 140,000 road, bridge, and transit projects in jeopardy, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of jobs."

States, too, are feeling the burn, experiencing the increased responsibility for a backlog of infrastructure projects, many are stymied by their own state fuel-taxes, and some are in the process or have already passed increases on gasoline taxes, such as in Maryland, Wyoming, Virginia, Kentucky and North Carolina, as well as parts of Alabama.

"Local governments, both cities and counties, have got to start working with the state on a statewide funding mechanism for transportation," said Rodney Carmical, executive director of The Tennessee County Highway Officials Association (TCHOA). "Some western states are looking at the tax based on miles driven. It's a new concept. But privacy issues about monitoring miles driven is the factor nobody wants to talk about. But today, you can be tracked by your cell phone."

Carmical expressed dismay about the state's current gas tax of



Photo by Victoria South

During the recent POWER OF TEN Regional Summit, Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner John Schroer describes the scope of TDOT's objectives and vision, and introduces the new Office of Community Transportation.

21.4 cents per gallon with concern that counties may not be getting their fair share of the funding pie.

"From the county standpoint, we're losing our infrastructure. We've got approximately 57,000 miles of road we're responsible for and local governments are 84 percent of the road miles in Tennessee. I've been told by people in administration that we are preparing to work on a plan, but as far as I know, local governments have not been offered a partnership."

"We've had situations in the past where we've had a problem maintaining our level of funding. For cities it's based on population. But for counties, it's based on sharing 50 percent equally. It means Shelby County and Moore County share the same half that month. And then 25 percent based on population, and 25 percent on land area, not road miles."

As a traditional "pay as you go" state, Tennessee foregoes transportation debt and the trappings of interest rates, something Gov. Haslam or Commissioner Schroer doesn't anticipate will change anytime soon.

"We are one of five states in the nation that has no transportation debt, which means all of our money, instead of going to principal and interest, goes to roads," Schroer said. "Consequently, because of that, our roads are ranked by federal highways as the third best roads in the nation. It means we are doing a good job at what we're doing."

But the Commissioner also notes the state is currently looking at alternatives for transportation funding. "Tolling is an option, not the

only one, but lots of states are using tolling and other forms of additional revenue," he said. "We're looking at what states are doing to see if it is applicable to us or would be something we would be interested in."

"Anybody who uses the roads should pay a fee," Carmical offered. "You have to have a certain amount of traffic to be able to fund toll roads, as they're supposed to pay for themselves over a period of time. In Tennessee, there's only a couple of projects that would qualify. It's the same way with partnerships in private enterprise. So far, in Tennessee, there hasn't been an opportunity to make money with transportation. We need to raise the automobile license fee, registration and tags. Where in the world could you drive a vehicle for \$24 a year?"

Carmical re-emphasized local governments' desire to be part of the process. "We would love to work with the states on a plan. Tennessee has undergone at least three legislative studies about how to raise money and it always comes back to the same answer, a fuel tax. We had legislation two years ago that would raise the gas tax a penny a year for five years and could not get a Senate sponsor."

According to TCHOA, it costs more than \$100,000 a mile to asphalt a road. "So \$100,000 plus for every mile of resurfacing, is \$1 million for 10 miles," Carmical said. "How many counties can afford that? If you don't have enough money to resurface the roads, then you're better off to plow them up and turn them back to dirt. You can maintain dirt, you can't maintain asphalt."

Major dilemma facing Highway Trust Fund

BY RYAN HOLEYWELL
Governing Magazine

The Highway Trust Fund won't be able to meet its obligations come 2015, according to a statement by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to the House Budget Committee.

Federal lawmakers, the report says, would have to cut transportation spending by 92 percent or raise the gas tax by more than 50 percent in order to bring revenue and spending in line.

The Highway Trust Fund, which gets its money from taxes on gasoline and motor fuels, is the source of money for federal spending on highways, bridges, roads and transit. The fund has struggled for years to remain in the black -- ever since federal transportation spending started exceeding the dedicated taxes used to pay for it.

As Americans continue to drive less, and fuel efficiency continues to improve, the gas tax -- currently at 18.4 cents per gallon -- will be a financially unsustainable way of paying for transportation infrastructure going forward, many academics say.

Since it hasn't been raised in 20 years, the gas tax's purchasing power has dramatically declined. (It would be about 29 cents per gallon today if it had been indexed to inflation, according to the



CBO.) While academics and transportation advocates almost universally agree with the idea of either increasing the gas tax or developing other fees to generate more reliable transportation revenue, neither of those ideas have gained traction in Congress.

The surface transportation bill, MAP-21, expires at the end of the 2014 fiscal year. The CBO writes that bringing the trust fund into balance after that would require cutting federal transportation spending from \$51 billion to \$4 billion, raising the gas tax by 10 cents or some combination of the two.

Another option -- one that's become Congress's favorite as of late -- would be to bail out the fund with general fund revenue. Indeed, when Congress passed last year's highway

bill it neither increased revenue nor made cuts. Instead, it used general fund offsets to maintain transportation spending levels.

"There is no painless way out of the dilemma facing the [Highway Trust Fund] in coming years," Bob Poole, director of transportation policy at the Reason Foundation, said in a statement. "There seems to be very little political support for increasing federal fuel taxes, and no other source of new revenue is on the horizon."

Indeed, since 2008, Congress has transferred \$41 billion to the trust to keep it afloat, with another \$12.6 billion authorized for 2014. Another \$14 billion transfer would be needed to prevent the projected shortfall in 2015.