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## Census Bureau: TN sees nearly9%populationgrowth

**By KATE COIL** *TML Communications Specialist* 

Tennessee's population grew nearly 9% between 2010 and 2020 and is now the sixteenth most populous state in the union, according to new information released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The new data showed the addition of 541,466 new residents made Tennessee rank eleventh out of the 50 states and District of Columbia in terms of which states gained or loss individuals. The state's 8.49% population increase made it rank seventeenth in terms a percentage change to population.

Overall, Tennessee is home to 2.07% of the total population of the U.S.

Of Tennessee's population, 6,910,840 – or 99.9% – are American citizens. There are also 6,057 Tennesseans who were living abroad – including active duty military – at the time of the Census.

The state went from the seventeenth most populous state in the nation in 2010 to sixteenth in terms of overall population. Tennessee recorded a total population of 6,916,897 (almost 7 million) in 2020, up from the more than 6.37 million reported in 2010.

The Tennessee State Data Center at the University of Tennessee's Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research said the state has actually seen a decrease in its population gains in the past two decades. The state saw its population increase by 16.7% between 1990 and 2000 and 11.5% between 2000 and 2010. This slowing increase in population is mirrored on the national level with the U.S. seeing the lowest rate of population gain experienced since the 1930s.

"Although our growth rate was slightly lower last decade, the 2020 population counts did exceed the pre-census estimate of an 8.3 percent increase," said Tim Kuhn, director of the Tennessee State Data Center. "We have to wait to learn more, but we are very thankful to the Tennesseans who completed the census and to the public and private leaders across the state who helped promote a complete count of our



#### 2020 Census in TN by the Numbers

**2.07** the percentage of the total U.S. population made up by Tennesse.

**6.91** million, the amount of people who call Tennessee home.

**8.49** the percentage the state's population grew by since 2010.

9 How many U.S. House sets TN has as determined by the Census. Where Tennessee

**16th** ranks in population among the 50 states.

residents."

Studies have shown that the increase in Tennessee's population during the past 30 years is a result of migration – more people moving into the state than out – than it is by the number of new births exceeding the number of deaths. Tennessee has seen a decline in birth rates every year since 2007.

In addition to keeping tabs on population, Census numbers are an important resource when it comes to the allocation of funds and the setting of political boundaries on all levels of government.

These recent numbers were a part of the U.S. Census Bureau's annual apportionment results, which use the population of each state to determine how many members of the U.S. House of Representatives each state is allotted. Tennessee *See* **CENSUS** *on Page 3* 

## **TN General Assembly adjourns 2021 session**



Republican members of legislative leadership assembled with Gov. Bill Lee for a post-session news conference. Pictured are Rep. Jeremy Faison, House caucus chairman; Rep. William Lamberth, House majority leader; House Speaker Cameron Sexton; Gov. Lee; Lt. Gov. Randy McNally; Sen. Jack Johnson, Senate majority leader; and Sen. Ken Yager, Senate caucus chairman.

This year's legislative session offered a unique set of challenges as necessary precautions brought about by COVID-19 limited visitor access to the offices of the General Assembly. However, your TML staff was able to maintain a high level of engagement and secure desired outcomes for our membership. A separate legislative report will be sent to our members highlighting key legislation approved during the 2021 session.

## Approved budget provides \$100M in local funds

State lawmakers passed the 2021-22 fiscal year budget on Thursday, April 29, totaling some \$42.6 billion.

#### Local Government Recovery and Rebuilding Grants

For the second year in a row TML worked with Gov. Bill Lee's administration to secure one-time disbursements of state grants to municipalities.

In his FY21-22 budget amendment the governor proposed \$200 million in non-recurring funds to provide Local Government Recovery and Rebuilding Direct Appropriation Grants to cities and counties on a per capita basis.

The House and Senate ulti-

budget, the grant monies are to be available in July and may be expended on any non-recurring expense.

The main components of the local government grants contained in the Senate and House budget amendments include:

- Each city is to receive a minimum grant amount of \$15,000, plus per capita distribution.
- Maximum grant amount for any single city or county is \$5 million.
- Grant monies may only be spent on non-recurring (one-time) expenses.
- Monies are not required to be expended on specific uses and expenditures are not required to be consistent with any specific



The reduction in local govern-

mately passed a budget that provides \$100 million in funds for local government grants for Fiscal Year 2022.

The amount approved by the Senate and House represents a \$100 million reduction in the amount proposed by Gov. Lee. However, unlike under the governor's revised categories.

- Cities and counties are not required to file a plan of the use of grant monies or a resolution from the local governing body requesting use of the grant funds.
- Grants are to be paid out by July 31, 2021.

ment grants was not the only element of Gov. Lee's revised budget affected by the Senate and House amendments.

The governor's proposed funding for broadband was reduced by \$100 million.

In addition, the governor's pro-See **BUDGET** on Page 5

# Municipal elections held in 12 cities across state

#### **By KATE COIL**

A dozen municipalities across Tennessee held local elections at the end of April and early May with both new and familiar faces taking seats on city councils, commissions, and boards of mayor and aldermen.

#### ALAMO

Voters with the city of Alamo went to the polls to decide local office on May 1.

Incumbent mayor John Avery Emison defeated challenger and sitting alderman Kenneth L. Bodkins by 7 votes to retain his seat. Emison earned 247 votes while Bodkins earned 240.

Incumbents John Reddick and Paul B. Conley IV will be joined by newcomers Jim Knox and Michael Moore on the Alamo Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Challenging candidates Rate Randall and Brad York failed to garner enough votes to obtain one of the four open seats on the board.

Reddick led the vote count with 356 followed by Knox with 315, Conley with 281, Moore with 223, Randall with 183, and York with 167. Incumbent alderman Larry Conder did not seek re-election while Bodkins ran unsuccessfully for the mayoral seat.

#### BELLS

Citizens of Bells went to the polls on May 1 to elect municipal officials. Sitting alderman Eric Jordan ran unopposed and was elected to serve as mayor of Bells with 148 votes. Incumbent mayor Joe E. Williams did not seek re-election to the seat.



Incumbents Dabney Long and John Pigue will be joined by newcomers Ricky Pender, Alice F. McDearman, and John Pigue on the Bells Board of Mayor and Aldermen, defeating incumbent Scotty Runions and challenger Lee Overton for the five available alderman seats.

Pender led the vote count with 159 followed by Long with 144, Mc-Dearman with 115, Bob Pigue with 111, John PIgue with 109, Runions with 107, and Overton with 87.

#### BRENTWOOD

Incumbents retained the three open seats on the Brentwood City Commission during the city's May 3 election.

Incumbents Mark Gorman, Regina R. Smithson, and current Mayor Rhea Emory Little defeated challenger Gina Starling Gunn for the three open positions. Little led the vote total with 3,665 followed by Gorman with 3,389, Smithson with 3,665, and Gunn trailing with 1,027.

#### DUNLAP

Voters in Dunlap went to the polls on May 1 to elect new municipal officials. Former Dunlap *See* **ELECTIONS** *on Page 3* 

# Athens online budget tool aims to educate, engage citizens in city budgetary process

#### By KATE COIL

As budget season arrives, officials with the city of Athens are giving local residents a unique tool to both learn more about the budgeting process and give officials feedback on what they want to see funded in the city.

Athens City Administrator C. Seth Sumner said the city has made available a budget tool through Balancing Act, a creation of Colorado-based public policy consulting firm Engaged Public, that helps communities educate and engage citizens in the often-complex budgeting process.

Sumner said the city had been looking for ways to better involve citizens with the budget process, especially as the pandemic made the typical meeting process less desirable for many.

"We are still living in the pandemic, but wanted to find some way we could reach out and listen to our citizens to allow their input on our budget process really for the first time outside the normal public hearing process," Sumner said. "I asked my staff to look around for tools and see what was available so we could make this a good, safe process and possibly even reach a larger crowd than we could do if we were meeting in-person."

Through Balancing Act, Sumner said citizens can utilize two tools to learn more about the budgeting process. The first is a taxpayer receipt that shows resi-



While past city budgets have largely relied on public meetings, concerns about the pandemic and a desire to reach a bigger audience of citizens prompted Athens officials to look for an online way to bring the budget process to local residents.

dents what their personal taxes pay for in terms of city services.

"More than four-to-one engagements are on the taxpayer receipt," Sumner said. "Residents plug in their home value, and based on that it will calculate roughly what their property tax for the city of Athens is. Based on their income level, it will calculate how much sales tax they pay. They will then get to see how much, say, a year of police service costs. It breaks everything down by the services that matter."

The second tool is one to balance the overall city budget, allowing citizens to add and subtract money from different departments to balance the city's budget based on what is important to them.

Citizens can subtract from some departments and add to others to change funding allocations for various departments. The only way to add cash to the budget, however, is to raise the city's tax rate. Citizens can also decrease the tax rate to see what would happen to the budget if less money was available.

Sumner said the tool was set up so citizens could understand the challenges city officials face when trying to create a balanced budget based on current income levels.

"Something that was import-See ATHENS on Page 3







#### ADAMSVILLE

Officials including University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd and University of Tennessee-Martin Chancellor Keith Carver were on hand to cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Coon Creek Science Center in Adamsville. Upgrades to the site included a new paleo lab, cabins, and a maintenance building. Situated on 232 acres of property, the center is home to one of the most important fossil sites in North America and is known for a geological formation known as the Coon Creek Formation. Fossils found in the area range from marine shells, crabs and snails to sharks. The science center is part of the Pink Palace Family of Museums and serves as an outdoor classroom for geology students, particularly those with the University of Tennessee-Martin. The site was named one of the nation's 12 best fossil sites in 2008.

