



## TML legislative process underway for 2020 session

The TML policy process is underway for proposed legislative initiatives for the second session of the 111th General Assembly. City officials were asked to submit their proposals by Sept. 6.

The TML Policy Committee will meet on Oct. 16, in the TML building located at 226 Anne Dallas Dudley Boulevard in Nashville.

Any municipality submitting a proposed legislative initiative must attend the meeting and present its initiative to the TML Policy Committee.

The TML Policy Committee is comprised of nine members: the eight elected district directors and the current 2nd vice president of the TML Board of Directors. The 2nd vice president serves as chairman and all nine members of the committee have voting privileges.

The committee will meet to consider and rank only those legislative initiatives that have been fully completed and presented to the committee for consideration. Any initiative that lacks the required signatures or, otherwise, fails to meet the requirements will not be considered by the committee.

Only “fully completed” proposals that meet the following requirements are being considered

- The proposed initiative must be submitted using the online Proposed Legislative Initiative Form, provided by TML.

- All sections of the Proposed Legislative Initiative Form must be completed, including: summary of the problem, description of the proposed remedy, and a statement of the anticipated benefits to municipalities. In addition, municipalities are encouraged to submit, either by reference or by separate copy, background or supplemental information in support of their submission. A member-municipality may submit more than one proposed initiative; however, a separate form must be completed for each submission.

- The Proposed Legislative Initiative Form must be signed by at least three eligible local officials of the sponsoring municipality. However, if the municipality’s governing body is comprised of four or fewer members, then only two signatures are required. *See POLICY on Page 5*

## House elects new leadership in Special Session

It’s official. Cameron Sexton was elected by the members of the Tennessee House of Representatives to be the Speaker of the House, during a special called legislative session in August.

Sexton was elected 94-0, with two democrats abstaining.

Sexton, 48, is currently serving his fifth term in the state House.

Last year, he was elected to the position of GOP Caucus Chair for the House Republicans. Rep. Jeremy Faison was elected by the GOP Caucus to fill that leadership position.

Other changes in leadership include Rep. Curtis Johnson who was appointed by Speaker Sexton to deputy speaker, replacing Rep. Matthew Hill.

Other members of the GOP leadership team remained as appointed by former Speaker Casada. They are Bill Dunn, Speaker Pro Tempore; and William Lamberth, Republican Leader.

For the most part, Sexton left most of the committee assignments made by Casada intact. However, there were some notable changes including naming Rep. Gary Hicks as the chairman of the Finance subcommittee, replacing



Cameron Sexton  
Speaker of the House



Rep. Curtis Johnson  
Deputy Speaker

Rep. Andy Holt, who moved to chairman of the Agriculture subcommittee. The speaker also created a new Appropriations subcommittee to be chaired by Rep. Matthew Hill.

Other changes include:

- Rep. Robin Smith, chair, Insurance committee;
- Rep. Ron Travis, chair, Businesses subcommittee;
- Rep. Ryan Williams, chair, Life and Health subcommittee;
- Rep. David Hawk, chair, TennCare subcommittee;
- Rep. Bob Ramsey, chair, Departments and Agencies subcommittee; and



Rep. Jeremy Faison  
GOP Caucus Chair

- Rep. Jay Reedy, chair, Public Service, and Employees subcommittee.

## 30 years later, ADA plays important role in municipal employment, public services

By KATE COIL

*TML Communications Specialist*

Nearly 30 years after it was signed into law, there are often still questions and concerns surrounding compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Signed into law in 1990, the ADA seeks to prohibit discrimination based on ability. An amended version of the ADA was signed into law in 2009 with updated definitions and protections.

There are numerous ways in which municipalities must comply with ADA ranging from making public transportation and sidewalks accessible to providing alternative forms of communication at city hall and public meetings to municipal hiring processes to any federally-funded programs. Those who are discriminated against can seek financial, legal, and injunctive relief against municipalities.

For many municipalities, ADA issues can be divided into two major categories: being compliant as an employer and being compliant as a provider of government services.

### ADA AND EMPLOYMENT

Richard Stokes, human resources consultant with MTAS, said that while many feel there is no discrimination against the disabled in their community, there is evidence to the contrary. The amount of complaints filed related to disability issues with the state’s Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have been on the rise.



Municipalities must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) both as employers and as providers of public services.

