

## Study finds municipal bonds save governments \$700 billion in interest

New ICMA report describes how access to tax-exempt financing affects state and local infrastructure investment

State and local governments would have paid \$714 billion in additional interest expenses between 2000 and 2014 without tax-exempt municipal bonds, according to a new white paper issued by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Other key findings from the new public policy white paper, *Municipal Bonds and Infrastructure Development—Past Present and Future*, prepared by Justin Marlowe of the University of Washington on behalf of ICMA's Government Affairs and Policy Committee, include:

- Virtually all state and local government capital investment is financed through municipal bonds.
- In 2014, state and local governments invested nearly \$400 billion in capital projects, a significant slowdown in spending. Total state and local capital spending has not yet returned to pre-Great Recession totals.
- Approximately 90 percent of state and local capital spending is financed by debt.
- Alternative financing methods, such as pay-as-you-go and public-private partnerships, are effective for some types of capital projects, but are not a robust alternative to traditional, tax-exempt municipal bonds.
- There are more than one million municipal bonds in the market today, issued by more than 50,000 units of

government, and their total par value is just over \$3.6 trillion.

If the federal tax exemption for municipal bonds were repealed, state and local governments would have paid \$714 billion in additional interest expenses between 2000 and 2014. For a typical bond issue, this would mean \$80-\$210 in additional interest expenses per \$1,000 of borrowed money.

Infrastructure funding is one of the most critical functions of state and local governments in the United States. Together, these levels of government are the main funders of the public sidewalks, roads, highways, bridges, and mass transit systems that Americans use to travel to work each day, as well as the public schools, colleges, and universities in which our future workforce is educated.

Tax-exempt municipal bonds, a fundamental feature of the United States tax code since 1913, provide a low-risk, cost-effective financing tool for the construction of infrastructure projects that are the lynchpin of the U.S. economy, improving quality of life, creating jobs, and sustaining economic development.

To download a copy, go to: [ema.org/en/icma/knowledge\\_network/documents/kn/Document/307554/Municipal\\_Bonds\\_and\\_Infrastructure\\_Development\\_Past\\_Present\\_and\\_Future?utm\\_source=pressrelease&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=text&utm\\_campaign=munibonds8-17-15](http://ema.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/307554/Municipal_Bonds_and_Infrastructure_Development_Past_Present_and_Future?utm_source=pressrelease&utm_medium=email&utm_content=text&utm_campaign=munibonds8-17-15)

## Nashville elects Megan Barry new mayor in runoff election

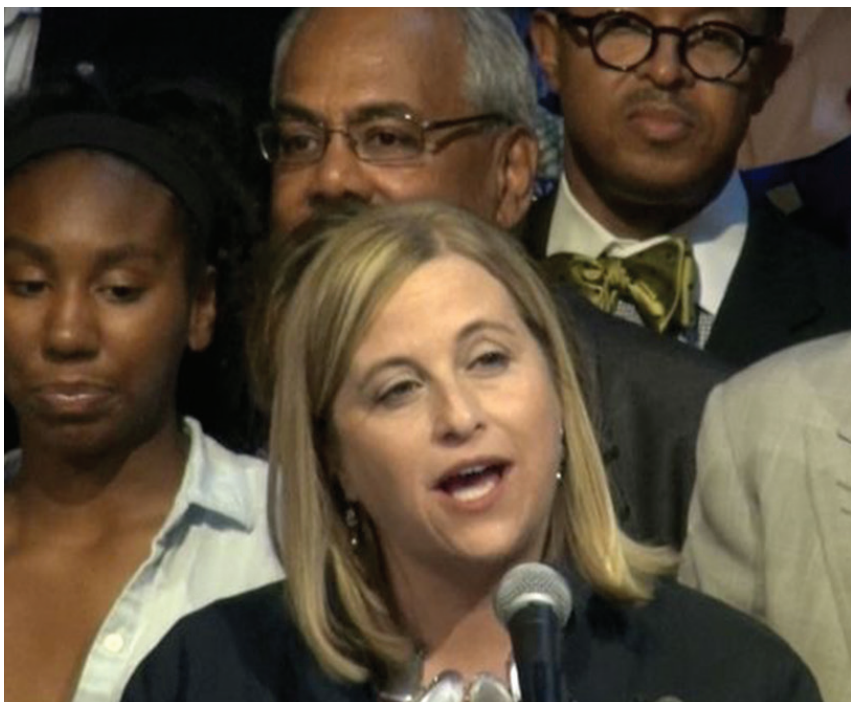


Photo by Jae S. Lee / The Tennessean

Megan Barry was elected the seventh mayor of Nashville's metropolitan government Sept. 10, making history as the first woman to hold the city's top office. Barry, who also became the first Metro Council member elected Nashville mayor, beat David Fox with 55 percent to 45 percent of the votes in the runoff election; Barry had 60,519 votes compared to 49,694 for Fox. Barry will be sworn into office Sept. 25 to a four-year term. In her campaign, she pledged to keep Nashville moving forward and to continue with the progress forged by the Dean Administration.

## Sparta's Bluegrass Festival nominated for international award

BY KATE COIL  
TML Communications Specialist

Bluegrass has long been an important part of the city of Sparta's heritage, and now the community is gaining international recognition for their festival, which celebrates the history of bluegrass in the region as well as introduces new generations to its all-American sound.

The 2014 Liberty Square - A Lester Flatt Celebration has been nominated in the 2015 International Bluegrass Music Award's Bluegrass Event of the Year category. Sparta's event is up against bluegrass festivals in Brooklyn; Lyons, Colo.; Richmond, Minn.; and La Roche sur Foron, France.

Results of the balloting will be revealed just before this year's Lester Flatt Celebration Oct. 10. The results will be announced during the International Bluegrass Music Awards Oct. 1 by The Gibson Brothers. The awards show is the centerpiece of the World of Bluegrass to be held Sept. 29-Oct. 3 in Raleigh, N.C.

Sparta's festival is named for Lester Flatt, one of Sparta's most famous native sons and an icon in bluegrass history. Flatt performed alongside Earl Scruggs as the guitarist in the Foggy Mountain Boys and in "The Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs Grand Ole Opry Show." Flatt also worked for a time in Bill Monroe's band Blue Grass Boys. Sparta is also the hometown of American bluegrass fiddler Benny Martin, who worked with Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff, Flatt and Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers and many others during his career. Martin is also famous for inventing the eight-string fiddle.

The festival began 18 years ago to celebrate the renovation of Sparta's town square, according to former chamber official, Brenda Cardwell. At that time, the event was called the Liberty Square Celebration.

"The first celebration was so successful that people asked if the city could do it again," Cardwell said. "For the past several years, Blake and Kimberly Williams have See **BLUEGRASS** on Page 3

## State's transportation problems focus of governor's 15-city tour

Haslam meets with legislators, local officials to discuss infrastructure needs

Gov. Bill Haslam and John Schroer, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) Commissioner, sat down with local and state officials from across the state in a 15-city tour to discuss the transportation and infrastructure needs in each region.

Among the cities visited were Memphis, Clarksville, Jackson, Nashville, Franklin, Kingsport, Greeneville, Murfreesboro, Shelbyville, Crossville and Union City. They plan to visit Chattanooga, Cleveland, Lenoir City and Knoxville later this month.

Throughout the meetings, Haslam and Schroer discussed the functionality and capacity of Tennessee's state roads and highways, safety issues around roads and bridges, and the impact infrastructure has on economic development efforts in urban and rural communities.

Tennessee's transportation system includes 95,000 miles of roads, 1,100 miles of interstates, 19,000 bridges, 28 transit systems in 95 counties, 79 general aviation airports, 949 miles of waterways and more than 3,000 miles of railroads.

"The quality of Tennessee's transportation and infrastructure system always ranks at or near the top when compared to the rest of the country," Haslam said. "We have no transportation debt, and we do a great job maintaining our roads, but we know we have challenges on the horizon. We know that we can't depend on the federal government to be the funding partner that it once was. We also know that as our infrastructure ages, maintenance becomes more important and more expensive. And we know that maintaining our roads is only part of the equation. Right now we have a multi-billion dollar backlog of highway projects across this state that address key access, safety and economic development issues, and that's only going to grow."

A 2015 Tennessee Comptroller's report on transportation funding states that revenues are not expected to be sufficient to maintain current infrastructure. Cars are more fuel efficient, construction and labor costs have risen, and Congress hasn't passed a long-term transportation funding bill in a decade. Tennessee's population is expected to grow by 2 million by 2040, which puts a greater demand on the state's infrastructure.

"TDOT is responsible for taking care of the assets we already have, for implementing current projects in the most cost-effective way, and for planning for the state's infrastructure needs of the future," Schroer said. "We look to Tennessee communities to help prioritize projects to make sure we're addressing evolving traffic patterns, population growth, safety issues, and the many other things that impact our infrastructure, and



Photo by State of Tennessee photographic services

Gov. Bill Haslam and TDOT Commissioner John Schroer discuss state's transportation needs with state and local officials.

these conversations are invaluable to the process."

Since 2010, TDOT has invested \$101 million state dollars on first and last mile road projects serving industrial expansion and recruitment helping to create nearly 29,000 jobs for 108 companies in Tennessee.

Funded primarily by state and federal gas taxes, TDOT gets no

money from the General Fund. Funding uncertainty from the Federal Highway Trust Fund forced TDOT to delay \$400 million in highway projects in 2015.

At each of the meetings, TDOT officials discussed the cost of several pending projects within each region.

See **Pages 8 & 9** for more coverage of the meetings.

## Sen. Tracy sets transportation meetings

Senate Transportation and Safety Committee Chairman Jim Tracy also plans to conduct meetings across the state to discuss Tennessee's roads and transportation needs. Tracy said he wants to get input from a wide variety of citizens and community leaders regarding solutions to the challenges the state faces in funding Tennessee's transportation infrastructure.

Presentations will be made by Susan Mattson, principal legislative research analyst for the State Comptroller, and Bill Moore, P.E., former chief engineer at the Tennessee Department of Transportation and Chairman of the Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance. Local legislators will be invited to attend as well.

"These hearings are to discuss solutions to fund the long-term



Sen. Jim Tracy

needs of Tennessee's transportation system," Tracy said. "Our needs are multi-faceted and there are several options which have been offered. I want to hear from a wide variety of citizens and community leaders regarding these options, as well as other suggestions about what we can do to improve our roads."

