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# 2020 Census count in final stretch, now 98.7% complete

United States®

The deadline for the conclusion of the 2020 Census enumeration phase has changed several times, but the work to count 100% of Tennessee households goes on. The latest announcement ended field operations and self-response on Oct 5.

As of Oct. 1, here is where Tennessee stands:

- 98.7% of housing units inTennessee have been counted 65.7% by self-response and 33% by follow-up door-knocking.
- Tennessee ranks No. 36 nationally in the rate of overall enumeration.
- 9.4% of follow-up work in the Memphis Area Census Office and 6.9% of the follow-up work in the Shelbyville Area Census Office are outstanding.

State-level apportionment counts currently remain targeted for Dec. 31, 2020, delivery and sub-state redistricting data is scheduled for delivery in a single release by April 1, 2021.

The State Data Center Program is a cooperative program of the State of Tennessee, The University of Tennessee and the U.S. Census Bureau. Data Centers in each state assist the Bureau by disseminating Census data, other federal data sets and information.

# Pandemic worsens food insecurity woes statewide



Tennessee First Lady Maria Lee helped pick and package fresh vegetables at Nashville-based food charity Cul2vate. Located on the campus of the Ellington Agricultural Center, the organization



## **October is fire prevention month**

October is Fire Prevention Month and the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office has launched a new public education campaign sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). This year's theme is "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen." Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the U.S. and has taken a deadly toll on Tennesseans. According to the NFPA, almost half of reported U.S. home fires (44%) started in the kitchen. Two-thirds (66%) of home cooking fires start with the ignition of food or other cooking materials. In Tennessee, 24.9% of reported structure fires in 2019 involved cooking equipment. Pictured above are members of the Jackson Fire Department during their public awareness campaign kick-off event.

# Memphis 3D mapping project charts the future of emergency response

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

A new project is utilizing 3D mapping technology to help emergency officials in Memphis respond, plan, and train for situations involving several important sites in the city.

The project is funded through \$450,000 grant from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as one of three municipal projects to research, test, and refine LiDAR capabilities. The city of Memphis also contributed \$400,000 toward the project.

Researchers from the University of Memphis worked with emergency management and city officials to develop 3D maps of seven important buildings in the city including the National Civil Rights Museum, Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium, Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, and Pink Palace Museum. The project also mapped locations on the University of Memphis campus including the FedEx Institute of Technology and Wilder Tower. The goal for the project is to scan and process more than 1.7 million square feet of space. Lan Wang, department chair and professor of computer science for the University of Memphis, was one of the project leads and said the buildings mapped were chosen for a variety of reasons. "The main criteria for us was the public interest in the building and whether that building is of interest to public safety entities," Wang said. "The Pink Palace Museum and National Civil Rights Museum have a lot of important and historical artifacts so it would be very important to save those buildings. The Liberty Bowl Me-



provides fresh, locally grown foods to those in need.

#### **By KATE COIL**

With many still out of work or on furlough and no new federal increase to unemployment benefits, officials at food banks and pantries across the state of Tennessee are expecting a continued increase in the use of their services due to the pandemic.

Elaine Streno, director of operations for the Maryville-based Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee, said leadership at all of the state's Second Harvest regional locations have reported an unprecedented amount of need for their communities.

"This year has been like nothing we have ever seen before," Streno said. "I have done this for 27 years, and there was nothing that could have prepared us for the way this hit so quickly and the way they shut down the state. The five affiliates in Tennessee with Feeding America speak every week, and we are all seeing the same thing. The demand has increased 50% overnight, and we all adjusted quickly. It is affecting every area of the state fairly equally. While the demand has dropped a little right now, it's still much higher than it was this time last year."

Tracey Edwards, community relations manager for the Kingsport-based Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee, said her organization has seen an increase in food needs from residents in all walks of life in their region.

"Wenormally feed about 40,000 per month in our region, but we are up to more than 50,000," Edwards said. "The number of people reaching out to us is exorbitantly higher and is increasing every month now that the boost in federal unemployment is gone. We always have senior citizens, people with children, and people with disabilities who need help. However, we are seeing more people because of the loss of jobs, the fact that there aren't jobs that pay enough, and a lot of younger people who don't have those six months of backup savings. We have seen people who work hard, have a job, and never thought they would ever have to ask for food."

Edwards said that her organization has to rely on its warehouse staff and drivers to both pack and deliver food since safety precautions have prevented volunteers from coming into facilities since March.

The organization has adapted to the pandemic in other ways by holding drive-thru food pantries and organizing delivery to elderly patrons who are quarantining at home. Edwards said her organization is also working with the agencies and churches they partner with to do "pop-up pantries" at different sites across the eight counties in the state's Northeast. She said they have also been offering more weekend events since many of those seeking food assistance are still gainfully employed during the week and unable to make it to weekday events.

Over the summer, deliveries were made to entire families rather than just students as part of their summer feeding program.

Streno said summer is often a time when there is a lot of need as families are no longer getting school meals provided for students. As a result of schools closing amid the pandemic, Streno said Second Harvest locations across the state adapted by beginning their summer feeding programs earlier than usual and coordinating with schools to ensure food was provided to students through drop-offs and drive-thru events.

Unlike previous years, several food programs were extended to feed entire families rather than only students.

Allette Vayda serves as director of operations for food programs with the Tennessee Department of Human Services See FOOD on Page 4

A student researcher with the LiDAR backpage and a 360-degree camera walks through the Pink Palace Museum in Memphis to generate a 3D map of the area. The museum is one of seven sites in the city mapped through the project.

morial Stadium is a very important building to protect, especially since a lot of people might be there at one time. For the university, the FedEx Institute of Technology is definitely something we are interested in protecting. The Wilder Tower is probably the tallest building on campus, and if there were an incident in the building, it would present some challenges to public safety agencies."

The 3D maps employ LiDAR technology, which refers to its use of light and radar technology and can also be an acronym for "laser imaging, detection, and ranging." Eddie Jacobs, electrical and computer engineering professor at the University of Memphis, said the project used this technology to provide laser-accurate measurements for 3D map generation.

"LiDAR basically uses light to measure distances," Jacobs said. "We use a laser that scans around and measures the distance from where the laser is to points in space that the laser reflects off of. We get 15 frames a second, which means every fifteenth of a second we get all the data points within a 360-degree circle of where you are." *See* MAPPING *on Page 3* 

### What happens to cities when the arts go dark?

#### BY ALAN GREENBLATT Governing.com

The Opera House in Newberry, S.C., was built back in 1881 but shut down for decades after serving as a movie palace. Since undergoing a \$5.5 million renovation during the 1990s, it's been a prime stop for concerts and touring shows. Its success has led to increased occupancy in nearby housing developments and helped attract employers such as Samsung Electronics and M.M. Technics, a German metal supply company.

"It's just been a great catalyst," said Newberry Mayor Foster Senn. "It's not that easy being a small town, but the Opera House has given us a flagship and been vital to our rebound."

It's long been common for mayors and other elected officials

to tout the arts as an essential component of their economic developmentstrategies. But it turns out that when the arts fall into depression, they represent a drag on local economies. Like theaters all over the country, the Newberry Opera House

went dark for

for a lot of them."

months due to the coronavirus pan-

demic. Losing the venue as a draw

has hurt neighboring restaurants and

other businesses. "It is tough being

a downtown shop right now," Senn

said. "These are some difficult days

A recent analysis by the Broo-



When the arts fall into depression, it can represent a drag on local economies.

kings Institution found that fine and performing arts organizations lost almost 1.4 million jobs and \$42.5 billion in sales between April and July alone. That's 50% of the jobs and a quarter of their sales. Things have gotten so bad that the Associa-See **ARTS** on Page 7



#### BURNS

Tennessee State Parks officials held the official grand reopening of the completely remodeled, 117-room Lodge Montgomery Bell at Montgomery Bell State Park in Burns. The lodge sits on the banks of Lake Acorn, just 40 minutes outside Nashville and minutes away from Interstate 40. The renovated lodge features modern rooms, a new full-service restaurant and bar, and 6,000 square feet of flexible event space. The renovations also created multiple room options with large windows and stunning balcony views. The restaurant will serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. Guests at the lodge will have access to an outdoor pool, fitness room, and outdoor patios overlooking the lake. The 3,850-acre state park was once the center of the iron industry in Middle Tennessee and is named for industrial icon Montgomery Bell, who was known as the "Iron Master of the Harpeth." The park's amenities include the 18-hole Montgomery Bell Golf Course, 19 miles of trails, and three lakes for swimming, paddling, and fishing.

#### CLARKSVILLE

The city of Clarksville's Downtown Market has been ranked the No. 1 Market in America and the overall "People's Choice" winner in the American Farmland Trust's 12th Annual Farmers Market Celebration. The market also won a \$1,000 first prize in the contest. The Clarksville Downtown Market, coordinated by the Clarksville Parks and Recreation Department, began in 2010 and has grown in popularity each year. Saturday mornings from May through September, thousands of citizens visit the market to purchase food, handmade crafts, and other goods from more than 80 vendors. All items are 100% locally grown and produced. More than 1,200 markets were entered into the contest and voting was close until the end.

#### **COLUMBIA**

SmileDirectClub will expand its presence in Middle Tennessee by locating a new, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Columbia, investing \$34 million and creating more than 300 jobs. The oral care company and creator of the first medtech platform for teeth straightening will use the new facility to ex-



#### **JACKSON**

The Jackson Housing Authority and Jackson-based West Tennessee Farmers' Market are parenting together to provide fresh produce to senior citizens through a mobile market. During its peak season, the farmers' market can see an average of 70,000 people, but transportation to the market can often be difficult for seniors, especially those who are homebound or face mobility issues The mobile market will set up at Jackson Housing Authority sites, allowing residents to shop in their own backyard. The Mobile Farmers' Market will currently be cash only with hopes to accept food stamps/EBT in the future. The mobile market will follow social distancing guidelines.