Title I of the ADA states that “employers are prohibited from discriminating against otherwise qualified individuals with a disability who can perform the essential functions of the job with or without an accommodation.” Stokes said this extends to hiring or discharging employees as well as how employees are paid and trained.

“The ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life

activity or that person has a record of such an impairment,” Stokes said. “If a person has been treated for a disability or impairment, they then have a record of that disability or impairment and are covered under the act. People with cosmetic disfigurement like scars or burns and those who are missing limbs may be able to go about their lives just fine, but we treat them differently. Because we treat them differently, they are regarded as being impaired and are

*See ADA on Page 5*

## Collierville announces plans to phase out glass recycling amid rising costs

BY JENNIFER CASEY  
*Collierville PIO*

Quite simply, recycling is just not as easy as it used to be.

Global markets are not accepting as many recycled materials as they have in the past, costs are rising for local recycling programs, and certain materials such as glass are causing contamination issues.

In January 2018, China implemented a policy that prohibits the import of certain solid wastes into their country; the policy also included an extremely stringent contamination standard.

As the largest export for recyclables generated in the U.S., China’s waste import restrictions caused recycling costs to rise in municipal recycling programs, including Collierville.

“We went from receiving \$25 a ton for our recyclables to paying \$80 a ton to dispose of the material – and the costs are going up every



Collierville joins other Tennessee cities by no longer recycling glass.

year. In comparison, we dispose of garbage for \$25 a ton,” said Bill Kilp, Collierville director of public services.

Recycling processing fees are

based on weight. A material such as glass, accounts for 5 percent of the recycle material volume collected, yet 25 percent of the weight. The

*See GLASS on Page 2*

## Proper communication vital to serving needs of deaf citizens

By KATE COIL

When she begins her talks with law enforcement throughout the state of Tennessee, Poppy Steele often begins with a story about a girl named Molly.

Most people don’t understand the story the first time Steele tells it; she uses sign language to relate the tale of Molly’s life. When no one in the room can understand what Steele is telling them, she speaks the story aloud as she signs.

“My name is Molly,” Steele said. “I’m a six-year-old little girl. I love the color purple. I love Skittles. I love ponies. My mom is a drug addict who sells me in exchange for drug money. I can’t tell anyone because I have no family who signs. I have no friends who signs. None of my teachers sign. If help does come, they don’t bring an interpreter.”

Steele said Molly’s story isn’t uncommon among members of the deaf community.

“The truth is, there are Molly’s all over the state of Tennessee,” Steele said to attendees at the TML Annual Conference in Memphis. “Statistics say that 50 percent of deaf children are abused, but the limited studies have been done with college students. Only 5 percent of deaf children make it to college. Of that 5 percent, half say they have been abused. If you extrapolate, the percentage of that other 95 percent of deaf children who are abused is going to be even higher. I’ve heard statistics as high as 90 percent of deaf children experiencing some kind of abuse.”

Additionally, one in four deaf women are the victim of domestic violence and one in three deaf women have been the victims of sexual assault. Incidents of neglect and physical abuse are also 25 percent higher among deaf children than hearing children.

Growing up in a household with two deaf parents led Steele to become the founder and board member of Sign Club Co. Along with her husband, a police officer, she often works with police departments across the state to help with communication.

“Unlike with many disabilities, there aren’t many warning signs that will tell you if someone is deaf,” Steele said. “They may have cochlear implants or hearing aids, but if someone has long



Poppy Steele

hair you wouldn’t see those. The deaf are just like normal people; they just need an accommodation. If you walk into a room full of deaf people and you are the only one who can hear, you are the one who needs an accommodation. Everyone else is speaking a language you don’t understand. Deafness is a different kind of disability. Deafness is only a disability if we make it so. Deafness is about a lack of access to communication.”

Deafness is one of the most common birth defects reported in the U.S. with one in every 1,000 babies born deaf. Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has some sort of hearing loss. Despite this, Steele said accommodations often aren’t made for the deaf or hard of hearing.

“I have found that many places are fine paying for a ramp or setting aside a parking space for the handicapped, but you change that request to providing a sign language interpreter, all of a sudden there is an argument,” she said. “This is something people don’t want to provide an accommodation for.”