### DATES AND VENUES FOR TRANSPORTATION HEARINGS

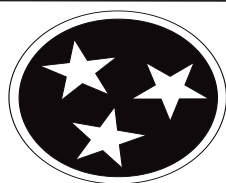
- **Nashville, Thursday, Sept. 17**  
2 p.m., Legislative Plaza, Room 301
- **Columbia, Tuesday, Sept. 22**  
10 a.m. Cherry Theater, Columbia State Community College
- **Memphis, Tuesday, Sept. 29**  
10 a.m., Shelby County Board of Commissioner's Chambers
- **Huntingdon, Tuesday, Sept. 29**  
6 p.m., Carroll Bank and Trust Community Room
- **Martin, Thursday, Oct. 1**  
10 a.m., Northwest Tennessee

- Development District Office
- **Jackson, Thursday, Oct. 1**  
2 p.m. Southwest Tennessee Development District Office
- **Knoxville, Thursday, Oct. 15**  
10 a.m. Bridgewater Place
- **Chattanooga, Wednesday, Oct. 28**  
2 p.m., Hamilton County Commission Room
- **Kingsport, Thursday, Oct. 29**  
10 a.m., Kingsport Center for Higher Education



Darin and Brooke Aldridge along with members of their band perform at the 2014 Liberty Square - A Lester Flatt Celebration in Sparta, which has been nominated for best festival at the International Bluegrass Music Awards. The festival plays tribute to the city's bluegrass roots and draws world-renown acts downtown.

# NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



## BRENTWOOD

The city of Brentwood has been awarded a \$216,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation for a traffic signal timing study on the city's major corridors. The funds come from the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program and will finance improvements on four primary roadways: Concord Road, Moores Lane, Wilson Pike and Murray Lane. The project will study 31 intersections and four timing plans developed for each with the goal of getting vehicles moving as efficiently as possible through intersections, particularly during peak-hour traffic.

## CHATTANOOGA

West Star Aviation has announced it will open a new facility at the Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (KCHA), a \$22.3 million investment expected to create 200 new jobs in the community. West Star specializes in the repair and maintenance of airframes, windows and engines, as well as major modifications, avionics installation and repair, interior refurbishment, surplus avionics sales, accessory services, paint and parts. The company will be renovating a more than 40,000-square-foot facility for mixed-use purposes including administrative and customer offices, engineering avionics, cabinetry and upholstery shop functions, and storage of customer aircraft parts.

## EAST RIDGE

The East Ridge Police Department has purchased 14 new laptops to be installed in patrol cars. The funds for the purchase came from a U.S. Department of Justice grant and selling off surplus materials. The Panasonic computers are expected to be in use by the end of the year and will allow officers to type up reports and file them while still in the field. As a result, officers will be able to stay in their patrol areas longer instead of returning back to the department to file reports. The department is hoping to purchase more computers for patrol cars in the future.

## ELIZABETHTON

National supply chain management company Fidelitone recently opened a new location in Elizabethton, which is expected to create 200 jobs by the end of the year. The company provides warehousing, order fulfillment and value-added product services for a wide variety of companies that operate mail order or online shopping businesses. The Fidelitone warehouse stores the merchandise for clients, and when an order comes in, Fidelitone employees collect, package and ship the products. Embroidery and engraving are among the value-added product services performed at the location. Fidelitone has been a family-owned business since 1929 and is based in Illinois.

## FARRAGUT

The town of Farragut's Board of Mayor and Aldermen hosted a ribbon cutting for the new playground at Mayor Bob Leonard Park, officially opening the ADA-approved

playground surface and energy efficient LED lighting. Mayor Bob Leonard Park is located at 301 Watt Road in Farragut, and the playground replacement was funded in part by a \$43,000 matching grant from the Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) grant from Gov. Bill Haslam and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

## FRANKLIN

The \$3 million SOAR Adventure Tower has opened in Franklin, an aerial adventure park featuring a 50-foot-tall vertical ropes course with four levels and more than 120 rope climbing elements. Many of the climbing elements are Music City-themed including guitars and drum sets suspended 20 feet above the ground. The park is based on nine similar parks located in Europe. The 10,000-square-foot park was designed by Germany's KristallTurm, which has 18 parks worldwide.

## GOODLETTSVILLE

The city of Goodlettsville has been awarded a grant by the Tennessee Division of Forestry to plant trees through the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program. A total of 17 crape myrtles, two purple smoke rees, and 12 magnolia trees will be planted within the median of North-Creek Boulevard. It is projected that the trees will be planted over the fall and winter months. "The City of Goodlettsville's NorthCreek Boulevard tree planting project will allow the city to enhance the beauty of one of the more traveled corridors within the city," says Tim Ellis, Goodlettsville city manager.

## KNOXVILLE

Innovate Manufacturing, Inc. will be locating its U.S. headquarters to Knoxville as part of an effort to be closer to consumers. The China-based injection molding company will invest \$4.7 million in building upgrades and renovations to a facility at 10340 Goldenfern Lane, which will specialize in injection molding, injection stretch blow molding and extrusion blow molding. Innovate Manufacturing produces hydration bottles, kitchen products, pet supplies, tools and other goods. The company will create 50 new jobs in the Knoxville area.

## LAWRENCEBURG

City and state officials joined Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner John Schroer in the opening of the Lawrenceburg West Bypass (U.S. Highway 64/State Route 15) during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The two-phase project will extend the road about five miles from the existing route west of Lawrenceburg to east U.S. Highway 43/State Route 6. Construction of the new four-lane facility includes two new bridges over Pond Creek and Shoal Creek, each measuring roughly 100 feet tall. The west bypass connects to the east bypass, which was completed in 2010. Both sections are part of a larger effort to connect 10 southern Tennessee counties beginning in the west in Shelby County and ending in the

east at I-24 in Grundy County. The \$47.2 million project is designed to prevent future traffic congestion by providing a safer, more efficient facility. It will also promote economic development along the corridor.

## LEBANON

SureCan Incorporated will be establishing a new manufacturing facility in Lebanon, investing \$15.5 million and creating 101 new jobs in the Wilson County area. SureCan plans to manufacture and assemble fuel cans at the new Lebanon location at 800 Maddox Simpson Parkway, allowing them to better serve the demands of markets in the Northeast and Southeast. The company's products include patented spill-proof technology and a rotating nozzle and thumb-release trigger, allowing gravity to dispense fuel from the bottom of the can.

## LEWISBURG

Multimatic Tennessee LLC will be investing more than \$20 million and creating 181 new jobs in Lewisburg as part of new automotive manufacturing operations. The funds will help with building up-grades and a new robotic welding infrastructure for the new Lewisburg facility. Multimatic is a global corporation supplying engineered components, systems and services to the automotive industry. Products to be made at the Lewisburg facility will include instrument panel structures, rocker braces and upper and lower tie bar supports. Multimatic's core capabilities include the engineering and manufacturing of complex mechanisms, body hardware, suspension systems and body structures, as well as the design and development of lightweight composite automotive systems. In addition, Multimatic delivers niche vehicle design, development and production for road and race car applications. Multi-matic is headquartered in Toronto, Canada, and has manufacturing operations and engineering facilities in North America, Europe and Asia, with alliance partner relationships in other automotive markets.

## MARYVILLE

DENSO Manufacturing announced it will be expanding its automotive components and systems manufacturing plant in Maryville, making it one of the largest operating campuses in DENSO Corporation's worldwide operations. With a workforce of 3,100 employees, DENSO is already the largest employer in Blount County. The company will be creating 500 new jobs in Maryville and investing \$400 million to expand the facility's manufacturing plants, convert an existing warehouse into manufacturing space and build a new warehouse on its campus. A key supplier of advanced technology to the automotive industry, DENSO Manufacturing Tennessee produces starters, alternators, instrument clusters and a wide range of electronic components and systems.

## MEMPHIS

The Memphis City Council approved the \$1.5 million purchase of



Officials with the Tullahoma Municipal Airport and city of Tullahoma welcomed Tennessee Economic and Community Development Commissioner Randy Boyd to discuss the impact of recent legislation affecting state airports and their capital improvement gains. Airport Authority Chairman Sam Crimm and Authority Member Jim Apple discussed the progress made at the airport in the area of economic development and stressed the importance of maintaining a strong facility improvement program from Tennessee's general aviation airports. Tullahoma Area Economic Development Corporation (TAEDC) Executive Director Thom Robinson gave an overview of aviation and aerospace projects and facilities in Tullahoma. Commissioner Boyd noted the many improvements that had been made in Tullahoma and stated that the Tullahoma Airport Authority was very well prepared.

the Donnelley J. Hill State Office Building from the State Building Commission on Aug. 24. The city has also pledged some \$6.2 million for renovations to the structure as well as \$680,000 for moving some city offices into the 14-story building across Civic Center Plaza from city hall. The city had originally planned to lease the building for two years at \$150,000 per year and then purchase the property. The state moved out of the building to One Commerce Square last year. The Donnelley J. Hill State Office Building originally opened in 1967 and has been appraised at \$2.2 million. The Memphis Police Department and Department of Housing & Community Development are among the offices moving into the building.

## MT. PLEASANT

The city of Mt. Pleasant has established a municipal parks and recreation department through a \$50,000 Tennessee Recreation Initiative Program grant provided through the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. TDEC Deputy Commissioner Brock Hill presented the check to city officials during a ceremony at town square. The TRIP grant is offered over a three year period. Mt. Pleasant will match \$25,000 to the \$25,000 from the grant for the next two years, with the city taking full responsibility of funding in the third year of the program. Through the grant, the city will be able to hire a director of parks and recreation as well as develop and expand city parks. Presently, all members of the city's parks team are volunteers. The grant will also fund the installation of handicapped restrooms at city parks.

## NASHVILLE

Nashville has been added as a new destination for OneJet, a new air transportation network that provides nonstop travel in small and medium-size markets. OneJet will be providing flights between Nashville International Airport (BNA) and Indianapolis International Airport (IND) and will join Memphis as well as Milwaukee and Pittsburgh

offering OneJet services beginning this year.

## SPRING HILL

Ryder Supply Chain Solutions will be expanding its warehousing, transportation, kitting and assembly operations in Spring Hill through a \$16.5 million investment and the creation of 606 new jobs in the area. The company will double its existing Spring Hill warehousing operations from 300,000 square feet to 600,000 square feet and increase its workforce from 200 to more than 800 over a five-year period. Ryder is a Fortune 500 company specializing in commercial fleet management, transportation and supply chains solutions. Founded in 1933, the company has operations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the U.K.

## WINCHESTER

A multi-million dollar renovation of the airport in Winchester is expected to come to a close at the end of the year after nearly two years of construction work. A storage hangar being built for a Hawker 800 jet owned by Hi-Tech Mold & Engineering S.E., Inc. is one of the finishing touches on the Winchester Municipal Airport (KBGF) in Franklin County. New improvements include updating the runway, tarmac and ramps to meet new standards set by the Federal Aviation Administration. Projects on the runway, T-hangars and lighting at the airport were completed at the end of August, and several of the new hangars are already occupied.

