



Make plans to attend TML Annual Conference in Knoxville, June 9-12

Pre-conference happenings on Saturday!



A mobile workshop to tour the Knoxville Public Works and Fleet Services Complex is scheduled from 1-3 p.m. on Saturday, June 9.

Several workshops and special events are being planned for Saturday, June 9, so make plans to come early to the TML 79th Annual Conference in Knoxville, June 9-12.

Beginning Saturday morning, UT-MTAS will offer courses as part of the Elected Officials Academy, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. After lunch, two CMFO workshops will be offered for those interested in obtaining continuing education units. Additional CMFO workshops will also be presented throughout the conference.

Also on Saturday, is a mobile workshop to tour the Knoxville Public Works and Fleet Services Complex, from 1 to 3 p.m.

The complex includes a 45,500 square foot office building designed to consolidate three departments and an employee health and wellness facility into a single, modern facility while showcasing the city's commitment to sustainable design. The building is designed to maximize the energy efficiency of the building, provide natural light and utilize a geothermal heating and cooling system.

The project also includes renovation of the existing Fleet Services heavy equipment building and the addition of a new fire engine/ladder fleet maintenance building, welding building, small engine shop and a renovated fleet administration and employee break room facility.

If you are interested in participating in this workshop, space is limited. You can sign up by marking it on your conference registration form or by contacting Sylvia Harris at sharris@tml1.org. Transportation will be provided.

Later that afternoon, the East

Tennessee Historical Center in Krutch Park, located on the corner of Market Street and Clinch Avenue, is hosting a special unveiling of a Women's Suffrage Memorial to honor Febb Burn and her son, Rep. Harry Burn, of Niota.

Harry Burn was a freshman representative in the Tennessee legislature in 1920 when he cast the deciding vote to approve the 19th Amendment. The amendment gave women the right to vote; Tennessee was the 36th and last state needed to make it law. But without his mother's urging, Burn might not have voted yes!

The statue will be revealed at 5:15 p.m. June 9 in Krutch Park, following a 4 p.m. historic re-enactment of a suffrage parade and a 4:30 p.m. program on Market Square. To learn more about the event, go to suffragecoalition.org.

The unveiling of the Burn Memorial is particularly timely as one of the conference's keynote speakers is author Elaine Weiss, who just released a book entitled, *The Woman's Hour, The Great Fight to Win the Vote*. She tells the story of a nail-biting climax of one of the greatest political battles in American history — the fight to ratify the 19th amendment. She will be featured at the conference from 10 to 11 a.m. on Monday, June 11.

To culminate the day, a welcome reception is planned for Saturday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. in the exhibit hall of the Knoxville Convention Center.

You can register for the TML Annual Conference online at www.tml1.org. For assistance, contact Sylvia Harris at (615) 425-3903 or by email at sharris@tml1.org.

See Page 6 for a At-A-Glance Conference Schedule.

Civil asset forfeiture reform bill approved by Tennessee Legislature

BY REX BARTON
MTAS Police Management Consultant

With no dissenting votes, both chambers of the legislature approved a significant change to the civil asset forfeiture laws. The bill, SB1987/HB2021, is currently awaiting the governor's signature.

Changing civil asset forfeiture laws has been a controversial issue in the legislature for the past several years. Some legislators have tried to completely eliminate civil asset forfeiture, while law enforcement officials see the process as a way to recover the ill-gotten gains of criminals.

Those seeking to eliminate or reel in the existing process have lamented over the innocent owner losing a vehicle used by a child to commit a crime, or funds being seized with no direct nexus to drug crimes, other than carrying the scent of drugs. The prolonged wait for an administrative hearing often resulted in the owner being without a vehicle for months, sometimes having to buy a new car to drive to work and not being able to keep up the payments on the seized vehicle.

SB1987/HB2021 provides an opportunity for the owner of any seized property, usually a vehicle, who was not present at the time of the seizure to contest the seizure during a forfeiture warrant hearing before an administrative law judge.

Under the current law, if an



SB1987/HB2021 provides an opportunity for the owner of any seized property, usually a vehicle, who was not present at the time of the seizure to contest the seizure during a forfeiture warrant hearing before an administrative law judge.

arrest is made, the owner has no right to be present at the forfeiture warrant hearing.

Assuming SB1987/HB2021 becomes law, the seizing officer will be required, within five business days of the date of seizure, to mail to the owner, by "return receipt requested" mail, at the owners last known address, a notice entitled "Notice of Forfeiture Warrant Hearing." The legislation requires the owner to be given reasonable notice of the forfeiture warrant hearing, but also provides that the hearing must take place within 45

days of the seizure.

The legislation also provides that if an alleged controlled substance is the basis for a seizure, and a crime lab analysis shows the substance was not actually a controlled substance, the seizing agency is required to send a copy of the lab report to the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (hereinafter "Department") within five business days of receiving the report. If the alleged control substance was the sole basis for the seizure, the department must See *ASSETS* on Page 5

Legislation allowing Sunday wine, liquor sales approved by TN General Assembly

The Tennessee General Assembly approved legislation permitting retail food stores to sell wine and retail package stores to sell alcoholic beverages seven days a week.

Bill sponsors, SB 2518 by Sen. Bill Ketron, R-Murfreesboro, and HB 1540 by Rep. Gerald McCormick, R-Chattanooga, say the legislation helps put retailers on par with restaurants, hotels, convention centers, tourist resorts, and other businesses in Tennessee which are already allowed to sell wine and spirits any day of the week under state law.

The measure allows retail businesses to open from 8 a.m. - 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 10 a.m. - 11 p.m. on Sunday, including some holidays. However, the new legislation still prohibits sales on Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving.



Retail package stores would be allowed to choose whether or not to be open seven days a week upon the bill becoming law. The bill will become effective for liquor sales upon the governor's signature. Grocery stores will not be allowed to begin Sunday wine sales until 2019.

"This legislation is about supporting small retail businesses across Tennessee and allowing them to make the best decisions they can to succeed while creating a higher level of convenience and

customer service for consumers," said Sen. Ketron. "The current law puts our local retailers at a competitive disadvantage."

Presently, retailers can sell beer seven days a week in Tennessee, while the sale of wine and distilled spirits is limited to Monday through Saturday and is not allowed on certain holidays.

Forty states allow for seven-day sales by retailers, including five which border Tennessee.

The bill now goes to Gov. Bill Haslam for his signature

NLC studies says state preemption of local authority continues to rise

The National League of Cities (NLC), in partnership with state municipal leagues, released an update to its report, *City Rights in an Era of Preemption*, that reveals state preemption of local authority is increasing throughout the country. From minimum wage to municipal broadband, the report illuminates the worsening trend of infringements on local democracy.

"People who live in cities and towns want control over their own destinies," said National League of Cities (NLC) CEO and Executive Director Clarence E. Anthony. "When states take away the ability of local leaders to make decisions, the values and will of the people are ignored."

More than half of all states now ban local efforts to combat inequality through minimum wage policy, while 23 states have denied local governments the power to enact paid sick leave policies. States have shut down local LGBTQ anti-discrimination ordinances, undermined efforts to advance environmental protection, and stifled innovation by preventing cities from having a say on high-speed broadband.

NLC's research analyzes state preemption bills and judicial activity in the areas of minimum wage,

paid leave, anti-discrimination, ride hailing, home sharing, municipal broadband, and tax and expenditure limitations. Compared to last year, 19 new laws were passed that will prevent cities from helping their communities across these 7 policy areas.

Additional states preempted local governments in the following ways:

- 12 percent increase in minimum wage preemption laws (three additional states for a total of 28)
- 21 percent increase in paid leave preemption laws (four additional states for a total of 23)
- 11 percent increase in ride sharing preemption laws (four additional states for a total of 41)
- 67 percent increase in home sharing preemption laws (two additional states for a total of five)
- 18 percent increase in municipal broadband preemption laws (three additional states for a total of 20)

Increased preemption has been linked to lobbying efforts by special interests, the spatial sorting of political preferences between urban and rural areas, and single-party dom-

inance in most state governments. As preemption proliferates, local leaders are prevented from keeping people safe, expanding rights, building stronger economies, and promoting innovation.

"When state laws nullify municipal ordinances or authority, the loss of local control can have far-reaching economic and social impacts in communities," said Brooks Rainwater, senior executive and director, NLC's Center for City Solutions. "Local control and city rights are priority number one. We know well that innovation happens in cities and then percolates upwards — this process should be celebrated not stymied."

Divorcing decision-making from the wants and needs of community members in this way creates an environment that counters the values of local democracy. To ensure that the core values of community members are heard and reflected in the policies and priorities of government, NLC launched the Local Democracy Initiative, of which this report is a key component. NLC is also working to equip city leaders with tools and strategies to prevent and reverse preemption through peer learning, evidence-based research and policy development.

Supreme Court hears online sales tax case

Ruling could have big long-term fiscal ramifications

BY BILL LUCIA
Route Fifty

Public officials and finance experts don't expect a dramatic, near-term surge in state and local revenues, even if the U.S. Supreme Court clears the way for greater online sales tax collections. But a case before the high court involving the tax could have big fiscal ramifications down the line.

The court heard arguments last week in *South Dakota v. Wayfair, inc.*, which offers a chance to reaffirm or scrap a legal standard that blocks states from collecting sales tax from internet retailers that don't have an in-state "physical presence," like offices or employees.

"The incremental revenue that would actually be gained immediately by Wayfair is probably relatively small," said David Hitchcock, a senior director at S&P Global Ratings. "It's not significant

in the short-run," he explained. "But it could be significant in the long-run."