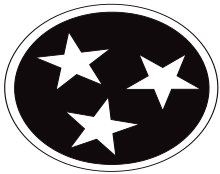
Of a recent survey of police departments in Tennessee, Steele said 8 percent reported attending a basic ASL training, 56 percent had access to ASL hardware or software, and 39 percent reported using interpreters to deliver Miranda Rights.

All departments have access to live ASL sign interpreters through organizations like Sign Club and the Tennessee Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (TNRID). One of the programs Steele’s company provides helps train officers to interact with the deaf community.

Approximately 98 percent of deaf people receive no education in American Sign Language (ASL). While more than 90 percent of children born deaf are

*See DEAF on Page 7*

NEWS  
ACROSS  
TENNESSEE



BARTLETT

Surface Dynamics will invest nearly \$10 million and create 110 jobs in the next five years by expanding its operations in Bartlett. The company has operated in Bartlett since 2010 and is part of the medical division of UnitedCoatings Group, a worldwide leader in providing coatings, 3D printing, and solutions to orthopedic original equipment manufacturers. As part of its expansion in Bartlett, Surface Dynamics plans to hire office, engineering, and production jobs.

CLARKSVILLE

The city of Clarksville has received a \$2,500 AARP Community Challenge Grant for a wayfinding signage project that seeks to promote and increase pedestrian activity in the downtown area. The grant was part of nearly \$1.6 million AARP distributed to 159 communities nationwide as part of their Livable Communities Initiative, which aims to improve communities for aging residents. The project, designed by Clarksville Parks and Recreation and Walk Bike Clarksville, will provide new signage directing walkers and bicyclists to destinations in the City’s core. The signs will be placed near parking areas and high-traffic intersections, offering estimated walk times to various sites. This information is designed to assure pedestrians that their walk will be manageable.

CLEVELAND

Local and state officials recently broke ground on the new Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans’ Home in Cleveland. Construction will soon begin on the single-story 108-bed intermediate and skilled care nursing facility consisting of six 18-bedroom residential houses that will span 110,000 square feet. Construction is estimated to be complete by summer 2021. Efforts have been underway for 16 years to locate a state veterans’ home in Cleveland for the nearly 50,000 veterans who live in the six-county area. The Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans’ Home will be the fifth state-operated veterans’ home in Tennessee.

GALLATIN

The city of Gallatin has acquired nearly 70 acres of property as part of a \$2.1 million effort to preserve land and guide community development. The city purchased around 50 acres on Coles Ferry Road, 14 acres at Sugartree Lane, and 2.8 acres on East Main Street, all of which are now being maintained by the city’s parks and recreation department. The 50-acre property was formerly home to Langley Hall and has an existing house that could be used as a training center, museum, or event space. The East Main Street property also preserves an area of where the Battle of Gallatin was fought. The purchases come at a time when the city is losing about seven football fields’ worth of cropland to development and seeing nine football fields worth of area become paved surfaces. The property purchases are to help ensure that new development also includes public amenities and green spaces.

MT. PLEASANT

The Mt. Pleasant Fire Department recently purchased a new fire engine/rescue apparatus that is equipped with 1,500 gallon-per-minute HALE pump and on-board tank with a capacity of 300 gallons. The apparatus can both fight fires and serve on the scene of medical incidents, motor vehicle accidents,

and pulls a firefighting foam trailer supplied through a partnership with the Maury County Office of Emergency Management and local chemical manufacturing company Solvay. The city was able to finance the purchase of the new equipment through a 35 percent grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and borrowed a low-interest loan for the remaining cost. The new engine will be stored at Fire Station No. 2 on Main Street until a building recently purchased by the city on Bond Street can be retrofitted to serve as an additional fire hall.

OAK RIDGE

The city of Oak Ridge has won the Sister Cities International 2019 Innovation Award for Arts and Culture for a community with a population of 25,001-100,000 for its renovation of the International Friendship Bell of Peace Pavilion at A.K. Bissell Park. As part of Oak Ridge’s 30-year student exchange with its sister city in Japan, middle school children from Naka-shi visited the site in 2018 while it was still under construction. The students, along with their local hosts, were able to see the beginnings of the new home for the bell, which will be ringing in Oak Ridge for 1,000 years to come. The competition, which is open to over 500 sister city programs nationwide, recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding individuals and community sister city programs that are promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

PARSONS

Good Sportsman Marketing (GSM Outdoors) will invest \$860,000 and create 34 jobs at a new location in Parsons. The hunting and sport goods manufacturing company will produce and assemble wildlife feeders and box blinds used in hunting applications at the new facility. With this new location, GSM Outdoors will be better equipped to serve the eastern U.S. GSM Outdoors, through its subsidiaries, develops, manufactures, and distributes outdoor sports products. Its products include digital infrared motion detector scouting cameras, laser sights, and super-bright LED, halogen, and krypton lighting products. The company was founded in 1999 and is based in Grand Prairie, Texas.