## WHITE BLUFF




The town of White Bluff recently unveiled a new, locally-created art piece alongside Highway 70. The piece, titled "Serenity," was created by metal artist Eric Lankford and was purchased through a Tennessee Downtowns Program grant the town received in 2014. Additional funding was provided by White Bluff businessman David Powell. Landscaping around the structure was completed by a local nonprofit group, the Friends of White Bluff, Inc. The work is the first public art installation in the town.

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# Sparta's Bluegrass Festival nominated for international award

**BLUEGRASS** from Page 1  
 been organizing the festival.”

Kimberly Williams, a publicist and wife of famed bluegrass performer Blake Williams, organizes the Lester Flatt Festival and performs alongside her husband. Blake Williams has been performing for more than 40 years with such bluegrass legends Bill Monroe, Patty Loveless, Vince Gill, Mike Snider and fellow Sparta-native Lester Flatt.

Blake Williams was born in Sparta, and other than the four years the couple lived in Nashville, he has lived in the area his entire life. When Blake and Kimberly Williams moved back to Sparta in 2000, she said they wanted to become involved in promoting the Sparta area as well as the local bluegrass scene.

“I approached the city about getting involved in helping do some things for the community because I have a background in event production,” she said. “When I lived in Nashville I worked for Gaylord Entertainment. A couple of years later, there was an opportunity for our bluegrass band – which consists of me, my husband and a few other folks – to perform at Liberty Square.” Soon, the event grew not only as a way to bring in world famous bluegrass acts to Sparta but also as a time to honor Sparta’s musical heritage. “The event has grown exponentially,” Williams said. “We have brought in nation-wide touring bands, professional bluegrass acts, and have renamed the event Liberty Square: A Lester Flatt Celebration. This was Lester Flatt’s home, and we have a very rich bluegrass heritage. There are a lot of well-known bluegrass artists over the years who have come from this area. Given the bluegrass heritage that Sparta and White County have, it seemed a perfect opportunity to pair that with the existing small, Liberty Square celebration. We wanted to grow it and increase tourism in the area.”

Since that time, the festival has grown to attract internationally famous performers and visitors from around the country.

“Now, we have national entertainment that comes every year,” she said. “We book four acts, and we draw people from all over the country to our little town. It’s a free event, and we average anywhere from 5,000 and 8,000 people each year.”

Of course, some of those world-famous acts don’t have far to go when they leave home for the Lester Flatt Celebration’s stage.

“A lot of well-known musicians have come from this area, and many still play here,” Williams said. “One of the guys who lives in this area and has three generations of family here is Josh Swift. He plays with Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, which is one of the most well-known bluegrass acts for probably the last 40 years. There are a lot of musicians from this area who play bluegrass music. We have fostered that, and we have grown that over the years.”

This year’s festival will include performances by Russell More, IIIrd Tyme Out, Joe Mullins and the Radio Ramblers, Blake Williams and Friends, and Flatt Lonesome as well as food, crafts, a classic car show and fireworks. Marvin Bullock, president of the Sparta-White County

Chamber of Commerce, said the celebration’s success is because of the hard work local residents put into it.

“That is the result of the outstanding work of Blake and Kimberly Williams,” Bullock said. “They put together a grand event for years, and bring in first class entertainment. This is a boon to our town, and hopefully even more people will come.”

Sparta celebrates its bluegrass heritage in other ways as well. A bust of Lester Flatt was unveiled at Sparta City Hall in 1996. Signs honoring both Flatt and Benny Martin have been erected in the town and the city also hosts Lester Flatt Memorial Bluegrass Day on the fourth Saturday in May as part of Tennessee’s “Bluegrass Day,” which was established in 2007.

On the third Friday of the month between April and October, visitors can also enjoy free bluegrass concerts in downtown Sparta.

“The concert series are more local and regional bands,” Williams said. “They will book one, possibly two bands depending on who they are. There are such great bands and great music in this general area with White, Putnam Overton, Warren and DeKalb. There is so much music and so many people play music on the side. That concert series allows those people to come together and perform.”

The concert series is a major draw for the city, bringing in visitors from as far away as Knoxville, Nashville and West Tennessee, Bullock said.

Other visitors come to the Sparta area to learn more about the roots of their favorite bluegrass performers, Cardwell said.

“When I worked at the chamber, there was always someone who wanted to know where he lived or where he was buried,” she said. “Now, we have a museum they can visit. They have also made special arrangements at Oak Lawn Cemetery where he is buried for the fans. People visit it like it’s a shrine. We would get people coming to Sparta just for Lester Flatt when they were attending a concert in Nashville.”

More than 35 years after his death, Flatt is still bringing bluegrass fans to Sparta.

“I expect Mr. Flatt’s legacy is what brings bluegrass fans here,” Bullock said. “In the 1980s, he had a recording studio here in Sparta, which has been an attraction. At one point, there was a carload of people in a limousine from Japan over here touring, and one of the things they wanted to see is where Lester Flatt lived.”

Other musical events in the region keep these bluegrass fans in town.

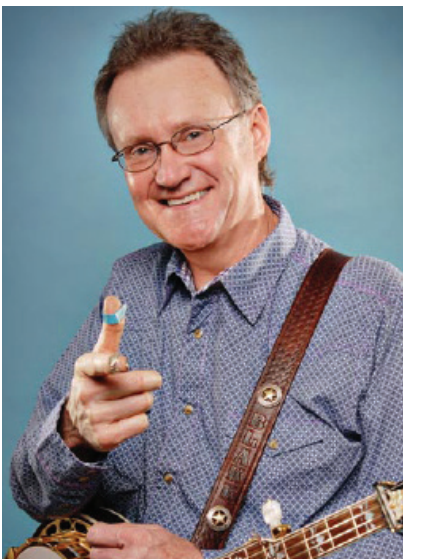
“We have events throughout the year that revolve around bluegrass, not just in Sparta but close by. There is the Bluegrass Underground in McMinnville at Cumberland Caverns and the Fiddler’s Jamboree in Smithville,” Bullock said. “This area, this region along the middle Cumberland, has enjoyed that craft for many years.”

Bluegrass also has the ability to bring in fans of all ages, Williams said.

“Bluegrass music speaks to



The crowds pack into downtown Sparta to hear performers in front of the famed Oldham Theatre. Lester Flatt performed at the theatre in his day, but the number of people attending the Lester Flatt festival soon outgrew the number of seats within the theatre. Today, bluegrass fans enjoy music from a stage outside as well as vendors, food and a classic car show during the Saturday event.



Sparta is known for its bluegrass legends. Lester Flatt (left) performed with Earl Scruggs in their band Flatt and Scruggs and was a regular on the Grand Ole Opry. Benny Martin (center) invented the eight-stringed violin and performed with musicians like Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff, the Stanley Brothers and Flatt and Scruggs. Blake Williams (right) is not only one of the driving forces behind the Lester Flatt Celebration, but is also a Grammy-winning bluegrass artist who has performed alongside Flatt, Monroe, Bill Snider, Patty Loveless and Vince Gill.

families,” Williams said. “It’s an acoustic music, doesn’t require electricity and years ago people would gather in their homes, on their porches, sit around and play music together. Bluegrass creates a very family-oriented, wholesome vibe. I think people are naturally drawn to it because of that. People from as young as two years old to those in their 80s and 90s love bluegrass music. It’s a style of music that appeals to many, many generations. I think it’s a very welcoming, warming kind of music.”

This monument to native son Lester Flatt is located in downtown Sparta, which bills itself as Bluegrass USA. While Flatt died in 1979, his hometown is still attracting music fans who want to learn more about his roots and Sparta’s bluegrass tradition. Visitors come to see his home or visit his grave at Oak Lawn Cemetery.



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# STATE BRIEFS



**For the third straight year, Tennessee public high school students improved on the ACT.** The average composite increased from 19.3 last year to 19.4 this year, adding to what has been a three-year pattern of growth for the state. In addition to overall growth, more Tennessee students than ever before are scoring college ready in all four subjects (math, English, reading, and science), showing a four percent increase from 2011. Even with this growth, only 27 percent of students met the college ready benchmark in math, 35 percent met the benchmark in reading, and 17 percent met the benchmark in all four subjects.

**The Tennessee Department of Agriculture and USDA Rural Development are teaming up to provide \$220,000 in combined seed funding for an initiative designed at promoting agri-tech innovation and entrepreneurship across the state.** The program, known as AgLaunch, is being led by the Memphis Bioworks Foundation and will include participation from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and the University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture. AgLaunch's goal is

to attract at least 200 entrepreneurs and help establish 100 successful companies in the state's agriculture sector by 2020. AgLaunch will seek to identify early stage agri-technologies and companies and assist them in building investable, high-growth enterprises through mentorship and programming. For more information visit [www.memphisbioworks.org](http://www.memphisbioworks.org).

**Three new sites have been selected by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development at Select Tennessee Certified Sites.** The newly certified sites include the Coffee County Joint Industrial Park Site in Tullahoma, the Technology Park II at Holston Army Ammunitions Plant in Kingsport and the Dresden Pad ready Site in Dresden. Among the qualifications needed to become certified, a site must have at least 20 developable acres, proper zoning in place to allow for ease of development, all utilities at the site or a formal plan to extend to the site, and truck-quality road access. There are now 37 Select Tennessee Certified Sites available in 25 different counties across the state.

**More than \$12.1 million in low-interest loans for water infrastruc-**

**ture improvements have been announced for cities and county governments across Tennessee** by state officials through the State Revolving Funding Loan Program. The Cookeville Boat Dock Road Utility district received \$750,000 for a green waterline replacement production funded with a 20-year, \$562,500 loan, with an interest rate of 1.22 percent, and \$187,500 in principal forgiveness that will not have to be repaid. The city of Lebanon will receive \$904,000 for water distribution system improvements. The project will be funded with a 20-year, \$587,600 loan, with an interest rate of 1.71 percent, and \$316,400 in principal forgiveness that will not have to be repaid. The city of Lebanon and the city of Paris also received traditional drinking water loans. The city of Lebanon will receive \$1.2 million for water distribution system improvements. The project will be funded with a 20-year, \$686,833 loan with an interest rate of 1.71 percent. The City of Paris will receive \$950,000 for WTP improvements and Volunteer Drive water tank rehabilitation. The project will be funded with a 20-year, \$950,000 loan with an interest rate of 1.29 percent.

## State creates Rural Development Task Force

Gov. Bill Haslam and Economic and Community Development Commissioner Randy Boyd announced the creation of a Rural Development Task Force that will bring resources together from a wide range of organizations to advance rural communities and economic development throughout Tennessee.