#### CHATTANOOGA

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced the work on the new and bigger lock at Chickamauga Dam in Chattanooga is expected to be complete by April 2024, which will reduce a major bottleneck for barge shipments on the Tennessee River. The new lock will be able to handle up to six barges at a time, well above the single barge the current lock can accommodate. Each barge on Tennessee's inland waterways keeps 90 trucks off the road and moves heavy freight more cost-effectively and with less energy. The final estimated total for the lock is \$757 million as continual congressional appropriations were needed to sustain construction, and construction costs increased annually. Once completed, the lock project is expected to have an annual economic payback of \$52.9 million.

#### ERWIN

After being closed for nearly two years, a new owner is hoping to reopen downtown Erwin's iconic Capitol Cinema as a music venue. Opened by Earl Hendren in 1935, the theatre remained in the Hendren family until it was closed in 2019. Robert Fury, who moved to Erwin in 2020, purchased the theatre from the Hendren family with plans to reopen the venue by fall of 2022. Renovations including a new roof are part of Fury's plans for the building. Fury has a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing and spent 30 years in the construction industry.

of its production on World War II efforts in the 1940s.

#### FAYETTEVILLE

Officials with the city of Fayetteville gathered to break ground on a long-awaited soccer field project financed by a Local Parks and Recreation Fund Grant. The project began in 2014 when Daiken/ Goodman donated land to the city in exchange for the installation of a traffic signal. The city received a Local Parks and Recreation Fund grant in 2018 with the land serving as the matching portion of the grant. Officials with the Fayetteville Board of Mayor and Aldermen, Daiken/Goodman, Barge Design Solutions, Baseline Sports Construction, and players with Fayetteville High School's soccer teams all joined together for the official turning of the soil.

#### FRANKLIN

Landmark Recovery, an addiction treatment company, is relocating its headquarters from Arizona to Franklin. The company's new headquarters will be located at 720 Cool Springs Boulevard and will create approximately 350 new jobs in the next five years. Landmark Recovery offers treatments for people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction, including options for inpatient and outpatient treatments, medical detox, and partial hospitalization. They have centers in Indianapolis, Louisville, Oklahoma City, Las Vegas, and Lexington. The company was founded in Scottsdale, Ariz., in 2016.

#### **KINGSPORT**

The second phase of a threeyear improvement project for Kingsport's Lynn View Community Center is taking shape with the planned opening of a new playground facility in time for summer. The new playground is expected to be opened in May and includes two climbing and slide structures connected with monkey bars. The \$52,000 project will also include benches, landscaping, and new fencing for both the playground area as well as the nearby basketball court and baseball field. The project is one of three renovation phases to the community center being funded through a \$450,000 Project Conservation. In addition to the splash pad, the funds have also financed ADA improvements to the park.

#### MARYVILLE

After nearly three years, a new inclusive playground is set to open at Maryville's John Sevier Park in June. The first phase of the project is being constructed by Cunningham Recreation as part of a collaboration between the Blount Inclusive Playground group, the Maryville Lions Club, the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Committee, and private donors and volunteers. The first phase of the project will include a rubber-like pour-in-place material making it easier for all children to navigate while the play equipment will be wheelchair accessible. Swings, slides, and other amenities for children of all abilities will also be available. The project is currently raising funds for the second phase of the playground, and when the second phase is completed, the playground will be the largest in Blount County.

#### **MEMPHIS**

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is launching the largest strategic investment since its foundation nearly 60 years ago, committing \$11.5 billion through 2027 to accelerate research and treatment for children around the world with catastrophic diseases. The hospital's six-year growth plan includes 1,400 new jobs and a \$1.9 billion investment in capital projects on the campus. The plan also includes investments of \$3.7 billion in cancer research focused on improving survival rates for the highest-risk cancers and for children with relapsed diseases. The hospital will also invest \$250 million in technology and resources for scientists and clinicians as well as \$470 million in global initiatives to fight pediatric cancer around the world. Part of this funding will go to create and staff seven international hubs through the St. Jude Global Alliance, a network of more than 140 institutions across 50-plus countries.

#### MT. JULIET

Plans have been unveiled for the newest park in the city of Mt. Juliet. Hamilton-Denson Park will be located on more than 8 acres at Tate Lane and West Division Street with plans for eight soccer fields, four multi-use fields, and a sidewalk connecting the property to the Town Center Greenway. City officials hope that the new park will address a lack of multi-purpose fields in the city and will be used by practices for local leagues. The project is estimated to cost \$650,000 and is part of a 10-year, systemwide master plan for parks in the community.

## JC Ford breaks ground on new operations in Columbia



JC Ford, an advanced manufacturing company, is establishing a new operations location in Columbia, where it will invest \$30 million and create 210 new jobs. Family-owned and operated, JC Ford was founded nearly 80 years ago. The company is a leading manufacturer in high-speed corn tortilla production equipment with production ranging from 1,000 to 8,000 dozen per hour. JC Ford also manufactures tortilla chip production lines, ranging from 250 pounds per hour to a completely automated 4,000 pounds per hour system. Pictured above is Columbia Mayor Chaz Molder and Gov. Bill Lee at the groundbreaking ceremony held May 6 in Columbia.

# Brentwood cuts ribbon on new police headquarters



Officials with the city of Brentwood have cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the Brentwood Police Department located at 910 Heritage Way. The building will accommodate all police divisions under one roof including patrol administration, criminal investigations, training, and the city's dispatch center for fire and police. The \$29 million building is the largest single capital project in the city's history and is the first new location for the department since 1987. The new building includes classrooms, a community room, defensive tactics and visual scenarios simulations, a firearms range, laboratory, an emergency call center, open lobby, public records access, and municipal court.

#### DAYTON

Robinson Manufacturing will expand its operations, investing \$15 million and creating 91 new jobs in Dayton. The clothing manufacturing and distribution company said the investment is part of an increase of its capabilities. The company manufactures, decorates, warehouses and distributes apparel for customers around the world. Due to increased demand, it has constructed a new warehouse and distribution space at its existing location at 1140 Broadway St. in Dayton. Robinson Manufacturing has remained family owned and operated since it was founded in 1927 just outside the Dayton city limits. The company has been headquartered in Dayton since the 1930s. Throughout its history, the company has manufactured apparel for a wide range of distribution, including nearly 90%

Diabetes grant the city received in 2019. The first phase was the construction of a walking and running track around the football field at the community center. The third and final phase slated for next year includes building a basketball and pickleball court near the playground site.

#### KNOXVILLE

Leading Solutions, Inc. (LSI) will establish new operations in Knoxville, investing \$2 million and creating 265 new jobs. LSI will open a call center in Knoxville that will operate primarily as a training center for new employees. Once trained, new employees will then work from home. LSI was founded in 1994 and is a provider of lending center services and consulting programs for financial institutions across North America. LSI provides 24-hour lending and member services to more than 300 of North America's premier credit unions, banks and mortgage companies.

#### LINDEN

Work is nearing completion on the new splash pad to be located at Linden Town Park. The splash pad project is being funded through a grant the town received in 2018 from the Local Parks and Recreation Fund Grant offered through the Tennessee Department of Environment and

#### NASHVILLE

Nashville ranks as the tenth best city in the country for construction workers, according to Industrial Paint and Protection (IPP) magazine. The city earned its rank based on its rate of new build permits, number of construction workers, cost of living index, workers per permit, and average construction worker salary of \$34,450. The city is one of the top ten markets for commercial construction in 2021, and saw a record-high of \$4.6 million in construction permits last year. The city's construction market grew more than 10% in 2020, and industry estimates say the city needs 186,000 employees from all professional levels to meet the current construction backlog in the state.

# Pigeon Forge planters pay tribute to essential workers



Members of the Pigeon Forge Utility Department pose with a utility worker planter to pay tribute for their efforts during the pandemic. Pigeon Forge is highlighting essential workers and the services they provide through the creation of planter people – living sculptures made of pots and flowers. Each planter was sponsored by a local business and placed around the community, creating a scavenger huntfor those who want selfies with Pigeon Forge's newest residents. Workers depicted by the project include a police officer, firefighter, teacher, doctor, farmer, park ranger, nurse, fisherman, grocery clerk, waitress, postal worker, photographer and more.



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**TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY** 

## Athens online budget tool aims to educate, engage citizens in process

#### **ATHENS** from Page 1

ant to us when we were setting this up was the visual perspective," he said. "You can easily look at the pie graphs and see where the majority of the money is going. We have incorporated our priority-based budget philosophy into this tool. When we looked at setting up the simulation, we put in our actual rough numbers for this upcoming fiscal year. Hopefully, one of the many things folks will get out of this is that it is always a challenge to figure out how we are going to be fiscally responsible but improve services. I hope there is a little bit of a better understanding about what our officials go through each year to create the budget."

One of the goals of the tool is to engage citizens who may have never engaged in the budget process or feel more confident in doing so from their phones, tablets, and other devices. Sumner said upwards of 74% engagements with the tool have been on mobile devices, often from links on social media.