SEVIERVILLE

A new 50-acre water park called “Soaky Mountain” will open its doors in Sevierville by summer 2020. The \$90 million water park is under construction and is estimated to bring an additional 100,000 guests to the area with an average annual attendance of 400,000 visitors. The water park will be home to more than 11 water attractions designed for guests of all ages, including a 35,000-square-foot wave pool generating waves up to six-feet high and a themed kids’ play-and-spray area featuring an activity pool with slides. The park plans to regularly open from mid-May until August with select openings in September. The park will incorporate the natural beauty of the Smoky Mountains into its design.

Collierville to stop glass recycling

GLASS from Page 1 town of Collierville paid \$237,500 for recycling processing fees in fiscal year 2019; \$60,000 of the fees were due to glass.

According to *Recycling Today*, “Glass that is collected and sorted through curbside programs is ‘highly contaminated,’ making the materials useless.”

By the time the recycled glass reaches the processing facility, it has broken into many small pieces. These microscopic glass particles mix with other more marketable materials such as paper, cardboard, and plastics, which reduces the value of those materials and causes damage to the equipment at the processing facility.

“Due to the difficulties processing glass and the minimal value of the product, many recycling processing facilities across the country are no longer receiving glass as an acceptable recyclable commodity,” said John Fox, Collierville operations manager of Public Services. “If facilities are

SMYRNA

The family of a Blue Angel pilot killed in an accident three years ago has donated one of his flight suits to the town of Smyrna in recognition of the community’s overwhelming support following the tragedy. The widow of Marine Capt. Jeff Kuss sent the Blue Angels’ flight suit to the community to thank Smyrna for how they have honored her late husband and supported her family after his death during air show practice in the town in 2016. The town also unveiled a memorial to Kuss in 2018 and raised \$1 million for his family. The town will display the suit at its Outdoor Adventure Center, which is near the memorial. The center provides educational information and is often a site of local school field trips. It has an exhibit on Kuss and the Blue Angels as well as Tennessee military and aviation history.

SHELBYVILLE

American whiskey brand Uncle Nearest is set to open its Nearest Green Distillery in Shelbyville on the former sign of Sand Creek Farms. The 27-acre property is and whiskey’s company are both named after the first known African-American master distiller Nathan “Nearest” Green, the mentor of Jack Daniels. Phase one of the distillery project includes a retail store, bottling house, and Tennessee Walking Horse Experience honoring the more than 50 championship walking horses who reside on the farm site. The facility will also include a welcome center, tasting area with a horseshoe-shaped bar, and a covered patio linking to Toppy’s, a bar named after the CEO’s horse.

SPRINGFIELD

The city of Springfield recently opened its first splash pad in time for the summer. The city has been without a public swimming pool for more than 20 years and found the splash pad as a more cost-efficient way to let residents beat the heat. The project includes the main splash pad with accompanying restrooms and a picnic shelter. The ribbon cutting for the splash pad was held in conjunction with Springfield’s Bicentennial Celebration.

TULLAHOMA

TE Connectivity will expand its operations in Tullahoma, investing more than \$15.7 million and creating approximately 100 new jobs. With this expansion, TE Connectivity plans on updating its current facility in Tullahoma and adding new equipment to its operations. The site expansion will add approximately 100 new jobs, including assembly and molding operators, maintenance technicians, engineers and supervisors. The Tullahoma site produces connectors that empower heavy construction, mining and agriculture equipment, as well as commercial vehicles. TE Connectivity, headquartered in Switzerland, is a \$14 billion global industrial technology leader that manufactures connectors and sensors that can be found in just about any vehicle, home, factory or office building in the world. TE employs 80,000 people at sites in 140 countries. The company has operated in

no longer accepting our materials, we cannot continue collecting the items.”