The Rural Development Task Force will develop and adopt an initial three to four year strategic plan that will include a comprehensive vision for rural development. In order to do this, the taskforce will convene issues forums, identify and engage stakeholder groups and look to the successful ThreeStar program

as a way to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities. Ultimately, the taskforce will work to identify, design and implement highly effective programming to address key issues that impact rural life. The taskforce will conduct its first meeting in September 2015.

The Rural Development Task Force is comprised of:

- Gov.'s Office: Will Cromer, Special Assistant for Strategy and Policy Director
- Dolores Gresham: State Senator, Somerville
- Ryan Williams: State Representative, Cookeville
- Dept. of Agriculture: Commissioner Julius Johnson (Co-Chair)
- Dept. of Tourist Development: Commissioner Kevin Triplett (Co-Chair)
- Dept. of Economic & Community Development: Commissioner Randy Boyd (Co-Chair)
- Dept. of Economic & Community Development: Amy New, Assistant Commissioner, Rural Development
- Dept. of Transportation: Toks Omishakin, Deputy Commissioner
- Dept. of Environment & Conservation: Dr. Shari Meghreblian, Deputy Commissioner
- Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development: Commissioner Burns Phillips
- Dept. of Education: Jayme Place, Chief of Staff
- Dept. of Health: Commissioner John Dreyzehner
- Dept. of Financial Institutions: Commissioner Greg Gonzales
- USDARD: Bobby Goode, State Director
- TVA: John Bradley, Senior Vice President of Economic Development
- Federal Grant Programs: Brooxie Carlton, TNECD Community Programs Director
- University of Tennessee Public Service: Dr. Herb Byrd III, Interim Vice President
- Farm Bureau: Lacy Upchurch, President
- University of Tennessee Ag Extension: Dean Tim Cross
- Tennessee Development District Association: Beth Jones, Treasurer/Secretary

of Coopertown. A current resident of Coopertown, Dennis accepted the position after a previously selected applicant who had accepted the position decided to pursue other options. Dennis previously served as the city's police chief from April 2003 until November 2004 and worked as a Tennessee State University Police Officer before accepting the position of chief in August. Dennis also worked in law enforcement in Florida. Previous Coopertown Police Chief Shane Sullivan announced his resignation in April and officially left office in June.

**Chris Ruberg** has been hired as a real estate manager for the city of Knoxville. Before coming to the city, Ruberg served more than three years with the state Department of Transportation's chief appraiser for highway projects in East Tennessee. Since September 2005, he's been a TDOT right-of-way appraiser, responsible for complex appraisals and field inspections on hundreds of pieces of property. He'd worked as a project manager and master carpenter for a construction company in Longview, Wash., for five years before working as a real estate appraiser for a Knoxville company and a Maryville company from January 2000 to September 2005, when he joined TDOT. A native of New York state, Ruberg earned a degree in urban studies at Roanoke College in Salem, Va. Ruberg will be working with Judy Walton, the city's real estate acquisition agent.



## PEOPLE

**David Brace** has been prompted to the position of senior director of public works for the city of Knoxville, a role that will make him the



David Brace

supervisor of the city's engineering, fleet services, parks and recreation, plans review and inspections departments. He will oversee 525 employees and more than \$90 million in resources. Brace previously served as the city's director of public services and started his new position on Sept. 7. He will report to Deputy Mayor and Chief Operation Officer Christi Branscom, who previously held the senior director of public works position. Brace will also be a member of the city's economic development team. Brace has a bachelor's degree in ecology/community health and a master's degree in planning, both from the University of Tennessee. He began work with the city of Knoxville in 2002 in the community development department before moving to public services in 2004. Prior to joining the City of Knoxville, Brace was a firefighter/EMT in Knox County for Rural Metro Corp. and worked as a consultant in the industrial rescue and safety field. Knoxville's Deputy Director to the Director of Public Services Chad Weth will fill Brace's position as director of public services.

**Laurence Dennis** has been selected as the new police chief for the city

## Tennessee economy grows for 15th consecutive quarter

Tennessee's economy continues on an upward trajectory as the Great Recession keeps getting smaller in the rearview mirror.

The Volunteer State recorded 8,317 new entity filings during the second quarter of 2015, which is a 9.9 percent increase compared to the same quarter last year. Data from a new economic report released in August shows the positive year-over-year growth for 15 consecutive quarters, despite the second quarter of 2015 lagging slightly behind the first.

The Tennessee Quarterly Business and Economic Indicators report is created to provide a periodical snapshot of the state's economy based on a variety of information, including new business data from the Division of Business Services. It's published through a partnership with Secretary of State Tre Hargett and the University of Tennessee Knoxville's Center for Business and Economic Research.

"Tennessee continues to be a hotbed for new businesses," Secre-

tary Hargett said. "These indicators tell us this momentum will continue well into the future."

Davidson County led the way with 1,471 new filings. Shelby County was second with 1,096 filings.

Despite the overall growth, there were 4,398 dissolutions filed in the second quarter of 2015, which is more than double the same time last year. The yearly total is expected to rise since most entities file dissolutions during the third quarter.

The national economy got back on track after a sluggish start to the year. In 2015, Q2, U.S. personal income increased by 4.2 percent over last year.

Tennessee's unemployment rate fell to 5.7 percent in June, a 0.1 percent drop compared to May and a 0.9 percent drop compared to June 2014. That is still above the national unemployment rate of 5.3 percent.

For a complete copy of the report go to: <http://sos.tn.gov/products/communications/2015-august-tennessee-quarterly-business-and-economic-report>

## Municipalities receive Tenn. Arts Commission funding

The Tennessee Arts Commission has awarded several municipalities with 2016 Creative Placemaking grants designed to strengthen economic vitality, livability and growth through the arts.

The grant program offers communities opportunity to develop unique assets, rejuvenate structures and streetscapes, improve the visibility of local businesses, and bring a diverse group of people together to build shared culture and community.

The Commission's allocation process involved a review by an independent panel that included national experts on creative placemaking and local leaders. The panel met on Aug. 26, to evaluate all eligible applications. Applications were evaluated on a competitive basis taking into account the project type, geographic location and whether the project was in a rural or urban community. Half of all eligible applications were from rural communities.

The town of Decatur received a \$7,300 grant as part of the Decatur Downtown Revitalization Project, which will help with the Downtown Summer Nights concert series. Created in 2015 through a partnership with the town, Meigs County and the Meigs County-Decatur Chamber of Commerce, the concert series have driven traffic to downtown businesses. Five concerts lasting three to four hours are planned for 2016.

Dresden also received \$3,360

for the Dresden Community Farmers' Market and City Park Enhancement project, which will allow local artists to be featured at the farmers market twice a month between May and September. The "Meet the Artist" program is in partnership with the UT at Martin's Department of Visual and Theatre Arts and will also include a community-driven mural project painted by young artists at Dresden City Park.

Several other communities will also benefit from grant funds. The Clarksville Arts & Heritage Development Council was awarded \$5,700 for the Clarksville Downtown Revitalization Project, the Campbell County Historical Society was awarded \$6,000 for the LaFollette Downtown Redevelopment Project, MainStreet Dayton was awarded \$6,000 for the MainStreet Dayton Cultural and Heritage Project, and Playback Memphis was awarded \$7,990 for the Memphis Community Building and Engagement Project.

With the mission to cultivate the arts for the benefit of all Tennesseans and their communities, the Commission funds a variety of arts projects through several grant categories. These grants help fund arts and cultural activities for more than 600 schools, local governments and nonprofit organizations in communities across all 95 counties. Visit [tnartscommission.org](http://tnartscommission.org) for more information.

## Grants available to preserve Underground Railroad sites

The Tennessee Historical Commission and Tennessee Wars Commission request applications for projects to protect Civil War and Underground Railroad sites in Tennessee.

The grants are funded through the Tennessee Civil War Sites Preservation Act, established in 2013.

"This is a valuable source of funding to help conserve time-honored battlefield properties," said Tennessee Historical Commission director and state historic preservation officer Patrick McIntyre.

Specifically the program helps fund the acquisition of the properties – or of protective interests in properties such as conservation easements – for land associated with the 38 most significant Civil War sites in Tennessee. In addition, the grants will assist in funding Underground Railroad sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or

for designation as a national historic landmark.

Previous grants from the fund have helped protect nearly 50 acres associated with the Battle of Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga. The amount of funds available for grants in Tennessee this year is expected to be \$250,000. After review, applications will be rated and ranked. The grants will pay a 50-percent match. The grant recipient must provide the remaining 50 percent of the costs as matching funds.

Completed applications must be submitted by Oct. 1.

Applications for grants are available from Fred Prouty at the Tennessee Wars Commission at 2941 Lebanon Road, Nashville, TN 37243. He may be reached via email at [fred.prouty@tn.gov](mailto:fred.prouty@tn.gov)

For more information visit [tn.gov/environment/section/tennessee-historical-commission](http://tn.gov/environment/section/tennessee-historical-commission).

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# Risky Business?

BY JUSTIN P. WILSON  
and JERRY E. DURHAM

In the 1983 movie Risky Business, Tom Cruise lives out the truthfulness of the old adage, "when the cats away, the mice will play." Tom plays an 18-year-old young man whose parents are out of town. The results range from the theft of his parent's furniture to the destruction of his father's beloved Porsche, and worse!

One of the most significant responsibilities that government officials have is managing risk. So, when you look at government that way, operating and managing government is "risky business."


Managing risk is an intentional process. For example, government managers realize there is a risk a fire may occur that could injure people and damage government buildings. They manage this risk with signage, sprinkler systems, smoke detectors, evacuation plans and insurance. They do this because they have performed a simple risk assessment and have concluded that the risk of fire, though remote, must be managed. The intentional decision to mitigate the risk of fire is an example of "internal" control.

Government managers could make the decision not to purchase fire and casualty insurance, or to disobey fire codes. However, by most standards of business practice and based on common sense, this would not be a wise decision.

There are other situations where managing risk is just as important, but they are not so obvious. For example, how do you manage the risk of preparing inaccurate financial statements? If governments are going to prepare financial statements, surely they want them to be accurate and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, which by the way, are required by Tennessee state statute. How do you manage the risk of overspending the approved budget, which would be a violation of state statutes and could possibly lead to higher taxes? How do you manage the risk of fraud? As with the fire example, government managers could make a decision to not implement controls over financial reporting, spending, and fraud. But, would that be a proper business practice? Does that sound like common sense management? Would you want your government managed that way?

The purchase of fire insurance is a no brainer. Managing accounting, reporting, and other types of performance risk is not so simple, but it is actually more important and should be just as intentional. Responsible government managers should be intentional about implementing internal controls for one simple reason, the public trust. What they manage belongs to someone else. The buildings, cars, cash, gasoline, computer programs, telephones, government credit cards, water and electricity, and ink pens all belong to citizens. Government managers are merely stewards of a public trust to manage it all with honesty and integrity. Internal controls are a simple, practical, proven, commonly accepted means of managing that public trust.