"I hope our citizens see the value they are getting for their tax dollars," he said. "I hope to see that our citizens' dreams are accounted for, that they get to actually share what they want the city to do or new services and programming ideas they want to see. They may never come to a public meeting and say it or call the city manager's office. However, they might use their tablet in their living room to type out that measure. This is a new experience; it's an educational tool. It's something I hope our citizens can gain a better understanding about what goes in to creating this most important legislative item that occurs annually and what it takes to actually balance that."

Sumner said the process also always city officials to more clearly see what is important to residents.

"For the city, we always try to help, educate, and engage our citizens in our processes," Sumner said. "When we engage our citizens, they tell us what they want, and what they want to pay for and then we go and do those things. I know that we will always do the right thing because we are listening and doing what our citizens want. From the city's side, this is a direct engagement we get from our friends and neighbors here in the Friendly City. They tell us what they want, and we are able to ensure those ideas, those needs get discussed by the elected body. We could actually see a more direct version of democracy here in our community in the most important



Citizens utilizing the tool can see how the city's budget is funded and can then take away or add to different departments. The tool also gives citizens the option to model how a tax raise could add to the municipal budget or how a tax decrease would cut into the budget. A second tool on the site is the Taxpayer Receipt, which allows residents to plug in their personal tax information to see how much services like police, fire, parks, and other important municipal services cost them.

ways that we have, which is what are we going to do and how are we going to pay for it."

As citizens continue to engage

with the tool, city officials are already considering ways to expand usage of the tool and make it a more permanent part of the budgeting

process.

For more information on the tool adopted by the city of Athens, visit <u>https://abalancingact.com.</u>

## Census Bureau: Tennessee sees nearly 9% population growth

#### **CENSUS** from Page 1

joins the majority of states who will see no changes to its House seats.

This means Tennessee will keep all nine of its U.S. House seats. The U.S. Constitution determines that the 435 seats in the U.S. House are allocated based on population of each state as determined by the Census.

As a result of the 2020 Census, seven seats in the U.S. House will be moved among 13 states. Texas will gain two seats while Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Florida and North Carolina will gain one. California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia all lost a seat.

The U.S. Census is also a determining factor what share state governments receive in federal funds as well as in how state tax revenue funds local governments. For example, Tennesseans received more than \$29.6 billion Census-determined federal funds in 2017, including more than \$14.5 billion for Medicare and more than \$6.29 billion for Medicaid.



Two-thirds of TennCare is funded through federal dollars determined by the Census with TennCare accounting for half of all federal money in the average Tennessee state budget.

The Tennessee Data Center said population and housing counts for counties, cities, and statistical areas are expected by late August. This data will be used for future Tennessee state-shared revenue allocations.

Redistricting data – which includes counts of population, voting age population, race, ethnicity, and housing units down to Census block-level – are expected by the end of September. The 2020 Census Redistricting Data will help determine new boundaries for political 
 1910
 1920
 1930
 1940
 1950
 1960
 1970
 1980
 1990
 2000
 2010
 2020

 Interview

 Source: Appointment Counts, US Census Bureau, 2020

This chart shows how much Tennessee's population has grown during each Census period since 1910. While the state has continued to add population, the rate by which Tennessee's population has increased has slowed since the 1990s.

districts, ranging from county commission to city council, as required by law. That redistricting process will begin in March 2021.

"The redistricting data are very important numbers for cities and counties across the state," Kuhn said. "Rebalancing population among political districts is the most oblivious use. But these data are also used to access a community's growth and look at housing vacancy rates, and they are incorporated into funding formulas. These uses are all dependent on the more detailed census data that will come later this summer."

As of the 2020 Census, the total population of all U.S. states including the District of Columbia stands at 331,449,281. This is an increase of 22,703,743 residents or

6.85% since 2010.

The population of the U.S. and all of its territories, including Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, stands at 334,735,155. As a result, the population of the U.S. and all of its territories has increased by 6.65% or 22,263,828 people. Despite the smallest increase for the state since 1910, California remained the most populous state in the nation with 39,576,757 residents or 11.82% of the population. While its population increased, Wyoming also remained the least populous state in the nation with .17% of the nation's population or 577,719 residents. Three states – Illinois, Mississippi, and West Virginia – along with Puerto Rico lost population since the 2010 Census.

## Municipal elections held in 12 cities across state

**ELECTIONS** from Page 1

Police Chief Clint Huth defeated incumbent mayor Dwain Land 596 to 448 to be elected as the new mayor of Dunlap.

Newcomer Becky Hatfield Card ran unopposed and was elected to the City Commission Seat A with 159 votes. Incumbents Jeff Harmon and Judy Layne both ran unopposed and were re-elected to Seat C and Seat D, respectively. Harmon garnered 782 votes while Layne earned 805.

M. Keith Davis also ran unopposed and was re-elected as Dunlap city judge with 802.

#### FRIENDSHIP

Voters in the city of Friendship went to the polls on May 1 to determine the results of local elections. Incumbent Casey Burnett ran unopposed and was re-elected mayor of Friendship with 52 votes.

Incumbent aldermen John Marvin, Rickey Ange, and Bobby L. Garrett, will be joined by newcomer Robert "Jackie" Perry after defeating newcomer Tommy Crawford for the four open aldermen seats in Friendship.

Marvin lead the votes with 50,

followed by Ange with 49, Garrett with 45, Perry with 41, and Crawford with 19. Incumbent alderman Billy Gibson did not run for re-election.

#### GADSDEN

Gadsden voters went to the polls on May 1 to elect city officials. Incumbent mayor Randy S. Smith ran unopposed and was re-elected to his seat with 35 votes.

The city will see all new aldermen with Christopher Burse, Josh Legions, Gary A. Mathis, and Connie Robinson taking the four open seats. Mathis led the votes with 46 followed by Burse and Robinson each with 41 and Legions with 40.

Incumbent candidates Angela McLemore, James Milan, Lynn Reasons, and Tracy Rinks all decided not to run again for their seats.

#### **MAURY CITY**

Voters in Maury City voted on May 1 in a municipal election.

Incumbent Rayce Castellaw retained the mayoral seat over challenger Lauren McLaughlin by a margin of four votes. Castellaw earned 69 votes to McLaughlin's 65. Incumbent aldermen Letha Johnson, Eric Latric Nance, and Bobby Wells will be joined by newcomers Brian Cook and Robert Mansfield. Mansfield led the vote totals with 88 followed by Johnson with 82, Wells with 80, Cook with 69, and Nance with 68. Alderwoman Wendy King did not seek re-election to the board.

#### **MORRISTOWN**

Morristown voters came to the polls on May 4 to select three seats on the city's Board of Mayor and Alderman.

Incumbent Robert H. Garrett narrowly defeated challenger Rob Burke for the Ward 1 seat. Garrett garnet 494 votes to Burke's 490.

Kay Senter also defeated challenger Charles Cook with 537 votes to Cook's 499 to keep the Ward 3 seat. Incumbent Tommy Pedigo ran unopposed and was re-elected to the at-large alderman seat with 721 votes.

#### PARKER'S CROSSROADS

Three candidates ran unopposed for three seats in the Parker's Crossroads election on May 4.

Incumbent mayor Kenneth Kizer and incumbent commissioner Jamie L. Simonton were re-elected to the two open four-year commission seats. Newcomer Tony A. Hardee ran unopposed and was elected to the two-year unexpired commission term.

#### **RED BOILING SPRINGS**

The city of Red Boiling Springs held its municipal election on April 24. Incumbent mayor Kenneth Hollis defeated challenger and sitting City Councilwoman Cynthia Fleming Smalling for the mayoral seat. Hollis earned 94 votes to Smalling's 53 votes.

Incumbents Helen Gregory, Donna Grisham, and George A. McCrary along with newcomer Joe Hill were elected to the four open city council seats on the Red Boiling Springs City Council. Hill led the vote county with 101 votes followed by McCrary's 96 votes, Gregory's 87 votes, and Grisham's 76 votes.

#### SEVIERVILLE

Sevierville voters went to the polls on May 6 to elect city officials.

The only contended race was the Alderman Seat 3 where newcomer Joey Ohman defeated incumbent Jim McGill with Ohman earning 358 votes to McGill's 269.

Mayor Robbie Fox and Seat 2 Alderman Mitch H. Rader both ran unopposed and were re-elected to their seats. Fox earned 500 votes while Rader earned 554 votes

#### SNEEDVILLE

Voters in Sneedville went to the polls on May 1 to vote in a municipal election.

Newcomer Dean Rhea defeated incumbent mayor William Pat Riley and fellow challengers Johnny "Crow" Mullins and Tony L. Seal. Rhea earned 173 votes to Riley's 92 votes, Seal's 86, and Mullins' 11 votes.

Incumbents Janet Collins and Michael S. Gibson will be joined by newcomers Steve J. Harrison, Myshone Collins, and Kenny L. Reed on the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, defeating incumbent Janet Cose and challengers Shane Gibson.

Harrison led the vote count with 272 votes followed by Myshone Collins with 231, Janet Collins with 228, Michael S. Gibson with 169, Kenny L. Reed with 160, Janet Cose with 136, and Shane Gibson with 135. Vice Mayor Matthew Waddell did not seek re-election.



**Major Tim** Eads has announced his retirement of the Bristol Police Department after a 27-year ca-

Tim Eads reer in law

enforcement. Eads rose the rank of captain in the U.S. Army before resigning his commission to accept a position as a patrol officer with the Bristol Police Department in 1994. A decade later, he was named captain of the criminal

services for the department.

investigation division and in 2007 was selected as major of support

Jimmy Eldridge, a former state representative in the Tennessee State House, has been appointed to

serve on the



Tennessee State Election Commission by Secretary of State Tre Hargett following the retirement of Jimmy Wallace. Eldridge will join the bipartisan, seven-member commission that is responsible for appointing local election commissioners and monitoring the activities and performances of those commissions as well as certifying voting machines for use. Eldridge represented Tennessee House District 73 from 2003 until 2019. A native of Jackson, Eldridge holds a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Lambuth University.