Moving forward, glass will no longer be accepted or collected as a recyclable material through the town of Collierville’s curbside collection program. The sanitation division will begin working toward removing glass from the curbside recyclable material collection program and plans to have 100 percent of the glass removed from the waste stream within a four-month period.

The environmental impact of disposing glass in a landfill is minimal. Glass is made from three natural ingredients: sand, limestone, and soda ash – a very abundant material that has few end users in the West Tennessee area.

“When glass breaks down and is removed from its usable market, it remains safe, stable, and releases no harmful chemicals into the soil,” Fox said. “It has been shown that even when glass isn’t recycled, it does not harm the environment.”

Ground broken on new hospital in Jefferson City



The Summit Medical Group broke ground on a \$5.5 million primary care medical facility and office building in Jefferson City. The 32,000-square-foot building will house 11 doctors and other medical professionals and provide 50 percent more room for patient care than the current Tennessee Valley Primary Care Facility located on the campus of Jefferson Memorial Hospital. Knoxville-based Joseph Construction will build the new facility.

Gleason receives caboose donation for town park



The city of Gleason has received the donation of a CSX caboose from the CSX Railroad. The caboose has been transported to stationary tracks prepared to display the caboose, which will serve as a reminder of the city’s ties to the railroad industry. The Gleason Downtown Revitalization Committee helped coordinate the delivery of the caboose to a set of specially-made tracks near the city’s Gazelle Grounds on Church Street. Members of the revitalization committee and employees of the West Kentucky-Tennessee Railroad helped prepare the track for display and situate the caboose.

Columbia cuts ribbon on sports complex expansion



Officials with the city of Columbia recently cut the ribbon on a \$6.5 million expansion to the city’s Ridley Sports Complex. The improvements include seven new playing fields, new concessions, additional parking and a more than \$1 million tournament headquarters that will allow the city to expand its Midstate Classic softball tournament, which brings in between \$10 and \$12 million in economic impact to the city. In addition to the 10 softball fields, the park now has seven fields adaptable for soccer, lacrosse, football, ultimate Frisbee, and rugby as well as a championship field with seating for 1,200 guests.

Dickson council honors internship participants



Dickson Mayor Don L. Weiss Jr. and the Dickson City Council recently honored local students who job shadowed members of the city’s building and codes enforcement department, serving as interns with the city staff. The students participated in a work-based learning program studying fields including architecture, engineering, and construction. The program both gives students hands-on experience and allowed the city to work with local students who may seek employment with the city upon graduation. From left to right: DCHS Work-Based Learning instructor Nikki Akins, DCHS student Aurelio Rincon, CWSH student Dalton Harper, Mayor Weiss, DCHS student Grayson Cochran, DCHS student Thor Tucker, CWSH Work-Based Learning instructor Veronica Walton, and (not pictured) DCHS student Austin Berry.

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Best Practices Series

Infrastructure

Decherd Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Improvement Project - NISSAN

# Decherd, Franklin County partner with state to invest in infrastructure

BY DR. BRIDGET JONES  
*jones-bridget consulting group*

The city of Decherd and Franklin County are located in southern middle Tennessee along the I-24 southern automotive corridor with three auto assembly plants and three engine plants within a 50-mile radius.

Decherd is the junction of major railroad and state highway connections that offer strategic transportation and logistical access for suppliers and distribution of engine products. Since the early 1990's, Decherd has seen unprecedented development with the location of Nissan Motor Manufacturing Corporation (NMMC) engine production facilities. This major industrial location has brought new residents and the promise of additional future investment by NMMC, along with the need for major infrastructure investments by the city and county governments.

In 1993, NMMC began construction of Phase I of the Nissan Decherd powertrain manufacturing facility and opened the plant in May of 1997 with 2,500 employees.

In 2014, NMMC began construction of the Phase II Infiniti powertrain manufacturing facility adjacent to the existing plant. It is projected to bring an additional \$190,970,000 in private investment by the company and create an additional 450 production jobs and 50 administrative jobs.

In 2017, Decherd and Franklin County officials began work with NMMC to prepare for Phase III that includes the addition of three 4-cylinder and 6-cylinder production lines and bring an additional 400 jobs to the facility. In 2017, NMMC reported the Decherd plant's annual production capacity at 1.4 million engines and crankshafts, along with 456,000 cylinder block castings, supplying 17 Nissan and Infinity vehicle models.