Internal controls are a means of ensuring that governments meet their stated objectives. In other words, internal controls are a simple way to make things go right and to prevent things from going wrong. These controls should be designed to work even when no one is watching. They help ensure that even when the "cats away," transactions and events are managed



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DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDIT

September 2015

## COMMON INTERNAL CONTROL DEFICIENCIES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The following are areas where internal control deficiencies are commonly identified in local governments by Local Government Audit staff.

- Segregation of Duties**  
Duties relating to accounting functions are often not adequately segregated.
- Manipulation of Data/Review of Audit Logs**  
Some accounting applications provide employees with the ability to manipulate receipts or general ledger entries. For those applications that record these manipulations in an audit log, management is not reviewing these logs.
- Cash Drawer Operations**  
Multiple employees operate from the same cash drawer within the office.
- Logical Access to Accounting Software**  
Logical access controls are inadequate. In some instances, passwords are not assigned to operating system or application user logins. Also, application logins are shared among users.
- Performance of Reconciliations**  
Management fails to perform reconciliations of its various general ledger accounts with supporting documentation and reports monthly.
- Timely Maintenance of Accounting Records**  
Some county offices do not maintain their accounting records on a current basis. Records may be maintained as many as several months behind throughout the fiscal year and may not be closed and available for audit timely.
- Purchasing Procedures**  
Many counties have internal control weaknesses related to their purchasing process. Examples include not establishing a formal purchase order system, issuing purchase orders after the purchases have been made, and paying invoices without confirmation that goods or services are received.
- Payroll Procedures**  
Records documenting payroll are often not maintained adequately. Examples include lack of supporting documentation for time worked and no evidence of supervisory approval of time worked.
- Data Backup and Disaster Recovery**  
Deficiencies in computer system backup procedures exist, and disaster recovery plans have not been developed.
- Lack of Management Oversight**  
Management does not always properly oversee the operations of the office.

**What are internal controls?**

Internal controls are defined as policies and procedures designed to assist management in achieving its goals and objectives. This framework must provide:

- a favorable control environment (tone at the top);
- continuing risk assessment;
- policies to ensure management directives are carried out;
- effective communication of information; and
- on-going monitoring of policies and procedures.

**How are internal control deficiencies identified?**

The Comptroller of the Treasury Division of Local Government Audit's staff performs audits annually in 89 counties, several component units, and one landfill. In addition, staff reviews the audits performed by independent accounting firms for six counties, municipalities, public internal school funds, charter schools, utility districts, housing authorities, local government created entities, quasi-governmental organizations, and other government-funded agencies. Through these audits, a number of internal control deficiencies are noted, evaluated, and communicated to management. The Division continues to evaluate a local government's efforts to address these deficiencies through the audit and review process.

Many of these deficiencies are considered to be significant due to their potential to lead to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

For more information, contact Jim Arnette at (615) 401-7841 or [Jim.Arnette@cot.tn.gov](mailto:Jim.Arnette@cot.tn.gov).

in accordance with management's directions and policies. Most government problems that get published as audit findings are the direct result of the absence or failure of some type of internal control.

Thankfully, the Tennessee General Assembly has decided that internal controls are important at the state and local government level. Our legislature has weighed in by passing The Financial Integrity Act, Section 9-18-101-104, Tennessee Code Annotated. This law requires internal controls for both state and local governments and should provide impetus, especially for local governments, to finally get serious about designing, documenting, and implementing adequate internal controls.

To be sure, running a government, especially in this day of constant change, is risky. But it is not gambling. Governing bodies and government managers can't just roll the dice and hope everything will turn out the right way. There are common sense actions that can be taken to manage risks. They are simple, they work, and they are not costly. We call those actions, internal controls.

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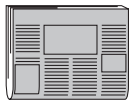
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### CITY RECORDER/FINANCE DIRECTOR

**WESTMORELAND.** The city of Westmoreland is now accepting applications for the position of city recorder/finance director. This position has a broad range of duties. Responsible for the financial activities of the city related to but not limited to: accounting and financial records of all funds, budgeting, purchasing, payroll, tax collections, grants, etc. Under the direct supervision of the mayor and the authority of the city council. Prepares the agenda for the governing body meetings, keeps minutes and maintains records of the proceedings of such meetings, prepares resolutions and ordinances. Supervises the work of subordinate office personnel. Administrator of the city's health insurance program, human resource coordinator, maintains insurance coverage for property, vehicles, workers comp and liability coverage. Participates in the annual external audit, including preparation of year-end analysis, audit work papers and coordination with auditor on audit procedures. A bachelor's degree in accounting from an accredited college is preferred but not required. At least 5 years of accounting and finance experience is a REQUIREMENT. Must be willing to obtain a Tennessee Certified Municipal Finance Officer Certification within 2 years of being hired. Obtain City Recorder Certification within 36 months. Must have the ability to be bonded. Applications may be picked up at Westmoreland City Hall or can be obtained online at [www.westmorelandtn.gov](http://www.westmorelandtn.gov). Applications will be accepted through the close of business on Tuesday, Sept. 29. Can be mailed to Westmoreland City Hall, P.O. Box 8, Westmoreland, Tn. 37186 or turned in at City Hall, 1001 Park St. The city of Westmoreland is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

### CODES INSPECTOR III

**GALLATIN.** The city of Gallatin is currently accepting applications for codes inspector III. Duties include: conducting field inspections and re-inspections of residential, commercial, industrial and public facilities for compliance with building, plumbing and mechanical codes and other ordinances. This is a 40 hrs. per week, day shift position. The hourly rate is \$24.08 + excellent benefits. Must have any combination of education and experience equivalent to graduation from high school supplemented by course study in a variety of inspection specialties and considerable experience in the building construction trade; Possession of a valid driver's license; requires certification by the International Code Council (ICC) in at least three disciplines at the time of application. Application deadline is Sept. 21, 2015. Interested persons must apply online at [www.gallatinonthemove.com](http://www.gallatinonthemove.com). Click on the employment tab at the top and follow the instructions. EOE.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**BRISTOL.** The city of Bristol, Tenn., is currently accepting applications for director of Community Development. Salary range is \$61,825 - \$95,175 DOQ, plus excellent benefits. Position answers to the City Manager. Must be a proven manager with excellent

communication and team-building skills. Responsible for all community development functions including planning, zoning, CDBG and other grant programs, code enforcement, GIS, and all departmental operations such as budgeting, policy development and goals development. Demonstrated success working with citizens, boards, businesses, etc. At least 6 years' experience in community development, 2 of which must be in a supervisory role. Master's degree in related field required. Go here to view the Position Profile: [http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/web2012.nsf/CityAdminWeb/994D-233D57C243D785257E9E00471426/\\$FILE/Bristol+Director+of+Community+Development+profile+2015.pdf](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/web2012.nsf/CityAdminWeb/994D-233D57C243D785257E9E00471426/$FILE/Bristol+Director+of+Community+Development+profile+2015.pdf). Send confidential resume and application to City of Bristol Human Resources Department, P.O. Box 1189, Bristol, TN 37620. Phone: (423) 989-5501. Or email resume to: [resume@bristoltn.org](mailto:resume@bristoltn.org). Position open until filled. See website to download application and review a summary of benefits: [www.bristoltn.org](http://www.bristoltn.org). EOE.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**CENTERVILLE.** The Hickman County Economic and Community Development Association announces that it is seeking an economic development director to lead its economic development organization. The association is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization serving Hickman County, Tennessee, and the town of Centerville. The economic development director will be required to do limited travel. The salary will be based on experience and other qualifications. Health, vacation, and retirement benefits are included. See the full job announcement at <http://www.hickmantn.org>. Qualified candidates are asked to submit a resume and cover letter to [hickmanecd@gmail.com](mailto:hickmanecd@gmail.com) by Oct. 1.

### FIRE CHIEF

**GOODLETTSVILLE.** The city is seeking an experienced Fire Service Professional to lead the city's full-service fire department. The city is seeking a proven, dedicated, responsive, and experienced individual for its position of fire chief. The successful candidate should possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree with a major in fire science, public administration, or a related field and 15 years of progressively responsible experience in the field of fire suppression and at least eight years as a chief, assistant chief or high ranking command position; a combination of education, training and experience which provides the requisite skill set will be considered. A related master's degree would be a plus. The fire chief is responsible for coordinating emergency fire services including fire suppression, prevention, inspection, arson investigation, training, emergency medical (non-ambulatory) and disaster services. Specific duties include managing a budget of \$2.4 million; managing a staff of 22+ FTE; preparing long range fire service plans; management and supervision of staff; coordinating automatic and mutual aid partnerships; reviews and interprets city ordinances and fire codes; promotes positive public relations and maintaining a close relationship with the community. Salary range: \$69,375.00 - \$110,025. Beginning salary range is expected to be: \$69,375.00 to \$86,719.00, plus an above average comprehensive benefits package. For a full search brochure please visit: [www.cityofgoodlettsville.com/chiefsearch](http://www.cityofgoodlettsville.com/chiefsearch). All interested applicants should submit a

resume with salary history and cover letter along with five personal and five professional references to: Fire Chief Search, 105 South Main Street, Goodlettsville, TN 37072, no later than 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 25. Email: [firechiefsearch@cityofgoodlettsville.org](mailto:firechiefsearch@cityofgoodlettsville.org)

### HEAD LIBRARIAN

**EAST RIDGE.** The city of East Ridge is accepting applications for the position of head librarian. Qualified applicants will have any combination of experience and training equivalent to a master's degree in library science from a college or university accredited by the American Library Association and/or five years experience working in a public institution or large organizational library. Must have considerable professional expertise in the library field, including supervisory and administrative responsibilities and be able to demonstrate success in library operations, finance, community interface, leadership and strategic planning. The candidate must possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills; and the ability to represent the city to the community, staff, media and city management effectively. Resumes may be submitted electronically to [tperry@eastridgetn.gov](mailto:tperry@eastridgetn.gov) or mailed to Ms. Trish Perry Human Resources Manager City of East Ridge 1517 Tombras Avenue, East Ridge, TN 37412. Closing date August 28, 2015. The city of East Ridge is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and Tennessee Drug Free Workplace.