The court last upheld the physical presence standard in a 1992 ruling in *Quill Corp. v. North Dakota*, a case involving catalog sales. Across the U.S., 45 states impose statewide sales taxes, according to the Tax Foundation. Local sales taxes are collected in 38 states.

One reason gains from eliminating the physical presence rule could be limited in the near-term is that e-commerce is only a fraction of the nation's overall retail sales — about 9 percent last year. Another is that states have found workarounds to the rule and are collecting taxes on many sales made by some of the nation's largest online vendors, including Amazon.

But there is tax revenue being left on the table. And online retail is expanding swiftly.

See *ONLINE SALES* on Page 7

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



ALGOOD

The city of Algood will purchase the antebellum White Plains plantation for \$250,000 for use as a venue to teach living history demonstrations. Established in 1809 by Revolutionary War veteran William Quarles who moved from Virginia to Tennessee, the plantation began as a two-story log cabin and grew into a brick plantation house in 1848. The property also contained a general store, blacksmith shop, post office, and inn along the Kentucky Stock Road as well as several slave cabins and a two-story school house for local children. The property was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009. The city hopes to locate a quilt museum and the Upper Cumberland Quilt Festival to the site as well have exhibits on Civil War history and early life in the Upper Cumberland.

BRENTWOOD

The city of Brentwood is discussing a \$20 million project to design and construct a new police department headquarters on city-owned property at 940 Heritage Way. The construction project would be the largest in the city's history and would be financed over the next six years. The city's police headquarters have been based out of the city's municipal center since 1987, but police officials said the new headquarters would provide them with a better location and additional security, especially as the new headquarters would be more centrally located.

BRISTOL

In conjunction with Bristol, Va., the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Startup Tri-Cities, the city of Bristol is working to bring a business startup community similar to that of Austin, Texas, to the area. A Small Business Festival will be held from May 3-5 across the region as part of National Entrepreneurship Week and will feature supporting organizations that bring innovation and growth to the area as well as highlight resources and opportunities for those groups. Additionally, the event will promote and highlight the successes of local entrepreneurs. Learn more at <http://startupTri.com>.

CLARKSVILLE

ATLASBX Co., LTD, will locate its first U.S. manufacturing facility in Clarksville, investing \$75 million and creating approximately 200 jobs. ATLASBX is a manufacturer of storage batteries and produces batteries for traditional passenger cars, light trucks, electric vehicles, commercial vehicles, boats and recreational vehicles. ATLASBX plans to build a new manufacturing facility that will be completed by 2020. The company will produce approximately 2.4 million batteries per year at the Clarksville facility, with a dedicated Absorbent Glass Mat (AGM) line, a high-performance battery for start-stop vehicles. ATLASBX is a sister company of Hankook Tire, which officially opened its tire manufacturing plant in Clarksville in October 2017. ATLASBX also maintains a headquarters office in Nashville that was established in 2017.

COLLIERVILLE

The Collierville Police Department has been awarded its eight law enforcement accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). The CALEA assessment team commended the Collierville Police Department for

its professionalism and dedication to providing the highest quality of service to the community. CALEA recognition provides objective evidence of an agency's commitment to improve operations and service delivery. This voluntary process to achieve recognition status means that the Collierville Police Department is committed to providing enhanced service to the citizens of Collierville. The department received its award of "Advanced Meritorious Certification" at a banquet held at the national Conference in Frisco, Texas.

COLUMBIA

The city of Columbia is moving forward with plans for a new park to honor city firefighters past and present. The new fireman's park will be located outside Columbia Fire Station No. 1, and a dedication ceremony is planned for the week of Sept. 11. Construction of the park will be conducted in two phases. The park's centerpiece will be a 50-by-50-foot concrete slab, which will contain bricks with names honoring past firefighters and families of firefighters. The slab's four corners will include words honoring Columbia Fire Department's core values — trust, integrity, duty, and honor. In the center will be CFD's new patch logo, which will reflect the department's new Columbia Fire/Rescue name. A mural has already been erected at the site honoring the department's 150 years of service to the city.

KNOXVILLE

The city of Knoxville has cut the ribbon on a new 0.6-mile segment of the First Creek Greenway, which connects Fulton High School at Woodland Avenue to Edgewood Park. The new trail segment also links the 4th and 5th City Council districts across Broadway and with a scenic bridge stretching over First Creek. The connection translates to hundreds of homes gaining pedestrian access to the North Knoxville Library, the Larry Cox Senior Center, the Broadway Shopping Center, other retail and commercial businesses, and various access points for Knoxville Area Transit Route 22 Broadway. The \$1.4 million project was funded by two federal grants totaling \$950,000 through the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization. The city of Knoxville contributed \$406,000 toward the project.

KNOXVILLE

The Federal Transit Administration has awarded Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) a \$3.6 million grant to purchase electric buses and charging equipment. The grant will fund the purchase of the first fully electric buses in KAT's fleet, which are initially planned to run on Route 17 along Sutherland Avenue. The grant is part of \$264 million in FTA funding awarded to 139 projects across the United States, to "improve the safety and reliability of America's bus systems and enhance mobility for transit riders across the country." The grant provides an 80 percent match toward the purchase of buses and charging equipment, which will enable KAT to acquire up to five new buses and install the necessary infrastructure. City officials anticipate the new vehicles will be on the road by the end of 2019, adding to the 13 hybrid electric buses and trolleys already operating in Knoxville.

LENOIR CITY

Officials in Lenoir City are working toward the second phase of downtown streetscape renovations. A \$1.65 million project will renovate Grand to C streets — excepting Kingston and A streets — with financing largely coming from grant money. The first phase of the project covered Kingston to A streets and was completed in 2016. The city will be working with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration as well as business owners in the area to complete the project.

MANCHESTER

The Manchester Parks and Recreation Department has received a \$25,000 grant from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to support out-of-school

time healthy food access and nutritional literacy programs. The funds come from a \$1.5 million grant NRPA received from Walmart to provide healthy foods and education about healthy eating choices to people across the country. Through the grant, Manchester will be able to increase the number of healthy meals children receive through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) during out-of-school times. Specifically, Manchester will be using the funds to expand its community garden programs, providing healthy foods to children in the parks during the summers and after school, as well as start an afterschool program teaching children how to prepare healthy food.

MEMPHIS

The city of Memphis has sold several city-owned properties to the fundraising arm of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for \$5.1 million. The hospital acquired the former fire station at 211 Jackson Street, the city's vehicle service center at 671 St. Jude Place, and sign shop facilities at 425 and 435 North Manassas Street. Until last year, the city required bids be taken out on all sales to help the city receive reimbursement but recently added an exception for bids presented by nonprofit organizations. St. Jude will use the properties as part of a \$412 million research center currently under construction, which will be one of the largest downtown developments in Memphis history. The expansion is the anchor to the Bicentennial Gateway Project.

MORRISTOWN

Belgian-based bus manufacturer Van Hool will invest more than \$47 million and create nearly 640 jobs by establishing its first-ever U.S. manufacturing operation in Morristown. The family-owned manufacturer of buses, coaches, and industrial vehicles plans to construct an approximately 500,000-square-foot facility in Morristown's East Tennessee Progress Center, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. At the new plant, Van Hool will manufacture public transit and commuter vehicles for U.S. transit agencies. Construction of the facility will begin later this year. Van Hool anticipates the facility will be operational in the first quarter of 2020, producing 500 buses a year to start. Van Hool designs and manufactures approximately 3,000 commercial vehicles and 1,400 buses and coaches annually.

MUNFORD

Construction is now underway at the first-ever dog park in the city of Munford and Tipton County. Located inside the city's Valentine Park, the one-acre dog park will be enclosed by a four-foot metal fence. City leaders expect construction of the dog park to be completed by the end of April. The park will feature designated areas for big dogs and small dogs, running water, an obstacle course for pets, and bags for waste disposal. The park will be open from dawn until dusk seven days a week. The total cost of the project is expected to be around \$8,000.

NASHVILLE

The city of Nashville has launched a new interactive mapping tool to help the community engage in the city's bicycle and pedestrian master plan. Dubbed WalkNBike Status Tracker, the site serves as an online public-information portal for the current pipeline of sidewalk and bikeway projects programmed throughout Metro Nashville. Citizens can access detailed information on how Metro prioritizes investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, provide input on project selection, and check the current status of all projects. Project-development phases can include neighborhood meetings, surveys, design/engineering, right-of-way acquisition, stormwater review, utility relocation, mitigation of impacts to trees or historical assets, and construction. Users can now review city staff notes on the status of sidewalk and bikeway projects funded in Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018. More information can be found at the site mpw.nashville.gov/sidewalks/.

Farragut officials cut ribbon on Mayor Bob Leonard Park



Officials with the town of Farragut cut the ribbon on improvements to Mayor Bob Leonard Park. Improvements to the park included renovation and expansion of an existing restroom that added a baby changing facilities, a synthetic turf field conversion, and additional parking and landscaping. The improvements were financed through a \$500,000 grant from TDEC.

Johnson City opens King Commons park downtown



Johnson City residents and municipal officials gathered to cut the ribbon on King Commons, the newest addition to the city's roster of parks. The 3-acre park was opened two months ahead of schedule and, like Founders Park, serves as a floodwater mitigation area in addition to a city park. King Commons is home to glowing walkways, a mural featuring local wildlife, stone bridges, sidewalks for walking and cycling, seat walls, and an area for events.

