

Why Cities Matter



Providing safe, clean, and reliable drinking water is a critical city service. Investments in drinking water and wastewater systems protect public health, aid in protecting the environment, provide fire protection, and ensure that there is an adequate water supply to support the state's growing population, businesses, and industries.

UT's Annual Governor's report says economy will see stronger growth

After five years of sluggish recovery, the US and Tennessee economies are poised for strong growth in 2014 and 2015.

Despite the slow pace of the recovery, many indicators—including an increase in consumer confidence, rallying stock market prices, and rising home prices—point to brighter growth prospects in the quarters ahead, according to the forecast in the *2014 Economic Report to the Governor of the State of Tennessee*.

The study, prepared by UT's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER), predicts the course of the state and national economies by examining many fiscal factors and trends.

Household net worth grew by almost 10 percent in 2013, surpassing its pre-recession level for the first time.

"As a result, consumers spent more and firms were more eager to hire," said Matt Murray, CBER associate director and the report's author.

The economy added about 2.2 million jobs in 2013. The unemployment rate also fell by more than a full percentage point over the course of the year, down to 6.7 percent in December 2013—the lowest it has been since late 2008.

For the third straight year, construction and manufacturing sectors showed payroll employment growth, adding 164,000 and 60,000 jobs respectively.

The rebound of the housing sector that began in 2012 continued into 2013. Housing starts increased by 19 percent from 2012 to 2013. Rising home prices from 2012 also continued into 2013.

"Despite its solid performance, the housing sector still has a long way to go to recover fully," Murray said. "Sales of new houses are still

Host of legislators to speak at Legislative Conference

A host of prominent state officials are set to speak at the Legislative Conference, slated for March 17-18 in Nashville at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown.

Both speakers, Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey and House Speaker Beth Harwell, will address TML members during the two-day event.

Also on the agenda are: Sen. Ken Yager, chairman of the Senate State and Local Government Committee, and Rep. Matthew Hill, chairman of the House State and Local Government Committee; and Sen. Randy McNally, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Rep. Charles Sargent, chairman of the House Finance Committee.

City officials will also hear from state Comptroller Justin Wilson, as well as key staff members from the state Treasury Department. Jill Bachus, TCRS director, and Steve Curry, first deputy treasurer, will provide an update on the Tennessee

Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS).

And as in years past, city officials will gain insights and perspectives from journalists covering the Capitol Hill beat during a moderated media panel scheduled for Monday afternoon.

Conference registration opens at 11 a.m. on Monday, March 17, followed by a buffet lunch at 12 noon. The conference will kick off at 1 p.m. and run through 4 p.m. on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday, March 18, things will get underway at 7:30 a.m. with a breakfast served until 8 a.m.. The conference program will begin at 8 a.m. and continue until 9 a.m.

City officials are encouraged to use their time in Nashville to attend Monday evening floor sessions and Tuesday morning committee meetings, as well as schedule time to visit with their legislators.

The two-day conference provides an excellent forum for city officials to interact with their legislators and to be updated on the many legislative issues being addressed by the 108th Tennessee General Assembly.

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

To register on line, go to www.TML1.org. Contact the TML offices at 615-255-6416, for more information.

We look forward to seeing you in Nashville next month!



Ramsey



Harwell



Wilson



Yager



Hill



McNally



Sargent

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Monday, March 17

- 11 am Registration
- 12 pm Buffet Lunch
- 1 pm Welcome
- 1:15 pm Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey
- 1:30 pm Sen. Ken Yager
- 1:45 pm Comptroller Justin Wilson
- 2 pm TML Staff
- 2:30 pm Steve Curry
Jill Bachus
State Treasury
- 3 pm Media Panel
- 3:45 pm Sen. Randy McNally
- 4 pm Adjourn
- 5 pm Floor Sessions

Tuesday, March 18

- 7:30 am Breakfast
- 8 am Rep. Charles Sargent
- 8:15 am Rep. Matthew Hill
- 8:30 am Speaker Beth Harwell

Chattanooga builds transparency, innovation as Code for America city

VICTORIA SOUTH
Communications Coordinator

"Am I dreaming or are you real..." The hip Chattanooga Convention & Visitors Bureau commercial where riverboats look like toys and people move in fastracked animation, mirrors Chattanooga's innovative spirit and openness to technology—which will be put into practice as a Code for America (CfA) city. A California-based non-profit, CfA pairs web developers with cities across the U.S. to develop tech solutions that improve the relationships between citizens and government. CfA fellows and government staff work together for a year to build apps, foster new approaches to problem solving throughout city hall, and tackle issues communities are facing.

And in a generation where even Grandpa is on Facebook and citizens seek information far beyond a front row seat at the city council meetings, the fellows are a welcome sight in the self-proclaimed Gig City, where Chattanooga's 170,000 businesses and homes have access to the fastest internet speeds in the Western Hemisphere.

"I am committed to a more transparent, and innovative government,



Photo courtesy of Open Chattanooga

Jason Denizac, Jeremia Kimelman and Giselle Sperber, Code for America fellows, selected from among the top web designers and software developers from across the country and around the world, settled in recently at Chattanooga's City Hall, where they, city staff and local developers, will begin developing and testing open source web apps to improve city services built around two of Chattanooga's top priorities—safer streets and civic engagement.

and opening up data is an important way to make government more accessible to our citizens," said Mayor Andy Berke, who initiated the CfA application process last summer in partnership with local data brigade Open Chattanooga. The tech-savvy, grassroots organization is becoming known for its public hack-a-thons and open source meetings at the city's public library and other venues across town, where Chattanooga's developers, designers, writers, and residents are brainstorming ways to use the city's public data effectively.

Open source refers to a program in which the source code is available to the general public for use and/or modification from its original design free of charge. Open source code is typically created as a collaborative effort in which programmers improve upon the code and share the changes within the community.

"Open data is a more technical approach to government data with some big advantages," explains *Digital Communities* reporter Wayne Hanson.

"A programmer can dip into the

content of an open data site, and instead of just copying and pasting data from it, can use an application programming interface (API) to link to live data sets on the site," he said. "These open data sets are machine-readable, meaning they can be manipulated by computer, merged with other data sets, mapped, etc., revealing new information and insight—like how many minutes it will take for the next bus to arrive, or cross-linking political contributions with successful legislation efforts."

The city's CfA interest drew the attention of the Benwood and Lyndhurst Foundations, which contributed \$250,000 in private funding in addition to the \$180,000 the city provided.