A.J. Fox has been selected as the new director of the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department. Fox



presently serves as the assistant director of the department and will take over from outgoing director Bonnie Gamble, who is retiring on June 30. Fox holds an associate's degree in business administration as well as a bachelor's degree in recreational leadership services from Middle Tennessee State University. He is a certified parks and recreation professional, facility operator, Tennessee Tourism professional, and other certifications. Before coming to work for the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department, Cox served as director of the South Pittsburg Parks and Recreation Department. During his tenure with Manchester, Cox has also served as an activities coordinator and maintenance supervisor.



Mary Lambert Health by

Mayor Tim Kelly. A Chattanooga native with years of experience in healthcare on both the local and federal level, Lambert's career in public health spans more than four decades. Lambert holds a doctorate in nursing from Vanderbilt University and has also held numerous faculty positions, including most recently at Vanderbilt. Lambert is also retired from the U.S. Army and U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corp. She began as a public health nurse at the Hamilton County Health Department and has since served in a variety of leadership position in top government agencies including the White House, FDA, CDC, Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Most notably, Lambert was also deployed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and in response to the national capitol anthrax

Emily **O'Donnell** has been selected as the first female city attorney for the city of Chattanooga. O'Don-

exposure event.

Emily O'Donnell

nell spent nearly seven years as a staff attorney for Legal Aid of East Tennessee, during which time she practiced in Hamilton, Bradley, Sequatchie, Rhea, Meigs, McMinn and Monroe counties, and was involved in a wide range of cases, including housing, domestic relations, employment and consumer issues. She served as vice president of external relations for the Chattanooga-based Public Education Foundation, executive director of the Women's Fund of Greater Chattanooga, and as a contract attorney before establishing her own firm in 2019. O'Donnell holds a bachelor's degree in political science and government from the University of the South and her law degree from the Georgia State University College of Law.

as the deputy director of Lewisburg Parks and Recreation for three years and as a community center director with the



Ira Thompson

Columbia Parks and Recreation Department for four years. He holds a bachelor's degree in human performance and sports science and a master's degree in health, physical education, and recreation both from Tennessee State University.

Ray Williams, retired deputy fire chief and fire marshal for the city of Clarksville, died on April 30 at the age of 61. Born



**Ray Williams** 

at Fort Campbell, Williams was a lifelong Clarksville resident. He earned his bachelor's degree at Middle Tennessee State University and upon graduation served four years in the U.S. Army. After that, he returned to Clarksville and joined the Clarksville Fire Department in 1987, working his way up to engineer, inspector, and fire prevention officer. He was named the city's fire marshal in 2000 and then promoted to deputy fire chief in 2016. He retired from the department in 2019.

### **Brentwood announces changes** to city engineering department

Two Brentwood Engineering and Service Center employees with 50 years of combined service retired in April as the city promotes two employees and hires two new members.

Brentwood Engineering and Service Center Director Mike Harris retired on April 23 after 15 years of service while Capital Projects Coordinator Jeff Donegan retired on April 26 after nearly 33 years of service.

Harris served for more than two decades in the private sector, as well as engineering director for



the city of Jackson before he was hired by Brentwood in 2006 when the engineering department

was created. As the city's first engineering director, he lead the renovation to city hall, the first phase of Smith Park, upgrades at the John P. Holt Brentwood Library, and management of several capital construction projects.

D o negan began his career with Brentwood in 1988 as a water and sewer equipment operation.



works director in 2007. During his tenure, he has managed numerous

Jeff Donegan advancing to the ranks to public

City Engineer Lori Lange has been promoted to lead the

city's en-

gineering

department

road widening and trail projects.



Lori Lange

upon Harris' departure. She has been with Brentwood since 2019. A licensed professional engineering, Lange previously worked as construction director with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), as well as worked with the city on the design of Smith Park in her role in the private sector. She received the 2018 Government Engineer of the Year Award from the Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers.

City Engineer Darek Baskin will oversee the city's capital projects. Baskin has been with the city since 2017 and previously as both the city engineer and director of planning and economic development for the city of Millington. He is also a licensed professional engineering and previously worked in the private sector.

Brentwood has also hired Grant Heintzman and Zane Pannell. Both Heintzman and Pannell previously worked with TDOT and are licensed professional engineers. Heintzman has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the UT at Martin, while Pannell has a master's degree and bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the UT at Knoxville.

## **Clarksville welcomes 18 new firefighters**



Ira Thompson has been selected as the new parks and recreation director for the city of Fayetteville. Thompson has more than 15 years of experience working in sports, fitness, and recreation as well as 18 years of experience in security, safety, and event protection. In addition to his work in the private sector, Thompson served

Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts and Fire and Rescue Chief Freddie Montgomery have welcomed 18 new firefighters to the Clarksville Fire and Rescue Department. The new firefighters are Jeremy Bailey, Sean Doute, Brian Ervin, Jacob Flores, Katie Gibbs, Jarrett Gibson, Justin Johnson, Hadley Krantz, Ethan Luffman, Matthew Moore, Sellers McNally, Ryan Nihoris, Matthew Price, Michael Roberge, Kurene Tagaloa, Justin Thompson, Devin Weatherlow, and Elisha Whitten.

## No loan is too large or too small



The city of Trenton recently closed on a \$275,000 note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) issued for city paving projects. Seated L to R: Leigh Ann Grice, city recorder, and Trenton Mayor Ricky Johnson. Standing is Tommy Green, TMBF marketing representative. The city has used TMBF programs 10 times since 2000.

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



The city of LaFollette recently closed on a \$1.5 million note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) to finance various public works projects for the city. LaFollette has used TMBF programs 16 times since 1993. Seated L to R: Mayor Mike Stanfield, and Stan Foust, city recorder. Standing L to R: Steve Queener, TMBF marketing representative; Terry Sweat, finance director; and Jim Jeffries, city administrator.





The Tennessee Aquarium is paterning with the Tennessee **Department of Transportation's** Nobody Trashes Tennessee anti-litter campaign to highlight the impact of road litter and micro plastics on Tennessee's waterways. Two new exhibits at the aquarium will show how trash can both destroy aquatic life but also impact water used for recreation and drinking. The permanent exhibits use actually litter taken from the banks of the Tennessee River. The hope is the campaign educates visitors young and old about the importance of keeping Tennessee waterways clean.

Tennesseans of all ages can improve their financial literacy skills for both home and business as part of new tools available through the Tennessee Department of the Treasury's **Financial Literacy Commission.** Free, web-based resources are available through the commission and accessible to Tennesseans of all ages. Starting in kindergarten, students can use these tools to develop smart money skills and play games designed to develop financial literacy skills that will stay with them through the future. Adults can access the Financial Empowerment Resource Library, which offers tools on a variety of financial topics ranging from budgeting, building savings accounts, credit scores and reports, homeownership, auto loans, checking, and retirement planning. Learn more at TNFLC.org, or https:// treasury.tn.gov/Financial-Education/Education-and-Resources/ for-Adults.

The state of Tennessee has administered more ACT tests than any other state in the country since testing resumed in June 2020. The Tennessee Department of Education said the state has administered more than 178,000 tests since testing resumed after being halted in the spring due to the pandemic. The state offered more than 20 opportunities for students to take the test both during the week and on weekends. Tennessee's high school juniors and seniors can take the ACT for free through the state's Basic Education Program funding for juniors. Additionally, in 2017, Tennessee instituted the high school senior retake program, paid for in full by the department as part of the state's commitment to encourage college participation. Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn thanked the state's "students, families, teachers, counselors, schools and districts for

The Tennessee State Fair will make history by taking place in conjunction with the Wilson County Fair in Lebanon this year. The recently passed state budget provides \$5.3 million for the newly combined event, which will be held Aug. 12-21 at the James E. Ward Agricultural Center in Lebanon. The award-winning Wilson County fair is the largest in the state and has been held for 42 years. The combination of the two fairs will include more than 150 events such as livestock shows, food and horticulture competitions, rides, tractor pulls, pageants, and other entertainment.

making student readiness a priority

even during challenging times."

## Tennessee fire departments bring safety education to the front porch

Municipal fire departments across the state of Tennessee teamed up with the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) for the inaugural Front Porch Fire Prevention outreach event in April.

A total of 93 departments across the state helped distribute 10,000 bags of fire safety educational materials in their communities as part of efforts to reduce fire-related fatalities. Each participating department also received education material for all ages from National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA), Knox Company and the SFMO.

"The COVID-19 pandemic may have presented challenges great and small to Tennessee fire departments, but they overcame those obstacles with creative solutions and teamwork," said SFMO Assistant Commissioner for Fire Prevention Gary Farley. "The Front Porch Fire Prevention program gives fire departments of all sizes a new way to share the importance of fire safety with residents while being mindful of COVID-19 and the uncertainty many Tennesseans may have about engaging in close contact with others.'

The goal of this event was to



The Alcoa Fire Department was one of 93 departments across the state of Tennessee who joined the State Fire Marshal's Office in the inaugural Front Porch Fire Prevention outreach event. The socially-distanced event brought fire safety and education to the front porches of residents across the state.

distribute fire safety education in a socially-distanced manner while allowing departments to interact with residents.