Kingsport park pavilion wins local excellence award



The new pavilion at Lily Pad Cove in Kingsport's Bays Mountain Park has received the Associated General Contractors Excellence Award for Project of the Year. The project received the award for the under \$2.5 million category based on its contribution to the community, overall aesthetics, sensitivity to the environment, and innovation in construction. It was constructed on the site of an aviary that had been torn down at the park more than a decade ago. The project in total cost the city around \$245,000 with \$200,000 of that funding coming from Kingsport's visitor enhancement program (VEP), which is funds used specifically to finance tourism-related projects. Kingsport officials will cut the ribbon on the pavilion on April 25.

Kingston reopens renovated Gertrude Porter Memorial Park



Officials with the city of Kingston, local volunteers, family members, and players with the local youth baseball league cut the ribbon on long-awaited renovations to the city's Gertrude Porter Memorial Park. Originally established in 1983 as Greenwood Park, the park was renamed after a Gertrude Porter, a beloved teacher and principal of Kingston's Greenwood School, in 1991. In 2014, the city received a \$250,000 state recreation grant to add two soccer fields, a baseball field, playground, greenway, and bathroom facilities to the park. Following the ribbon cutting, the city held its first baseball game of the season at the park.

TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY
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Citywide pollination project creates a 'buzz' in Johnson City

BY KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Concerned with the disappearance of bees and other pollinators from their community, one Tennessee city and its local university have stepped up to make pollinators feel more at home.

While bees are the most common creatures associated with pollination, populations of butterflies, hummingbirds, beetles, moths, and even bats also contribute to the pollination of plants. Approximately one in three food crops and three-fourths of the earth's flowering plants require pollinators, according to Dr. Ingrid Luffman, a faculty member with the East Tennessee State University Department of Geosciences.

"A wide variety of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and moths, is essential to sustaining agricultural yields and maintaining a healthy ecosystem," Luffman said. "Eighty percent of the world's flowering plants depend upon pollination to reproduce, including one-third of our food, such as apples, pumpkins, almonds, blueberries, watermelon, broccoli, coffee, and more."

But habitat loss, parasites, pesticides, and other threats have drastically decreased pollinator populations worldwide. The amount of monarch butterflies has decreased 90 percent in the past 20 years. Bee populations have declined by about half in the past 10 years and, despite posting a 3 percent increase in population last year, are still facing dangers from bee-killing mites and colony collapse.

Bees and pollinators have been an important area of study for members of ETSU Biology Department. With the decline in pollinators, officials with the university decided to focus their expertise in their own backyard. Together, the university's Center for Community Outreach and departments of art and design, geosciences, sociology and anthropology, and sustainability came together to form the ETSU Pollination Project.

Sensing the issue was bigger than the university itself, ETSU's Center for Community Outreach also contacted Johnson City officials in 2016 with an idea to involve the city and local residents, as well as students, professors, and faculty members in the project.

Johnson City Public Works Director Phil Pindzola said the partnership between ETSU and the city spawned the "What's the Buzz" community education series in 2016 as well as other pollinator-friendly activities city-wide. The series was kicked off in May of that year with Buzzfest, a downtown event that brought together 28 downtown businesses, ETSU, and city officials to promote pollinator-friendly gardens and products, crown a local Bee Queen, and educate the public about the project.

At the same time, Johnson City was working on two new park projects. The result was a city-wide pollination corridor that stretches from ETSU's campus to downtown Johnson City.

"We were already building



Top Left: Johnson City residents volunteered their time planting pollinator-friendly plants at locations like Oak Hill Cemetery to encourage bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds in the community. Volunteers also raised funds, volunteered time, and made in-kind donations for a planting project at the municipal library.

Top Right: To kickoff the project, the city and ETSU held a celebration called "Buzzfest" downtown to educate residents about pollinators and how they could become involved. The festival included the crowning of a bee queen and sales of pollinator-friendly products.

Left: This map highlights the pollination corridor planned in Johnson City from ETSU's campus to the Johnson City Public Library. Sites like Founders Park, King Common, the Oak Hill Cemetery, and the city's farmers market are all important locations that featured into the plan.

walkways around the creek that runs past ETSU and into downtown," Pindzola said. "We were also in the process of building some parks downtown. During the midst of these projects, the idea of pollination came from ETSU. Most of the plants they have planted at ETSU are pollination plants, and they were already pursuing planting pollinator vegetation. They encouraged us to do the same at Founders Park and King Commons, so now we have two five-acre parks with pollination plants."

The pollination theme carried over into the design of King Commons Park.

"We kept asking people for a theme, and the one they kept coming back to was pollinators," Pindzola said. "Elements of the park deal with environmental issues. We have a mural painted by a man from Asheville that depicts all kinds of plant and wildlife. We had the Memphis Metal Museum install railings with pollination type plants in their design."

In addition to providing pollinator-friendly plants in public spaces, Pindzola said Johnson City also passed an ordinance that allows for backyard beekeeping. Citizen involvement was also en-

couraged throughout the project, especially at the garden planted at the city library.

"It is good for the community as a whole when citizens get involved in sustainable practices," he said. "The library was a nice project. People raised money, in-kind contributions, and gave their time. The library sits right at King Common, and it has a much better presence in the community today than it did five years ago. Volunteers worked at various parks around the community to continue the theme of pollination."

Beyond the benefits of bringing pollinators to live in Johnson City, Pindzola said the project has brought the university and the city together.

"Anytime you have university and a community working together on a project it's a good thing for the community," he said. "It's a good thing for each entity, but it's great for the community as a whole. That is a big change for us from say 20 or 30 years ago. Anytime we can partner with ETSU we try to. Their current administration is really in touch with working with the community, coming up with great projects that are good for everyone."

Luffman said the project has involved local residents from all walks of life to make pollinators a part of the community.

"On a local level, business owners, campus departments, residents, and local and state government are invited to support pollinators by planting wildflowers, using native plants for landscaping, and providing clean water sources," she said. "Together, ETSU and Johnson City have taken steps on campus, in city parks, and in cultivated public areas to strengthen and support these beneficial insects and the delicate web that sustains us all."

Activity with the What's the Buzz is still going on in Johnson City two years later with information and education sessions being hosted at local venues and community centers, community gardening and planting sessions, and promoting events by local beekeeping associations.

Cities across the nation have joined Johnson City in providing spaces for pollinators to flourish. Since 2015, more than 700,000 pollinator gardens have been designed, planted and registered across the United States.

Mary Phillips, senior director

at the National Wildlife Federation, is among many encouraging cities and other entities across the country to become part of the National Pollinator Garden Network. As part of National Pollinator Week, June 18-24, the organization is hoping to reach 1 million bee-friendly gardens.

"One thing is clear: Americans love pollinators and their efforts are paying off," Phillips said. "Research in recent articles, such as the *Journal of Applied Ecology*, have shown that even small gardens can make a difference for pollinators by increasing diversity of bee species across urban and suburban landscapes. Anyone can plant for pollinators and join this effort to reach one million. Every habitat of every size counts, from window boxes and garden plots to farm borders, golf courses, school gardens and more. Anticipation is growing across the National Pollinator Garden Network's 50 conservation, garden trade, voluntary civic and federal partners, as we rally to get the remaining gardens registered."

To learn more about National Pollinator Week or register a pollinator garden, visit pollinator.org/mpgcmapp/.

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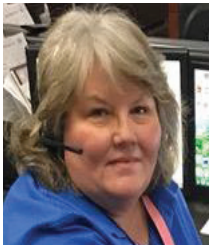


Paul Blackwell, chief of police for the city of Tullahoma, has been selected to serve as the interim city administrator following the retirement of Jody Baltz after 20 years in the position. Blackwell was unanimously voted Tullahoma's interim city administrator by the city's Board of Mayor and Alderman. City officials said they anticipate Blackwell will serve in the interim role for three or four months as city leaders work to select a new city administrator. While Blackwell serves as interim city administrator, Capt. George Marsh of the Tullahoma Police Department will serve as acting chief of police.



Paul Blackwell

Terrye Canady, a 911 dispatcher with the town of Collierville, has been awarded the Ken Owens Memorial Award from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The award is presented to communication dispatchers who make unique contributions to their department and actively work to keep the department in compliance. Canady serves as a dispatcher communication training officer, terminal agency coordinator, and compiles files, documents and other data for the agency. She has developed a training manual for the town of Collierville, and is certified through the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials.



Terrye Canady

Virginia Causey has been selected to fill the seat on the Jonesborough Board of Mayor and Alderman vacated by now Mayor Chuck Vest. The former administrative assistant to Town Administrator Bob Browning retired in March of last year after more than 30 years of service to Jonesborough. Vest was selected as Jonesborough's mayor following the resignation of Kelly Wolfe in March. Causey's appointment has filled the last vacant seat on Jonesborough's board. She will serve on the board until the municipal election this fall.



Virginia Causey

Mary Knight Clinard, first female mayor of Fairview and Nashville personality, died on April 7 at the age of 92. Clinard grew up in



Mary Clinard

Nashville, graduating from West End High School and attending Peabody College where she was known for being active in the local theatre scene. After moving to Holland, Mich., to host three local radio programs, she returned to Nashville in the 1950s to work in local radio and television including the WSIX-TV show "Party Line with Mary." She and her family moved to Fairview in 1962 where she helped establish Fairview's first library in 1963. Clinnard ran for a seat on the Fairview City Commission in 1967 and was elected the first female mayor of Fairview in 1969. She would return to the Fairview City Commission 20 years later, serving as its vice mayor from 1987 to 1990. Clinard earned her bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University in 1985, and continued to remain active as a substitute teacher, school volunteer, ladies singing groups, beautification committees, and the arts.

Harry Gill Jr. has announced he will retire as Smyrna's town manager on Aug. 31 after five years with the city.