"This initiative asks the important question, 'How can technology make our community better?'" Sara Morgan, president of the Benwood Foundation, notes. The Foundation was instrumental in helping the Chattanooga Library have the ability to host all the data for the CfA programmers and participants to access, a concept considered to be cutting

What cities need to know about ACA's employer mandate rules

BY NEIL BOMBERG
National League of Cities

On Feb. 12, the U.S. Department of Treasury issued its final employer mandate rules governing large employers (those with 50 or more employees) under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Known as the "employer shared responsibility" or "employer mandate" rules, these rules require that employers with 50 or more full-time and/or full-time equivalent employees provide those employees and their dependents with affordable health care coverage that meets specified standards, or face financial penalties.

When the rules were released,

what garnered the most media attention was the portion of the rule that states that employers with 50 to 99 full-time workers have one more year to comply with the law. This means they will not have to comply with the shared responsibility provisions until Jan. 1, 2016, after which they will be subject to any and all penalties and fees if they fail to comply with the ACA.

From the perspective of cities, however, this provision may be the least important.

The rule includes many other provisions, including those pertaining to seasonal employees and volunteer employees including first responders that are very important to cities and will go into effect on Jan.

1, 2015.

Specifically, the rule:

- Clarifies the meaning of the term governmental entity to include "the government of the United States, any State or political subdivision thereof, any Indian tribal government, or any agency or instrumentality of any of the foregoing";
 - Reiterates that a large employer for purposes of the ACA is one that within the preceding calendar year employed an average of 50 or more full-time and full-time equivalent employees;
 - Grants employers a 12 month "look back" period to determine whether an employee is full- or part-time;
- See *ACA* on Page 4

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



ARLINGTON

MicroPort Orthopedics, the sixth largest multinational hip and knee reconstruction company, celebrated the grand opening of its global headquarters in Arlington. The recent acquisition by MicroPort Scientific Corporation of the OrthoRecon business from Wright Medical Group, Inc. led to the establishment of MicroPort Orthopedics. MicroPort now holds U.S. manufacturing, global infrastructure, logistics and operations in the top four global orthopedic markets, as well as established hip and knee franchise brands. MicroPort Orthopedics' headquarters is staffed by a workforce of nearly 600 employees from Tennessee and the surrounding area.

DICKSON

The city's fire department is teaching home fire and hazard safety to local students with the department's new Modeltech International Hazard House – a replica play house that lights up, projects sound, and simulates an electrical arc and smoke via a remote control. The 80-pound collapsible house includes three levels/floors – a basement with an office and garage; a kitchen and living room with a fireplace, on the middle floor; and a bathroom and bedroom on the top level. A stairway with trip hazards, connects all three levels, and smoke simulators quickly rises from each floor to the top level. Velcro flaps and tokens in each room illustrate potential hazards, like a roll of flaming paper towels over the stove top in the kitchen; or candles on a nightstand. Students remedy the hazards by flipping the Velcro flaps and using the props.

FARRAGUT

The East Tennessee Chapter of the United States Green Building Council (USGBC-ET) recently honored the town of Farragut's McFee Park with a Green Project Award. The park was designed by Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon, Inc. (BWSC), who provided architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering services and nominated the park for the award. The Green Project Award is part of USGBC-

ET's overall Green Light Awards program, which celebrates outstanding achievements, leaders and volunteers who have advanced sustainability in the East Tennessee region. Green Project Awards are given to projects that represent leading work in sustainable design, construction, and/or operation. McFee Park is a model of sustainable park design offering many environmentally sensitive and energy-savings features. These include photovoltaic solar panels on the large pavilion roof that provide partial power to the restroom buildings; bioswales that collect, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff; a permeable paver parking lot that reduces costs of typical stormwater management structures; native, low-maintenance trees, shrubs, and flowers; and LED light fixtures that offer lower power consumption and maintenance.

GALLATIN

Crews began work on the third phase of the Downtown Streetscape project in Gallatin. The project will include new sidewalks, new pavement, improved drainage, decorated pedestrian lighting, landscaping, brick or stamped-asphalt crosswalks, benches, trash cans and new signage along Main Street. The third phase, which is currently the last planned section, is being funded through a \$400,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation, of which the city is responsible for \$80,000. Once complete, the three sections will total \$3.5 million worth of work. The second phase of the project, which stretched along West Main Street from South Locust Avenue to Highway 31E, was completed in July 2012. The downtown square and sections of North Water Avenue and Main Street were included in the first phase of the project.

HENDERSONVILLE

The city obtained a new \$400,000 fire engine for Station 3 through a federal Assistant to Firefighters Grant awarded in 2013. A new \$850,000 ladder truck for Fire Station 5 was also purchased through a federal Community Development Block Grant awarded to the city in

2012. The city funded 20 percent of that cost. Engine 3 is currently in service and Ladder 5 is expected to be fully equipped and operational soon.

KINGSPORT

Downtown property values increased by more than \$8 million during calendar year 2013, according to the Sullivan County Property Assessor's records. Downtown area building permits for the year totaled \$1.4 million and property values have steadily increased for 15 straight years. "Downtown growth in valuation isn't attributable to any single, large building permit or development, rather there were many small remodeling and rehabilitation projects across the downtown area," said Jeff Fleming, assistant city manager for Development. Since 1999, total downtown property values have nearly doubled, increasing by \$72.5 million. Fleming serves as city staff liaison to the Downtown Kingsport Association and Model City Coalition. The information is gathered annually in compliance with Kingsport's designation as an official Main Street Community by the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development. The unprecedented flooding made 2013 a tough year for Downtown merchants, and the Downtown Kingsport Association plans to redouble its efforts to help merchants with marketing initiatives, promotions, special events, and economic restructuring.

KNOXVILLE

A Wisconsin-based packaging products company announced it will invest \$43 million in an expansion that will create 231 new jobs. WS Packaging Group Inc. said it will consolidate production it now has in four buildings in Knoxville and one in Powell into a single building in Westbridge Business Park in West Knox County. The company announced the investment, over the next two years, will include adding new equipment that will enable the company to increase production of digital label printing, flexographic printing, digital offset printing, and sheet-fed offset printing. The company provides packaging products to small businesses, high-volume manufacturers and consumer product companies.

KNOXVILLE

A former surgical center in East Tennessee is being transformed into a forensic pathology office. Knox County is expected to receive \$4.25 million in a budget proposed by Gov. Haslam for the morgue and autopsy unit that will serve a 22-county region. The project is expected to cost \$5.25 million overall, according to the county's purchasing director. The county kicked in \$1 million for the property purchase. Crews are gutting the Sullins Street building and qualified contractors are lining up for the job to install features for the autopsy center.

LEBANON

Novameta Specialty Products, a metal products manufacturer, will relocate its headquarters and manufacturing to Lebanon. The move to Wilson County represents an investment of \$8.6 million and will create 43 new jobs over the next four years. Currently headquartered in Wyckoff, N.J., Novamet has purchased the former Toshiba manufacturing facility in the Lebanon Industrial Center and plans to develop the site into a center of manufacturing businesses. The facility is located on 97 acres of land and is about 500,000 square feet. Novamet will have 350,000 square feet available for further development.