The Front Porch Fire Prevention campaign is just one in a series of programs the SMFO has been involved with. Since the creation of the agency's "Get Alarmed Tennessee!" campaign in 2012, the SMFO has worked with fire departments across the state to distribute more than 244,000 free smoke alarms to local residents, which have saved at least 314 residents from fires in their homes.

For more information, visit <u>https://www.tn.gov/commerce/</u><u>fire/prevention-education-and-out-reach/get-alarmed-tn.html.</u>

# TDOT announces \$2.6 billion, three year transportation program

Gov. Bill Lee and Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) Commissioner Clay Bright have released TDOT's annual three-year transportation program, featuring approximately \$2.6 billion in infrastructure investments for 68 individual project phases in 45 counties across the state.

The program supports Gov. Lee's first Executive Order by funding work on 58 highway and bridge projects in economically distressed and at-risk counties.

"Investing in infrastructure is an important part of driving economic opportunity throughout our state," Gov. Lee said. "This funding, particularly for rural Tennessee, will help to keep Tennesseans safe and moving in the right direction."

The program emphasizes the repair and replacement of bridges, with activities beginning on 55 structures in 33 counties. Twenty-one of those bridges are on the state highway system, with the other 34 on local roads.

The comprehensive program also continues to build on the IMPROVE Act's progress, which provides for infrastructure investments in all 95 counties. This year's program budgets dollars for 123 of the 962 projects listed as part of the 2017 legislation.

Construction will begin in FY 2022 on several critical transportation projects across the state, including:

- Relocated Alcoa Highway (SR 115/US 129) – Blount County
- Nolensville Pike from Old Hickory Boulevard to Mill Creek (SR 11/US 31A) – Davidson County
- I-75 Interchange Modification at I-24 Phase II – Hamilton County
- Sevier-Jefferson Counties,

• I-55 Interchange Modification, Crump Boulevard – Shelby County

In addition to the 2022 budgeted program, partial plans for 2023 and 2024 are included for planning purposes.

The comprehensive multimodal program contains components for rail, waterway, and aviation projects, funds statewide initiatives to improve safety, and addresses congestion through the HELP and Incident Management Programs.

It also provides funding for transit agencies in all 95 counties and Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations.

To view a complete list of projects and programs funded through the 2022-2024 three-year multimodal program, visit <u>https://www.</u> <u>tn.gov/tdot/program-develop-</u> <u>ment-and-administration-home/</u> <u>program-development-and-ad-</u> <u>ministration-state-programs.html</u>

# West Tennessee residents invited to take part in DRA broadband mapping project

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) announced the launch of the Delta Broadband Mapping Project, an initiative aimed at strengthening broadband infrastructure that supports telehealth, distance learning, and remote work throughout West Tennessee.

The initiative encourages residents to participate in the free, anonymous Delta Speed Test, conducted through an innovative crowd-sharing platform that collects and analyzes data in real time. The gathered information will inform and support strategic investments in critical infrastructure that will expand the availability of high-quality internet access across the region. "Broadband is essential infrastructure that is often lacking, especially in rural areas of the Delta region," said DRA Spokeswoman Shawna Blair. "The Delta Broadband Mapping Project allows our state partners to accurately identify digital divides and ultimately obtain state and federal resources dedicated to broadband expansion projects. In less than one minute, Tennesseans can take the Delta Speed Test and help state and local leaders understand the internet capabilities within their communities."

In addition to seeing their own upload and download speeds, participants will help policy makers identify gaps in high-quality, affordable internet access.

"We are committed to getting every corner of Tennessee connected but that depends on partnership and quality data," said Gov. Bill Lee.

The Delta Speed Test can be taken from any device that has an internet or cellular connection to your home Wi-Fi signal. The test takes less than one minute to complete, and no personal information will be collected.

West Tennessee residents are encouraged to participate in the Delta Speed Test by visiting <u>dra.</u> <u>gov/speedtest</u>. To participate, a device must be connected to your home internet service and disconnected from a virtual private network (VPN) that may be connected to a workplace or school.

For the most accurate results, ensure that no one else connected to your home internet is using a substantial portion of the internet bandwidth during the test.

Individuals without internet access in their home can visit their local library or other locations that offer free internet access to submit the address of a home with no available service.

To see images of the Delta Speed Test in-progress, visit <u>dra.</u> <u>gov/research/broadband-map-</u> <u>ping/.</u> For more information about the Delta Broadband Mapping Project, visit <u>dra.gov/speedtest.</u> Newport Highway (SR 35/ US 411) – Sevier-Jefferson counties

### Approved budget provides \$100M in local funds

#### **BUDGET** from Page 1

posed two-week sales tax holiday for restaurant, grocery and prepared food purchases was limited to just one week, resulting in another \$50 million reduction.

## Sales Tax Holiday for Grocery and Restaurant Purchases

The budget includes a weeklong sales tax holiday on the retail sale of food, food ingredients (grocery) and prepared foods (restaurants/catering) beginning on July 30, 2021, and concluding at midnight on Aug. 5, 2021. The sales tax exemption afforded during this period does not apply to the sale of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, candy, or dietary supplements. The sales tax exemption provided during this period applies to both the state and local option sales tax; however, the budget includes a hold-harmless provision, which provides for the reimbursement of the local share derived from such purchases. This is similar to the hold-harmless reimbursement provided to local government for other sales tax holidays.

Gov. Lee proposed creating a two-week sales tax holiday on grocery and restaurant purchases, but the Senate and House passed budgets limit the sales tax holiday to one week.

#### Investment in Broadband

Gov. Lee's revised budget

www.PEPartners.org

800.624.9698

provided for a \$200 million investment for broadband. These funds were intended to further the Lee Administration's goal of ensuring all communities are served.

The budget adopted by the Senate and House reduce the level of state investment in broadband to \$100 million in the upcoming fiscal year. However, it should be noted that the state will receive federal funds, under the American Rescue Plan, that may be utilized to enhance accessibility to broadband.

Senate Finance Chairman, Bo Watson, indicated that the \$250 million derived from these separate reductions would be expended on a one-time payment to the state's legacy pension plan (TCRS).

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## CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertising: \$9.25 per column inch. No charge to TML members. Send advertising to: Carole Graves: cgraves@ TML1.org.

#### ASSISTANT CITY ENGINEER

HENDERSONVILLE. The city of Hendersonville is currently accepting application materials for the assistant city engineer position in our Public Works Department. This position assists the assistant public works director and city engineer with professional engineering functions. Minimum qualifications: bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Sufficient experience to understand the basic principles relevant to the major duties of the position, usually associated with the completion of an apprenticeship/ internship or having had a similar position for 5+ years. Possession of or ability to readily obtain a valid Driver's License issued by the State of Tennessee for the type of vehicle or equipment operated. Working knowledge of Autocad/Microstation preferred. Proficiency in using computer equipment and computer experience with Microsoft Office suite products. Professional Engineer License (TN) required. Salary/Pay Rate: \$77,104 or higher DOQ. Interested and qualified candidates must submit a completed job application, resume, and cover letter highlighting career experience as it relates to this position. Return completed job application, resume, and cover letter to the Human Resources office at Hendersonville City Hall via the methods below. No faxed applications will be accepted. Mail or bring to: 101 Maple Drive North, Hendersonville, TN 37075; or e-mail to: personnel@hvilletn.org. Open until position is filled.

#### CLAIMS SYSTEM ADMIN

PUBLIC ENTITY PARTNERS Under the direction of the Director of IT, the Claims System Administrator is responsible to: Support, enhance, secure, optimize, and maintain the Origami Claims Management System and supporting systems. Ensure data integrity and that the system maintains a high level of security, performance, and availability. Work closely with any IT Staff & End Users (internal, external, or third party) to resolve any issues. Provide any assistance needed to access PEP data sources to meet needs and protect sensitive information. Work closely with Adjusters and other Claims staff to understand processes and workflows, then make recommendations to automate these processes to gain efficiencies. Qualifications include: undergraduate degree in a computer related field from an accredited college or university, and six years of experience in the computer-related or information technology field, or a substantially- equivalent combination of education and experience is required. Experience maintaining, optimizing, and securing Microsoft Windows network systems. Experience supporting; Microsoft Windows 10 systems and peripherals; Microsoft Office \365 suite; Microsoft Windows Servers \Networks. Experience using and supporting any of the following applications preferred but not required: Origami Risk Claim System; HTML \ XML; Microsoft SQL \SSIS Packages; C#; Microsoft Visual Studio; Scripting; PowerShell. Full Job description can be found at pepartners. org. Salary range \$90,000 - \$102,000 DOE. Excellent benefits and retirement plan.Please send cover letter and resume to ctaylor@pepartners.org or Attn: Celeste Taylor, 562 Franklin Rd. Suite 200 Franklin, TN 37069.

state ordinances. Must be a high school graduate or possess equivalent. Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written. ICC/State of Tennessee Residential Building Inspector certification, ICC/State of Tennessee Residential Mechanical Inspector, and ICC/State of Tennessee Residential Plumbing Inspector certifications preferred, or ability to obtain within 2 years of employment. This is a full-time position with an hourly rate of \$18.88. The city provides a comprehensive benefits package. Applications and a complete job description may be picked up at city hall during normal business hours or download from the city website: www.shelbyvilletn. org. Applications must be returned to City Hall Administration Office, 201 Spring Street or submitted online and will be accepted until position is filled. EOE / drug free workplace. Successful applicants required to pass background check, physical, and drug screen.