During his tenure with Smyrna, Gill has overseen the creation of the Outdoor Adventure Center, expansion of the municipal pool, Depot District renovation project, and various other projects. A lifelong Smyrna resident, Gill began his career as a teacher and basketball coach for Smyrna High School where he worked for 16 years. He then served as principal of Cedar Grove Elementary School and served for nine years as the Rutherford County Director of Schools beginning in 2003.



Harry Gill Jr.

Larry Goodwin, chief of the police for the town of Collierville, has announced his retirement after 48 years of service as a police officer. Goodwin joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1965 amid the Vietnam War, serving a tour of duty as a combat rifleman with the 3rd Marine Division. After returning home to Tennessee in 1969, he joined the Memphis Police Department as a patrolman, climbing the ranks to serve as commander of the city's organized crime, vice and narcotics division; commander of the West Precinct Uniform Patrol Division, and director of the Memphis Police Training Academy. He eventually attained the rank of chief inspector with the Memphis Police Department. After 26 years with the city of Memphis, Goodwin joined the Collierville Police Department as a captain, overseeing the staff services division. He would be appointed chief



Larry Goodwin

of the department three years later, spending a total of 22 years with the Collierville Police Department.

David James, an Etowah city commissioner, died on April 11 at the age of 77. A lifelong resident of Etowah, James attended Tennessee Wesleyan College and then Mercer University in Macon, Ga., before returning to his hometown as a history teacher. He served as managing editor of the *Etowah Enterprise* and then as publisher of the *Dickson Free-Press* and *Polk County News*. In 2014, he was elected to the Etowah City Commission. James also served as an unofficial historian for Etowah and wrote a column about local history for the *Daily Post Athenian*.



David James

Cleveland Mayor Tom Rowland has been named Cleveland State Community College's "Community First Person of the Year" during the college's annual Community First Awards gala. Each year, the college invites the general public to nominate people who live out its "Community First" motto in their daily actions for awards, and school officials said they wanted to honor Rowland for his almost 28 years of service to the community. Rowland first took office in 1991 and was honored alongside members of the Cleveland community in the arts, business, education, healthcare, nonprofit, philanthropy, public service, student leadership, and volunteer service categories.



Tom Rowland

Debbie Sharp has been selected as the new neighborhood coordinator for the city of Knoxville, taking over from David Massey when he retires in June. Sharp presently serves as the assistant neighborhood coordinator, a title she has held since 2014. Before coming to the city of Knoxville, Sharp had a 20-year career in the social services careers including two years in the Peace Corps in Ecuador, working with the Assault Crisis Center, Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, Catholic Charities, and Community Connections. Sharp is active in the South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association and was a driving force behind the neighborhood's designation by the National Wildlife Federation as Tennessee's first certified community wildlife habitat.



Debbie Sharp

Haslam taps Meghreblian to helm TDEC following departure of Martineau

After Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) Commissioner Bob Martineau announced his departure from the agency, Gov. Bill Haslam has appointed Dr. Shari Meghreblian, deputy commissioner for TDEC's Bureau of Environment, as the agency's new commissioner.

Martineau was selected by Haslam to head the department in January 2011.

"I want to thank Gov. Haslam for this opportunity to serve. It has truly been the highest honor of my professional life," Martineau said. "I have been blessed to work with a team of wonderful, highly capable professionals across the department who are passionate about making Tennessee a better place to live work and raise a family."

Before coming to TDEC, Martineau earned his bachelor's degree from St. John's University in Michigan and a law degree from the University of Cincinnati.

He was employed for more than 30 years as an environmental lawyer, including seven years of service in the Office of General Counsel for the U.S. EPA in Washington, D.C., and 16 years as a partner in private practice at the Waller law firm in Nashville.

When Martineau returns to the private sector in May, he will be working as the president of Knoxville-based LHP Management, LLC, a real estate firm known for developing affordable housing.

Meghreblian will take over the department as commissioner effective May 1.

She joined TDEC as deputy commissioner on May 2, 2011, to oversee the department's environmental regulatory programs for the protection of Tennessee's air, land, and water.

During her first year, Meghreblian was selected as TDEC's representative on Haslam's Top to Bottom Review Committee and also served as TDEC's liaison for the Department of Economic and Community Development's Fast Track Infrastructure Development Program. She was a primary sponsor of TDEC's LEAN process improvement initiative and the governor's Customer Focused Government initiative.

Meghreblian earned her bachelor's degree in marketing and economics from Western Kentucky



Bob Martineau



Dr. Shari Meghreblian

University, as well as a master's degree in engineering and a doctorate in environmental management from Vanderbilt University.

Meghreblian has more than 20 years of combined experience in private sector manufacturing and environmental management systems. She joined TDEC from General Motors' plant in Spring Hill, where she served as the environmental operations manager since 2005.

Prior to that, she worked in various roles at the Spring Hill facility under the Saturn Corporation, including manager of environmental affairs, production operations supervisor, and environmental engineer.

Recognized in Tennessee and nationally as a successful steward of natural resources through industrial conservation and pollution prevention, Meghreblian's achievements include leading the General Motors' Spring Hill plant to become the first industry in the state to achieve performer level status, the highest achievement available in the Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership program.

Former Knoxville PD Chief Keith tapped to head COPS



Phil Keith

Former Knoxville Police Chief Phil Keith has been selected as the new chief of community policing for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Appointed to the position by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Keith will serve as the sixth chief of the DOJ's Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services or COPS division. He originally served as a member of the task force of chiefs of police who called for the creation of the agency more than two decades ago.

Keith's duties with COPS will include overseeing grant awards, innovative policing strategies, and training and technical assistance.

The COPS division works with state, local and tribal police and sheriff's departments across the country on hiring practices, policing strategies, training opportunities and technical assistance.

Keith's career with the Knoxville Police Department began in 1970, and he served as Knoxville's police chief from 1988 to 2004.

Following his retirement, he has worked with the Amber Alert program and as a consultant with such agencies as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Tennessee Police Chiefs Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and others.

He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from East Tennessee State University and a master's in safety administration from the University of Tennessee. An endowment at UT's Law Enforcement Innovation Center also bears his name.

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STATE BRIEFS



Despite a dip in fourth-grade math scores, Tennessee has maintained his progress on the 2017 Nation's Report Card given every two years to students in fourth and eighth grades by The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Tennessee made historic progress in 2013 on NAEP, becoming the fastest improving state in the country, and those scores have been largely stable through the 2015 and 2017 cycles. This year's results are the first time Tennessee's scores on the NAEP exam align to TNReady scores, showing a similar percentage of students who are proficient in each grade and subject for 2017. In contrast, in 2007, Tennessee received an "F" in Truth in Advertising from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce because results on the state exam were often remarkably different than what NAEP showed as students' true understanding of the content.

The Tennessee Department of Treasury's Criminal Injuries Compensation Program has paid out \$301.2 million in claims since its inception in 1982, including \$11.7 million last year alone. The fund helps innocent victims of violent crimes and their families when no other financial means are available to them, helping them to move forward with their lives. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Program provides a fund of last resort that may cover expenses such as medical bills, lost wages, loss of support to financial dependents, and more for victims of violent crime in Tennessee. Many in Tennessee are not aware of the program or what may be eligible for compensation. The Treasury is using National Crime Victims' Rights Week to expand the circle and connect with those who would benefit from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Program.

Gov. Bill Haslam and the Country Music Association Foundation have launched a statewide grant program to help give students across Tennessee access to music and arts programs. The State of the Arts program will last three years with eight grants awarded totaling \$1 million in the upcoming 2018-19 school year. Grant funds can be used for professional development for music teachers, additional arts and music supplies, and materials and equipment used to address equity, or to expand local arts education outreach programs.

Tennessee Wildlife Federation has been named National Wildlife Federation's Affiliate of the Year. Each year, National Wildlife Federation recognizes one of its 51 state and territorial affiliates for outstanding achievement in conservation. This is Tennessee Wildlife Federation's first Affiliate of the Year win since 1979, and its fourth in the organization's 72-year history. This honor recognizes many different kinds of work, all of which have contributed to the federation's reputation as a lead-

Civil asset forfeiture bill passes TN Legislature

ASSETS from Page 1

submit an order of dismissal to the administrative law judge set to hear the case, within five days of receiving the lab report from the seizing agency. The seizing agency has to return the property to the owner within five days of receiving the signed dismissal order. All of this is to prevent an owner from being deprived of his property for an extended period of time after it is determined there is no longer a basis for the forfeiture of the property.

The legislation also creates a "rebuttable presumption" that currency, when someone claims ownership, is not subject to forfeiture unless there is evidence to the contrary. Seizing officers will have to provide evidence that the cash has a direct connection to illegal activity. An "alert" by a drug dog, when the cash could have been in proximity to other cash tainted by drugs in an ATM, will likely not provide enough evidence for forfeiture without other supporting evidence.

Finally, the legislation requires attorneys' fees to be awarded to the owner of property that was seized

among affiliates, government agencies, and nonprofit conservation organizations in Tennessee and throughout the nation.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is hoping to make tracking crimes more transparent through a new website. TBI's new Crime in Sight website allows visitors to track crime statistics related to drugs and driving under the influence, property crime, and violent crime between 2001 and 2016. Users can search for statewide statistics as well as those in individual jurisdictions including judicial drug task forces, county sheriffs' offices, city police, campus police, and state parks. The site was partially supported by funds awarded by Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics. For more information, visit crimeinsight.tbi.tn.gov/tops/.

More than 10,000 adults have applied for the state's new Tennessee Reconnect program, which allows adult learners to attain a tuition-free associate's degree or technical certificate. Between application submission opening on Feb. 15 and April 10, 10,497 Tennesseans have applied to participate in the program. Tennessee Reconnect is open to adults over the age of 24 that do not yet have a college degree. Among those who have applied for the scholarship, more than two-thirds have previously enrolled in college and just more than half of all applicants have attended college in the past five years. The average age of applicants is 34 years old and nearly 90 percent of those who applied plan to work while enrolled through Reconnect. For more information on the program, visit TNReconnect.gov.