MEMPHIS

ServiceMaster, which has been in restructuring mode since spinning off its TruGreen division as a separate company, has eliminated 105 jobs at its corporate headquarters. A company spokesperson said the company is taking a fresh look at the overhead structures and associated costs to support its growth plans to ensure ServiceMaster is operating effectively.

MEMPHIS

Nike is in the midst of a \$301 million expansion of its Northridge plant in Frayser, a suburb of Memphis. The project means the company will create 250 new jobs and retain 1,600 existing local jobs. Nike officials said the expansion could have landed in another community, if not for a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) incentive that is expected to save \$57.8 million over 15 years.

Jackson kicks off month to encourage volunteerism



Photo by Megan Smith/The Jackson Sun

Last April, more than 50 organizations participated in Jackson's first Month of Miracles. Pictured: Ella Parham and Jeannie Harris move plants to a garden at Parham's home.

You don't have to wear a cape and a mask to be a hero — people are becoming heroes every day in Jackson by volunteering their time and energy to make the city a better place.

The Month of Miracles is an annual event created by the city of Jackson to encourage organizations and individuals, young and old, to help improve the community through acts of volunteerism.

The initiative helps people find a volunteer activity that suits their personality and skill set in hopes that they will continue to assist in the growth and strengthening of the Jackson community for future generations.

More than 50 organizations and

groups volunteered last year. In 2013, projects ranged from home repair and yard work to putting new shoes on the feet of children.

Residents are encouraged to help identify worthwhile projects that need volunteers.

A new website has been launched for the Month of Miracles that allows people to share project ideas online at www.miraclesinjackson.com. On March 1, registration will open for volunteers to pick the project that best suits their team's capabilities.

Volunteers are also invited to sign up for the Month of Miracles e-newsletter to stay up-to-date on the projects in Jackson and what resources volunteers may need.



Photo by Josh Cross / Gallatin News Examiner

More than 100 local leaders and medical professionals were on hand for the grand opening of TriStar Portland ER. Portland Mayor Ken Wilber said the facility brings peace of mind to local residents. The city has not had an emergency room facility since the closure of Portland Medical Center at the end of 2008. The new facility is the result of a \$3.8 million retrofit of the old medical center building.

MONTEREY

Monterey's board of mayor and aldermen have agreed to allow yard sales every Saturday during the farmer's market season. "We want the farmer's market here used," said Cultural Administrator Ken Hall, who hopes offering yard sales every Saturday will keep things busy during the summer months and help vendors sell more produce. "We are a small market area, and it's hard to keep vendors here when they can go to larger markets and make more money," he said. The farmer's market should be up and running by early June, with yard sales beginning the first Saturday in June.

MURFREESBORO

The Distinguished Budget Award has once again been awarded to the city by the Government Finance Officer Association's (GFOA). The award was presented for the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget. This is the third consecutive year the award has been presented to Murfreesboro for a distinguished budget. The GFOA award represents a significant achievement by the city, and it reflects Murfreesboro's commitment to meet the highest principles of governmental budgeting and adherence to the city's own financial policies. In order to receive the award, the city had to satisfy a stringent set of nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. The guidelines assess how well the budget serves as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device.

MURFREESBORO

Amazon is hiring more than 2,500 full-time workers at its order fulfillment centers around the U.S. with jobs available in Murfreesboro. The online retailer, last year, hired more than 20,000 people at its fulfillment centers, with more than half starting out as seasonal workers.

NASHVILLE

San Francisco-based Eventbrite announced plans to set up operations and hire 45 customer support workers. The city was one of several cities in the running for the new ticketing company's office to bridge the gap between the Southeast and Silicon Valley. The company is hiring and intends to have individuals trained and working by the first of April.

SPRING HILL

The Spring Hill Board of Mayor and Aldermen unanimously adopted a Neighborhood Sidewalk Program, allowing homeowners' associations or groups of neighbors to petition to request a sidewalk or multi-use trail to be installed in their neighborhood. To qualify, at least 65 percent of property owners abutting the proposed sidewalk must sign a petition and submit it to the Public Works Department. The idea is to improve pedestrian mobility and safety, and create walking connectivity to local schools, parks, transit facilities, and between multiple types of land uses, said Alderman Chad Whittenburg, who proposed the much requested program. City Administrator Victor Lay and city staff worked throughout 2012 and 2013 to pull property plats and catalog all disconnected sidewalks that have missing gaps. Duda digitally scanned in all the neighborhood maps creating an electronic archive of the city's existing sidewalks. The city generally budgets about \$100,000 annually for sidewalk and greenway projects. It currently has \$50,000 remaining in that fund this fiscal year, which ends June 30. For sidewalk projects chosen for funding, the city will pay up to 75 percent of the cost, depending on the need for the project, with the neighborhood funding the remainder. A smaller funding share could be provided for less critical projects in which an HOA is willing to put up at least half of the money.

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Chattanooga builds transparency as a Code for America city

CODE from Page 1

edge across the country.

"We're a unique city in that way in that we have an incredible public library that is working to provide digital information in the same way that they provide print information," said Stacy Richardson, Chattanooga's chief policy officer. "We have an open data portal on the library website right now and we're working to move as much public data as possible over to that portal. Libraries have traditionally always had the ability to standardize information and catalogue it, so we're working with them closely to make sure all that our data is up to a specific standard and is user friendly."

Chattanooga's trio of fellows, Jason Denizac, Jeremia Kimelman, and Giselle Sperber, are among the 31 top web designers, researchers, software developers and project managers selected by CfA from across the country and around the world as fellows in this year's program, gleaned from companies and government organizations such as Lockheed Martin and NASA.

The CfA crew were introduced recently by Mayor Berke at a downtown co-working space before settling in at city hall, where they will remain the entire month of February, researching whatever project they choose to take on. The team will

order to avoid confusion. We want to ensure people are accessing the information they need, and that they don't get overwhelmed or discouraged."

"There is utility in data once it's made available," notes Hanson. "And nothing beats utility like open data that can be captured, manipulated, compared, graphed and mapped."

In Collierville, for example, citizens got a preview recently of the town's latest interactive project, Map Gallery. The gallery will provide the public with access to the same maps and data that town staff currently use. The project features a general map of Collierville, a historic district map, parks and greenbelt map and a subdivision map along with community sanitation routes and school zoning information. Users can access parcel ID numbers, zoning of specific properties and links to the town's zoning regulations as well.