#### KNOXVILLE

Officials with the city of Knoxville and Cal Johnson Recreation Center in Knoxville have cut the ribbon on \$732,866 worth of recreation construction and renovation. A nearly \$570,000 renovation created a large multipurpose room and added family restrooms to the gym area. A mezzanine area near the gym was opened up with the addition of new flooring to accommodate new programs as well as increase visibility to the entire facility. Two new activity rooms were added for small group meetings, and computers will be installed in one of the rooms available to visitors. Improvements will also be made to the concession and kitchen area as well as to restrooms with new furniture added throughout the facility. Another major upgrade was the \$71,031 fitness room. In addition to new floors and windows facing out to the gym, \$60,000 in fitness equipment has been installed. Outside the building, a new 4,500-square-foot \$81,700 playground was installed. It features four slides and numerous climbers, four belt swings, and three musical pieces. The playground offers an ADA-compliant surface, an accessible bench and sidewalk and accessible ground-level and elevated activities.

#### LEBANON

Moldex-Metric, Inc., officials have announced the N95 respirator mask manufacturer will locate new operations in Lebanon, investing more than \$25 million and creating more than 200 jobs in the next three years. Moldex is expanding its N95 respirator capacity to meet the surge in demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future market demand. The company plans to retrofit an existing building in Lebanon, which will be its first manufacturing facility in Tennessee. Beyond the capacity increase, Moldex also intends to build an additional distribution center on the 21-acre site. Headquartered in Culver City, Calif., Moldex is the second largest manufacturer of N95 respirators in North America and has been manufacturing NIOSH approved respirators and hearing protection products for almost 40 years. Moldex products are made using proprietary technology and have been granted more than 50 patents.

## **Morristown officials open Durham Landing**



Officials with the city of Morristown cut the ribbon on Durham Landing, a new roadway on the city's west side that will serve as the gateway to the city's new public works complex and a future community center. The 50-acre parcel of land where Durham Landing is located was purchased in 2017 with construction on the public works site beginning in 2018. The roadway includes two lanes, a roundabout, and a wide, landscaped median. An expansive sidewalk and multi-use trail add pedestrian amenities to the area.

Metal Products is a family-owned and operated business founded in Livingston.

#### **MEMPHIS**

The Memphis Area Transit Authority has launched a redesigned website and a new app aimed at allowing users to go cashless when paying for fares. The GO901 Mobile app is a free fare app that allows passengers to purchase single fare tickets and all day passes on their smartphones. Passengers can also buy multiple passes or tickets and store them for future use. Passes can be scanned at the front of all MATA vehicles. The new website design includes integration of the mobile app as well as features helping users manage their account balances for mobile app use. The new redesign is part of a long list of modification efforts MATA has put forward recently, including offering wifi access on all of its fixed-route buses, para-transit vehicles, and rail trolley cars.

#### **MILLERSVILLE**

Renovations to the Millersville City Hall are moving forward with construction adding 11,800 square feet of space and a second story to the building. The renovations will more than double the original size of the structure and echoes larger growth taking place across the community. Construction on the project began in March and is on track to be completed by December. When completed, the building will be able to house the city's police, fire, court, and codes department along with the city manager's offices and city commission chambers. Parts of the new building are being named after those who have been influential in the city's past. The city borrowed \$3 million for the \$2.6 million.

# Etowah officials cut ribbon on Chew Chew Dog Park



From left to right, Etowah Mayor Burke Garwood, Boyd Foundation President Randy Boyd, and Etowah Commissioner Jim Swayne cut the ribbon on Etowah's Chew Chew Park. The town received \$25,000 for the park from the Boyd Foundation's Dog Park Dash grant program. The park has an area for large dogs and an area for small dogs.

### Hendersonville breaks ground on First Responders Memorial



tend its manufacturing capabilities for its clear aligners in support of its continued expansion and growth while also increasing organizational resilience and introducing innovations to its supply chain. This project represents SmileDirect-Club's third expansion in Tennessee in three years. In March 2019, the company announced it would invest \$217 million and create more than 2,000 jobs across its Nashville headquarters and Middle Tennessee facilities.

#### FRANKLIN

The city of Franklin has been ranked eighth on Money Magazine's 20 Best Places to Live for 2020. Franklin has ranked in the top 10 on the list for the past two years. The city's 44% job growth in the last 10 years, 33% increase in population, and quality of its school system are among the reasons why the city received its high ranking. The location and expansion of healthcare and manufacturing companies like Optum, Mars Petcare, Nissan North America, and Community Health Systems have also contributed to the city's overall ranking. The median household income for Franklin residents is \$110,000 with the median price for a family home averages to be \$495,000.

#### TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY

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#### LIVINGSTON

BR Metal Products will expand its Livingston manufacturing facility, investing \$182,500 and creating 32 jobs in the area. BR Metal Products will also purchase new equipment as part of the expansion. The company is transitioning its temporary employees to a full-time basis while offering benefits and increased wages. BR Metal Products is an aluminum permanent mold foundry that specializes in high end commercial castings, electrical grid industry castings, and furniture castings. Using in-house machinery, BR Metal Products creates castings, welding fabrications, metal product finishing, and tooling. BR

#### SMRYNA

The city of Smyrna recently opened is new Zama Park, which celebrates the city's 30-year relationship with its sister city of Zama, Japan. Smyrna and Zama first partnered together in 1990 after the decision was made to locate auto manufacturer Nissan's first North American plant to Smyrna. The pocket park named after Zama is just the latest in a series of business, cultural, educational, and other exchanges between the two communities over the years, including visits between municipal leaders, community members, students, and others. To celebrate the opening of the new park, Consul General Kayoko Fukushima helped city officials cut the ribbon.

#### SURGOINSVILLE

Homeland Vinyl manufacturer will invest \$2.2 million and create 55 jobs as part of an expansion to its facility in Surgoinsville. The company will add 38,000 square feet to its operations including new extrusion lines and assembly line capabilities. Homeland Vinyl manufactures a diverse portfolio of vinyl profiles, including fencing, rail and deck products. In 2017, Homeland Vinyl added 50,000 square feet to its Surgoinsville facility and installed new equipment. The company has operations in six states across the U.S. including the facility in Surgoinsville. Founded in 1933, Homeland Vinyl's is headquartered in Birmingham, Ala.

Officials with the city of Hendersonville and the Hendersonville Rotary Club held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new First Responders Memorial in the city. The monument will honor past, present, and future police, fire, and EMS professionals in the city. The memorial is a gift to the city from the Hendersonville Rotary Club to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary.

# New hangar under construction at Alcoa's McGhee Tyson Airport



After more than 20 years of planning, a new maintenance hangar is being constructed at the McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, located at the joint military-public McGhee Tyson Airport in Alcoa. The 57,400-square-foot hangar will house the 134th Air Refueling Wing's fuel planes during routine repairs and maintenance. The new massive workshop replaces two old hangars, one of which will be demolished and another which will become a fuel cell shop. The new \$30 million hangar is expected to open in August 2021. Federal funds for the project were in part secured by U.S. Rep Tim Burchett, R-Tenn.



## Brentwood moves forward with new police training technology

**By DEANNA LAMBERT** Brentwood Community Relations Director

The Brentwood Police Department will move into a newly constructed police facility in the Spring of 2021 and an entire room on the first floor will house a stateof-the-art firearm training simulator system.

The technology will allow officers to train in a virtual climate on decision-making scenarios pertaining to use of force including de-escalation tactics.

Brentwood Police Chief Jeff Hughes said this technology is essential.

"Despite our continued training on proficiency, police find they are more likely to be criticized for their decision making when it comes to shoot/don't shoot," Chief Hughes said. "In those few seconds an officer decides to shoot or not, there are a lot of factors running through one's mind. One of the major benefits of using the professionally produced scenarios on the VirTra Simulator is the cultivation of effective verbal communication (de-escalation skills) with subjects during tense situations."

VirTra, Inc. is a global provider of training simulators for the law enforcement, military, educational, and commercial markets.

As the leading manufacturer

virtual reality and simulation systems for situational awareness and judgmental use-of-force training, VirTra creates customized scenarios using 360-degree, interactive, photorealistic environments for military force-option training, law enforcement training, and security personnel training.

of custom and turnkey immersive

The simulator will include two AR-15 drop-in kits with four magazines, two Smith and Wesson M&P 9mm weapons with six magazines, two X2 Taser weapons, two OC Canisters, and access to an entire library of training scenarios.

An annual subscription payment of \$47,718 will include all warranty and maintenance for up to five years.

Earlier this year, VirTra, Inc. released a new training curriculum designed to help law enforcement professionals bridge the communication gap and interact more effectively and positively with individuals with autism.

Other scenarios in their system include active shooters in schools and other public places.

"The controller can control what happens in the scenario based on the officer's actions, so that will give them the opportunity to practice de-escalation skills," Chief Hughes said. "Just like with the Citizens Police Academy, we allow citizens and the public to



The city of Brentwood is moving forward with a new training simulator that will help law enforcement prepare for a variety of situations they may encounter in the field.

experience this because you get a real feeling for what it's like to be in a situation and know what's going through an officer's mind and what it feels like to have to shoot or not shoot."

The new technology will replace the department's current firearm simulator, which will be submitted for surplus once the new system is operational.