Tennessee has the fourth highest rate of lung cancer in the nation with some regions seeing lung cancer rates between 50 percent and 100 percent higher than the national average. The Tennessee Cancer Consortium said lung cancer is the primary reason Tennessee's overall cancer mortality rate is so high when compared with national averages. Despite the risks, more than 20 percent of Tennessee's still smoke. This year, the American Lung Association gave the state an "F" for tobacco prevention program funding, tobacco taxes, access to tobacco cessation treatments, and tobacco 21 laws. The state also earned a "C" for smoke-free air. Lung cancer in Tennesseans is also often diagnosed in later stages, when it is harder to treat. Fewer than 20 percent of cases are caught early when survival can be more than 50 percent. More than 46 percent of lung cancer cases in Tennessee are not caught until a late stage, when national survival rates are 4.5 percent. One of the reasons lung cancer is caught so late is because many Tennessee hospitals do not have access to annual low-dose CT scans and many patients are not aware of lung cancer symptoms.

but ordered to be returned by an administrative law judge. Attorney's fees are capped at the lesser of 25 percent of the value of the property or cash, or \$3,000. The maximum attorney's fees is \$3,000.

However, per the legislation, if the administrative judge forfeits the property to the seizing agency, and the owner prevails on an appeal, the judge hearing the appeal is required to award attorney's fees incurred during the administrative proceeding and, "any reasonable attorney's fees incurred during the appeal." The section on attorney's fees for appeals will not become effective until Jan. 1, 2019. All other sections will take effect Oct. 1, 2018.

SB1987/HB2021 as passed by the legislature can be seen as a compromise between those who want to abolish civil asset forfeiture and those who see it as a positive tool for law enforcement. These changes should help eliminate the excesses that have caused the process to come under such scrutiny in the first place.

TDOT releases three-year plan, \$2.6B in infrastructure investments for 143 projects

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner John Schroer released TDOT's annual three year transportation program, featuring approximately \$2.6 billion in infrastructure investments for 143 individual project phases on 116 projects. The program also places a high emphasis on the repair and replacement of bridges, with activities beginning on 80 structures. Ten of those bridges are on the state highway system, with the other 70 on local roads.

The comprehensive program continues to build on the progress of the IMPROVE Act, which provides for infrastructure investments in all 95 counties. This year's program budgets dollars for 195 of the 962 projects listed as part of the 2017 legislation.

The increased revenue generated through the IMPROVE Act has provided the funds necessary to move several important projects forward, including:

Davidson County, I-440

- Pavement rehabilitation and safety improvements from I-40 to I-24

Hamilton County, I-75

- Reconstruction of interchange at I-24

Knox County, US 129 (SR 115 - Alcoa Highway)

- Widening from near Woodson Drive to near Cherokee Trail Interchange

Obion County, I-69

- Construction from west of SR 21 to US 51 (SR 3)

Shelby County, US 78 (SR 4/



Lamar Avenue)

- Widening from near Raines Road/Perkins Road Interchange to SR 176 (Getwell Road)

Unicoi County, Locust Lane

- Replacement of bridge over South Indian Creek

Washington County, I-26

- Interchange at SR 354 (Exit 17)

Wilson County, I-40

- Widening from SR 109 to I-840

"This year's transportation plan provides for much needed infrastructure improvements and maintenance for many areas of our state," Gov. Haslam said. "These investments result in a safe, reliable, and debt-free highway network for our citizens and are critical in our efforts to bring high quality jobs to

Tennessee."

In addition to the 2019 budgeted program, partial plans for 2020 and 2021 are included, along with funding for 15 transportation programs including Rockfall Mitigation, Spot Safety Improvement, and the statewide HELP Program. The program also provides funding for transit agencies in all 95 counties, as well as Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations.

To view a complete list of projects and programs funded through the 2019-2021 three-year multimodal program, visit <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/GovHighwayProgram-FY19-21.pdf>. For an interactive map view of the 962 IMPROVE Act projects, please visit <https://www.tdot.tn.gov/projectneeds/spot/#/>.

\$1.5M in Tourism Enhancement Grants awarded to 25 Tennessee communities

Improved tourism infrastructure assets increase economic impact

The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development announced 25 communities will receive more than \$1.5 million in the third round of Tourism Enhancement Grants to assist with tourism infrastructure assets.

The two agencies partnered to assist counties and cities improve local tourism assets to increase the economic impact of their communities. Tourism Enhancement Grants are designed for cities and counties seeking to invest in local tourism infrastructure assets, such as stages, signage, enhancement to attractions or venues and other resources that target expanding local tourism.

"Assisting a partner in shoring up a tourism asset is critical to rural areas," Commissioner Kevin Triplett, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development said. "Tourism development is economic development and in some rural areas, tourism is a main industry. We appreciate our partnership with TNECD and the willingness that team has to invest in upgrades that not only increase opportunities for visitation but enhance the quality of life for the citizens of these communities."

The Tourism Enhancement Grant program, in its third round, is funded through the Rural Economic Opportunity Act, which is

designed to improve the economic indicators in rural communities across Tennessee. Each application was supported by the community's senator and representative in the Tennessee General Assembly.

"Tourism is one of the most important economic drivers in many Tennessee communities, and in partnership with the Department of Tourist Development, we want to continue to help communities promote and grow their tourism assets," Commissioner Bob Rolfe, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development said. "In the first two rounds of the program, more than \$2 million was awarded to nearly 60 projects across the state. I congratulate the 25 communities selected in the third round as these projects will have a profound and lasting impact on Tennessee's tourism infrastructure."

"We have seen an incredible amount of positive activity happening throughout the state thanks to the passage of the Rural Economic Opportunity Act, and the tourism enhancement grants are no exception," Amy New, TNECD assistant commissioner of Rural Development, said. "I am proud of these 25 communities for proactively taking the necessary steps to improve their tourism assets, which will in turn strengthen Tennessee's economic development efforts."

An advisory committee made up of staff from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture selected the 25 communities out of 39 grant applications.

The grants awarded include:

Alamo	\$35,000
Baxter	\$75,000
Brownsville	\$57,950
Carter County	\$51,400
Carthage	\$55,147
Cross Plains	\$36,250
Decatur County	\$75,000
Erwin	\$60,688
Grundy County	\$75,000
Hardin County	\$75,000
Hickman County	\$75,000
Huntsville	\$75,000
Jackson	\$50,000
Loudon	\$75,000
Marion County	\$50,000
Martin	\$75,000
McMinn County	\$75,000
McKenzie	\$71,250
Metro Lynchburg/	
Moore County	\$75,000
Oak Ridge	\$56,250
Polk County	\$75,000
Portland	\$42,450
Pulaski	\$20,000
Smyrna	\$36,000
Wartrace	\$53,900

NATIONAL BRIEFS



The U.S. economy added 103,000 jobs in March, well below expectations, and economists said calls from the White House for billions in tariffs on imports may have stalled economic expansion. The unemployment rate held at 4.1 percent for the sixth straight month, the lowest level since December 2000, when it was 3.9 percent, according to the U.S. Labor Department reported. Economists had predicted a gain of 195,000 in March and noted that job gains in February and January were each 50,000 than initially predicted.

Capital expenditures on U.S. municipal water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure will rise 11 percent in the next 10 years, according to water sector research firm Bluefield Research. Factors in the rising costs of water include poor water quality, environmental mandates, and aging infrastructure. Total capital spending

in the U.S. municipal water sector is projected to exceed \$683 billion by 2027. Of the total estimated future spending, \$376 billion, or more than half, is planned for the pipes, pumps, and waterways that make up collection and distribution networks. The report was compiled by analyzing planned spending on water systems in 100 major cities.

Following the school shooting in Parkland, Fla., states across the nation are strengthening school safety measures. A total of 226 bills or resolutions in 39 states have been introduced regarding arming school personnel, building security, curriculum, emergency drills and response plans, firearm carrying, law enforcement, and risk assessment. Of the 226 measures, 20 bills have been enacted and three resolutions have been adopted while 52 failed or were put on hold until next year. A total of 144 are still pending in the

legislature while six are awaiting signatures from governors. New York state introduced the most bills with 15 while Maryland introduced 14. A total of 13 measures were up for debate in Minnesota, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.

The U.S. middle class is slowly regaining ground after the amount of middle class households sank in every state save Wyoming between 2000 and 2013. Recent data shows that a larger share of households were identified as middle class in 2016 than in 2013 in 38 states. Middle class is defined as households earning between two-thirds and twice the states' size-adjusted mean household income. In 30 states at least half of households were middle class, up from 28 in 2013 but down from 43 in 2000. Only Alaska and Hawaii have seen middle class households return to the same numbers as 2000.



CLASSIFIED ADS

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

ANIMAL SHELTER MANAGER
COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville has an immediate opening for the position of animal shelter manager. The purpose of this position is to oversee and manage the day to day operations of the town's animal shelter. Requires a bachelor's degree in animal sciences, business, agribusiness, or a related field; supplemented by three years supervisory experience in an animal shelter; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Requires a valid motor vehicle operator's license at time of hire. Must obtain National Animal Control Association (NACA) Level 1 and Level 2 certifications no later than 36 months from date of hire. Must be flexible with weekday and weekend working hours. Must be available after hours for call out and have good animal handling skills. Tasks require the regular and sustained performance of moderately physically demanding work typically involving some combination of climbing and balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, and crawling. Selection process may include: examinations, interviews, assessment centers, practical skills, etc. Must be able to pass a work-related physical and drug test. Salary is \$32,425 - \$55,584 annually (DOQ) with excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit an original town of Collierville application. Applications are available to download at www.collierville.com, or you may obtain one from our Human Resources Office located at 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN, 38017, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Completed applications must be submitted either by mail or in person to the above address. We are unable to accept faxed or emailed applications.