#### **DEPUTY CITY PLANNER**

MT. JULIET. The city of Mt. Juliet is seeking qualified candidates for deputy city planner for the Planning & Zoning Department. Required AICP Certification. Selected candidates will be required to complete pre-employment testing as deemed necessary for position. Must hold avalid TN driver license. Detailed job description for requirements of this position is available online. Applications must be filed electronically and are available on the city's website, www.mtjuliet-tn.gov. Electronic applications accepted until Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 5:00pm. The City of Mt. Juliet reserves the right to stop accepting applications at any time. For questions, regarding the electronic application process, please call (615) 754-2552. EOE/Drug-free Workplace.

#### FINANCE DIRECTOR.

BRISTOL. The city of Bristol, TN, with a budget of \$70 million, is seeking a well-rounded professional with proven leadership skills to serve as the finance director. This position is responsible for planning, directing and supervising the city's financial management, including financial planning and reporting, account practices, revenue collections, cash management and internal controls. Position reports to the city manager. Full understanding of accounting principles, GAAP, GASB, and financial management systems (including Excel) with strong interpersonal, organizational, supervisory, and decision-making skills required. Must be a team player who can work well with other city departments, the city manager, outside agencies and the public. Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or public administration, or a related field; supplemented by five or more years of progressively responsible work experience in finance, with demonstrated administrative and management skills; or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. CPA, Master's Degree, CMFO, and/or CPFO preferred. The successful candidate can expect a competitive benefits package with an annual salary range of \$67,377 to \$104,434. Salary offered will be dependent on qualifications. To read more about the city of Bristol, TN, the position and to apply, candidates must complete an online application and upload a resume at: http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx.

policies as set forth in city ordinance and state laws. Desired minimum qualifications include graduation from an accredited fouryear college or university with a degree in human resource, public administration, business management or a closely related field. Five years' experience in a human resource capacity; or any equivalent combination of education and experience which demonstrates the capability to perform the essential duties and responsibilities of the position. Salary range for this position is \$63,710 - \$70,500 DOQ with a comprehensive benefits package including health insurance, retirement through the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, paidtime off, and paid sick leave options. Interested candidates must submit a cover letter, resume, at least five job related references and a City of Covington job application by 5:00 p.m. Friday, May 14, 2021. The job application and additional information may be found at the City of Covington's website: http://www.covingtontn.com/.Allmaterials should be emailed to: trose@covingtontn. com. Any questions, please call 901-475-7170 or email HR Director, Tiny Rose at trose@covingtontn.com. Interview times and locations will be set after the application process closes on May 14, 2021. EOE

#### PLANNING DIRECTOR

SHELBYVILLE. The city of Shelbyville is accepting applications for the full-time position of planning & community development director (planning director). The planning director will be responsible for daily administration of all planning and zoning activities, including comprehensive planning, and the administration of subdivision regulations. The planning director will also implement and manage municipal projects related to the development of this growing community. The ideal candidate will have at least a bachelor's degree in urban planning or a related field (master's degree preferred), and a minimum of 5 years' experience involving municipal land use planning at local government level. This is a full-time salaried exempt position with a starting salary between \$64,896 - \$79,601, depending on qualifications. Applications and a copy of job description may be picked up at city hall during normal business hours or download from the city website: www.shelbyvilletn.org. Application/job description must be returned to City Hall Administration Office, 201 N. Spring Street, and will be accepted until position if filled.EOE/Drug-free workplace.

#### PLANNER / SENIOR PLANNER

COOKEVILLE. The city of Cookeville is accepting applications for a position in the planning department. The position will be filled as either planner or senior planner, depending on qualification. Pay range: \$43,180 - \$72,737 DOE. Applications/resumes will be accepted until 4:30 pm on 4/15/21 and must be submitted online. View complete job posting/ qualifications and submit applications at www.cookeville-tn.gov. EOE.

training, and experience. Master's degree preferred. The successful candidate can expect a competitive benefits package with an annual salary range of \$75,994 to \$121,590. Salary offered will be dependent on qualifications. To read more about the city of Bristol, TN, the position and to apply, candidates must complete an online application and upload a resume at: <u>http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx.</u> risk manager.

#### **RISK MANAGER**

SEVIERVILLE. The city of Sevierville invites applications for the position of risk manager. The essential function of the position within the organization is to manage risk exposures within the city's government. The position is responsible for identifying risk exposures within governmental operations, assessing potential impact of the risks, evaluating likelihood of occurrence, and developing appropriate measures to control, limit, and finance the risk exposures. The position develops and implements programs within organizational policies; reports major activities to executive level administrators through conferences and reports. This position's primary duties are: identifies and evaluates potential risk exposures within city governmental operations; develops and implements risk control measures in compliance with state and federal regulations and laws.Plans, administers, and coordinates a comprehensive Risk Management Program; studies safety policy and practices of organization and each department to ensure adequate scope of policy and practice.Oversees healthcare plan structure, benefits, and experience to ensure optimal operations. Evaluates validity of insurance claims and seeks appropriate resolution. Leads in management of workman's compensation claims, ensuring participation of relevant parties and appropriate claim resolution. Reviews accident/incident/ injury reports and confers with insurance company to identify ways to prevent recurrences. Promotes organizational health and well-being through prescribed activity, wellness program, appropriate incentives, positive reinforcement of good practices, and balanced disciplinary actions. Utilizes analysis, research, consultation, collaboration, and innovation in seeking improvement of health plan benefits for city employees. Monitors and adapts fitness levels of Police and Fire Department personnel in positive context, based on standards developed through medical and industry research. Gathers and maintains information/data to support periodic and special reports documenting activities for area of responsibility. Attends staff and other professional meetings to exchange information;

attends technical or professional seminars or conferences to improve technical or professional skills.Minimum qualifications: requires education or training equivalent to a bachelor's degree in law, risk management, insurance, business administration, or a closely related field. Requires six years of related experience. Salary: \$58,455 to \$66,058 full-time with excellent benefits Please submit application and/or resume in an envelope marked "Risk Manager" to:City of Sevierville, Att: Human Resources P.O. Box 5500, Sevierville, TN 37864-5500. Applications can be completed on-line at www. seviervilletn.org. Resumes may be sent by fax to 865-453-5518 or e-mailed to kward@seviervilletn.org. Closing date: 05/03/2021 at 5:00 p.m. Only applicants who provide a valid e-mail address will be notified when the position has been filled. EOE

#### SUPERINTENDENT WATER MANAGEMENT FACILITY

DANDRIDGE. The town of Dandridge is accepting applications for the fulltime position of superintendent for the Dandridge Water Management Facility. The superintendent is responsible for performing administrative and supervisory work in planning, organizing and directing the operations of the Dandridge Water Management Facility. The superintendent will also manage the construction, repair, maintenance and operation of the Dandridge Water Management Facility's water distribution and wastewater collection systems. The Superintendent will exercise direct supervision over assigned employees and provide technical assistance. The superintendent will also advise the town administrator of matters relating to the Dandridge Water Management Facility and work under his or her direct supervision. Must possess state of Tennessee Grade II Water Distribution, Grade II Collections and Grade III Wastewater licenses; Must possess a valid driver's license; 10 years' experience in water or wastewater utility operations of which some experience having been in an increasingly responsible administrative or supervisory capacity. This is a full-time salaried exempt position with a starting salary between \$50,000 - \$70,000, depending on qualifications. The town of Dandridge offers a generous employee benefit package which includes: employer paid medical coverage, employer paid dental coverage, employer paid \$50,000 life insurance coverage, employer paid TCRS pension plan and employer contributions to a 457 deferred compensation plan. Applications/resumes can be submitted at Town Hall, 131 E. Main Street, or mailed to: Town of Dandridge, P.O. Box 249, Dandridge, TN 37725. EOE.

### Data Security Analysis

#### **CODES INSPECTOR**

SHELBYVILLE. The city of Shelbyville is accepting applications for the full-time position of codes inspector for the building and codes department. The codes inspector is responsible for technical work in the enforcement of building and zoning codes and city and

#### **HUMAN RESOURCE/** PURCHASING DIRECTOR

COVINGTON. The city of Covington is currently accepting applications for a Human Resource/Purchasing Director. This position performs a variety of complex administrative, technical, and professional work in directing and supervising the personnel systems of the city including classification, compensation, recruitment, selection, benefits, and training. Also includes overall management of the Civic Center, serves as Title VI Coordinator, manages, and administers purchasing

#### POLICE CHIEF.

BRISTOL. The city of Bristol, TN (pop. 27,000), due to retirement of current police chief, is seeking a well-rounded professional with proven leadership skills to serve as the city's next police chief. The police chief will lead the nationally accredited department of 78 sworn officers and 21 civilian employees and will manage the department's \$8.3 million budget. Position reports to the city manager. Strong interpersonal, organizational, supervisory, and decision-making skills required; ability to interact and communicate effectively with local, state and regional law enforcement personnel, local officials and the public is required. Must be a team player who can work well with other city departments, the city manager, and outside agencies. Bachelor's degree in public administration, criminal justice, business administration, or a related field; supplemented by 10 or more years of progressively responsible work experience, with demonstrated administrative and management skills; or an equivalent combination of education,

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#### Finance & Accounting Consultant - Municipal Technical Advisory Service - 21000000IM Regular Full-time, Market Range 13, Knoxville, ŤN

The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) seeks applications for a Finance and Accounting Consultant in its Knoxville or Johnson City office. MTAS is an agency of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service that

The Finance and Accounting Consultant (one of six at the agency) provides professional advice, technical assistance, and training in the area of municipal financial management to approximately 72 cities and towns in east Tennessee, regardless of size, on a broad range of issues and problems. In addition to providing direct customer assistance, this position also researches, develops, and maintains timely technical reports and publications on critical financial issues.