## Memphis 3D mapping project charts the future of emergency response

MAPPING from Page 1

Wang said the university used a LiDAR backpack and a 360-degree camera to capture 360-degree images using a "point cloud." A point cloud is a collection of 3D data points, usually defined by x, y, and z coordinates. These tiny data points can then be used by 3D modeling technology to recreate physical spaces for purposes including planning, architecture, and virtual reality programs.

Since the data collection can be sensitive, Wang said the person collecting the data has to walk through a room at a certain pace. The mapping program also allows the labeling of certain items.

"Typically, each floor needs its own scan, but for bigger buildings we often break down each area of a floor into separate sections," Wang said. "Afterwards, we have the point cloud data and images. We have to piece the multiple scans back into one big point cloud. We also process the images to label objects. We then combine those back together into an annotated, color-coded point cloud. We can use georeferencing to add geocoordinates to every point in the space. We recognize 30 types of objects like fire extinguishers, fire alarms, stairs, elevators, windows, and doors. Anything that is relevant to public safety agencies is labeled. We actually asked officials what objects they felt would be most important for us to label, and they ranked the importance of different objects."



A color-coded 3D map of the FedEx Institute of Technology as created by the project. The maps include data like the location of fire extinguishers and alarms as well as emergency exits.

not necessary for the 3D map like people who may have been in the building when the scan was

document. From the data processing side, one of the big surprises is that we couldn't find many existing data sets that had the objects we wanted to label. We had to build our own data sets, which takes time and manual labor." Beyond real-time response to emergencies, Wang said there are a variety of ways in which the scans can be used. "It can be used for training and for planning purposes," she said. "For example, if you wanted to plan the best rescue route or how to navigate through the building before entering it, you can use this model for planning. A lot of our emergency personnel are interested in finding the best entrance to use if they need to reach a certain

there."

Wang said 3D mapping tech-

this scan

to recreate

what was

of the need to protect those structures.

The data sets collected during the current project will be provided through the city of Memphis' website for those who need the data for research projects, public safety initiatives, and to give feedback on the project so future scanning projects in the city can be refined.

Memphis Deputy Chief Information Officer Wendy Harris said the mapping project is another example of how working together can benefit both the city and the university.

"From a research perspective, the University of Memphis has the facilities to provide students with the knowledge and skillsets to assist in these types of projects," Harris said. "The city, on the other hand, always likes to work with local businesses and entities on these types of projects. It's a benefit for both to use our resources to get more done. We don't have to go through a lot of red tape to work with each other. There is great expertise on both sides." Jacobs said university officials always welcome a chance to help the city where they work and live. "As both members of the University of Memphis and individuals that live in Memphis, the city of Memphis is a city on the ascension," he said. "We are improving in a lot of ways. This is a way we can directly contribute to that. The university is very supportive of the city of Memphis, and as individuals who live here, we at the university like doing these kinds of things for the city.'

nology like that being used in Memphis is also currently being used to reconstruct the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris after the massive fire in 2019.

Part of the process of combining the scans, images, and other information is removing things conducted. Different objects and room sizes can also impact data collection.

"Scanning can be very tricky," Wang said. "There are a lot of things you should do and shouldn't do. You have to keep all the doors open and make sure people are not moving. There are a lot of details you have to pay attention to. Small spaces can be more difficult, like storage rooms or equipment rooms. Stairs and rooms with lots of windows and mirrors can be hard to scan because of reflection, but we are able to deal with all of that. Through the process, we learned a lot and created a best practices

"I think this will become more common as the technology becomes more widely available," she said. "As the technology becomes easier to use, I see the 3D mapping being used in a variety of ways."

While all the buildings set out in the initial project have been scanned, there is interest in continuing the project if funding becomes available. Wang said Memphis officials have expressed interest in 3D mapping of Memphis area schools in the future because

## No loan is too large or too small



The Town of Livingston recently closed on a \$1.8 million capital outlay note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund TMBF) issued to finance waterline improvements. The Town has used TMBF's various loan programs 12 times since 1996. Seated L to R: Linda Mooningham, TMBF Marketing Director and Legal Coordinator; Livingston Mayor Curtis Hayes; and Livingston Town Clerk Phyllis Looper.

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



The City of Clinton recently closed a \$1 million note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) issued to finance city school system improvements. Seated L to R: Kelly Johnson, Director of Clinton City Schools; Clinton Mayor Scott Burton; and Gail Cook, Finance Director. Standing L to R: Roger Houck, Clinton City Manager; and Steve Queener, TMBF Marketing Representative.





Chris Crocker has been selected as the new police chief for the Dresden Police Department.

He will take



Chris Crocker

over from former Chief Steve Howe who left in June to accept a position with the Tennessee Office of Inspector General. A native of McKenzie, he graduated from West Carroll High School. Crocker has worked in law enforcement since 2011 when he was first employed by the Dresden Police Department. He attained the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant during his first four-anda-half-years with the department. Crocker then went to work for the Weakley County Sheriff's Department for four-and-half-years before returning to the Dresden Police Department as assistant chief one year ago.

Joseph "Joey" Edwards has been selected as deputy fire chief for the city of Mt. Juliet. Edwards brings



Joey Edwards

a vast array of experiences coupled with education and credentials to the job. He has served in municipal, state, and federal government during his 20 years of firefighting and administration. His career started in Shelbyville as a line firefighter before moving on to a civilian position with the Department of Defense fighting fires, EMS calls, and training. Edwards then accepted a position as the lead instructor and eventually as the campus supervisor. During his time at the Tennessee State Fire Academy he was instrumental in reviving the recruit program and the implementation of online learning using various learning management systems. Edwards was also responsible for building relations across the state to improve firefighter training programs. Edwards holds numerous degrees and national certifications including Fire Officer IV and is an active member in the EMS field as an AEMT. He is also credentialed by the Center of Public Safety Excellence as a chief training officer. Edwards is a published author for



PEOPLE

safety officer and crosstrained in law enforcement and fire service. During his career, he also served as a member of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), field training officer, and in the warrants division. Jones continued to work for the department for more than a decade after his initial cancer diagnosis.

Dennis Pedersen, the state of Tennessee's director of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has received an award for

as a public

**Ray Jones** 



Pedersen

leadership from a national organization. The 27-year veteran state employee was chosen for the Champion Award from the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC), an organization promoting the use of GIS and other data for government service. NSGIC noted Pedersen's work to collect, process and disseminate accurate LiDAR data across the state. LiDAR is a surveying method that uses laser to help generate precise, three-dimensional information about surface characteristics in Tennessee.

MaryPruitt, a longtime former state representative for Nashville, died Sept. 20, 2020, at the age of 85 following a fall.



Pruitt served in the Tennessee House of Representatives from 1985 until 2012, first becoming a member after a special election upon the unexpected death of her husband, the late state Rep. Charles Pruitt. Born in Brentwood, Pruitt earned her bachelor's degree and master's in education from Tennessee State University.

## Pandemic worsens food insecurity woes

#### FOOD from Page 1

(DHS), which administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for the state. The federal program provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. The department also administers a sister program, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), that works with summer programs.

Vayda said the department has been working with schools and afterschool programs to continue to support children regardless of whether or not students are physically in school.

"The program operates in a lot of different ways, and has tried to adapt in different ways to best serve the needs of communities," Vayda said. "Child care centers, day care homes, and a lot of those type facilities continue to operate throughout the pandemic. We have been working with the USDA, who funds the program, since March to figure out the best way to operate. We have received wavers for afterschool programs that allow parents to come to pick up those meals. We are trying to support our communities however the meals are needed. It may be allowing a waiver allowing a family to pick up meals for a whole week at one time or supporting a child care center that is continuing to operate during this time."

During the summer, Vayda said the role of the SFSP was more important than ever.

"We have really been relying on that program since schools were out of session from March through September," Vayda said. "We have been working to help provide meals directly to children within their communities. Our SFSP have actually been authorized to continue operating through Dec. 31, 2020. Similarly, to these programs, we have a lot of city governments, nonprofits, and churches who participate in the SFSP programs in their communities. Hopefully, we will not still be experiencing this level of impact next summer, but we are already asking folks to consider applying for next summer's program since we are already seeing that there is going to be some continued impact on communities next year."

Vayda said there are a variety of ways to participate in the program as a site, volunteer, or organization.



Second Harvest of Northeast Tennessee holds a food pantry event at the Elizabethton Veterans of Foreign Wars. Organizations across the state have had to change the way they operate to meet the growing need of those facing food insecurity due to the pandemic.

staple' foods. We have to make sure that the donations we get now go more toward those non-perishable items like spaghetti sauce, pasta, canned tuna, canned chicken, and canned vegetables since we are getting that fresh stuff from the state and federal government. We are very thankful for that partnership with the government."

Kim Doddridge, a spokesperson with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA), said the department has been working a variety of ways to promote access to fresh foods during the pandemic. One initiative has been promoting the use of the 160 active farmers' markets listed on Pick Tennessee's website and mobile app.

"We've been very active with farmers' markets, and we have some farmers who have never participated in those before who are now," Doddridge said. "We have also seen more on-farm sales where you go to the farm itself. In addition to answering the call of neighbors in need, farmers figured out pretty quickly how to work around where they could still provide fresh produce but do it safely. They have organized on-farm purchases to where people could preorder and not have to even get out of their car."

Doddridge said the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA) has also helped coordinate the agriculture industry with food bank services. TDA also administers the federal The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans. Edwards said one donation that strongly impacted her region came through a partnership with several groups involved in the dairy industry. Recently, TDA joined representatives from Weigel's Convenience Stores, Mayfield Dairy, the Randy Davis Memorial Milk Fund, the Tennessee Dairy Promotion Committee, and Tennessee food banks affiliated with Feeding America for donation announcements. "As many across the state face challenges resulting from this pandemic, we're seeing community leaders in the food industry step up to address food insecurity," Commissioner of Agriculture Charlie Hatcher said. "Distributing perishables isn't easy but when producers, processors, retailers, and food banks work together, fresh,

wholesome food gets to where it's needed most."