BOOKKEEPER / ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
MASON. Responsible for bookkeeping and support services under the general supervision of the office manager/human resources manager. Instructions to the employee are general and the employee must routinely use independent judgment when performing tasks. The employee must occasionally consider a different course of action. The uniform accounting code and accounting system must be followed in order to complete tasks. Graduation from an accredited high school or possess equivalency, and supplemental course work in bookkeeping principles and practices. Experience in clerical accounting work. Responsible for all bookkeeping and financial records of all funds including reconciling bank statements and invoices, bond payments, drafting checks, accounts payable, etc.; balances all receipts and tax collections monthly; prepares all deposits and withdrawals; prepares all bookkeeping reports; prepares all payroll; prepares Social Security and tax withholding reports; prepares quarterly unemployment reports; reviews recorder reports before being submitted to state; maintains general records of account according to established accounting classifications, including various ledgers, registers, and journals; posts entries to books and computer from supporting records; makes adjustments and prepares financial statements; and deposit city receipts at bank. Salary: \$14.00 Hourly. Please apply at the Town of Mason; Mason City Hall; 12157 Main Street. Position open until filled. EOE.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
TULLAHOMA. The city of Tullahoma is seeking applicants for the position of city administrator who works under the general direction of the board of mayor and alderman. The city administrator oversees city operations with a \$26 million general fund budget and 150 full-time employees in administration, police, fire, public works, finance, parks and recreation, human resources, and planning and codes departments. The minimum requirement for this opportunity is a bachelor's degree with a master's degree preferred in public administration, management, business administration, or closely-related field and a minimum of five years of municipal leadership experience as a city administrator or manager of a public agency or department with related duties. Salary is DOQ and the city offers a comprehensive benefits package. Interested applicants must submit a resume, cover letter and professional references to City of Tullahoma, Attn: Human Resources Director, PO Box 807, Tullahoma, TN 37388, or by email to cbrice@tullahomatin.gov. Resumes will be accepted until May 1. Applications are subject to public disclosure. EOE / TN Drug Free Workplace.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
BRISTOL. The city of Bristol is accepting applications for the following full-time position director of com-

munity development. Salary range \$65,927 - \$102,186 DOQ. Under executive direction of the city manager, the purpose of this position is to plan, organize, direct, and integrate the city's planning and code enforcement programs and services, and the Community Development Block Grant and Home programs and services. This position is responsible for policy development, program planning, budget management, administration, and operational direction of the Community Development Department functions. Has responsibility for accomplishing department objectives and goals within the guidelines established by the city manager and performs related work as assigned. This position interprets the department's codes, regulations, plans, policies, and functions for elected and appointed boards, citizens, the business community, and the public. Plans, organizes, controls, integrates, and evaluates the work of the community development department; with staff, develops, implements and monitors long-term plans, goals, and objectives focused on achieving the city's mission and council priorities; directs the development of and monitors performance against the annual department budget and the city's capital improvement plan budget; manages and directs the development, implementation and evaluation of plans, policies, systems, and procedures to achieve annual goals, objectives, and work standards that support the city's mission and values. Master's degree in planning, public administration, or related field required, with six years increasing responsible experience in municipal planning, zoning, permitting, enforcement, and consultation, two of which are supervisory in nature; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this position. Must possess excellent knowledge in the field of municipal planning, state planning legislation, and land use regulations. Must possess knowledge and proficiency in the operation of personal computers and be knowledgeable in the field of Geographic Information Systems with some knowledge of ArcView preferred. To be considered, candidates must complete an application and upload a resume at: <http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx>. EOE

FINANCE DIRECTOR.
FAYETTEVILLE. The city of Fayetteville (population 7,000) is seeking an experienced, qualified, energetic, team builder with exceptional leadership skills to be their next finance director. This is an exceptional opportunity to serve in a top-notch organization with a dedicated staff of high-quality leaders and managers. The finance director's position requires an individual with extensive recent and progressively responsible finance administration experience. Other attributes include sound judgment, human resources skills, organization development expertise, and a can-do work ethic. The finance director is a highly visible city department head that is expected to project a professional image of the city and finance department in all situations. The city of Fayetteville will offer a competitive salary and benefits package to the successful candidate. The position profile is available for review at www.fayettevilletn.com. Send cover letter and résumé to Fayetteville HR Director, at 110 Elk Ave S, Fayetteville TN, 37334 or email cover letter and résumé to: agay@fayettevilletn.com or apply online at www.fayettevilletn.com/resident/career_and_employment_opportunities/index.php no later than April 25. EOE.

FINANCE DIRECTOR.
GERMANTOWN. The city of Germantown is seeking a qualified individual to serve as finance director. Under broad direction of the city administrator, the finance director is responsible for the overall administration and management of the city's Financial Services Department. Financial services includes three areas: accounting, treasury and city court. Responsibilities include directing the accounting, cash management and fund investment activities to ensure financial security of the city government. The finance director is also responsible for ensuring legal and regulatory compliance for all accounting and financial reporting functions. The finance director exercises supervision over general accounting, accounts receivables/collection, payroll, and utility billing system, business licensing, fund investments, debt management, and municipal court activities. The minimum requirements for this opportunity include: bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business, or public administration and seven years of experience managing accounting and cash management operations, including two years professional experience in governmental accounting; or any combination of education, training, and experience providing the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform essential job functions. All qualified applicants must have local government experience. A master's

degree is preferred. Certification as CPA strongly preferred. For more details and applications, please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/germantown>. The application process will remain open until the position is filled. EOE

MAINTENANCE WORKER
COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville is seeking a maintenance worker for grounds and parks maintenance. Salary range is \$24,960 (DOQ) annually with excellent benefits package. This position is a semi-skilled and unskilled manual laborer as part of a parks and grounds crew performing routine maintenance and construction tasks for various public facility projects. Requires a high school diploma or GED; previous experience and/or training in maintenance and construction work in area of assignment is preferred; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this job. May require occasional weekend work. Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license. The work involved in this job requires sufficient physical strength, stamina, and ability to pass a work related physical proficiency test and pre-employment examination including drug test. The work is physically demanding, may require lifting heavy objects, and may require working in inclement weather. Selection process may include: examinations, interviews, assessment centers, practical skills, etc. Drug testing may be required. To apply: submit an application to Human Resources Office, 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN. EOE 38017

PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR
HENDERSONVILLE. This position directs the operations of Parks and Recreation Department and coordinates the provision of a comprehensive recreation and leisure program for all ages. Bachelor's degree in a course of study related to the occupation field. Master's degree preferred. CPRP preferred or other related professional certifications. Experience sufficient to thoroughly understand the diverse objectives and functions of the subunits in the department in order to direct and coordinate work within the department, usually interpreted to require 5-7 years related experience. Possession of or ability to readily obtain a valid Driver's License issued by the state of Tennessee for the type of vehicle or equipment operated. Salary: \$79,499 annually or higher DOQ. To apply visit <http://www.hvilletn.org/> and view the job openings page or come by the personnel department at Hendersonville City Hall located at 101 Maple Drive North in Hendersonville, TN. Closing date for acceptance of applications and other required materials is May 9, at 4:00 PM CST. EOE

WATER PLANT OPERATOR II
GALLATIN. The city of Gallatin is currently accepting applications for a Water Plant Operator II in the public utilities department. The purpose of this position is to perform intermediate technical work in the operation and maintenance of the water treatment plant; does related work as required. Work is performed under regular supervision. Limited supervision may be exercised over subordinate plant personnel. This is a 40 hours per week position. The shift could be 1st or 2nd, depending on the needs of the department. The hourly rate is \$20.11 + excellent benefits. The following duties are normal for this position: oversees proper functioning of water pumps, motors, chlorinators, filters and chemical feeders making adjustments as necessary to maintain proper flow of water; performs manual cleaning or preventive maintenance duties as assigned; replenishes treatment equipment with chemicals; and collects water samples from designated points. Other duties may be required and assigned. High school diploma/equivalent with two years recent experience in maintenance work involving plumbing, mechanical and electrical repair and installation. Must have a valid, appropriate driver's license. Must possess a Grade IV Water Treatment Plant Operator certificate issued by the state of Tennessee, and must retain certification throughout employment. Interested persons should apply online at www.gallatintn.gov. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. EOE.

WATER SUPERINTENDENT
BELL BUCKLE. The town of Bell Buckle is seeking applicants for the position of water superintendent who will work as the technical advisor to the board of mayor and alderman. Qualification requirements include: Grade II Water Distribution, Grade II Water Collections & Grade III Wastewater License. Salary is DOQ. Interested applicants must submit a resume, cover letter and professional references to Town of Bell Buckle, Attn: Human Resources, PO Box 276, Bell Buckle, TN 37020, or by email to janet_robinson@townofbellbuckle.com. For more



SATURDAY, JUNE 9
1 - 3 pm CMFO Workshops
1 - 3 pm Mobile Workshop
7 - 9 pm Welcome Reception

SUNDAY, JUNE 10
9 am - 5 pm Registration
9:30 am - 5 pm Exhibit Hall Open
10:30 - 11:30 am Workshops
11:30 am - 1:30 pm Lunch
1:45 - 2:15 pm District Meetings
2:30 - 4 pm Opening General Session
4 - 5 pm Roundtable Discussions
6 - 8 pm Host City Reception

MONDAY, JUNE 11
8 - 8:45 am Continental Breakfast
9 am Exhibit Hall Open
9 - 10 am Workshops
10:15 - 11 am Second General Session
11:15 am - 12 noon Business Meeting
12 - 1:30 pm Lunch
2:30 - 3:30 pm Workshops
3:45 - 4:45 pm Workshops
6:30 - 11 pm Pool Party

TUESDAY, JUNE 12
8 - 10 am AWARDS BREAKFAST

UT-MTAS APRIL MAP CLASSES

ETHICS AND THE MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE

The class will focus on ethical standards for officials and employees. Areas of interest that will be covered include: political activity, conflicts of interest, and technology and social media. There will be discussion on the MTAS model code of ethics and the role of the Tennessee Ethics Commission.