### MUNICIPAL COURT SPECIALIST

**UT-MTAS.** The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) has an opening for a Training Specialist II position. This position is based in Knoxville. The municipal court specialist provides training, continuing education, and technical assistance to municipal court clerks and other appointed and elected officials, developing lesson plans and delivering training in a classroom setting. The position concentrates on one-on-one and regional field-based training; it provides onsite instruction and training in the operational processes of municipal courts and also includes researching and drafting informational documents on municipal issues. The position works with the training team by producing and facilitating classes as requested in addition to providing technical assistance to MTAS consultants to support their work with cities. Applicants should have a practical knowledge and understanding of the problems faced by city officials, particularly municipal court staff. The position performs other special work or duties as assigned by the training program manager, assistant director, or the executive director. This position requires a master's degree in public administration, criminal justice, or a closely related field. A law degree is preferred. It also requires at least five years employment in court administration, local law enforcement or a law department preferably with at least three years as a court administrator, state or city attorney, city prosecutor, or senior administrative police officer. Prefer training experience. The position requires a broad base of knowledge of municipal court operations and state and federal regulations impacting municipal courts. It requires someone with the ability to communicate effectively with both experienced and knowledgeable city officials and with city officials who may be new to municipal operations. This position requires extensive travel to municipalities across the state to deliver on-site consultation and training. Applicants are encouraged to review all job requirements prior to applying at <http://www.ips.tennessee.edu/?id=4>.

Salary is based on a combination of professional experience and qualifications. Applicants should apply electronically to [https://ut.taleo.net/careersection/ut\\_knoxville/jobdetail.ftl?job=15000000OB](https://ut.taleo.net/careersection/ut_knoxville/jobdetail.ftl?job=15000000OB) and submit a cover letter and resume. Position is open until filled. The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.

### PLANS EXAMINER I-ZONING

**FRANKLIN.** Under limited supervision, is responsible for technical work in the review of construction plans and enforcement of building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, flood plain, zoning, and/or fire and life safety codes and City ordinances as assigned. This position will be assigned to the Zoning section and review duties will focus on the zoning aspects of residential permit applications and also to ensure that planning conditions and Zoning Ordinance regulations are followed through on non-residential projects. The disciplines most applicable to this position will be zoning, flood plain, building, and City ordinances. The required knowledge, skill, and abilities to satisfactorily perform job duties are normally acquired through attainment of a bachelor's degree from four-year college or university; or four to five years building inspection related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience. Must have experience as a Building Inspector III. SALARY: \$21.29/HR For a complete job description or to apply on-line go to: [www.franklntn.gov/jobs](http://www.franklntn.gov/jobs). Deadline to apply: Open Until Filled EOE/Drug-free Workplace

### STORMWATER MANAGER

**WHITE HOUSE.** The city of White House is currently accepting applications for the position of Stormwater Manager. This position is responsible for developing and maintaining the City's MS4 stormwater program. Under general supervision the employee is responsible for developing and managing the City's MS4 stormwater program. An employee in this class performs difficult professional work developing, administering, and implementing federal, state, and local stormwater requirements including developing and administering stormwater management plans, and developing and managing a public education and outreach program. Applications should be returned to the HR office located at 105 College Street or emailed to Human Resources at [dthomas@cityofwhitehouse.com](mailto:dthomas@cityofwhitehouse.com). Compensation Range: \$18.78 to \$22.88 per hour (\$39,062.40 to \$47,590.40 annually) DOE Application Deadline: Open Until Filled. EOE.

### STREETS & ROADS SUPERVISOR

**WHITE HOUSE.** The city of White House is currently accepting applications for the position of Streets and Roads Supervisor. An employee in this position is responsible for supervision of public works streets and right of way maintenance and construction and is also responsible for the supervision of garbage and brush removal and supervises Public Work and Sanitation staff. Performs other related work as required. Visit our website at [www.cityofwhitehouse.com](http://www.cityofwhitehouse.com) for the full job description and to obtain an application. Applications should be returned to the HR office at 105 College Street or emailed to Human Resources at [dthomas@cityofwhitehouse.com](mailto:dthomas@cityofwhitehouse.com). Salary range: \$18.78 to \$22.88 per hour DOE. Deadline: Open Until Filled. EOE.



## TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

### Oct. 2-3: Erwin.

**Unico Apple Festival**  
Named one of the top 20 events in the Southeast by Southeast Tourism Society. Festival includes 350 arts and crafts vendors from around the country featuring painting, photography, wood-turning, sculpture, metal crafts, jewelry, blown glass and much more. Three food courts, and three entertainment stages featuring live music. A large children's area complete with rides and activities is included in the festival for both the young and young-at heart. A wide array of tournaments are featured including the NFS 4-Mile Race, Farm Bureau Tennis Tournament, Erwin Record Photography Contest, Corn Hole Tournament and Apple Dumpling Contest. 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information go to <http://unicocounty.org/apple-festival/>

### Oct. 3: Chattanooga

**21st Annual Wine Over Water**  
Walnut Street Bridge. More than 100 wineries from around the world will come to the event, which extends over the Tennessee River and is one of the world's longest pedestrian bridges. Regional musicians will entertain with music varying from jazz to bluegrass. Enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres from area restaurants. Ticket information can be found at [www.wineoverwater.org](http://www.wineoverwater.org).

### Oct. 17: Greeneville

**BBQ & Bluegrass Festival**  
Held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Depot Street and featuring two bluegrass shows at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Food, craft, and commercial vendors will line up along Depot Street, between Main and Irish streets. Kids activities are also planned. Sponsored by TEVET, LLC. For more information, search Facebook for "BBQ & Bluegrass," "Town of Greeneville," or contact Amy Rose at 423-639-7105

### Oct. 9 in Nashville

## TN Municipal Attorneys to conduct land use seminar

The Tennessee Municipal Attorneys Association will hold a seminar on Land Use Law on Oct. 9 in conjunction with the Tennessee County Attorneys Association and Metro Nashville.

The seminar will be held in the Sonny West Conference Room of the Howard Office Building, which is located on 2nd Avenue in Nashville. It will provide up to 6 hours of general continuing legal education credit.

Topics to be discussed at the seminar include telecommunications towers, historic zoning, exclusionary zoning, religious land use, agricultural exemption, aesthetics, the Anti-SLAPP statute, takings, exactions, and writs of certiorari, among others. Registration materials are available at TMAA's website, [www.tmaa.us](http://www.tmaa.us).

George Dean of Tune, Entretien & White, PC, in Nashville will discuss recent case law developments. Sam Edwards, executive director and chief legal counsel for the Greater Nashville Regional Council, will speak on planning commissions including issues related to general plans, subdivisions and dedications.

Bill Terry of Bill Terry and Associates in Nashville, will present information on recent legislative developments in land use law and annexation, Joey Hargis with Nashville-based Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, will provide information on zoning boards including jurisdiction, variances, conditional uses and procedures.

All four speakers will participate in a panel discussion on persistent issues including estoppel, contract zoning and First Amendment issues while Dean and Hargis will also discuss judicial review issues including certiorari, trail procedure and enforcement actions.

Any questions about the seminar should be addressed to Dennis Huffer, TMAA executive director at 615-512-5445 or [hufferd@gncr.org](mailto:hufferd@gncr.org) or Nelle Greulich, TMAA business manager at 615-834-4616 or [ngt-maa@aol.com](mailto:ngt-maa@aol.com).



**Municipal Technical Advisory Service**  
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

PRESENTS

THE 2ND ANNUAL

**November 19, 2015**

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Call Patrick Mills to register - (865) 974-0413 or register online: [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)



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Dr. Debye Turner Bell



Comedian:  
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## MEET US IN MUSIC CITY

Host City Nashville heads the list of best travel destinations, places to live, and cities attracting young people. See why this November at the annual Congress of Cities and Exposition, and discover how this city ran with its identity as a historic music center and developed a thriving creative economy.

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# How millennials are about to change the face of public service

As they move into leadership positions, we're going to hear less about "rowing" and "steering" and more about engaging the public.

BY SAM TAYLOR  
 GOVERNING MAGAZINE

I was talking recently to Jack Madans, a founding team member of the "civic hacking" group Code for America, about community engagement, and we lamented the state of public participation in government.

It shouldn't be just about giving the public a chance to be heard, we agreed. It should be about taking the feedback from the public and then actually utilizing it to fashion policies that have an impact on their lives. That often isn't what happens when some municipalities get public feedback, Jack felt, adding that a lot of today's public engagement is like the Make-A-Wish Foundation without the wish actually being granted.

So how can we improve the way governments get and utilize public input? I believe a lot of this will change with time - that is, as more millennials come into positions of executive leadership in cities, we're going to see more focus on "the new public service," a term coined by Janet V. Denhardt and Robert B. Denhardt in their book *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering*.

The millennial generation that

I'm part of has a strong dedication to public service. It's a generation that wants to make a difference in its communities and ensure that citizens control their own destiny. Public engagement is a cornerstone to making that happen.

Historic forms of government administration focused on either the "old public management" aims of simply "rowing" to achieve the ends of elected policy-makers or the "new public management" goal of "steering" agencies, with wide latitude toward market-focused management solutions. As the Denhardts might say, however, the public has been placed in the back of the boat. With the new-public-service approach, energized public administrators are intent on putting the community directly in the captain's chair.

It seems like a simple concept. But older forms of public administration did not readily embrace citizen input as a means of developing policy.

We're changing that now. Millennial executive leaders are already pushing on these fronts, seeking innovative public-engagement solutions using technology, such as the opportunities provided by Code for America. It's then about working to follow up with constituencies to ensure that they know how their input has been utilized.

That follow-up is critical to

counteract the perception in some communities that public servants aren't listening to the input that citizens do provide -- one reason that it can be hard to engender the level of public participation that makes for a healthy, productive civil dialogue.

So let's begin to tell a different story. Start by building strategic public-engagement strategies for policy initiatives that work to both recruit participants and engage them. That means ensuring that residents are aware of how valuable their input is and understand clearly how it will be used. Personalize the communications to residents.

And go to where the community is. People are busy. They are tired. They are on fixed incomes. Attending meetings can be difficult. Bring the meetings to them, perhaps by creating a mobile or "pop-up" city hall, with staff members from different departments meeting and talking to residents while providing them with information about what their community's government is doing and actively seeking their input. Put up booths at the local grocery store with information on the next major planning effort.

Millennials are thinking about these kinds of opportunities constantly, embracing a form of public administration that places the community directly in that captain's chair. It's about serving, not steering.

COMING  
UP

October 7 - 9

**2015 Tennessee Governor's Conference On Hospitality & Tourism**  
 Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville. For more information on the educational and professional development seminars that will be offered at this year's conference, schedule, speakers, registration, lodging, and the annual TnHTPAC Golf Tournament, visit [www.tnhta.net](http://www.tnhta.net) and click on "2015 TN Governor's Conference."

October 13-14

**TNECD 62nd Annual Governor's Conference on Economic and Community Development**  
 Renaissance Hotel, Nashville. Register now for the 62nd Annual Governor's Conference. For more information or to register for the conference, please visit [govcon.tnecd.com](http://govcon.tnecd.com).