Weigel's provided vouchers for 60,000 gallons of milk through Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee and Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee. The Tennessee Dairy Promotion Committee donated \$20,000 for Second Harvest Food Banks to buy milk. The milk will be purchased from Mayfield Dairy in partnership with the Randy Davis Memorial Milk Drive Fund.

Food companies have also been effective in meeting hunger needs of Tennesseans in other areas of the state. Publix Super Market donated chicken, more than 17,600 pounds of produce and 17,800 pounds of milk to food banks in East Tennessee. Tyson Foods donated chicken to three Tennessee food banks and helped transport about 15,500 pounds of food to Helping Hand of Humboldt. Sysco donated eight pallets of food to Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee.

While there has been some decrease in need since students who have returned to school, Streno said the last part of the year is typically the busiest for food pantries.

"This is our busiest time from now until Christmas and always has been," she said. "We will have enough food for the next three months, but it's what will happen





Firehouse magazine and has spoken at multiple national and regional fire conferences during his career.

Joe Hall, former police chief for both the towns of Watertown and Alexandria, died Sept. 24, 2020, at Vanderbilt Medi-



Joe Hall

cal Center in Nashville. A graduate of Watertown High School, Hall served more than 30 years in law enforcement and was a certified law enforcement training officer. In addition to having served as chief, Hall was actively serving as assistant chief of the Watertown Police Department as well as city court clerk and city codes officer for Watertown at the time of his death.

Ray Jones, a 31-year veteran of the Smyrna Police Department,



Kathy Stickel

oversee 200 staff members responsible for conducting the financial and performance audit of all state departments, agenices, and higher education institutions. Stickel has been with the comptroller's office since 1995, holding several leadership positions. Most recently, she served as director of management services. A graduate of Murray State University, Stickel also holds a master's of accountancy from the University of Kentucky. A CPA and Certified Government Financial Manager, she serves as the Association of Government Accountants National Treasurer.

"We would really encourage anyone who has a daycare center, an adult care center, or who runs an afterschool program to reach out to us, get on our website, and let us help them and work with them on this program," she said. "We accept applications from organizations all year round. We work to provide training for new organizations and help support them in that application process."

As the pandemic continues, Edwards said programs being offered through the Tennessee Department of Emergency Management (TEMA) and the USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) have been invaluable resources.

"They are providing us with fresh meat, fresh produce, and milk, and we are able to distribute perishable foods to people," she said. "Of course, we always need donations of non-perishable, 'shelf in January that mainly has us concerned."

Despite this, Streno said those who have the means have been working to help those in need.

"I am very proud of our communities who are giving such unbelievable support and fundraising," she said. "The giving has never been stronger across the state. We all receive national grants and we all received a grant from BlueCross and BlueShield. Our neighbors and our communities do not want to see their neighbors going hungry. We also receive a \$1 million budget item from the state of Tennessee every year. Luckily, we were able to get that funding again this year. I would just like to say to the folks working with the state legislature to continue our funding because it will be needed. No one knows where we will be six months from now."

For more information on local food banks and pantries, visit feedingamerica.org.

# PUBLIC ENTITY PARTNERS

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Tennessee's graduation rate dipped for the first time since 2013, despite relaxed diploma requirements amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Data released by the Tennessee Department of Education showed 89.6 of public high school seniors had earned their diploma within four years, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the record-high rate set by the class of 2019. The state's graduation rate has climbed by 4% in the past decade, and the 2020 decline surprised many as greater accommodations were made for 2020 seniors.

Unemployment rates decreased in 94 of the state's 95 counties in August. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development said Benton County was the only county in the state to report an increase with a 0.1%increase in its month-to-month unemployment rate. Moore County reported the state's lowest unemployment rate for August at 5.1%, dropping from a 6.4% rate the month before. Shelby County recorded the highest unemployment rate at the state with 13.4%, still down 1.4% points from its July rate. Overall, the statewide seasonally-adjusted jobless rate for August was 8.5%, down 1.2% from the revised July rate of 9.7%. Nationally, the seasonally-adjusted jobless rate also decreased in August to 8.4%, falling 1.8% from the July national rate of 10.2%.

The Tennessee Education Lottery Corp Sports Wagering Committee has granted conditional approval to the first three sports betting agencies allowed to operate in the state. BetMGM, DraftKings, and FanDuel were the first three vendors whose applications received conditional approval to offer sports betting with Nov. 1 as the projected start date when betting will be opened in the state. Another operator has applied but not received approval. Lottery officials said legalized sports betting could become operational in the state sooner than the projected Nov. 1 start date if all four who have applied to serve as vendors can agree to open on the same earlier date. As Tennessee has no physical casinos within state lines, all sports betting will have to be conducted online. Vendors must pay a \$750,000 annual license fee and the state has imposed a minimum hold of 10% on are being offered as part of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) statewide campaign "Learn Online. Graduate Online." to make adult education accessible to all interested Tennesseans. To learn more about local adult education programs, call TDL-WD at 800-531-1515, or go to the website <u>https://www.tn.gov/</u> <u>workforce/general-resources/</u> <u>news/2020/9/15/adult-learnerscan-earn-high-school-equivalency-diplomas-online.html.</u>

Enrollment is down 11.5% at Tennessee's community colleges with about 10,000 fewer students enrolled than this time last year. The Tennessee Board of Regents said the enrollment decreases follow a national trend of declining enrollment at community colleges with national enrollment down 7.5%. The decline may have a greater financial impact on community colleges than the one caused by the Great Recession. Particularly, Tennessee reported a decline in the number of black and especially black male students at community colleges. The economic recession and pandemic are largely to blame for the decline with many prospective students instead having to deal with job loss, childcare, and other needs.

Tennessee could lose 72,632 jobs and see the closure of 1,028 and foreclosures of 752 hotels without Congressional aid, according to new information from the American Hotel and Lodging Association. A study found that 74% of hotels nationwide would be forced to lay off additional employees and more than two-thirds of hotels would not make it another six months without federal aid. The study also found that Tennessee has lost 37,284 of its 161,404 pre-COVID hotel-related jobs due to the pandemic.

The state of Tennessee has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial **Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association** (GFOA) for the state's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). This marks the 40th year the state has received the recognition, the most any state in the nation has earned the award. The division of accounts in the department of finance and administration produces the annual report in a year-long process of overseeing state finances. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

### **Delta Regional Authority awards \$3.6M in grants**

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA)has announceda\$3,615,385 investment that will boost economic development and improve the quality of life for eight Tennessee communities and their residents.

The investment will be matched by \$2.4 million and will attract an additional \$64 million in leveraged private investment (LPI) into Tennessee. The projects will improve water and sewer systems and support innovative job training in communities across Tennessee. These projects are expected to create or retain 187 jobs, train 170 individuals, and affect nearly 6,800 families.

The Lake County Industrial Site and Port of Cates Landing in Tiptonville will receive a DRA investment of \$1,519,000 through the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF), which targets physical infrastructure projects that help build safer, more resilient communities in the Delta region. The city of Tiptonville will use DRA funds to improve the water storage tank and water system at the Port of Cates Landing and the Lake County Industrial Complex, creating 100 new jobs and training 100 individuals. The DRA funds will contribute to a more than \$19.5 investment in the project.

Two projects in **Memphis** will be funded through the States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP), which provides direct investment into community-based and regional projects to support basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, workforce training and education, and small businesses development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship,

Through SEDAP, the DRA will invest \$360,000 of the total \$1.28 million financing the 38126 Innovation and Technology Center in Memphis. The South Memphis Renewal Community Develop-



The Memphis Agricenter International Innovation District is one of two Memphis projects and eight total projects in Tennessee sharing in more than \$3.6 million in funds awarded by the Delta Regional Authority.

ment Corporation will use DRA funds to construct a new 10,500 square foot commercial building for an Innovative Technology Center to provide workforce development and training opportunities for residents. This investment is projected to create 20 new jobs and train 70 individuals.

SEDAP funds will also help the DRA invest \$400,000 in the \$500,000 Agricenter International Innovation District in Memphis, which will construct infrastructure to expand an agricultural research park and provide opportunities for business expansion.

Additionally, SEDAP funds from DRA will also help finance two projects in **Lexington**. The city will receive \$509,000 for a \$1.2 million lift station replacement that will replace and relocate a sewer lift station to serve 3,406 families and a \$337,906 investment on a \$3.3 million infrastructure expansion to provide water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure to an agricultural processing facility.

The town of **Sharon** will receive a DRA investment of \$100,000 through SEDAP for the Sharon Well Replacement Project, a \$587,140 project to install a new 10-inch well to improve service to 481 families. The city of **Savannah** will also receive \$254,179 in funds from DRA through SEDAP for a sewer rehabilitation project. The city will rehabilitate existing manholes and make sewer system repairs to the Central Business District. This investment is projected to affect 2,857 families.

The Crockett County Distributor Site in **Bells** is also receiving \$135,300 toward a \$43.3 million projects to extend water service to a new distribution center adjacent to U.S. 412/State Route 20.

DRA coordinates directly with the governor's office and three local development districts in the state for program funding implementation.

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 2000 to promote and encourage the economic development of the lower Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. DRA invests in projects supporting transportation infrastructure, basic public infrastructure, workforce training, and business development.

### Elder financial exploitation are increasing in Tennessee

Comptroller's Office evaluates the patchwork of state and local entities that protect elderly Tennesseans

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office has completed a review of elder financial exploitation in Tennessee.