"Maps, both interactive and static, allow us to view and understand the relationships between various pieces of geographic information," said Kevin Bingham, Collierville GIS Manager. As an evolving product, new features will be introduced to Map Gallery periodically, such as flood plain information and the status of approved



Photos courtesy of Open Chattanooga

The Code for America fellows take in a view of downtown Chattanooga from Finley Stadium.

ority spending," Richardson said.

According to the *Chattanooga Times*, an Open Chattanooga Brigade developer is "configuring applications to build a working budget so residents could go online and compare what their tax dollars buy them in city services. Potentially, building their own hypothetical budgets."

"I think that's certainly the direction that we're moving to as a city, where everything we do should have some mechanism for citizen feedback and citizen engagement, so that we are constantly improving our services based on the feedback of the people who access them every day," Richardson said. "The fellows are discussing the development of a mechanism for public input throughout the budgeting process, as the departments submit proposals for funding—an easy mechanism for the public to review, rank and give feedback to the department."

Governing Magazine's Steve Towns notes there's economic value in putting government spending data on an easily accessible "government checkbook" site, however open government goals such as strengthening accountability, building trust and improving citizens satisfaction are more difficult to measure in dollars and cents.

In his article "Why Does Open Government Matter," Towns cites tools, such as the one developed by the University of Albany's Center for Technology in Government is designed to help leaders make better decisions on open government investments. The Open Government Portfolio Public Value Assessment Tool (PVAT), measures the social, political, strategic and government integrity value of open government initiatives.

Code for America

Code for America operates four basic programs: The Fellowship, the Peer Network, which is a national network of leaders in technology and staff from city government who provide targeted training, hands-on support and early access to new technology and cutting-edge data standards; The Code for America Brigade, government partners deploying powerful apps, co-hosting regular civic hacking events, and connecting with citizens to build better interfaces to government. Open Chattanooga is recognized as an official CfA Brigade, and Code for America International, an arm of the organization that helps jumpstart

Code for Germany and other countries across the globe.

More information about the CfA Fellows program is available at <http://codeforamerica.org/2014>.

More than 50 cities across the country applied for the Code for America fellowship this year. In addition to Chattanooga, the 2014 Code for America cities include:

- Atlanta, GA
- Charlotte, NC
- Denver, CO
- Lexington, KY
- Long Beach, CA
- Mesa, AZ
- San Antonio, TX
- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Warwick, RI



CfA fellows arrive at Chattanooga City Hall where they will work with the staff for the remainder of February.

return to CfA headquarters in San Francisco to network with other fellows, before returning to Tennessee to test their application at year's end.

The fellows are currently working with the city's staff and local developers to develop and test open source web apps to improve city services built around two of Chattanooga's top priorities—safer streets and civic engagement.

"We've talked about providing more detailed information about activity happening in neighborhoods," said Richardson. "As an administration, we're looking at providing crime analysis details along with neighborhood (crime) hotspot maps. We are in the beginning stages of getting all of this data up and online and we're training people on how to use the data and what it means, in

developments.

"The people of America need to start thinking of themselves as citizens again," said Jennifer Pahlka, executive director of Code for America. "And if you're a citizen, it's not just about the benefits you get, but also about the responsibilities."

Chattanooga's fellows will work to improve the city's internal processes as well, such as procurement, by networking with city departments to develop and determine effective solutions that use taxpayer dollars responsibly, according to Richardson.

"Some cities are already creating interactive budgets that allow citizens to say how they would utilize government dollars and where they would put the emphasis on pri-

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Gov. Haslam and first lady **Christy Haslam** were among the guests at a recent state dinner for French President **François Hollande** at the White House. The formal state dinner on the White House South Lawn, included food from across the country with entertainment provided by singer **Mary J. Blige**.



Haslam

Randy Boyd of Knoxville has been appointed to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). For the past year, Boyd has served as a full-time, unpaid special advisor to the governor for higher education, focusing on the "Drive to 55" initiative to bring the percentage of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications to 55 percent by the year 2025.



Boyd

Rep. Richard Floyd, Dist. 27-Chatanooga, announced he will not seek re-election in November. Citing a desire to spend more time with his family, Floyd noted that a need to recover properly from recent surgery prompted his decision. Floyd has served since 2007 and is currently a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, the House Local Government Committee and the House Local Government Subcommittee.



Floyd

Austin Edmondson, former Somerville city administrator, has been appointed interim town administrator of Chapel Hill in Marshall County.

Teresa Nichols will fill the term left vacant by the death of former Kingston council member **Kevin McClure**. Nichols has served previously on the council for four years.

The Old Timers Hall of Fame will be adding **Cleveland City Council member and Vice Mayor Avery Johnson Sr.** to its members.



Johnson

Retired from Maytag for eight years, Johnson has served on numerous boards and organizations including past president of Cleveland Toastmaster Club, Cleveland Evening Lion's Club, and 100 Black Men of Bradley County.

Cameron Ross is Germantown's new director of Economic and Community Development Services, replacing **Andy Pouncey**, who retired at the end of last year. Ross, 34, will implement the city's Economic Development Strategic Plan and Smart Growth strategy. A native of Madison,



Ross

Miss., Ross formerly worked in Cincinnati for the Environmental Protection Agency and for the city of Cincinnati. He most recently spent six years as a planner in charge of several projects focusing on neighborhoods, including a \$2.4 million federal grant to create land development codes.

Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver will be Union University's new president. Oliver will leave his position as president of East Texas



Oliver

Baptist University. Oliver will be the 16th president of Union University after a unanimous vote by Union's board of trustees. Oliver, 48, succeeds **David Dockery**, who has served as Union's president for the past 18 years. A native of San Antonio, Oliver has been the East Texas Baptist University president since 2009. Oliver will begin full-time on June 1.

Karen Blake joins UT-MTAS as Court Training Specialist

Karen Blake is MTAS's new Municipal Court Clerk Training Specialist. She has served as Franklin city attorney and assistant city attorney and represented many other towns, cities and counties in her 18-year career.

As Code Enforcement Section Chair of the International Municipal Lawyers Association, Blake enjoys working on code enforcement cases and has developed forms and procedures used throughout Tennessee and the country for International Property Maintenance Code issues.

In 2011, she received the William J. Thornton IMLA Faculty Award for her contribution to Code Enforcement Education. She also served on the board of the Tennessee Municipal Lawyers Association, as well as the editor of its newsletter for five years, and is a past president of the Williamson County Bar Association.

With her new role within the MTAS training department, Blake will work directly with Administrative Office of the Courts training



Blake

programs. She will also provide additional training and consultation on matters related to municipal court clerks.

"We are happy to have **Karen** on board within the training department," said MTAS Training Manager **Macel Ely**. "She will be a great asset in providing quality training and consultation to our cities in Tennessee."