#### Duties and Responsibilities: The Finance and Accounting Consultant:

- Provides financial management advice and technical assistance to customers Develops and instructs training courses for municipal officials and employees
- Researches, drafts, and maintains publications on critical financial issues for municipal officials and employees
   Updates reference materials on agency databases which are utilized by internal staff as well as customers

#### **Required Qualifications:**

Education: This position requires a Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or a related field. A Master's degree in accounting, finance, or a related field is preferred.

- Experience:
  With a Bachelor's degree, this position requires at least eight years of work experience in a financial related position with five years of governmental accounting experience. With a Master's degree, it requires five years of work experience in governmental Eight years of work experience in a financial related position in municipal government is preferred.

#### Knowledge:

- This position requires a knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting municipal finance operations to establish credibility and effective working relationships with local officials. The position also requires a professional certification (CPA, CGFM or CPFO) or ability to obtain one within 18 months of hire date. The professional certification must be current and in good standing throughout the time of employment.

#### Skills:

This position requires managerial, analytical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills. These skills are used daily in identifying a specific city's financial problem and providing the advice and assistance to resolve the problem. A high level of cognitive or intuitive skills are needed to fully understand and implement successful solutions to financial problems.

#### Abilities: The position requires the ability to:

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- Teach in a classroom setting
- Prioritize projects
  Travel statewide with overnight travel

#### Application:

is position will be opened until filled. You can find more information about this position at www.mtas.tennessee.edu. Applicants must apply online and attach a cover letter, a resume and three references with contact information. For more information please visit: https://ut.taleo.net/careersection/ut\_system/jobdetail.ftl?job=21000000IM&tz=GMT-04%3A00&tzname=America%2FNew\_York

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# Local governments expect to embrace some technology post-pandemic

#### BY KATE ELIZABETH **OUERAM** Route Fifty

After a year of tailoring their jobs to function during a pandemic, local government officials continue to believe that Covid-19 will have a lasting impact on the way they deliver services to constituents. But the day-to-day work of municipal governing probably won't change forever, according to the results of a recent survey of city and county officials and employees.

The New Normal Survey, a joint effort among a group of organizations that work with local governments, asked government officials to share their predictions "about how public services will evolve as a result of Covid-19."

The survey, conducted online March 24 through April 7, questioned officials about their government's priorities (what were you focused on before the pandemic, and what are you focused on now?), impacts from Covid-19 (how did municipalities spend their 2020 relief funding?), adoption of new software and technology, and general inquiries about the future, including which changes might be permanent.

The questionnaire, completed by 599 respondents, was a follow-up to a similar survey last summer that sought to identify initial changes in service delivery amid the early stages of the pandemic. This year's version gathered critical information about the ongoing changes in government services directly from the people responsible for delivering them, said Ellory Monks, co-founder of The Atlas, which coordinated the survey along with Engaging Local Government Leaders, CivicPulse, CivicPlus and Route Fifty. The Atlas and Route Fifty are owned by Government Executive Media Group.

"Many local governments in the United States are at a crucial turning point right now, as vaccine distribution becomes more widespread," she said. "The New Normal Survey provides incredible data and insight into the lasting legacy of Covid-19 on local governments from the people best-suited to comment: local government employees themselves."

#### Local priorities shift with the pandemic

According to the results, priorities in local government agencies have shifted dramatically since 2020. Last July, for example, 43% of survey respondents said they were prioritizing "work from home and workflow management;" by last month, that number had dropped to 28%. By contrast, 44% of respondents this year said they were focused on community engagement, a 14% jump from last year.

"Shifting priorities among local governments reflect many different current trends," Monks said. "The increased focus on community engagement, for example, may be because of communications campaigns encouraging vaccination. But that increased focus on community engagement is also likely because of increasing expectations of local government when it comes to equity, inclusion and transparency."

Despite those shifts, most respondents said they expected their governments to continue to prioritize pandemic-related issues up to a year from now, including community engagement (50%), small business support (38%) and public health and wellness (33%).

But the daily changes-including reduced capacity for on-site staff, a shift from paper to digital services and slowed-down processes-are not likely to remain permanent, respondents said. And while local governments as a whole moved quickly to embrace new technology at the onset of the pandemic, only some platforms will stay in use.

For example, 81% of survey participants said they conducted board meetings virtually during the pandemic, but only 54% of them expect to continue that practice indefinitely.

But other new systems are here to stay. Ninety percent of respondents expect forms to remain digital, while 87% predict that residents will continue to be able to pay fees and bills online. Other likely permanent adoptions include digital permitting (84%), community engagement (83%) and citizen requests (81%).

Those results line up with citizen expectations, according to the survey, which found that 53% of respondents expect residents to demand faster response times moving forward, up from 38% last year. Seventy percent of governments expect to adopt more technology to meet those needs, while 33% said they would rely more on "external partners" and 29% pledged to continue to work to remove silos within their organizations.

"It's clear that local government and public service delivery will look a lot different because of Covid-19," according to a report on the survey results. "While there are still many challenges ahead as local government organizations adjust to the new normal, there are early signs that local governments will come out of this stronger, smarter, and more sustainable."





Forum found that the U.S.

tion also found that neighborhoods with a high proportion of residents of color are three times more likely to have poor air quality.

The U.S. gross domestic product hit 6.4% in the first quarter of 2021, the best quarterly reading since 2021. The U.S. Commerce Department reported that widespread vaccination, warmer temperatures, and stimulus checks powered the economy to grow by 1.6% in the first three months of the year. Consumer spending, which accounts for two-thirds of economic growth, increased 10.7% in the first quarter while spending services saw a small recovery, expanding from 4.6%. Consumer confidence also hit a 14-month high in April.

Health Statistics found that the national birth rate fell 4% last year with little more than 3.6 million births in 2020. The country recorded more than 3.74 million births in 2019. This marks the sixth consecutive year birth rates have declined while the country's general fertility rate also dropped to a record low with 55.8 births per 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44. Perhaps due to the pandemic, birth rates among teenagers fell to a record low with those between the ages of 15 and 19 dropping 8%. In order to remain stasis, the U.S. population would need to have a birth rate of 2,100 births per 1,000 women while the current rate is only 1,637.5 births per 1,000 women. Experts believe contributing factors to the "baby bust" might be because more working-age Americans are having to support the nation's record number of senior citizens, meaning younger Americans do not have the time or resources to have children.



#### May 14-15: Wartburg

Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival The 2021 Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival kicks off with the Second Annual Pet Parade a 6:30 p.m. and a concert at 7 p.m. followed by a fireworks display. Events will resume Saturday with a car show, vendors, food court, live music, children's activities, silent auction, donation drawings, 5K Loop Hike, and more. For more information, visit https://www.tennesseemountainlaurelfestival.com/

#### May 15-16: Maryville

Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival and Games

Come join one of the oldest Scottish festivals in the country to learn more about clans, cultural heritage, listen to Celtic entertainers, watch athletes engage in traditional feats of strength, take in performances of traditional dances, and shop specialty Celtic goods and foods not normally found in stores. For more information, visit https:// smokymountaingames.org/

#### May 22: Townsend

Smoky Mountain Bigfoot Festival From noon to 6 p.m., the Townsend Visitors Center will gather believers from all over to share evidence, discuss theories, and wrestle Sasquatch himself. The event will feature vendors, food trucks, storytelling, clogging, chainsaw carving, live music, a bigfoot calling contest, and more. For more information, visit facebook.com/ thebigfest

#### May 29: Bell Buckle

Bell Buckle Car Cache and Pig Pick

This scavenger hunt by car combines geocaching and virtual treasure-hunting in a quarantine safe way that gives participants a tour of Bell Buckle. Prizes will be awarded to those who have earned the most points by finding different locations. Event begins at 9 a.m. with the rally starting at 10 a.m. and ending at 3 p.m. Participants can also enter into the whole hog raffle with proceeds going to local food banks. For more information, visit https://bellbucklechamber.com/



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incurs \$617 billion in damages every year as a result of poor air quality with the EPA saying the country spends an additional \$65 billion every year to address air impurity. More than 135 million Americans - roughly 41% of the national population live in areas where polluted air puts their health and lives at risk. Despite seeing incredible improvement in the 1970s due to the creation of the EPA and Clean Air Act, the number of Americans exposed to poor air quality has seen little decrease since 2013. The recent report from the American Lung Associa-

The number of births in the U.S. fell in 2020 to the lowest level since 1979, continuing a multi-year trend of declining birth rates in the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for

May 20 - 21 Municipal Court Clerk Conference Franklin

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## Tennessee trails offer plenty for cyclists of all abilities

#### **By KATE COIL** *TML Communications Specialist*

Established in 1956 by the League of American Bicyclists, National Bike Month is celebrated each year in May to showcase the recreational and health benefits of cycling as well as to raise awareness about cyclist safety.

National Bike Month also aims to encourage those who have never been on a bike to try cycling and those who haven't biked in a while to pick it back up.