Elder financial exploitation is the wrongful or unauthorized use of the assets, funds, or property of elderly individuals. Those who exploit the elderly may include family members, businesses, acquaintances, and strangers. In the last several years, the Tennessee General Assembly has strengthened state laws to protect the state's elderly population from financial exploitation, as well as abuse and neglect.



operators. Sports betting vendors are also subject to a 20% tax rate.

The state of Tennessee is encouraging adults wishing to earn their general equivalency diploma to utilize online solutions. Virtual classes preparing students for the exam as well as online exams

Elder financial exploitation appears to be increasing in Tennessee. The Adult Protective Services

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With elder financial exploitation on the rise across the state, the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has issued a review and suggested policy issues to better protect seniors.

(APS) program in the Tennessee Department of Human Services operates the statewide hotline and reporting system for complaints about all types of elder abuse. APS also investigates reports of elder abuse. APS data confirms that, from 2015 to 2019, the number of reports it received for all elder abuse categories increased by 52%, while reports of financial exploitation increased by 87%.

One overarching concern, expressed by stakeholders across the state, is that state law limits the types of investigations of elder financial exploitation that APS, the agency most closely associated with issues concerning elder abuse, can undertake. APS can investigate these cases only when they involve a caregiver and the misuse of government funds.

Research by the Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) found that Tennessee's approach to protect elderly adults from financial exploitation is made up of a patchwork of state and local entities. APS officials told OREA that the agency receives a large number of reports of suspected elder financial exploitation that do not meet the criteria for investigation under the law, and that it refers these to law enforcement and district attorneys general, among other entities.

The effectiveness of Tennessee's patchwork approach, however, is unknown due to data limitations. Although efforts have ramped up in recent years to better coordinate the review of suspected cases of elder financial exploitation, there is no statewide system to track elder financial abuse cases in Tennessee. Without a statewide system, it is not possible to track the progress or resolution of cases when they are shared between state and local agencies.

The lack of a statewide data system also prevented OREA from fully estimating the prevalence and cost of elder financial abuse in Tennessee.

OREA's research found that APS does not have enough intake workers and district attorneys lack the specialized staff to tackle the complexities of some elder financial exploitation cases. Reports of abuse to APS have increased in recent years and intake workers are at full capacity during peak times.

According to an APS official, intake workers at APS are not always able to follow up on each report. District attorneys also indicate that staff with specialized knowledge of financial exploitation or accounting are necessary to prosecute a wider range of elder financial exploitation cases.

The Comptroller's Office has included a number of policy considerations for the General Assembly in its report.

To read the report, please visit the Comptroller's OREA website at: http://comptroller.tn.gov/orea



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

#### ACCOUNTANT

GREENEVILLE. The town of Greeneville is seeking a professional Accountant with a CPA or a CMFO (Certified Municipal Financial Officer) or achievement of such certification within two years. Municipal government finance accounting experience preferred. Bachelor's degree required. Salary DOE. Applications and resumes can be emailed to humanresourcesstaff@ greenevilletn.gov or mailed to Human Resource Director, 200 N. College Street, Greeneville, TN 37745. A completed application is required for consideration. To download an application, please visit www.greenevilletn. gov and click Public Services>Human Resources>Forms & Downloads.Open until filled. EOE/Drug Free Workplace

#### **CHIEF BUILDING INSPECTOR**

PIPERTON. The city of Piperton has an opening for a full-time chief building inspector. Duties will include residential and commercial construction inspections (building, plumbing, and mechanical), plan review, responding to public requests for service and resident's concerns, enforcing city ordinances, and assisting the building official as necessary. At least one ICC commercial certification is required. Remaining ICC commercial certifications must be obtained and maintained within one year (building, plumbing, and mechanical inspector) of hire. Must have five years code enforcement/inspection experience, including two years supervisory experience. Valid driver's license is required. Background check will be conducted. Salary is commensurate with experience. Medical and retirement benefit package is provided. Applications may be obtained at the Piperton Administrative Office at 3725 Hwy 196 Suite B, or at www.pipertontn.com/ jobs. Return application and resume to tjohnson@pipertontn.com. EOE.

#### **CIVIL PLANS REVIEWER**

MT. JULIET. The city of Mt. Juliet is seeking a candidate for the following position: Full-time civil plans reviewer to assist the director, deputy director and city engineer in the Public Works and Engineering Department in a variety of functions related to development services, general engineering, construction plans review, and the publication of manuals, specifications, etc. for the city of Mt. Juliet. Selected candidates will be required to complete pre-employment testing as deemed necessary by each specific position. Applicants will need to hold a valid TN driver license. Excellent benefits and TCRS Retirement; Salary DOQ. Detailed job descriptions and requirements are available online. Applications must be filed electronically and are available at the city's website, www.mtjuliet-tn.gov. This position will be open until filled. 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.

progressive responsible management experience that includes experience in city management, planning, zoning, and finance. Position profile is available at www.oakhilltn.us. Send cover letter and resume by electronic mail to the City of Oak Hill, attention Jeff Clawson (jeff.clawson@oakhilltn. us). Initial review of applications will occur by the first week of October. Position opened until filled. For additional information please contact: Jeff Clawson (jeff.clawson@oakhilltn.us) and/or Gary Jaeckel (gary.jaeckel@ tennessee.edu)

#### **CITY MANAGER**

PORTSMOUTH, VA The city of Portsmouth, VA., seeks visionary, outcome-oriented leaders with strong communication and fiscal management skills. The city desires candidates with experience leading in racially diverse, urban communities of comparable size and who are committed to engaging with citizens, building consensus among stakeholders, and making steady progress toward the city's goals. Portsmouth faces both major challenges and exciting opportunities, and the city is seeking an enthusiastic leader who is ready to do the work.Portsmouth is a full-service city with a 2021 General Fund budget of \$254 million and an employee count of approximately 1,200 FTEs. Candidates must possess a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration or related field and at least 7 years' experience in a senior executive position in a municipal or closely comparable operation. A master's degree in a relevant field is preferred. To see complete job description and to apply by Oct. 23, 2020, go to www.GovHRjobs.com. Direct letters to Dele Lowman Smith, Vice President GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, #130, Northbrook, IL 60062. EOE.

#### **CITY MANAGER**

SHELBYVILLE. The city of Shelbyville (pop. 20,335) is seeking a city management professional to be their next city manager. The city manager is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the city council. The city has a \$23.3M budget with 175 full-time employees. Candidates should possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public administration, business administration, or a field closely related to municipal management and a minimum of eight years of progressively increasing city management experience, or any combination of education and municipal experience that demonstrates proficiency in managing a complex municipal corporation. Residency within the city limits will be a requirement. Salary range \$90,000 - \$145,000, depending on experience & qualifications. A position profile is available at www. shelbyvilletn.org. Send cover letter and resume immediately by electronic mail to the University of Tennessee ' s Municipal Technical Advisory Service, attention Gary Jaeckel, at gary. jaeckel@tennessee.edu. Initial review of applications will occur Oct. 12, 2020. Please direct questions to Gary Jaeckel at the same email address.

and training that includes progressively responsible emergency management operations, emergency/disaster planning, public safety, hazardous materials regulations, program/personnel management, and public relations; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Must have a bachelor's degree in emergency management, fire science, management, public administration, or closely related field. Preference may be given to candidates who are graduates of the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) program from the National Fire Academy and/ or possessing personal accreditation as a Chief Fire Officer (CFO) from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Required certifications from the Tennessee Commission on Fire Fighting Standards and Certification include: Fire Fighter-I; Fire Fighter-II; Fire Instructor-I; Fire Officer-I; Fire Officer-II; Ability to obtain Fire Officer-III and Fire Office-IV within first 24 months of employment; Tennessee certification as a Fire Code Inspector. For additional details, please see full job ad at www.nolensvilletn.gov

#### LAND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR/SENIOR **PLANNER**

MARYVILLE. The city of Maryville is seeking to fill one open position in the planning division of the development services department as either a senior planner or land development administrator. The position will be filled based on departmental needs and the candidate's experience and qualifications. Applicants seeking the land development administrator position will: perform intermediate skilled technical work administering and enforcing the city's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations; serve as staff support to various boards and commissions; prepare and present reports; maintain files and records; and prepare related work as apparent or assigned. Work is performed under the limited supervision of the deputy development services director. Bachelor's degree with coursework in urban planning, public administration, geography or related field and considerable experience in professional planning preferably in municipal government, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Applicants for the senior planner position will be responsible for: professional and technical work in the city's planning program including review of land use applications' staffing of city boards, preparing reports plans and planning related regulations. Provides information to the public regarding land development regulations and processes. Reports to the deputy development services director. Master's degree in urban planning, public administration, or a related field required and extensive experience in professional planning preferably in municipal government or equivalent combination of education and experience. AICP certification preferred. The position is open until filled. Applications are available at the city of Maryville Municipal Center, Human Resources, 400 W. Broadway and on our website www.maryvillegov. com. Nepotism policy prohibits hiring relatives of city employees. EOE. In addition to a city of Maryville employment application, applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, and writing sample. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please direct inquiries to humanresources@maryville-tn.gov.

and analysis. Must possess knowledge of the capabilities of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) as it relates to planning and demographics. Experience in implementing infill development projects or policy is a plus. Minimum of a bachelor's degree in city, urban, or regional planning, public administration, landscape architecture, civil engineering, or related field is desirable with a minimum 2 years' experience in the areas of long-range planning, zoning, and/or public policy; preferably in government or consulting with the public sector. Membership(s) in the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Urban Land Institute (ULI), and/or Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) is desired but not required. The RPC offers a comprehensive benefits package including medical, dental, and vision insurance, paid time off, flexible spending account access, and TCRS package. Pay Range \$44,304 - \$55,848, DOE. This position will remain open until filled. A complete copy of the job description is available online. Applications/resumes must be submitted online at https://www.cityofclarksville.com/ EOE.