Target Audience:
All Municipal Employees

Credits: (3.5 CLE/4 CPE)

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ADVISORY SERVICE

Dates/Locations/Times:

May 8 Knoxville
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. EDT
May 9 Chattanooga
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. EDT
May 10 Nashville
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. CDT
May 14 Memphis
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. CDT
May 16 Jackson
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. CDT

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

Infrastructure Week May 14-21



The 6th Annual National Infrastructure Week is a national week of events, media coverage, and education and issue advocacy to elevate infrastructure as a critical issue impacting America's economy, society, security, and future.

Hundreds of organizations and thousands of leaders are uniting around one message: **The future won't wait. Neither can we. It's #TimeToBuild.**

During Infrastructure Week, organizations and individuals around America – from local businesses, trade associations, and chambers of commerce to mayors and individual citizens – host events; tour new and innovative projects; talk about infrastructure in national, local, and social media; and show policymakers at all levels of government the breadth and diversity of support for long-term, sustainable infrastructure investment.

To learn how you can become involved, visit: <http://infrastructureweek.org/>

information, call Bell Buckle Town Hall at 931-389-9513. EOE. In accordance with Tennessee law, the Town of Bell Buckle is a Smoke-Free Workplace

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
BRISTOL. The city of Bristol is accepting applications for the following full-time position of zoning administrator. Salary Range \$44,311 - \$68,682 DOQ. Under the direction of the community development director, the position is to perform professional, technical, managerial, and administrative work within the Planning and Zoning Division. Job functions include, but not limited to: administration of zoning activities, interpretation and application of Tennessee state statute, Sullivan County, and Bristol city codes, ordinances and regulations, communication with other

departments, public agencies and the general public, initiation of actions necessary to correct deficiencies or violations of regulations, extensive research for city projects, and development of strategies to promote efficient land use consistent with community goals and objectives. Excellent oral communication and interpersonal skills to present research findings to various boards and committees. Prefer master's degree in planning or a related field with 3 years of experience in the planning profession or bachelor's degree in planning or related field and 5 years of professional planning experience. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification is desirable. To be considered, candidates must complete an application and upload a resume at: <http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx>. EOE

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Online sales tax ruling could have big long-term fiscal ramifications

ONLINE SALES from Page 1

E-commerce sales increased 16 percent last year in the U.S., while total retail sales grew just 4.4 percent. This growth in online commerce means the physical presence rule, if left intact, could cause deeper erosion of state and local sales tax revenues in the coming years.

"If you project that out far enough, this could be a very significant loss in revenues," Hitchcock said.

David Schumacher, director of the Office of Financial Management in Washington state, described the possibility of capturing more taxes from out-of-state, online retailers as "closing a loophole rather than adding a new tax" and said it would "definitely be a good thing."

"We could always use the extra money," he said. "But it's not like a budget buster, or it's not a solution to all our problems."

Sales tax collections are especially important in Washington, one of seven states that does not have an individual income tax. But Schumacher said that, with Amazon located there, the state has been collecting sizable online sales tax revenues for some time.

Numbers he has seen indicate that if the physical presence rule were nixed, "maybe it's a hundred million dollars for the budget."

"We have a \$50 billion budget," he added. (Washington budgets on a two-year cycle. Total tax revenues for the state in fiscal 2017 were around \$21.9 billion, according to a state financial report.)

"It's not huge," Schumacher said of potential new online sales tax revenue. But he added: "I would love to have it for my next budget."

David Thurman, a budget director in Tennessee's Department of Finance and Administration, said rolling back *Quill* could add somewhere around \$100 million to \$300 million to his state's revenues. "It's that big of a range because we just don't know," he added.

"Everybody's spending more and more online," Thurman said. "What this does is kind of shores up your tax base a little bit."

As for banking on extra online sales tax dollars: "we'd want to be very conservative until we started collecting it, to see what it looks like."

Thurman explained the amount of added sales tax revenue in Tennessee, in the event *Quill* is reversed, would depend

David Thurman, a budget director in Tennessee's Department of Finance and Administration, said rolling back *Quill* could add somewhere around \$100 million to \$300 million to state revenues in Tennessee.

on how the state sets thresholds for collecting the tax. One proposal that's been floated, he said, is to apply the tax to firms with over \$500,000 in sales.

The South Dakota statute that led to the *Wayfair* case is written to only apply to retailers with over \$100,000 of sales, or 200 separate transactions, in the state annually. U.S. Government Accountability Office estimates released last year show that state and local governments could have gained \$8 billion to \$13 billion in 2017, if states had the authority to require sales tax collections from all out-of-state "remote sellers," like online vendors.

Those gains would be about 2 percent to 4 percent of total, 2016 state and local revenues.

"There's definitely still revenue out there, but how much is something I'm interested to see," said Richard Auxier, a research associate in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. "The ability to tax some online sales is not going to solve every state's budget problems," he added.

Bob Scott, chief financial officer for Carrollton, Texas, a city of about 130,000 residents north of Dallas, said it's difficult trying to predict the local benefits for city revenues if the *Quill* ruling were to be reversed, noting that "the hardest thing to estimate is what's not there."

He's aware of state estimates for 2016 that show gains could be about 3 percent, which would work out to around an extra \$1 million each year for Carrollton's roughly \$200 million budget.

"Would we be able to put another million dollars to good use? Absolutely," Scott said. "Is a million dollars going to dramatically change what we do? Probably not."

But he also noted that the effects would vary between jurisdictions if the physical presence ends.

"In my opinion," Scott said, "it's going to be a big help to local governments but it's certainly not going to be a panacea."

For some state governments with tight finances, the prospect of new online sales tax collections—however limited—is welcome.

"From Louisiana's perspective, the *Wayfair* case is going to be a significant decision," said

Kimberly Lewis Robinson, the state's secretary of revenue.

Robinson explained the state is currently facing a \$600 million to \$700 million budget shortfall, and said if the court rules in a way that enables Louisiana to mandate that more online retailers collect sales taxes, it could raise between \$200 million and \$400 million in additional revenues annually. "That's a game changer for us, in terms of addressing that shortfall," she added.

General sales and use tax collections in Louisiana for fiscal year 2017 were around \$4.3 billion.

Whatever happens in the *Wayfair* case, states are finding ways around the obstacles *Quill* presents for tax collections, as an S&P Global Ratings report from last year highlights.

For instance, New York passed a law in 2013 that says any out-of-state company providing a platform for third-party vendors located in the state establishes a "nexus," which allows the state to require sales tax collections. Amazon lost a court challenge against the law.

California later passed a similar measure, which led to legal wrangling with Amazon and an eventual agreement from the company to pay taxes on a delayed basis, the S&P report notes. (Amazon now collects and pays sales tax in all states where the tax is imposed—though the company does not do this for sales by third-party vendors using its platform.)

Meanwhile, a Colorado law mandates that remote sellers that have \$100,000 or more in annual sales in the state, and that don't collect sales tax there, need to report customers making over \$500 of purchases per year online. This opens the door for the state to seek taxes on internet purchases from consumers—who generally owe tax on sales when retailers don't collect it.

"States are making interesting legislation that can help fill in the gaps regardless of where *Wayfair* comes out," Hitchcock said as he discussed online sales tax collections.

"It will certainly make it a lot easier if *Quill* is overturned," he added. "Because then states can just directly say: 'you have to pay it.'"



TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

April 27-29: South Pittsburg

National Cornbread Festival
 The festival will feature cornbread cook-off, entertainment, food, arts and crafts, street dance, carnival, fireworks, and much more. The kid's corner will feature games, face painting, rides, and inflatables. Hours: Fri. 6 p.m.-close; Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m.-close. Visit <http://national-cornbread.com/>

April 28-29: Franklin.

Main Street Festival
 A fun-filled weekend of music, arts and crafts, food and children's activities. There will be a kid's area with a variety of carnival games, food, pony rides, and a petting zoo. Shop about 150 artisans and crafters displaying and selling handmade wares. Free admission. Hours: Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit <http://downtownfranklin.tn.com/festivals/>

May 12: Portland

77th Annual Middle Tennessee Strawberry Festival
 Enjoy live music, over 125 food, craft & information vendors, contests, inflatables & activities for kids, carnival, 5K walk/run and more! The parade will be at 4 pm followed by a free concert at 6 pm featuring Four on the Floor (Decades) on the Market Street stage. Fireworks will follow the concert in the downtown Portland area. Visit www.middletnstrawberryfestival.com

June 2: Coopertown

2018 Barrel Festival
 Join thousands celebrating the heritage of the barrel maker at the Coopertown Barrel Festival, just 25 miles north of Nashville the first Saturday in June, from 7 am - 4 pm. Hundreds of vendors will showcase their wares along Old Coopertown Road in this free outdoor, rain or shine, event. Enjoy live cooper demonstrations, a classic car show, antique tractors, music, food, shopping, history exhibits, our "Cooper of the Year" contest, kids zone, barrel raffles, and a whole lot more in our annual fundraiser for the Town of Coopertown. The 6th annual festivities will kick off with the Barrel Fest 5-Miler at 7 am. Walker and runners register at www.runsignup.com To register for a booth at the festival go to www.barrelfestival.com and checkout our Facebook pages: www.facebook.com/coopertownbarrelfestival; www.facebook.com/barrelfest-5miler; www.facebook.com/coopertowncommunitydevelopment

No loan is too large or too small



The city of Clinton closed a \$550,000 capital outlay note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to purchase a new fire truck for the city. Front row from left to right: Gina Ridenour, city recorder; Mayor Scott Burton; and Gail Cook, finance director. Standing from left to right: Roger Houck city manager; Archie Brummitt, fire chief; and Steve Queener, TMBF marketing representative.