Gatlinburg's David Beeler retires after 41 years



Pictured are **David Beeler**, Gatlinburg City Manager **Cindy Cameron Ogle**, and Gatlinburg Mayor **Jerry Hays**.

David Beeler, Gatlinburg assistant city manager/finance director, retired Jan. 3, after nearly 42 years of service to the city. Hired in 1972 as a clerk in the accounting department, Beeler has witnessed the city's dramatic growth and transformation through the years, and holds the distinction of serving under every Gatlinburg city manager except the first.

During his tenure, Beeler has led the finance department from five employees, who at one time, hand recorded the city's financial records, to today's nine, who complete a much higher volume of work with the aid of computers. He has also seen the total number of city employees grow from around 75 in 1972, to more than 300. **Beeler**

was on board when the city budget reached its first million, all the way to the current fiscal year with more than \$77 million.

In his retirement, Beeler's devoting more time to his charity work. He performs as a clown with the Shriners and Masons, and he's enjoying more quality time with his wife, **Agnes**, and family.

Robert Holt, the city's assistant finance director, will fill Beeler's slot. Holt has served the city since September 1996, when he was hired as finance director for the Gatlinburg Visitors and Convention Bureau. In 1997, Holt became finance manager for Gatlinburg's newly formed Department of Tourism and he also previously served as the city's treasurer.

TN Healthy Watershed initiative promotes 2nd round of funding

The Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative announced its plans to fund new watershed improvement and protection projects, with a focus on four of the Initiative's Strategic Investment Areas. Areas of focus are Regional Water Planning; Restoration Projects; Scientific Research and Monitoring; and Protection of Waters and Wetlands. Up to \$637,500 in funding will support projects across the state beginning in August 2014, lasting through December 2016.

The Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative is requesting proposals for new projects to fund across Tennessee. The deadline for new proposals is March 21, 2014.

To view the Request for Proposals and to learn more about the Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative, please visit http://www.tn.gov/environment/water/water_tn-healthy-watershed-initiative.shtml.

Launched in August 2011, the Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative is the result of a partnership among the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and the West Tennessee River Basin Authority.

The initiative's primary goal is to maintain and improve water resources across the state by bringing together the public, landowners, resource management agencies, and conservation-focused organizations to promote communication, collaboration, and thoughtful water resources planning.

To date, 11 projects have been completed or are in progress; and all will be complete by fall 2014. Dedication ceremonies for two projects, one in west TN (Shelby County) and one in east TN (Knox County) will happen this spring.

What cities need to know about Affordable Care Act

ACA from Page 1

- Clarifies that the term full-time equivalent employee, or FTE, "means a combination of employees, each of whom individually is not treated as a full-time employee because he or she is not employed on average at least 30 hours of service per week with an employer, but whom, in combination, are counted as the equivalent of a full-time employee solely for purposes of determining whether the employer is an applicable large employer."; and
- Provides that any employer who transitions from a small employer to an applicable large employer and provides qualified health care coverage to its employees by April 1 of the same calendar year in which they become a large employer will not be subject to any of the penalties for failing to meet the large employer mandate.

Seasonal Employees

The Department of Treasury also ruled that an employer is not considered to employ more than 50 full time employees if: "(1) the employer's workforce exceeds 50 full-time employees for 120 days or fewer during the calendar year, and (2) the employees in excess of 50 employed during such 120-day period are seasonal workers as defined by the Secretary of Labor." This should help cities with small full-time workforces but larger seasonal workforces remain exempt from the employer mandate if those employees meet the Dept. of Labor's seasonal worker definition.

Volunteer First Responders

Most notably, the final rule provides

that the hours of bona fide volunteers do not count toward the "number of employees" calculation under the ACA. This includes volunteer first responders who receive deferred compensation benefits, reimbursements or allowances for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of services as volunteers or nominal fees customarily paid in connection with the performance of services.

This rule is significant for small communities with fire departments whose workforce meets the Treasury's definition of volunteer first responders that may have been concerned that the need to count their volunteers would cause them to be subject to all of the rules for large employers under the ACA.

However, so-called volunteers who receive more than nominal compensation - expense reimbursements, small stipends or length of service pension benefits - will not be considered bona fide volunteers and will have to be counted as employees for purposes of the ACA. This means that cities and towns where volunteers receive compensation that is more than nominal, even if it is less than what is paid to regular firefighters, will have to count their volunteers as employees for purposes of the ACA.

This conforms to NLC's previous discussions about how (bona fide) volunteer first responders should be considered under the ACA, and its more recent assessment based on Treasury's Jan. 10, 2014, memo regarding fair treatment of volunteer firefighters.

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STATE BRIEFS



Federal shortfall threatens TDOT road projects

The federal Highway Trust Fund's \$15 billion shortfall is so severe that without action from Congress, major road projects around the nation and in Tennessee could get stuck on the drawing board. The shortfall could mean a \$900 million cut to the Tennessee Department of Transportation's budget, a move that could spark across-the-board reductions, shelve road projects and scuttle ride-sharing programs. TDOT has 400 projects under development plus 750 local projects that state officials are exploring for possible funding. That's in addition to an estimated \$8 billion in a years-long backlog of road projects. Paul Degges, TDOT chief engineer and deputy commissioner, said the loss of the federal money would not stop projects already under way, but it would mean planned or proposed projects would gather dust.

TN nets public safety grant

Tennessee, Illinois and Iowa are receiving a grant to increase public safety by sharing criminal justice information. According to the National Governors Association, state-level reforms aimed at reducing recidivism, lowering corrections costs and improving safety may not work as well if states don't have a good way of sharing corrections information with each other. The states receiving the grant will get guidance and technical assistance from the Association and experts in the private sector, research organizations and academia. The program is called the Cross Boundary Corrections Information Exchange Policy Academy. It is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance.

\$4.3 M facility to protect Smokies artifacts approved

The U.S. Department of the Interior has approved final funding for a \$4.3 million facility to store the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's collection of historic artifacts. Friends of the Smokies and the Great Smoky Mountains Association will provide \$2.3 million of the total cost from donations. The 13,000-square-foot building in Townsend will preserve some 422,000 historic records and pre-park artifacts including oral histories, farm tools, clothing, and old photographs.

TN classrooms extending hours

A report released by the Comptroller's Offices of Research and Education Accountability (OREA), found that increasing classroom hours may have little effect on students. The study examines several education reforms, including extended learning time, using existing time efficiently and improving the quality of instruction. Many schools currently implementing extended learning time are doing so through the use of federal school improvement grants. These grants — intended to help the lowest performing school improve academic achievement — require numerous reforms, including extended school schedules.