#### PLANNING DIRECTOR

CLEVELAND. The city of Cleveland (pop. approx. 50,000) seeks an experienced planning director to coordinate its overall land use and development programs for both current and longrange planning activities. Home to a mid-sized university, strong industrial footprint, substantial residential and commercial development pressure, and redevelopment opportunities. Duties include reviews and coordination of small area plans, site plans, subdivisions, rezoning requests; preparing and presenting reports to the city council, planning commission, board of zoning appeals and other community groups; assisting in ordinance and policy creation and amendments; and issuing commercial and residential permits. Graduation from an accredited university with 6 years community planning, or comparable work, and possession of AICP certification is required. Master's degree preferred. Strong writing and presentation skills required with working knowledge of technology, Excel and GIS software required. Salary DOE plus strong benefits and retirement packages. Submit resume and cover letter to Kim Miller (Human Resources) at kimmiller@clevelandtn. gov. Position open until filled. First review of applications will begin on Nov. 6, 2020. EOE.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

SAVANNAH. The city of Savannah is currently seeking a qualified and experienced professional for the fulltime position of public works director to plan, organize and direct the overall activities of streets, right-of-way and facility maintenance. This includes supervision of 12 full-time employees, over-sight of contract sanitation services, and budgetary operations including a long-term street resurfacing program and directing a variety of construction and maintenance tasks. The successful candidate will have 7 to 10 years supervisory experience in construction, maintenance, equipment operation or related fields of public works, be team-oriented and able to communicate well with the public. Benefits include a competitive salary (DOQ), paid health, dental, vision and life insurance, 401(a) retirement, paid leave and holidays. Interested applicants must complete and submit an "Application for Employment" utilizing forms furnished by the city. These forms and a full job description are available at City Hall Human Resources, 140 Main Street, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday except Holidays or on the city's website at www.cityofsavannah.org. Applications may be submitted via email to bmatlock@cityofsavannah. org or mailed to Savannah City Hall, Attention: Human Resources, 140 Main Street, Savannah, TN 38372. Application deadline is Nov 9, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. EOE.

#### **SENIOR PLANNER**

TULLAHOMA. The city of Tullahoma is seeking applicants for a senior planner in the Community Development Department. Tullahoma has a population of 20,000 and is a progressive community located in southern Middle Tennessee close to Nashville, Chattanooga, and Huntsville, Ala. The city has numerous parks and greenways, nearby lake access and a top rated school system making it an ideal place to live. The senior planner is responsible for all aspects of municipal planning including zoning, cur-rent and long-range planning, site planning and special projects. The senior planner provides information and technical services to various boards and committees. This position requires someone who is professional, has strong analytical and problem-solving skills and is able to build effective working relationships. Bachelor's degree from an accredited undergraduate program in planning, or other related field is required. Five (5) years of related planning experience in state or local government and AICP certification preferred. Salary range is \$55,000 - \$62,000, DOQ. Tullahoma offers an excellent benefits package and participates in TCRS. Please send resume with cover letter to: City of Tullahoma, Attn: Human Resources, P.O. Box 807, Tullahoma, TN 37388 or send e-mail to: cbrice@tullahomatn. gov. Open until filled. Drug Free Workplace/EOE

#### **UTILITY ENGINEER**

LAVERGNE. The city of La Vergne is seeking applications for a utility engineer. The utility engineer is responsible for providing technical assistance and work products for the city's utilities (water, stormwater, and wastewater) in addition to providing support to public works for roadway, traffic, and structures. Typical job duties may include project management and engineering, administrative tasks, correspondence, citizen customer service, minor design, and technical writing.Graduation from an ABET accredited college with a degree in civil engineering or a closely related field is required; minimum of five years related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience is required; P.E. Certification is required. Salary range is \$69,841 - \$80,929. Job posted until filled. For more details and to Apply visit the city of La Vergne's website www.lavergnetn.gov

#### **CITY MANAGER**

OAK HILL. The city of Oak Hill (Pop 4700) is seeking a city management professional to be their next city manager. Oak Hill is located just a few miles south of downtown Nashville. The city manager is appointed and reports to a five member board comprised of commissioners popularly elected at-large to staggered, four-year terms of office. The city has a \$2.1M budget with 5 employees and several contracted services. Serving this satellite city is a unique and rewarding opportunity to be part of the greater Nashville community. Candidates should possess a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or a field closely related to municipal management, with a master's degree in a related field preferred: and a minimum of 10 years of

#### **FIRE CHIEF**

NOLENSVILLE. The town of Nolensville is seeking a qualified and innovative individual for an exciting opportunity to become the town's first fire chief. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in, and knowledge of, fire administration services and programs, be resourceful, and have a professional interest in influencing strategies for a rapidly growing community that is establishing a fire department. The chief will supervise, regulate, and manage the department and maintain control of all personnel and activities including fire safety education, fire protection, fire extinguishment, emergency medical service, and administration. Minimum qualifications include: 10 years previous experience in firefighting operations; and five years previous experience in firefighting operations as a paid battalion chief officer or higher

#### LONG RANGE/SPECIAL **PROJECTS PLANNER**

CLARKSVILLE. The Clarksville-Montgomery County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) has an opening for a Long Range/Special Projects Planner. Located just 40 miles northwest of Nashville, Clarksville's affordability is hard to beat. Clarksville was named Best Place to Live by Money Magazine in 2019, one of the Top 10 Cities Where Millennials are Moving, and the best place to live on \$50,000 in Tennessee. This position requires a working knowledge of land use planning and how policy, the economy, and laws affect the built environment. The LR Planner must be a proficient reader, writer, and researcher. Must be knowledgeable in conducting surveys

#### TML Board of Directors to meet Oct. 28

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Municipal League will meet in regular public session on Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020, at 12 noon (CST), in the conference room of the Tennessee Municipal League, 226 Anne Dallas Dudley Blvd. Nashville, TN., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before the TML Board. Some members of the TML Board of Directors may participate in such meeting by electronic means via Zoom, which will be available to any member of the public attending such meeting. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Monday, Oct. 26, in the offices of the Tennessee Municipal League, 226 Anne Dallas Dudley Blvd., Suite 710, Nashville, TN. Additional information concerning the above may be obtained from Jackie Gupton, 615-255-1561.

#### Bond Fund Board to meet Oct. 28

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund will meet in regular public session on, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020, at 8:30 a.m., local time, in the offices of the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund, Suite 502, 226 Anne Dallas Dudley Blvd. Nashville, TN., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said Board. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Monday Oct. 22, 2020, in the offices of the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund, 226 Anne Dallas Dudley Blvd., Suite 502, Nashville, TN. Additional information concerning the above may be obtained from Jackie Gupton, 615-255-1561.

#### Management Consultant - Municipal Technical Advisory Service - 19000001YI Regular Full-time, Pay Grade 43, Nashville, TN

The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) seeks applications for a Municipal Management Consultant in its Nashville office. MTAS is an agency of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service and provides consulting, technical assistance, training, and research services to Tennessee cities

#### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

The position provides professional advice and assistance in the area of municipal management primarily to an assigned set of cities in Tennessee, regardless of size, on a broad range of issues and problems. In addition to providing direct client assistance, the Management Consultant researches, develops and maintains timely reports on critical issues; teaches municipal training courses within the context of a well-defined training curriculum; and assists other consultants in the agency in the performance of individual and team projects. This position performs other special project work as assigned.

#### **Required Qualifications:**

Education: The position requires a Master's degree in public administration or in a related field.

#### Experience:

This position requires at least five years employment in local government, including three years as a city manager or six years as an assistant city manager. Preference is given to experience as a city manager or assistant city manager in a city with a minimum 10,000 in population. Extra consideration will be given for additional experience in city management or Tennessee specific experience.

The position requires knowledge and understanding of the problems faced by city officials. It requires independent planning and processing of projects, questions, training, etc. The work is performed in both the field and the office and as such, requires constant scheduling and updating of work activities.

This position requires extensive travel

Each employee that drives a vehicle for work-related business must have and maintain a valid driver's license and appropriate automobile insurance.

Applicants are encouraged to review all position requirements prior to applying. Salary is based on a combination of professional experience and qualifications.

For best consideration, applications should be submitted by October 30, 2020. Applicants should apply electronically at https://hr.utk.edu/staff-positions/

All applicants must submit a resume, cover letter, and a minimum of three professional references. Position is open until filled.

For more information and to apply, please visit: https://ut.taleo.net/careersection/ut\_system/jobdetail.ftl?job=19000001Yl&tz=GMT-04%3A00&tzname=America%2FNew\_York

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.



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## What happens to cities when the arts go dark?

**ARTS** from Page 1 tion of Art Museum Directors has lifted its normal taboo on members selling works to pay for operating expenses.

Theater and concert sales took less of a nosedive than employment in large part because many patrons were willing to donate the value of their tickets to canceled performances. Some are still buying subscriptions for seasons that may or may not ever happen. However, people won't keep buying tickets to non-existent shows forever.

"If theaters can't come back on a fully functional basis, then that's actually going to hurt businesses quite a bit," said Deb Clapp, executive director of the League of Chicago Theatres. "That's all over Chicago. It's not just about downtown."

Presenting organizations around the country are hosting countless online events. That may entertain audiences and donors, but they aren't doing anything to bring people out of their homes to spend money. In normal times, the average patron spends more than \$30 on top of any admission price when attending a cultural event, according to Americans for the Arts, an advocacy and research group.