The town of Arlington closed a \$6 million fixed-rate PBA loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to finance various capital improvement projects at the town's Forest Street Campus. The money will also be used to construct and equip a new town hall. Pictured from left to right are: Gerald D. Lawson Jr., town attorney; Mayor Mike Wissman; and Brittney Owens, recorder/treasurer. Standing: Tommy Green, TMBF marketing representative.



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Cities benefit from use of CDBG funds for needed community projects

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Improving local infrastructure for the benefit of rural and low-to-moderate income communities has long been a goal of the Community Development Block Grant program.

Historically, about one-third of each round of CDBG funding goes to public facilities and infrastructure projects across the nation. CDBG has improved public facilities that benefited more than 33.7 million people between fiscal years 2005 and 2013 alone.

Like many states across the nation, the bulk of Tennessee's infrastructure funds are allocated for water and sewer projects, drainage systems, and street projects. However, these funds can also be used for more visible projects that stand to benefit the community at large.

Kent Archer, CDBG director for TECD's Community and Rural Development Division, said many of these projects fall under the community livability grants, which are designed to improve services other than water and sewer or housing rehabilitation. While most funds in this category go for fire and emergency services grants, this category also can fund renovations to other types of community infrastructure.

"The intention with those funds is to improve health, safety, and quality of life," he said. "It can be anything from rehabilitation work to a hospital to financing fire trucks and ambulances or blight eradication type projects. We also put in a few drainage mitigation projects in there as well."

Only 2.9 percent of community livability projects awarded in Tennessee covered new building and infrastructure projects of non-residential structures, such as drainage construction, new street construction, and construction to community facilities. The reason for this is the competitiveness of the grant program.

Archer said when a community livability project like park improvements is compared to a project like constructing a new fire hall, the fire hall easily wins the scoring process. However, there are some projects that do meet scoring guidelines.

PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia City Recorder Audrey Russell said her community is home to 656 people, one gas station, and no stoplights. The municipality, located in Loudon County, only has two full-time employees in addition to its mayor and aldermen. Philadelphia was already facing adversity when, in 2013, a meteorological phenomenon known as a wind shear

devastated the city hall.

"It was an unusual circumstance," she said. "The wind knocked down our city building and took with it everything we had. The building was more than 100 years old, and we were able to save some of the bricks that were handmade by slaves when it was originally built. There were vacant attached structures near it that were also affected."

To replace the city hall structure, Philadelphia turned to the CDBG program. Russell said she worked on the CDBG grant for nearly two years – the first Philadelphia had ever applied for – and the city was awarded \$280,000.

"We had to tear down what was left, and we purchased an additional vacant lot," she said. "You don't think about how much you have to pay to just tear something down. You have to pay for dumping and to haul that waste somewhere. The grant has paid for about a third of the construction cost. The grant was the catalyst for this project. If we didn't get the grant, we would have to get a loan for the rest of the money. But the city wouldn't have been able to finance the loan."

Still under construction, Russell said the new city hall has evolved into a community centerpiece for Philadelphia.

"At first, we were just looking to replace what we originally had, but as time went on, the idea for the project began to grow and different things transpired," Russell said. "Now, the project is a community center with a place for town hall meetings, places to reach city officials and leaders, and we have also taken on the volunteer fire department. The building will contain five bays for the fire department, a kitchen, sleeping quarters, and just better facilities. We also will have a place for an ambulance. This is the first time this area of the county will have its own ambulance service."

While the grant was a catalyst for rebuilding city hall, Russell said the building project itself has been a catalyst for the hopes of Philadelphia's residents.

"We are small town USA; we are smaller than what most people think of when they think of a small town," she said. "We really are a tight-knit community. This is a launching platform for our town. Our citizens know how this town used to be, the potential it has and can fulfill. This new building gives them hope. If we can get this project done, there are some other things we can do and renew the place. We want to bring more to the community. It provides them with a sense of identity."

Russell said rural communities often rely on grant programs.



The former church sanctuary - originally constructed in the 1960s - has been turned into a community event space known as the Tennessean Room as part of the new Covington Civic Center. Since it opened, Mayor Justin Hanson said members of the public and local groups have been able to use the space for events including school reunions, weddings, business functions, and chamber of commerce functions. The city was also able to double the amount of attendees at its annual daddy-daughter dance because of the space afforded by the new venue. Hanson said events have been booked at the site well into 2019.

"There is no way we would have been able to do this project without a grant," she said. "We are a small town and don't have a big source of tax revenue. Small local communities in rural areas usually have a population that drive to big cities to work. If you aren't working in your community, that means there aren't jobs and there isn't that tax revenue. Also, a lot of people who live in our community came here to retire. Grants like this help us provide basic community functions, services, and needs, whether that be a fire department, parks, or a library. We don't want to raise taxes on our citizens, and these grant programs allow us to give our citizens those things without having to raise taxes."

COVINGTON

In 2012, the city of Covington was presented with a unique opportunity to transform a piece of local history into a facility that could be used by city and county government officials as well as the public. Founded in 1839, Covington's First Baptist Church was once located on Washington Avenue in downtown. When the congregation decided to expand to a new location in 2012, city officials negotiated to purchase the former church site for redevelopment.

Covington Mayor Justin Hanson said it is rare for a piece of real estate in downtown to become available, let alone one with so much space.

"There are two ages to the building, which made renovating it a challenge," Hanson said. "There have been three churches on that site. The first burned and the second was built in the 1920s. Then, on Easter Sunday in 1962 the sanctuary of the church caught fire. Covington's Fire Department was able to save the Sunday school building that was dated from the 1920s."

The city paid \$725,125 for the structure, and then was faced with finding funds to renovate the building. In 2013, Covington was granted \$300,000 from the CDBG program to help fund the first phase of what would become a \$1.3 mil-



A subcontractor works on repairs to the Covington Civic Center, a former church structure acquired by the city of Covington. The city used CDBG funds for the first phase of the project, which included asbestos abatement and making the building ADA compliant.

lion project. Hanson said the CDBG funds went to one of the most vital aspects of the building's renovation: bringing it up to modern codes.

"The renovations were done in two phases, and the CDBG funds paid for the first phase of the renovations," Hanson said. "That included making the building ADA compliant and asbestos free. There is always something to contend with when you are renovating a building. When you are dealing with a building that was built in two parts and have to bring it up to modern standards, you have to deal with certain challenges."

Following the first phase of the renovations funded through the CDBG program, the city of Covington was able to move the Tipton County Commission on Aging into offices on the first floor within the former Sunday school building. When the second phase of renovations was completed, the city of Covington moved its own human resources department into the second floor of the Sunday school building and then opened the former sanctuary as an event center.

Now known as the Covington Civic Center, the building has become a gathering point for citizens.

"We have renamed the sanctuary the Tennessean Room, and we are renting it for business functions,

school reunions, weddings, family gatherings, and so on," he said. "The building is a block up from city hall, a block away from county government, and certainly in our community there is a need for a space like this. We've had town hall meetings there. It gives our local churches and nonprofits a sizable place to rent and to use for whatever function they see fit. There is a warming room there so food can be served. It's now the most sizable event space in the county. We get calls every day from people who want to come and tour the facility. We have booked events as far forward as 2019 here."

The city even held its annual Covington Daddy-Daughter Dance for the first time at the facility this year.

"The room can host an excess of 300 people," he said. "Before, we had to hold events at the gymnasium at our city's sportsplex. This large space has helped us double the number of attendees at our daddy-daughter dance. We have already planned some holiday events there later this year."

There is an added benefit for city employees. While other branches of the city couldn't locate into the building based on CDBG stipulations, Hanson said the city's human resources department has found the location a perfect new home.

"When you are dealing with HR issues, you need privacy and a place where employees can go and discuss things of a sensitive nature," he said. "This created a win-win situation. We have more space at city hall, and HR has the privacy it needs."

Without the CDBG funds, Hanson said it would have taken much longer for the project to get off the ground.

"CDBG dollars help communities like ours with economic development and infrastructure improvements," Hanson said. "Cities across Tennessee face problems with revenue; we are essentially looking at property taxes and sales taxes. We have to leverage funds with grants to make these big projects happen. When you are able to apply for these CDBG dollars, you can use a local match and fund a sizable project. There are wide-ranging ways to spend this money. It helps communities like Covington make necessary improvements and improve quality of life. Cutting these funds would be detrimental to Covington and cities like Covington."



Philadelphia's old city hall was damaged beyond repair when a wind shear caused the collapse of its roof in 2013.



Using funds from the CDBG program, the city of Philadelphia has finally started construction on a new city hall after the first was severely damaged by a wind shear. As plans have progressed, the city hall structure has grown to allow room for city offices, meeting rooms for city leaders and the public, as well as housing the local volunteer fire department and county ambulance service.