Bike paths and trails are becoming more and more popular in communities across Tennessee, offering residents ways to get to home, work, and school as well as spend time outdoors. There are plenty of ways for those of all skills levels to see what Tennessee has to offer.

#### **BEGINNER ROUTES**

Erected in honor of a local trail advocate, the Brian Brown Memorial Greenway in **Martin** does a lot more than connect downtown Martin with the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. The 3.4-mile, round-trip multi-use trail is a favorite of walkers, runners, skaters, and cyclists who all enjoy the route through a former railroad corridor and farmland owned by the university. Asphalt trails cruise by wildflowers and the local creek with equal amounts of sun and shade.

Following Mouse Creek in the northern part of the city, the **Cleveland**/Bradley County Greenway is presently a 3.94-mile trail that takes users through the heart of the city, uniting the city's retail sector, residential areas, and park facilities. Five footbridges span the linear, lighted path that is also lined with public art. Plans are in progress to expand the route further south by the end of 2022 with the possibility of the route growing in the future.

A multi-purpose 4.3-mile trail, the **Springfield** Greenway connects the city's historic downtown business district with J. Travis Price Park. Along the tree-lined path, cyclists can take in local color with historical buildings and land markers telling the Springfield story. Spotting wildlife like herons, turtles, and ducks in the Sulphur Fork Creek is a popular pastime among locals who frequent this trail.

Built for the students, faculty, and staff of Union University in Jackson, the university's Wooded Trail System is also open to the public. The system has 6.5 miles total of hiking, running, and mountain biking trail with a mix of beginner to intermediate trails ranging in length from a mile to nearly 4 miles long. For those who want to get in mountain or off-road biking, this is a great place to begin. Nashville's Shelby Bottoms Greenway takes visitors on a tour of a natural oasis in an urban setting. The 6.4-mile multi-use trails takes visitors through hardwood forests, open fields, wetlands, and streams with the option to take a paved path or traverse the road less traveled with more natural routes. Several trails across Tennessee bring communities together in a literal fashion, like the Mountain Goat Trail. Following the path of the former Mountain Goat Railroad, the current 7.5 trail connects the cities of Monteagle, Sewanee, and Tracy City. Riders can also segment the trail into the 5 miles between Sewanee and Monteagle or the 2.8 segment connecting Monteagle to Tracy City. Plans call for the trail to expand to a full 35-mile route along the former rail line, allowing cyclists to travel to Cowan, Coalmont, Gruetli-Laager, and **Palmer**. Another great rails to trails route connecting communities is the Tennessee Central Heritage Rail Trail including the municipalities of Cookeville, Algood, and Monterey. A paved 4.23-mile section connects the Cookeville Depot Museum in downtown to the Algood Community Center while the remaining trail is located in Monterey. Eventually, these two trails as well as an extension to the town of Baxter will bring the trail to a full 19 miles. With nearly ten miles of paved and concrete linear trail for cyclists, the Kingsport Greenbelt connects the city's neighborhoods, shopping centers, and park system. Visitors can stay on the main route from the South Fork of the Holston River along Reedy Creek or branch off onto connector trails. Along the way, stop off at more than 20 points of interest that highlight the history of the Model City.

**Parsons**, Mousetail Landing State Park has much more to offer than its famed fishing and camping. The park also boasts four-miles of easy mountain biking trail and 9 miles of more advanced trail for those who want to test their limits. Visitors from bigger cities like Nashville, Jackson, and Memphis are frequent overnight visitors to get a chance to conquer the hills and enjoy the river views the park offers.

While many have taken this route as part of a motor trail, the Cades Cove Loop Trail in the **Townsend** area of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is also a favorite among cyclists who want more of a challenge. The 11-mile loop takes visitors through one of the most popular destinations in the national park and cyclists come out in droves on Wednesdays when the trail is closed to vehicles. Those who want a shorter ride can also use some of the many turnoffs available along the way.

Those looking to escape back into nature don't have to travel far from downtown **Knoxville** to do so. The



The Cumberland River Bicentennial Trail in Ashland City offers both a shorter paved route for beginners that can also be extended into a longer, more moderate unpaved route ending at a local campsite.





#### **MODERATE ROUTES**

Located between Linden and

Former mine trails, white water overlooks, and scenic views of the Cherokee National Forest are among the reasons why the most experienced cyclists enjoy the 30-miles of mountain trails available through the Tanasi Trail system near Ducktown.

Knoxville Urban Wilderness Loop Trail is a 12.5-mile nature trail for cyclists that can connect to more than 30 miles of trails in the citywide trail system. The trail offers a variety of ways to enjoy the outdoors by bike. Scenic vistas and historical landmarks add to the overall experience of the trail.

Ashland City's Cumberland River Bicentennial Trail is 13.3 miles that accommodates both beginner and moderate skill levels. The first portion of the trail is paved but those seeking more of a challenge can try the newer, unpaved routes. One of the highlights for visitors is crossing one of the six original train trestles utilized by the trail. Visitors can take in waterfalls, local flora and fauna, and even end the day with a camping at the trail terminus at the Cheatham Lock and Dam campground.

Collegedale is home to a variety of unique biking trails, including the interlinking Biology Trails and White Oak Mountain Trails as well as the Bauxite Mountain Trail. While there are some 25 miles of trails on both sites, there is a more moderate 14.3-length visitors can take. Part of the campus of Southern Adventist University, the trails are open to the public. While suitable for beginners when taken individually, these trails combined can give bikers a variety of challenges. Considered a hidden gem to many, these trails allow users of all abilities to design their own routes.

More than 15 miles of trail connect the cities of **Alcoa** and **Maryville** on the joint Maryville-Alcoa Greenway. Cyclists can start at Alcoa's Springbrook Park or Richard Williams Park and follow the ninemile path down to Maryville. From there, bikers can continues through the Maryville Greenbelt to Sandy Springs, Pearsons Springs, or Founders Park for a total of 15 miles. There are also plenty of places to stop off and get snacks along the way.

While the last train has long since left this route to **Clarksville**, the 16mile former rail route turned greenway along the red River and West fork Creek is a popular destination for both those seeking to run quick errands and take more recreational routes. Those looking for more of a challenge can take the full route from Valleybrook Park to Billy Dunlop Park, hitting up sites like the Clarksville Riverwalk, Raymond C. Hand Pass pedestrian bridge, and still seeing plenty of local wildlife.

Also known as the Tennessee Riverpark, the **Chattanooga** Riverwalk will eventually stretch 22 miles from downtown Chattanooga to the Moccasin Bend National Archaeological District. Presently, the trail offers 16.1 miles from the Amincola Highway ending either at the Tennessee Aquarium and riverfront at Ross's Landing or crossing the iconic Walnut Street Bridge into Coolidge Park. The route takes visitors through the city's Bluff View Arts District as well as marshes and wetlands.

#### **EXPERT ROUTES**

The Shelby Farms Greenline in

Those who want to get into mountain biking can check out the Union University Wooded Trail System in Jackson. A mix of beginner to intermediate natural trails gives users a chance to test their mettle off the beaten path.

**Memphis** has sections and routes for cyclists of all abilities, but those who want a challenge can take the full 21.4mile route through the city, spanning from Midtown to Cordova. Located on the Former Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway line, the trail connects residential neighborhoods and one of the country's largest urban parks; Shelby Farms. Those on the greenline may even forget they are in the middle of a city with a large canopy of trees, scenic wetlands, riverside routes, and the occasional wildlife.

Not for the faint of heart, the Cherohala Skyway from **Tellico Plains** to the Tennessee state border is a 23.7-mile rugged scenic byway through the northern part of the Cherokee National Forest. A favorite challenge among cyclists in the southeast, the route offers numerous overlooks and side routes that can stretch the journey even longer. Those who want an extreme route can take the full 43-mile route from Tellico Plains to Robbinsville, N.C.

In the southern part of the Cherokee National Forest, cyclists can challenge themselves to the 30-miles of trail near the Tennessee-Georgia border at the Tanasi Trail System in **Ducktown**. Ranging from paved roads to knobby mountain trails, the system allows visitors to explore the old Copper Road Trail, see the Olympic whitewater rafting course on the Occoee River, screech down the Thunder Rock Express, and more. This route was designated an "Epic Ride" by the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), one of only six in the Southeast and 32 in the country.

Another IMBA rated Epic Ride is the Big South Fork 5 at Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in **Oneida**. This mountain biking trail across the Cumberland Plateau boasts miles of scenic gorges, sandstone bluffs, and historic features that dot the backcountry. A 33-mile ride total, this route offers amazing views and challenging drops that will get anyone's heart racing.

Pack some camping supplies and plan to stay overnight to meet the change that is the 83.1-miles of the Natchez Trace from Franklin to Collinwood in Tennessee. Beginning at the famed double-arched bridge in Franklin, this route is often taken in a vehicle but can be just as fun and even more challenging by bike. With gorgeous scenery no matter the season, the route is a hot spot for Tennessee history. Along the southern route to Collinwood, there is plenty of time to stop off in neighboring cities including Hohenwald, Mt. Pleasant, Lawrenceburg, and Waynesboro.

Those who are really ambitions can also tackle the BRAT: Bicycle Ride Across Tennessee. Held each year by its namesake organization, the BRAT encourages cyclists to get out across the state, tackling new routes each year. The organization also hosts two other major biking events each year: the Horton 100 at Henry Horton State Park in **Chapel Hill** and the Paris Century at Paris Landing State Park in **Paris**.