TN AP scores below average

A new report shows over the last decade more students are taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Tennessee. But the College Board shows the state is below the national average of students in the class of 2013 who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam. The national average was 20 percent, where Tennessee was 10

percent. A 3, 4, or 5 are the scores typically accepted by colleges for credit and placement. Over the past decade, the report said the number of students who graduate from high school having taken rigorous AP courses has nearly doubled. The report also showed the improvement states have made over the last decade in students scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam. Tennessee went from 7.7 percent in 2003 to 10.1 last year.

SAFE campaign promotes seatbelt usage

The Governor's Highway Safety Office (GHSO) launched a new highway safety campaign aimed at increasing seat belt usage across the state. The SAFE Campaign (Seat Belts Are for Everyone) is designed to increase seat belt and child passenger safety restraint usage in Tennessee. Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to participate in the campaign by planning and implementing occupant protection initiatives in their communities. In 2013,

more than half of Tennessee's traffic fatalities involved unrestrained drivers or passengers. The SAFE campaign is designed to educate drivers across the state about the importance of wearing seat belts. To date, 169 law enforcement agencies have agreed to participate in the campaign. Each agency is required to plan and execute activities in their community that raise awareness about seat belt usage, along with seat belt enforcement efforts. Agencies that participate in the SAFE campaign will be eligible to win a fully equipped police vehicle and other highway traffic safety equipment. For more information visit www.tn.trafficsafety.org.

Latest Blue Book is TN Orange

The latest version of the state's Blue Book is Tennessee orange. The Blue Book is the Tennessee's guide to state government. It includes information about state history and government, and contains biographies of all members of the Tennessee General Assembly. This year's book is dedicated to Pat Summitt, the coach emeritus of the Lady Volunteers basketball team at the University of Tennessee. The Blue Book is published every two years by the secretary of state's office.

State's total tax collections fall below January budget

Tennessee's total tax collections fell below budgeted expectations in January. Finance and Administration Commissioner Larry Martin announced that overall January revenues were \$1.1 billion, which is \$51.6 million less than the state budgeted. January represents the fifth month of negative growth in corporate tax collections this year.

"January sales tax collections reflect consumer spending that occurred during the December holiday buying season and we recorded the largest growth rate we've experienced in the past 13 months," Martin said. "Retailers were more aggressive in holiday marketing strategies.

"April is typically the biggest month for corporate tax filings, which have been volatile here and across the nation for some time. In anticipation of a revenue shortfall, we're closely monitoring state spending and revenues in order to keep the budget balanced."

On an accrual basis, January is the sixth month in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

The general fund was under collected by \$43.8 million and the four other funds were under collected by \$7.8 million.

Sales tax collections were \$6.3 million more than the estimate for January. The January growth rate was positive 4.94 percent. For six months revenues are under collected by \$18.0 million. The year-to-date growth rate for six months was positive 3.65 percent.

Franchise and excise taxes combined were \$48.9 million below the budgeted estimate of \$188.6 million. For six months revenues are under collected by \$207.3 million.

Gasoline and motor fuel collections for January decreased by 8.57

percent and were \$4.9 million below the budgeted estimate of \$71.5 million. For six months revenues are under collected by \$0.6 million.

Tobacco tax collections were \$0.9 million below the budgeted estimate of \$18.5 million, and for six months they are \$6.3 million under the budgeted estimate.

Inheritance and estate taxes were over collected by \$0.1 million for the month. Year-to-date collections for six months are \$15.1 million more than the budgeted estimate.

Privilege tax collections were \$3.1 million less than the January estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, August through January, collections are \$4.4 million below the estimate. All other taxes were under collected by a net of \$0.2 million.

Year-to-date collections for six months were \$222.7 million less than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was under collected by \$219.6 million and the four other funds were under collected by \$3.1 million.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2013-2014 are based on the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation of Dec. 19, 2012, and adopted by the first session of the 108th General Assembly in April 2013.

The Funding Board met in December to hear updated revenue projections from the state's various economists. The board adopted revised revenue ranges for 2013-2014 that assumes an under collection from the July 2013 budgeted estimate in the amount of \$111.2 million to \$134.5 million in total taxes and in the amount of \$126.1 million to \$145.6 million in general fund taxes for the current fiscal year.

Report says economy will grow

ECONOMY from Page 1

perience the largest rates of job growth in 2014 and 2015.

- Personal income was up 2.7 percent last year, slightly behind the pace of income growth for the nation. It is projected to rise by 4.2 percent this year followed by 4.5 percent in 2015.

- Taxable sales increased at a rate of 2.8 percent in 2013. They are projected to increase by 3.4 percent this year and 3.8 percent in 2015.

- The state's housing and labor markets have been slow to heal. Recovery in the housing sector will continue this year. However, the labor market is likely to continue to struggle for the remainder of the decade.

State Revenue Performance

Tennessee tax revenues continue to grow, but at a slower rate than the Southeast region as a whole. Total tax revenues grew by 3.3 percent in fiscal year 2013, while sales tax collections were up only 1.8 percent. Both revenue categories grew more slowly than in the majority of other states in the region.

Sales and use tax collections were up 2.5 percent from December of last year. Business tax collections were 20.5 percent above last December, while inheritance and estate collections were up 67.5 percent and gasoline tax collections expanded by 16.8 percent.

Read the entire report online. <http://tndata.utk.edu/erg14.pdf>

TN General Assembly updated mobile app offers new features

A recently updated mobile app allows Tennessee residents to connect with the Tennessee General Assembly, the governor and his cabinet and the Tennessee congressional delegation.

The Tennessee General Assembly app, originally released in 2012, has new features and a redesigned user interface.

The Tennessee General Assembly app features a continually updated, searchable database of contact, staff and committee information for the Tennessee legislature and now includes information for the governor's office and the Tennessee congressional delegation.

Developed by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and Bass, Berry and Sims PLC, the app is available for 99 cents in the Apple App Store and the Google PLAY Marketplace and is designed to help Tennessee residents connect with their legislators.

"We began producing a print directory of the General Assembly more than 30 years ago to provide a reference for Tennessee residents and to educate legislators about electric co-ops," says David Callis, executive vice president and general manager of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. "Our app continues that tradition — providing a unique tool while educating users about our co-ops."



The app is ideal for anyone who wants to monitor the activities at the state Capitol and is designed to be the best reference possible for those who are interested in or work with Tennessee legislators.

The app is available for iPhone, iPad and Android devices and can be found by searching for "Tennessee General Assembly" in the Apple App Store or Google PLAY Marketplace.

Tenn. communities to apply for adventure tourism certification

Program designed to promote job growth in rural areas

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and the Department of Revenue are accepting applications for communities seeking to become certified as adventure tourism districts pursuant to the Tennessee Adventure Tourism and Rural Development Act of 2011. The act allows certain tourism-related businesses within adventure tourism districts to qualify for a jobs tax credit.