In St. Louis, a group called Grand Center Inc. was started 40 years ago to help revitalize the city's long-neglected midtown. The 60 arts organizations located on or around Grand Boulevard normally bring in 2 million people a year, not only helping restaurants draw customers, but prompting renewed investment in hotels and apartments.

Over the past six months, however, the number of visitors has dwindled down to almost nothing.

"We employ thousands of people in this district who pay a 1% earnings tax," said Rich Simmons, Grand Center's executive director. "For those jobs that have been downsized, perhaps permanently, those are taxes that are not going to go to the city."

#### **Only the Big Survive**

The Brookings study found, unsurprisingly, that job losses in the arts have been most severe in New York and Los Angeles. The Metropolitan Opera — the nation's largest performing arts company announced that it was canceling its entire season and won't reopen until September 2021 at the earliest.

But the pain has been felt all over. "There are more than 100,000 small nonprofit arts organizations around the country," said Michael Seman, a professor of arts management at Colorado State University and coauthor of the Brookings study.

For the past 123 years, the last week of July has meant Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyo., a "celebration of western roots" (think: rodeo). Over seven days, the event typically draws 250,000 people, who fill hotels, shops and restaurants to capacity. This year, it was canceled due to COVID-19.

"It really is the heartstring of our community," said Cheyenne Mayor Marian Orr. "It was truly heartbreaking and it was very surreal to have it canceled. This event has survived world wars, it's survived depressions and recessions and it wasn't until this pandemic that brought us down and broke the horse."

The cancellation represented a huge economic hit for the city, but Orr notes that planning is already well underway for next year's Frontier Days, the 125th anniversary edition. People in the arts world predict that a lot of big events, as well as large organizations such as symphonies and major theater companies, should be able to survive past the pandemic, thanks to deep-pocketed donors. Tiny nonprofits that have always operated on a shoestring may pull through as well. They're used to not having any money.

But many middle-sized groups the ones that normally employ about five to 10 people and have overhead to meet - may not make it. "If this continues, I do see the possibility of some of the organizations not being around," said Simmons, of Grand Center in St. Louis.

After plummeting in the spring, crowdsourced funding for arts projects has recovered "robustly" and is now higher than it was a year ago at this time, according to Doug Noonan, research director at a cultural affairs center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. But the character of giving has changed, he said.

"The crowd money is funding larger arts projects rather than smaller ones," he said.

#### Will Audiences Come Back?

For people wary of the virus, entering an enclosed space and spending hours among hundreds of other people may well be one of the last things they'll feel comfortable doing. And the arts, for all their value, are inherently an optional activity.

"There is a hit economically for communities that have been relying on all this spending coming in for their arts events," Seman said. "That's not going to change in a meaningful way until sometime in 2021, if all goes well with a vaccine."

Noonan counters that, while there's a lot of talk about "catastrophe" in the arts sector, he believes arts districts will rise from the ashes, in time.

"There's a lot of pent-up demand for live performances," he said. "People really do crave rubbing shoulders and shared experiences."

Clapp, of the Chicago theater league, is also optimistic about the long-term yearning for theater among those who miss it. Patrons will be ready and willing to attend when they can, she predicts, given precautions such as wearing masks. Already, presentations such as patio concerts or small-scale theater productions presented in parks are filled to capacity, though that's usually limited.

Still, Clapp doesn't downplay the current challenge. Many of her members have laid off 80% of their staffs. "Thousands of people in Chicago are out of work," she said. Out of 230 theater companies that belonged to the league when the year began, five have closed for good. Clapp notes that the number is smaller than she would have predicted back in March, if she'd known that everything would go dark for at least six months.

They'll have to wait more than six months, though. In Chicago, theaters aren't expected to open until the spring, at the earliest. That means a full year of closures. Not many businesses of any kind can last that long without any real revenue coming in.



Sales of new homes rose in

The U.S. economy plunged at

study reported that teens spent an average of \$2,150 this year, a 9% decrease over last year and down from the peak spending of \$3,023 reported in the spring of 2006. The study found that teens spent less on food, concerts, events, and other items amid the coronavirus, a decrease that could reflect less money being available to families in general. Teens expressed a growing concern about the state of the economy with 48% of teens said they believe the economy is getting worse, compared with 32% a year ago. The study found that teens are turning more to second-hand shopping as well as purchasing from online retailers like Amazon over shopping in-person. The study found that girls spend more on apparel while boys spent more on shoes.

Performing arts venues are hoping that the feds will fund more aid to small businesses, but Congress has kept its pandemic checkbook shut for months now. As more presenting organizations close, artists and employees are having to look elsewhere for sustenance.

"We were a big industry in Chicago," Clapp said. "It took 50 years to build the industry to where it was. It's going to take a very long time to build it back."



#### Oct. 17: Wartrace Old Time Harvest Fest

Come enjoy classic fall festivities like a pancake breakfast, crafts vendors, artisans, food trucks, musical performances, and demonstractions from blacksmiths, potters, crafters, and more. For more info, visit wartracechamber.org

#### Oct. 25: Dickson

#### The Dickson Hunt

The Frank Clement Railroad Hotel Museum kicks off its new citywide scavenger hunt. This hour-long game allows visitors to explore the history and heritage of downtown Dickson. The event will run Tuesday and Saturdays for the foreseeable future. For more info, visit <u>clementrailroadmuseum.org.</u>

#### Nov. 7: Townsend

Grits and Grain Festival

The Townsend Visitor Center hosts the annual Grits and Grain Festival, celebrating the legendary distillers of the Smokies. Whiskey-tasting events, regional craft spirits, food, and music highlight this event. For more information, visit gritsandgrainfest.com

#### Nov. 15-24: Greeneville

Sixth Annual Greeneville Tourism Festival of Trees

The Greeneville Tourism Festival of Trees is a 10-day event and silent auction that features more than 50 decorated trees, wreaths, garlands, and centerpieces donated by local organizations. The kick-off event includes refreshments, live music, and photos with Santa. For more information, visit www.greenevilletn.com/events/sixth-annu-

al-tourism-festival-of-trees

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August despite economic concerns and the ongoing pandemic. The U.S. Commerce Department reported new home sales rose 4.8% in August to a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 1.01 million units. August marks the first time this rate has gone above 1 million since 2006. This is after new home sales increased by 13.9% in July but saw steep declines in March and April. Record-low mortgage rates as well as increased demand from before the pandemic appear to be fueling the increase in sales. The median price of a new home was \$312,800, according to the Commerce Department.

a record rate of 31.4% in the second-quarter, but economists are hopeful for a recovery in the fourth quarter. The second-quarter decline was almost four times larger than the previous record-holding fall of 10% in the first quarter of 1958. Third-quarter statistics are not expected to be released until days before the presidential election in November. Economists are predicting a slowed if any growth for the third quarter and are hopeful the economy will expand at an annual rate of 30% in the fourth quarter.

Teen spending has hit a two-decade low according to a biannual report that has measured teen spending for 40 years. The Piper Jaffray "Taking Stock of Teens"



November 18-21, 2020 NLC City Virtual Summit https://citysummit.nlc.org/

March 15-16, 2021 TML Legislative Conference Nashville

July 31 - Aug 3, 2021 TML Annual Conference Chattanooga



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## U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander reflects on service to Tennessee

**By KATE COIL** TML Communications Specialist

For more than 45 years, U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander has been one of the most well-known figures of state and national politics in Tennessee. When Alexander retires from the senate at the end of the year he will have severed nearly 26 years combined as both a governor and senator – more than any other Tennessean.

Born Andrew Lamar Alexander in Maryville, Alexander is a seventh generation East Tennessean and graduated from Maryville High School in 1958. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University in 1962 and a law degree from New York University in 1965.

He then served two years as a law clerk for Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge John Minor Wisdom before moving to Washington, D.C. There he would serve as a legislative assistant to famed Tennessee Sen. Howard Baker Jr. and as a staff assistant under President Richard Nixon. He would also meet and marry Leslee "Honey" Buhler.

Returning to Tennessee in 1970, Alexander served as manager of Gov. Winfield Dunn's election campaign and then ran for the seat himself the first time in 1974. When he ran again in 1978, he was elected to the seat and served as Tennessee's 45th governor until 1987.

Alexander then served president of the University of Tennessee and then as the fifth U.S. Education Secretary under the administration of President George H.W. Bush.

In 2002, he was sworn in for his first term as U.S. Senator representing Tennessee, a role he has held since.

An avid outdoorsman and longtime advocate of groups like the Boy Scouts of America and Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Alexander is also a classical and country pianist. He and his wife Honey have four children and nine grandchildren. He still lives outside of his hometown of Maryville.

#### TT&C: What first interested you in politics? What made you first decide to run for political office?

U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander: When I was ten, my father took me to the courthouse in Maryville to meet our congressman who was U.S. Rep. Howard Baker Sr. My father served on the school board in Maryville, and I was taught by both my parents to respect people in public life and look up to them. I think that interested me. When I went to Boys State in 1957, I was elected governor of Boys State by a landslide margin of three votes. Gov. Frank Clement made a speech at my inauguration as Boys State governor. He said 'Someday, one of you boys will grow up to be the real governor of Tennessee,' and I guess I thought he meant me.



U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, **R-**Tennessee

big plants themselves. They said they did it by computer. I asked what the computer looked for and they said it looked for the intersection of the best four-lane highways. I asked the legislature to improve our four-lane highway system in order to attract the auto industry suppliers. By the time we passed all three of those in 1991, the National Truckers' Association said we had one of the best four-lane highway systems in the country.