October 21-23

**TCMA Fall Conference**  
 DoubleTree Hotel, Chattanooga. A wide range of topics timely to the needs of TCMA members will be covered over 2 1/2 days, beginning at 9 a.m. on Oct. 21, and ending by 12 noon on Oct. 23. To reserve a room at the DoubleTree, call the hotel at 423-756-5150 and indicate the group name - TN City Managers Association. Or go online to [www.chattanooga.doubletree.com](http://www.chattanooga.doubletree.com). Rooms are also available at the Hampton Inn & Suites. Call 423-693-0500, or go to [www.chattanoogadowntownsuites.hamptoninn.com](http://www.chattanoogadowntownsuites.hamptoninn.com)

October 22 - 23

**TGFOA Annual Conference**  
 Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro. The primary professional and educational gathering of government finance officials in the state. Among the topics to be presented: uniform guidance OMB; legislative update; social media; GASB update; economic outlook; and TN Comptroller's office uniform chart of accounts project update. Early registration through Oct. 2. Go to: <http://tngfoa.wildapricot.org>

November 4-7

**NLC Congress of Cities**  
 Music City Center, Nashville. Join city officials from all over the country for four days of networking, learning, thought-leadership, and of course some fun with friends and colleagues, old and new. To register: <https://registration.experientevent.com/shown1c152/>

November 3 - 5

**TCAPWA Conference**  
 Chattanooga Convention Center. For additional information email [mark-miller@charter.net](mailto:mark-miller@charter.net)

## UT-MTAS OCTOBER MAP CLASSES

### RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Developing a system to file everything and then find it again...fast! Sounds simple...but isn't. There is a lot more to good records management than pulling and replacing files. If you have the responsibilities for organizing, filing or retrieving records and information, you know there's a lot more to it than ABCs. To make your filing system work for you and your municipality, you need to have a solid knowledge of the basics - and smart ideas and solutions that meet your unique needs and challenges. This course will cover the basics of records management including filing arrangements or systems, open records law, record keeping and retention schedules. Upon completion of this course, you will know what to keep and how, what to toss - and when.

**Target Audience:** Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, City Attorneys, City Recorders, Code Enforcement Officials and Utility and Public Works Directors and Managers

**Dates/Locations/Times:**

October 13 Jackson 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. CST  
 October 14 Nashville 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. CST  
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**Credits:** 4 CEU

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To register for a course, go to [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu), or fax to 865-974-0423. Credit card payments must register online with the Solution Point System: <http://www.solutionpoint.tennessee.edu/MTAS> or by invoice. For registration assistance, call 865-974-0413. Or for more information, contact Kurt Frederick, training consultant, at 615-253-6385.

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## No loan is too large or too small



The city of Jackson closed a variable rate loan through the TMBF loan program in the amount of \$17.4 million to finance its three-year capital improvement plan.

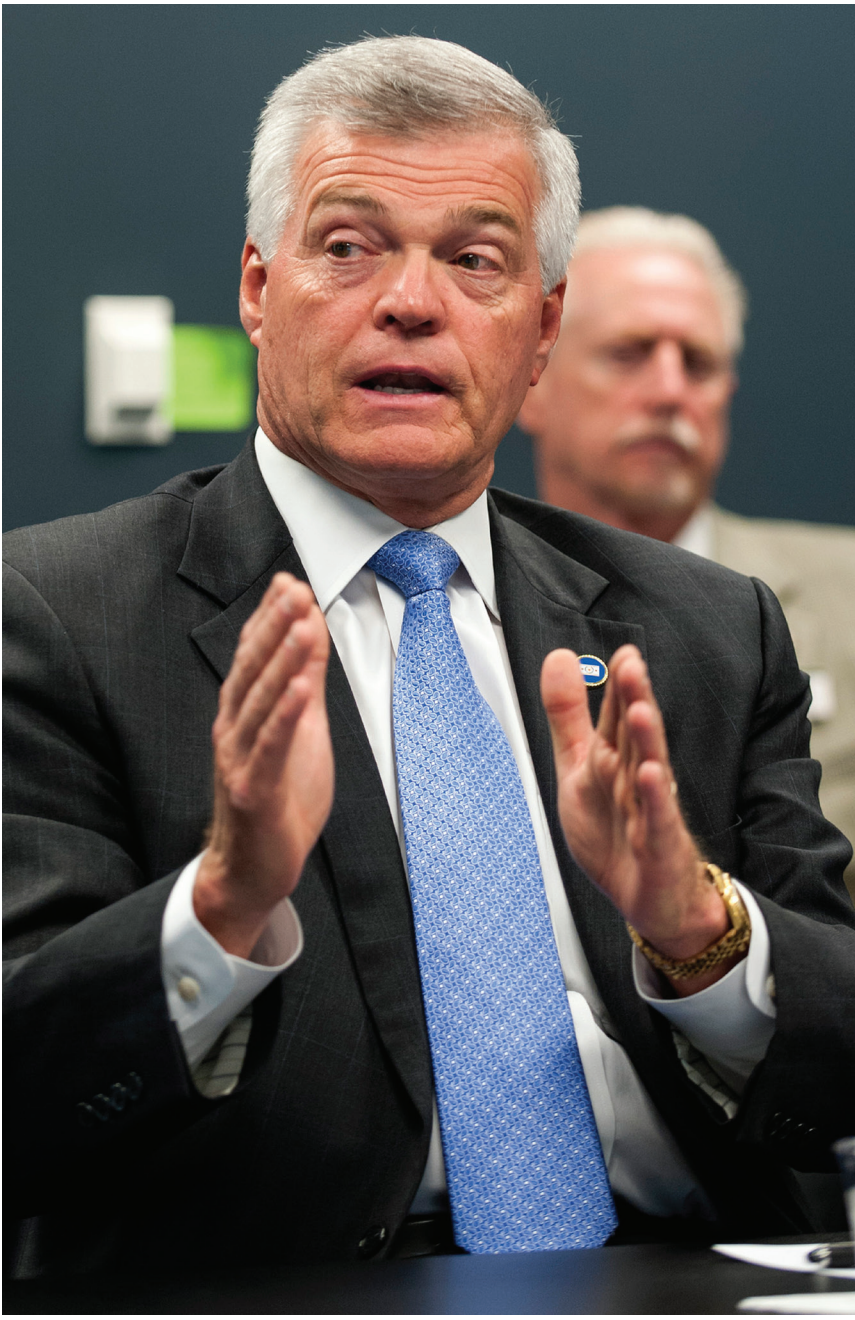
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**TMBF**  
 TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL BOND FUND

The town of Livingston closed a loan through the TMBF loan program in the amount of \$1.1 million for a capital outlay note to finance parks and recreational facilities.



# Haslam, TDOT meet with legislators, local government officials



Sen. Transportation Chair Jim Tracy



Gov. Haslam, Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, and TDOT Commissioner John Schroer



House Speaker Beth Harwell and Rep. Mike Harrison



House Local Government Chair Rep. Tim Wirgau



Gov. Haslam, Rep. Sabi Kumar, and Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan



Above: Kingsport Mayor John Clark

At right: Brentwood Mayor Regina Smithson and Brentwood City Manager Kirk Bednar





# Road funding, transportation infrastructure needs discussed



Gov. Haslam and McKenzie Mayor Jill Holland



TDOT Commissioner Schroer and Sen. Majority Leader Mark Norris



Rep. Johnny Shaw



Shelbyville Mayor Wallace Cartwright, Shelbyville City Manager Jay Johnson, and Rep. Pat Marsh



Franklin Mayor Ken Moore



Rep. Jason Powell, Rep. John Ray Clemmons, Rep. Harold Love, and Rep. G.A. Hardaway



Sen. Jeff Yarbrow and Sen. Ferrell Haile



Dyersburg Alderman Bob Kirk (right)



Murfreesboro Mayor Shane McFarland

# ECD Commissioner Randy Boyd “doubles down” on education and rural development to make state No. 1 for high-quality jobs

BY LINDA BRYANT

When Randy Boyd takes charge, success often follows. The longtime entrepreneur from Knoxville was appointed Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) in December 2014. A dizzying amount of business relocations and expansions have been announced since that time. TNECD has also committed to several new initiatives, including one aimed at making Tennessee’s most distressed rural communities more economically vibrant.

In August 2015, alone, TNECD announced eight major company locations or expansions amounting to \$480 million in investment dollars and hundreds of jobs for Tennesseans. Boyd gives much of the credit to his staff and the momentum the department already had when he took the helm. But there’s no denying his track record of success.

Boyd is chairman of Radio Systems Corp. in Knoxville. The company produces more than 4,600 pet products under brand names such as Invisible Fence, PetSafe, and SportDOG. He is also the owner of the Smokies, the minor league Class AA affiliate of the Chicago Cubs he purchased in 2014.

In 2013, he took a leave of absence from his company to serve Gov. Bill Haslam in a volunteer role as his Special Advisor on Higher Education. He played a major role in the development of the Drive to 55 initiatives and in Tennessee Promise, a new nationally-recognized program that provides free community college tuition to approximately 25,000 Tennesseans a year.

When Boyd was growing up, he worked for his dad’s factory for \$1 an hour. By the age of 11 he was expected to buy his own clothes. He graduated from high school when he was 16 and attended the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, where he paid his own tuition and graduated in three years.

“I have been blessed with a host of mentors, but none are greater than my father,” Boyd said. “I’ve always been proud to say he didn’t give me the money to start my business. My dad gave me the example of what success looks like and what it means to never quit.”

Boyd has two grown children, Harrison and Thomas. His wife Jenny is also a budding entrepreneur. She owns Boyd’s Jig & Reel, a Scottish pub in downtown Knoxville.

**TT&C: Gov. Haslam appointed you in December 2014, which means you are coming up on your first anniversary. How’s it going?**

**RB:** We came in with a lot of momentum. *Business Facilities Magazine* had named us State of the Year for two years in a row, and last year we set a record of 24,221 new job commitments — the best in Tennessee history. There’s more good news this year. We set a goal of reaching 25,000 jobs, and we’re on track to do over 26,000. Of course, being on track and actually getting it done are two different things, but we like our momentum.

**TT&C: You are a successful entrepreneur. How does that mix with working for the government?**

**RB:** People ask that a lot. The question isn’t how am I going to adjust to government, the question is how government is going to adjust to me. I’m going to continue to operate as an entrepreneur and business person until somebody says I’m going in the wrong direction. We are going to have the most entrepreneurial, most business-centric department in state government and maybe even in the United States. I have told my team that excuses such as ‘that’s just the way people do things in government’ are unacceptable. If it makes sense to do things the way we’ve done them in the past, let’s keep doing things that way. If there’s a better way, let’s change our approach.