Sponsored by Sen. Ken Yager, the Tennessee Adventure Tourism and Rural Development Act of 2011 defines Adventure Tourism as outdoor recreational opportunities such as equine and motorized trail riding, white water rafting and kayaking, rappelling, road biking, rock climbing, hang-gliding, spelunking, shooting sports, mountain biking, canoeing, paragliding, zip lining and other such tourist and recreational activities.

"The Tennessee Adventure Tourism and Rural Development Act establishes a plan to promote outdoor recreational opportunities statewide, particularly in those rural counties with high unemployment.

The Act authorizes a local-state partnership which will promote our beautiful state and create needed jobs," Sen. Ken Yager said.

All interested local governments must submit their completed applications to TNECD by April 15, 2014. Applications and additional information can be found at <http://www.tn.gov/ecd/AdventureTourism.shtml>, including a guidance document for local governments.

Approved applications will receive certification for a period of three years. Upon expiration of the three year period, local governments must submit a new application for certification.

In Tennessee, the U.S. Travel Association reported that domestic and international travel accounted for a direct spend of \$15.3 billion in 2011 with estimated federal, state and local tax receipts of \$2.5 billion.

Outdoor recreation in Tennessee is particularly strong, generating \$8.2 billion annually in direct consumer spending, sustaining 83,000 direct jobs and generating \$535 million in state and local tax revenue.



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Who will cover the costs of an aging America?

Demographic change and tax policies that favor the elderly mean an ever-widening fiscal gap for state and local governments

BY FRANK SHAFROTH
Governing Magazine

As the nation's population not only ages but the aging also live longer than any previous generation, there will be increasingly serious state and local taxing and revenue consequences. Within four years, seniors are projected to control 70 percent of the nation's disposable income and comprise as much as half the population. This demographic trend heralds a growing fiscal gap between the cost of government services to an aging America and reduced revenues, a gap exacerbated by two unsustainable trends: retirement-benefit liabilities and rising health care costs.

The demographic reality is that we soon will see a fairly dramatic drop in the proportion of workers in the population and the taxes they pay, along with a commensurate increase in the number of people who depend on government at all levels for support. Thus, unsurprisingly, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has a foreboding outlook for state and local government budgets, forecasting an ever-widening gap between projected revenues and expenses for decades to come. GAO estimates that state and local governments would need to either raise taxes or reduce expenditures by 14.2 percent between this year and 2060 to eliminate that gap.

Consequently, even as states and local governments recovering from the Great Recession face short-term pension and revenue hurdles, these shortfalls pale to what is coming. GAO cites rising health costs as the primary driver of the sector's long-term fiscal challenges. Medicaid expenditures, along with health-insurance costs for public employees and retirees, are expected to rise

sharply. GAO projects state and local governments' total health-related costs to climb from the current 3.8 percent of GDP to 7.2 percent by 2060.

As we enter an era when boomers and seniors outnumber the remaining workforce, we may need to reexamine the common practice of granting state and local tax breaks for seniors. Out of the 41 states with personal income taxes, 37 have some type of exemption for retirement income. In addition, 27 states and the District of Columbia exempt all Social Security benefits from income taxes. (A 28th, state, Iowa, will phase out its tax on Social Security benefits by the end of this year.) The remaining states with personal income taxes include some portion of Social Security benefits in taxable income. Seventeen states exempt military pensions from income taxes entirely, while many other states exempt some portion of military pension income. Ten states go the full gamut: They exclude all federal, state, and local pension income from taxation.

State income-tax exclusions for private pension income, however, are not as generous as those for Social Security and public pensions. Twelve states and the District of Columbia fully tax private pensions, while Alabama, Hawaii and Illinois exempt most retirement income and Mississippi and Pennsylvania exempt all retirement income, including 401(k) and IRA distributions. Four states -- Minnesota, Nebraska, Rhode Island and Vermont -- allow no exclusions for pension and other retirement income.

States are not alone in this oncoming day of fiscal reckoning: Many cities and counties offer a senior or elderly property-tax exemption, with the most common being a

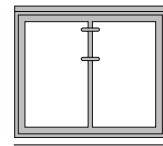
reduction in the equalized valuation of property so that, in essence, the property owner pays taxes on a discounted value. Some cities and counties "freeze" the assessed property valuation for seniors, thus allowing the property owner to pay property taxes each year based on a previous, lower valuation, while others offer property-tax deferral programs. Cities and counties all have their own terms to qualify for senior or elderly exemptions, but the age of 60 appears to be a common trigger point.

The consequences of these tax policies already have been playing out. The director of one local-government agency providing services to the aging wrote that her department had not received any additional funding in over seven years, a time during which the qualifying population almost doubled. Thirty years ago, she wrote, "there were 5,000 older adults in the county, and we had two senior centers. We now have almost 50,000 older adults and still have two senior centers. The population we serve is changing. We used to serve one generation in a senior center, now we can have three. Different generations require different programming."

A lot of people, she added, think that Medicare pays for the kinds of services her agency provides. It doesn't. Services like these are paid for primarily through state and local revenues. As an ever-increasing percentage of older Americans will require more state and local services but pay less in taxes -- even as they become a majority of voters -- a day of reckoning is coming.

Editor's note: Frank Shafroth is the director of the Center for State and Local Government Leadership at George Mason University

COMING UP



Mar. 8: NLC Congressional City Conference, Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. Brings together more than 2,000 elected and appointed city leaders to focus on the federal policy issues that are important to local governments. NLC University offers pre-conference training sessions designed to develop personal leadership skills and cultivate topical expertise. For more information visit the NLC website <http://www.nlc.org/build-skills-and-networks/education-and-training/event-calendar/congressional-city-conference?tab=2>.

Mar. 25-26: TN Environmental Conference at the Meadowview Conference Resort & Convention Center, 1901 Meadowview Parkway in Kingsport. The region's premier networking event with more than 60 speakers sharing information and ideas for smart choices. For more information, contact Mark Braswell TN Environmental Conference Executive Planning Committee, at 423-854-5459 or e-mail mark.braswell@tn.gov or for agenda and registration, visit www.TNEnvironment.com.

Mar. 27-28: Municipal Court Conference Held at The Embassy Suites, 1200 Conference Center Blvd. in Murfreesboro. Covers the general operation of a municipal court and updates on legislative changes impacting municipal courts. Specific topics include court docket preparation and maintenance, collection of litigation tax, submission of court action reports and record keeping requirements for municipal courts. Participants will learn how to establish a records process that conforms to state laws and regulations and learn how to perform court clerk functions efficiently and effectively. For cities with General Sessions Jurisdiction, sign-in will be March 27 beginning at 10:30 am CST. Conference will begin at 12:00 pm CST Thursday with lunch and a speaker and conclude at 12:00 pm CST Friday. For more information, contact Michelle Buckner at 865-974-9851 or e-mail michelle.buckner@tennessee.edu.