I believe one of the reasons Gov. Bill Haslam was able say we've become the nation's No. 1 auto state is because we built such good roads. First, we attracted Nissan, the biggest and most efficient auto plant in North America, and then Saturn, now General Motors. Then Gov. Bredesen brought in the Volkswagen plant. What really brought the jobs in was the roads. We now have thousands of suppliers in almost every county. Nothing has done more to raise family incomes and create stronger communities and towns than the auto industry.

What I'd really like to underscore about that road program is that we paid for it. We started the tradition 40 years ago of zero debt. Unlike many states that have billions of dollars of debt, our legislatures have paid for these roads. As a result the money goes for roads not interest on the debt.

I remember in 1986 when I was trying to pass the Better Roads Program I went with [then State Rep.] Lincoln Davis up to Overton County because he was afraid they would vote him out of office if he voted for the gas tax. After they heard about how much they would be getting from the gas tax and that it would keep property taxes down, one of the county commissioners stood up and said 'Lincoln if you don't vote for this we'll defeat you.' Lincoln likes to tell that story and so do I.



From left to right, then Gov. Lamar Alexander, former President GeraInd Ford, and then Senate Minority Leader Howard Baker outside the Tennessee governor's mansion in 1979



Alexander wearing his trademark plaid during a campaign stop. The plaid shirt became an icon of Alexander's campaigns during his second campaign for governor.



Refuge in West Tennessee.

What I tried to do whenever I could as governor was to make Tennessee No. 1 in things. In 1980, I flew out to Palo Alto, Calif., to see Steve Jobs at Apple. We became the first state to put Mac computers in all the middle schools so students could become computer literate.

We had Tennessee Homecoming '86 that celebrated the 3,000 places we call home. The point of that was for everyone in every place to find something about that place to celebrate and invite everyone from that place to come back.

I think that attitude was carried on by Govs. McWherter, Sundquist, Bredesen, and Haslam, and has set our sights higher. When our goals became more ambitious community by community, our state saw a lot accomplished.

#### TT&C: What advice do you have to your successor in the senate?

LA: What I'd like for them to know is that it's hard to get here and it's hard to stay here, so while you're here you might accomplish something good for the country. I get up every day hoping I do something good for the country, and I usually go to bed at night thinking I have. For those who look at Washington and see all the partisan bickering back and forth, I would suggest you look at Washington as a split screen television. That bickering is on one screen. On the other screen we are fixing No Child Left Behind, passing the Great Outdoors Act, building Chickamauga Lock, dealing with the backlog in the Smokies, and finishing the uranium processing facility at Oak Ridge. There is a lot going on to make us a better country. It's a very satisfying experience for me. I feel very fortunate that Tennesseans have given me these opportunities to serve them. I won't say I've enjoyed every minute, but I've loved every day. I wouldn't swap it for anything.

#### TT&C: Who have been your biggest influences in life and why?

LA: Well my parents to start with. My mom taught nursery school and kindergarten in a converted garage in our backyard for 30 years. She had 25 three- and four-year-olds in the morning and 25 five-year-olds in the afternoon at Alexander's Nursery School and Kindergarten, and she had nowhere else to put me. I got a good head start in education, and she expected all of those children to amount to something, including her own. My dad was principal of Westside Elementary School when I was born and later on the school board for 25 years.

Besides my parents, there were three men I worked for early on in my career. One was Federal Judge John Minor Wisdom in New Orleans who was the judge who ordered Ole Miss to admit James Meredith in the desegregation case. There was also Bryce Harlow, who was President Nixon's counsel in 1970 in the White House and was President Eisenhower's favorite staff member. Of course, there was Sen. Howard Baker Jr. who I volunteered to work for on his 1966 campaign. I came to Washington as his legislative assistant. Those three men gave me my graduate degree in politics and government, and I was a lucky student. There couldn't have been three better influences in anyone's life.

#### TT&C: As governor, you launched the Better Roads Program that has become the model for how Tennessee funds transportation projects. Did you expect the project to have as big of an impact at the time?

LA: When I was recruiting Saturn - which has now become the largest General Motors plant in the world – I asked the officials how they located their suppliers. I knew the suppliers would be more important than the

#### TT&C: You have been involved in numerous education initiatives. Which of these do you feel have had the most impact?

LA: I was fortunate enough to be taught by my parents, a teacher and a principal, to value education and I got a good education. I saw the opportunities it gave me, and I was sure it would give those opportunities to others. When I became governor in 1979, Tennessee was the third poorest state. I kept trying to find ways to raise family incomes. I finally figured out that better schools and better colleges meant better jobs. Until we improved our education system and more Tennesseans were better educated, we wouldn't be able to raise family income.

The things I've worked on I think made the biggest difference were the Better Schools program in 1983-84, which made Tennessee the first state to pay teachers more for teaching well, created the governor's schools in the summer for outstanding high school students, and chairs of excellence at the universities.

In Washington, I think two of the biggest things I've done is fixing No Child Left Behind to get rid of the Common Core mandate. Having a Common Core is fine if Tennessee adopts it, but Washington was getting too busy telling local schools and teachers what to do. The other thing I'm doing that I hope to finish by the end of the year is simplify the FAFSA. You have to fill out the FAFSA in order to be eligible for the two-years of free tuition that Gov. Haslam and the legislature provided. It is so complicated that Gov. Haslam told me that the FAFSA is the biggest obstacle to those seeking those two-years.

#### TT&C: You have served in a variety of capacities on both the state and federal level. How were these roles similar and in what ways were they different?

LA: Being in one helps with the other. When I'm working to simplify the FAFSA, it helped to have been president of the University of Tennessee and understand what a burden it is for families going to college. When the issue of tariffs comes up in the senate,

Alexander said hiking the trails in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of his favorite pasttimes. Alexander was instrumental in passing the Great Outdoors Act, which will help address the backlog of projects at the park.

it helps to have been a governor who brought in the auto industry because I know that tariffs on aluminum and steel make it more expensive to make cars in Tennessee and costs us jobs.

The difference of being governor is being like Moses pointing a rod and saying 'let's go this way' and trying to persuade half the people you have the right strategy. Being a senator, operating with 100 individuals who operate by unanimous consent a lot of the time, is like being a parade organizer. Your role is more like picking the music, organizing the route, picking the drum majors, and then marching in the middle of the parade to make sure no one heads off in the wrong direction.

#### TT&C: You have long been an advocate for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Why is it important to preserve this landmark?

LA: The park is important because I love it like most Tennesseans. I always love to hike there. We Tennesseans gave the park to the U.S. Unlike most of the western parks that were carved out of federal land, the Smokies were purchased with money from school children, families, and the legislatures of North Carolina and Tennessee and then given to the country. I feel that ownership, and I grew up hiking in it every weekend. It's that love of outdoors that makes it important to me. Of course, economically its tremendously important to East Tennessee because it has more visitors than any park in the country and brings in tourism. It makes Tennessee a better place to live.

#### TT&C: While serving on the Senate **Energy and Water Development** Appropriations Subcommittee, you have worked to promote the nation's inland waterways and harbors. How do you see Tennessee's use of these waterways and harbors evolving in the future?

LA: They are very important. For the

eighth straight year we've funded the reconstruction of Chickamauga Lock. Inland waterways and harbors were underfunded and not well supported eight or ten vears ago. A group of us said 'what will it take for us to have a great system of inland waterways and harbors.' We've been able to raise funds, to raise taxes on the big barges that use them, and all that came through the appropriations subcommittee I chair.

#### TT&C: What do you hope for the future of the U.S. Department of Energy and what role would you like to see Tennessee play in scientific and energy development moving forward?

LA: The biggest role Tennessee plays is at Oak Ridge. Through my little subcommittee I've chaired for six years and served as ranking member on for eight, \$4 billion a year goes to Oak Ridge, \$2 billion of it to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the rest to the uranium facility and cleanup of nuclear waste.

The University of Tennessee just created a new Oak Ridge Institute to train scientists and engineers who can pass a national security test so we have a steady flow of talented people. The best thing the U.S. Department of Energy can do for our country and Tennessee is to continue to fund national laboratories like Oak Ridge. No other country has anything like it. It's our secret weapon.

We've made sure over the last ten years to fund supercomputing at Oak Ridge so we're still first in the world.

#### TT&C: What are some other projects you have been involved with you are the most proud of?

LA: We just passed the Great American Outdoors Act, which is the biggest outdoor recreation and conservation legislation in more than 50 years. It will deal with the maintenance backlog in the Smokies, Cherokee National Forest, and Tennessee Wildlife

#### TT&C: During your campaigns, you became known for your trademark plaid shirt. How did this come about? Do you have any plans for what might happen to this shirt once you retire?

LA: The Smithsonian already has one, and we've borrowed it for my office. I'm giving it back when I go back to Tennessee in January. I've still got some left, and they still fit. My COVID mask is also made out of red and black plaid like my shirt.

It came about when I ran for governor and lost. My wife Honey thought I wasn't a very appealing candidate. She said I needed to do what I enjoyed doing, and what I enjoyed was being outdoors and music. So, I walked across the state for six months and spent the night with 73 families. I needed to wear something for that, so I went down to the Friedman Army Surplus Store in Nashville and bought a dozen red and black plaid shirts. I wore a different one every day, and as I walked across the state, I started selling them. When the price started going up, I thought I may be winning. That experience really helped me keep my feet on the ground and taught me a lot about the state.

#### TT&C: What plans do you have for your retirement?

LA: I'm going home. We still live outside Maryville where I grew up. I don't have any specific plans, but I've always found something interesting to do. I think retirement is like reading a good book. You finish one good chapter, and you turn the page expecting the next chapter to be good as well.