**TT&C: Did you make any big changes right away when you came into office at TNECD?**

**RB:** This department is always focused on recruiting new business — on helping existing businesses expand and on supporting entrepreneurship. We are going to continue to focus on these areas. They are the blocking and tackling of our department. There are also two areas we’re doubling down on. Rural development is one of those areas. While it’s great that some of our major metropolitan areas — Nashville for example — are booming. But many of our communities aren’t able to keep up. They are struggling, and they are not sharing in the success of the state. Earlier this year, we hired Amy New as Tennessee’s first-ever assistant commissioner for Rural Development. In this position, Amy is 100 percent focused on rural development. This really increases the odds that all communities can share in Tennessee’s success. We have 21 distressed counties in our state, and they include counties that are in the lowest 10 percent in the nation. It is our goal to completely eliminate their low standings by 2025. We don’t want any distressed counties in our state. We’re coming up with a whole series of initiatives focused exclusively on those communities to help them pull themselves up.

The second big area where we’re doubling down is education. I’ve spent a lot of time in the past working on educational initiatives. We realized very quickly that it doesn’t do any good to send kids to college to get degrees in areas where there are no jobs available. Meanwhile, we have all these businesses across our state that are struggling to find workers. There’s a skills gap, and it points to a problem. Education and business are not aligned properly, not communicating well enough. We are making

sure that the businesses we interact with are engaged and communicating with higher education. We’re making sure that the supply and demand parts of the equation are being addressed in the communication process.

**TT&C: What are some specific things you can do to help distressed counties?**

**RB:** Let me talk about leadership and organization first. Our first step, which was appointing Amy New as assistant commissioner for Rural Development, was very important. The second thing is working with partners at the Department of Tourist Development and the Department of Agriculture. We have created the Rural Development Task Force with people from six different departments within the state government. There’s a whole range of other people, all of whom are involved with rural development programs — from UT Extension offices to the Farm Bureau to TVA and a host of other organizations. You simply can’t develop a rural economy without developing the workforce. We’ve got certain



Commissioner Randy Boyd  
TN Economic and Community Development



ECD Commissioner Boyd along with Gov. Bill Haslam and Sens. Bill Ketron and Jim Tracy at the Nissan announcement held in March. Nissan plans to invest \$160 million to build a new supplier park at their Smyrna vehicle assembly plant. The project is estimated to support more than 1,000 newly created supplier jobs.

communities that have 6 percent post-secondary attainment (pursuing education past high school). Businesses in the future will require on average 55 percent of the workforce to achieve postsecondary attainment. If we don’t take ownership of this and help to improve education in the workforce, we can’t be as successful as we want to be. We all have to pitch in.

We want to help rural counties by investing in assets. The first thing a company or business asks when they come to our state is: “where can I put my business? Do you have a site ready for me?” They won’t wait for you to build that site. In the past we’ve given our rural communities consultation on what would make a good site, but we haven’t given them the financial assistance to go get their sites up and running. We want to step up to the plate and give financial assistance for developing these communities.

Another important area of development is entrepreneurship. We’re working through Launch Tennessee and another organization called AgLaunch to develop more entrepreneurship in our rural communities. There are different challenges in small communities compared to larger cities such as Knoxville, Nashville or Chattanooga. For example, a small business that hires new people in Spencer or Mountain City, may only hire 10 people, but that’s a significant number for them. At TNECD we’re known for bringing in big business — and the jobs that go along with them — to industrial sites. This is a great thing, but at the same time this big business approach just isn’t the right solution for many of our rural communities. It just doesn’t make sense to put a big factory in these places. Yet, they are in geographic locations with a lot of natural beauty. They are probably best served if we enhance their tourism. We are working with the Department of Tourist Development to help them develop these assets.

Rural broadband is another important area of development for us. You can do business anywhere in the world from anywhere in the world today, but you have to be wired. A lot of our rural communities just aren’t connected. The only pathway to success today is to be online, and we’ve got to make sure that can happen for them.

**TT&C: Have you looked to other states to find good examples of economic development, or is Tennessee one of the state’s that’s leading the way — or both?**

**RB:** In many ways we’re leading in a lot of these initiatives, but at the same time we are not alone. Nearly every state has an urban-rural divide. Rural areas are being left behind all over the country. We went on a trade mission to the maritime provinces of Canada about two months ago, and they have the exact same issue. They have a couple of metropolitan areas that are doing okay and a lot of rural areas that are really struggling. It’s actually worse in their case because people are leaving at a pretty dramatic rate. Most of their young talented employable population are heading south. At least we don’t have that problem. But we could in the future if we don’t bring jobs and opportunities to our struggling communities.

**TT&C: What are some of the strategies for aligning education with economic development?**

**RB:** We have a workforce subcommittee that’s bringing several departments — Education, Human Services, Labor, Higher Education and Economic Development — to the table to create new programs and strategies at the state level. There are a lot of initiatives that are going to be coming out of this group. We’re going to be submitting a report to Gov. Haslam soon with nine new initiatives for him to consider.

We’ve also created a new group, the Workforce 360 Council, which will bring local stakeholders, businesses, higher education and K-12 together at the local level to better align with our goals. We’re talking to our businesses about creating — or participating in — the outputs of the educational institutions. One great example is the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT). They have workforce advisory councils that include people from different industries — welding for example. Because of the councils we can make sure the college is actually teaching students the exact skills on the right equipment. When students graduate they will be skilled in the things that the businesses need. The great thing about our TCAT is that they’re very adaptable. They can react to change very quickly. The four-year schools may not be able to react quite as quickly, even though they are trying to be more adaptive.

The last thing: We are encouraging business leaders to step up for those mentorship roles with students who are granted scholarships through the Tennessee Promise program.

**TT&C: What are we doing to make sure we are in that category, one of the best places to start a new business?**

**RB:** We’re continuing to invest with our partner, Launch Tennessee, to create more entrepreneurial activities. We have nine accelerators around the state to help facilitate and mentor new startup businesses. Launch Tennessee has a program called 36|86. It’s a big yearly conference that brings investors to the table. This year they had their best year. Close to 70 investors from all over the world came to learn about investing in Tennessee.

We want to do all we can to make sure we’re not getting in the way of people doing business. All the different steps — the various rules and regulations and departments you have to go through — can be daunting for business owners. We want to streamline this process, simplify it so it can be much easier to start a small business in Tennessee. If you’re starting a big business you have attorneys and accountants who take care of these kinds of things for you. When you’re a single entrepreneur trying to start something, it can be very discouraging to the point of inhibiting.

**TT&C: What do international investors see about us that’s so attractive?**

**RB:** From a logistical point of view, we’re just blessed with great geography. We are at the center of the Eastern United States. We have the Tennessee River, the Mississippi River and six different class-one rail lines that go through the state. We have major interstates.

Investors are also attracted to our workforce.

I thought the hardest part of this job would be getting the word out about grading and utilities. It turns out that all the things about developing a site usually aren’t even a conversation. The people we talk to have figured that part out. Everybody’s got dirt, electricity and water; those things are just basic. They ask questions like, “What’s the workforce of the future? What is the state doing to prepare the workforce?” We can answer their questions better than most any other state. Conveniently for us, we have programs put in place to help. We have Tennessee Promise, which offers free community college tuition, and Tennessee Reconnect, which helps adults enter college.

**TT&C: What does TNECD do to “court” a company? How do you get them interested in Tennessee?**

**RB:** Sometimes it’s a process that’s brought to us by default. When an anonymous company goes through a selection process looking for a particular type of site or location, you just have to provide the right site or location to meet their criteria. Once you get into the final selection process the company is revealed. After that, it’s about convincing them we have the best workforce, the best overall package. That’s one path, but a lot of our businesses these days are coming to us because we are aggressively cold calling them. For example, Alex Bertelli, one of our ECD superstars, went to the airshow in Oshkosh, Wis., because there were people there from the Cirrus Aircraft Company. We knew they were looking at 20 states and 30 different airports for possible places to expand. We were the only state to go to this particular conference, and we ended up winning the business. We showed that we were the state that cared the most. Attracting business to Tennessee is about relationships and just making that extra effort to be there when you are needed.

Here’s another good example. We have a couple of ceramic tile manufacturers that are now coming to Tennessee. I can also tell you that we will probably have between three to six more in the next 12 months. It all started with one of our ECD superstars, Bryan Farlow. Bryan went to a flooring show about six months ago in Orlando. It was a speculative venture, and there were no representatives from any other state at the show. He talked to every single person at the show. There were companies from all over the world interested in moving companies to the United States. They had no idea where to go, and we happened to be the first ones to talk to them. We were able to convince them that we were the best place to come! In fact, we may end up becoming a mecca for ceramic tile in the United States.

In an atmosphere where everybody’s going after the same kind of business, we’re finding that you have to continue to differentiate to be competitive. So if the intense competition has everyone wanting to be the aerospace capital or the life science capital, it means everyone’s not going after the ceramic tile capital. There’s opportunity in the niches.

**TT&C: What are a couple of your biggest challenges at TNECD?**

**RB:** Rural development is going to be a challenge. I talked with Gov. Haslam when we first focused on it, and he asked me a hard question. He said, “I get the effort, and I get the need. But can we really win?” To answer honestly, I have to say I don’t know for sure. It’s going to be hard. It takes so many different variables, and there’s not just one solution.

The first and most important thing is to have a laser focus. We are isolating those 21 distressed counties, and we’re going to create a new system that says these counties have to get special treatment. They have to be part of our conversation every day. These counties don’t have to become economic powerhouses. I was talking to the mayor of Van Buren yesterday. Right now, they’re at about 10 percent unemployment, and to achieve full employment they need about 200 more jobs. It’s not easy to create 200 jobs, but it’s certainly possible.

**TT&C: Where do you think the state will be in the next five years?**

**RB:** We will be the No. 1 state in the Southeast for high-quality jobs. We will have zero distressed counties. We will have the fastest growing GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and the fastest growing personal income in the 12 Southeastern states.

**TT&C: Is there anything else you would like to mention?**

**RB:** Our Three Star program is a key part of the infrastructure we need to reach our goals. This program was rebranded four years ago under Gov. Haslam. Participation is based on an annual evaluation and activity plan. Local community leaders and joint economic and community development boards are encouraged to implement activities that will impact a community’s competitiveness in a global economy. The program has benchmarks that communities agree on in order to earn their Three Star status. There’s a reward if they do it, and we are going to try to up that reward over time. Getting all communities to get to that basic level of success through participating in the Three Star program is a big effort, and a very important one. You have to have a community that provides public safety, basic education and the health and wellness people want when they are considering moving to an area. We are going to help the communities do that.