April 23-25: Tennessee City Management Association 2014 Spring Conference. Held at The Embassy Suites, 1200 Conference Center Blvd. in Murfreesboro. Two full days of educational programs and networking opportunities targeted to the needs of local government professional administrators. Limited number of hotel rooms available at the discounted rate of \$139 per night. Use Group Code: CMA. To register or view the conference program, visit www.TNCMA.org under "Future Educational Conferences." To reserve a room, call the hotel at 615-890-4460 or go to www.murfreesboro.embassysuites.com

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The city of Morristown closed a \$20 million loan for sewer system upgrades.



The city of Ripley closed a \$1 million loan for a new fire hall and equipment.

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Community partnerships, sustainable practices reap rewards in Lewisburg

BY VAUGHN CASSIDY
TDEC
Office of Sustainable Practices

Lewisburg is a small town located in southern Middle Tennessee. It is the county seat of Marshall County and is proving that team work and strong partnerships are the cornerstone for sustainability. Several examples of sustainability like a mature recycling program, an industry achieving zero waste, a higher education curriculum, and great local attractions are some of the reasons why Lewisburg and its many components are being recognized for their forward thinking, innovation, and success.

With slightly more than 10,000 residents, the city of Lewisburg leverages dependable partnerships when pushing the needle to the next level of sustainability.

The Marshall County Solid Waste, led by director Morgan Thomas, is an excellent example. In 2008, they launched the first of two phases of curbside recycling which eventually became the recycling portal for all residential customers in the city limits. With an impressive 65 percent participation rate for residential recycling, more than 10,000 pounds of recyclable materials were collected in the two phases. They also provide four strategically located convenience centers for county residents to drop off their recyclables.

Successful sustainable community programs recognize that businesses can benefit from community initiatives like a strong recycling program. As the largest employer in Marshall County, with approximately 1,000 team members, Calsonic Kansei North America, Inc. is a significant corporate citizen in Lewisburg. They began their journey toward zero waste in 2010 after landfilling more than 921 tons of waste in the previous year. In just one year, they were able to decrease the amount landfilled by 80 percent, disposing of more than 187 tons in 2011. February 2012 marked the milestone of being the first month they accomplished zero waste. Zero waste is a dramatic accomplishment for any manufacturer and another example of a successful partnership with the city.

Achieving zero waste would not have been possible without the local commitment of the Marshall County recycling program. Pat Flood, director of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Solid Waste Management, observed, "The Lewisburg partnership with Calsonic is a great example

about three miles, a public stage, and a farmer's pavilion are some high-light features of the park.

Greg Lowe, director for the Lewisburg Economic and Community Development office, along with the city of Lewisburg Economic Development Board invited the Wyoming Rural Development Council to visit their city and conduct what is known as the Wyoming Study. The council had been conducting assessments for more than a decade to inventory a community's unique assets and liabilities and to develop suggestions for improving the environmental, social, and economic future. Until Lewisburg, the evaluations had previously only been conducted in Wyoming.

In April 2012, the Wyoming Rural Development Council spent four days in Lewisburg touring the city and conducting a series of interviews and listening sessions. After receiving input from more than 200 residents through oral and written discussion, the seven team members of the council met to discuss what they observed. Each individual council member representing a variety of professional backgrounds prepared comments, which included a number of specialized short-term, attainable recommendations as well as long-term suggestions, ideas, and projects. The full report is available online on Lewisburg's home page and includes a collection of helpful resources for planning, funding and implementing future improvements.

Another key community partner is Columbia State Community College which operates five satellite campuses including the one in Lewisburg. They conducted the first campus Sustainability in the Curriculum workshop in 2012. They are engaged in educating faculty members and giving them the opportunity to converse with resource experts from the community and their college peers to discover how the concept of sustainability is relevant within their own discipline.

"We are just beginning to see the fruits of our labors here in Lewisburg," Lowe said. "In the past two years, we have enjoyed several industry expansions and relocations, an increase in retail development and many improvements to the aesthetics and amenities of the community overall."

From a top-notch recycling program, local employers that lead by example, a commitment to providing quality recreational and educational opportunities and a strategic vision for the future, Lewisburg is indeed sustainable on purpose. The city of Lewisburg is strategically in-



Welcome to Lewisburg
In The Middle of Everything



With slightly more than 10,000 residents, the city of Lewisburg is proving that team work and strong partnerships are the cornerstone for sustainability.



Lewisburg receives the TVA Sustainable Community Silver Level Award. Picture (L-R) are: Senior Vice President of Economic Development for the Tennessee Valley Authority John Bradley, Lewisburg Director of Economic Development Greg Lowe, Sustainable Community Team Member Barbara Woods, Lewisburg Mayor Jim Bingham, Sustainable Community Team Member Lisa Jackson, Marshall Co. JECDB Director Mike Wiles and President/CEO of Boyette Strategic Advisors Del Boyette.



Rock Creek Park features 15 acres of recreation and leisure opportunities. The bridge was donated by the Marshall Medical Center.

of what can be achieved when government and private industry work together to accomplish a goal."

A livable community that optimizes options to live, work, and play has become increasingly more important for residents. The city of Lewisburg offers a surprising number of quality recreational opportunities for a city its size. Many of those opportunities are found in a rich and diverse system of parks and outdoor activities including one of the jewels in the city, Rock Creek Park. With a bridge donated by Marshall Medical Center as its centerpiece, the park is 15 acres of recreation and leisure enjoyment. Two recently completed trails, totaling

tegrating partnerships into an array of accomplishments by benchmarking current strides, prioritizing projects and implementing action steps for realization of goals.

The Tennessee Valley Authority recently recognized their success in achieving economic well-being and a thriving community in harmony with their natural surroundings by naming Lewisburg as a Valley Sustainable Silver Community. The Economic and Community Development Office led by Lowe recognized the existing efforts and welcomed an opportunity for the Valley Sustainable Communities Program to work with Lewisburg sustainable community team members to de-

velop ideas for making even more strides toward sustainability. The Silver level designation recognizes that Lewisburg has community-wide sustainability in place, with some programs available to support the business community and take advantage of economic development opportunities.

"We are extremely proud to receive this recognition from TVA," said Lewisburg Mayor Jim Bingham. "We work very hard to be the kind of community people want to live and work and one that supports its business and industry. It feels very good to have those efforts rewarded by agencies such as TVA and Boyette Strategic Advisors."



The stage at Rock Creek Park is popular for live entertainment and community events. Below is the Marshall County Courthouse.