As a large employer in the fast-growing automotive sector and an instrumental contributor to economic development in the state and region, it has been imperative that adequate infrastructure be available to accommodate NMMC expansion needs and requirements. Since the first announcement, officials from the community and TNECD have met regularly with NMMC managers to address current and future needs of the manufacturer.

rent and future needs of the manufacturer.

The city of Decherd, Franklin County, TNECD, and multiple state government and federal departments have successfully partnered to invest in necessary infrastructure including site development, access roads and highways, water and wastewater infrastructure and workforce development services to position the town, county and south central region for future economic and community development opportunities. The construction of new and expanded wastewater treatment facilities for the Phase II expansion was one essential part of these strategic investments.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

In 2014, community officials began the process to develop plans and identify sources of funding for a new wastewater treatment system to meet current demand and accommodate future capacity requirements. The city of Decherd determined the need to expand their current wastewater treatment plant to a hydraulic treatment capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day to accommodate existing and future wastewater flows.

As future requirements were being determined, the city worked with TNECD and the South Central Tennessee Development District to identify funding sources and develop requests using Community Development Block Grant, TNECD FastTrack, Economic Development Administration, Appalachian Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development, and local government funding sources. This public-private partnership positioned the community to secure funding and begin to make systematic infrastructure improvements in a relatively short timeframe.

In 2016, design and engineering for the Decherd Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project was finalized with plans and specifications to upgrade existing facilities and equipment and add a plant expansion. This project will increase the capacity of wastewater treatment systems and successfully accommodate the projected increase in wastewater discharge due to Decherd's rapid growth, annexation and the NMMC's Phase II expansion.

## TNECD INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS

*Adequate infrastructure is a fundamental component of successful economic and community development. TNECD provides leadership and administration for state and federal infrastructure programs directly and also works in conjunction with local and federal partners.*

*The TNECD Community Development Block Grant program provides grant funding for community and economic development projects including water and sewer system improvements and extensions, owner-occupied housing rehabilitation, health and safety projects, and commercial façade improvements.*

*The TNECD FastTrack Infrastructure program provides grants to local communities for public infrastructure improvements and must be used for specific infrastructure investments benefiting one or more companies committed to creating new jobs and/or making new capital investments.*

*The USDA Rural Development Tennessee Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant program in Tennessee provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and stormwater drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.*

*The Appalachian Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership that works with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for economic development and improved quality of life. Through ARC, Tennessee is able to award grants each year for economic and community development projects in the 52 counties in middle and east Tennessee served by the ARC.*

*The Economic Development Administration - Public Works program empowers distressed communities to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment.*

*For more information visit the TNECD Community and Rural Development.*



The city of Decherd, Franklin County, TNECD, and multiple state government and federal departments have successfully partnered to invest in necessary infrastructure. As a large employer in the fast-growing automotive sector and an instrumental contributor to economic development in the state and region, it has been imperative that adequate infrastructure be available to accommodate Nissan's expansion needs and requirements

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Nissan Decherd powertrain manufacturing facility is the largest private employer in Franklin County and the South Central Tennessee region. Since 1997, Nissan's plant has been building reliable, high-quality engines while providing secure and high-paying jobs for residents and supporting community organizations. NMMC Decherd provides engines for all Nissan and Infiniti vehicles built at the company's vehicle assembly plants in Smyrna, Tennessee and Canton, Mississippi. In 2013, the plant began supplying electric motors to support U.S. production of the all-electric Nissan LEAF.

## TOTAL 1997-2017 ECONOMIC IMPACTS INCLUDE:

- 20-year Investment \$1,000,000,000
- 20-year engines assembled 10,000,000
- Models Supplied 17 (Nissan and Infiniti vehicles)
- 2017 Employment 2,500
- 2017 Payroll \$63,000,000
- 2017 Community Impact \$200,000 (contributions to local organizations)
- 

## PROJECT FUNDING

TOTAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT FUNDING	\$11,200,000
(Projections for federal and state grant funding, local investments)	
• Community Development Block Grant	\$400,000
• Appalachian Regional Commission Grant	\$500,000
• TNECD FastTrack Infrastructure Development Grant	\$500,000
• Economic Development Administration Grant	\$1,000,000
• USDA Rural Development Loan	\$5,000,000
• City of Decherd and Franklin County Local Match	\$3,800,000

## PROJECT LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERS

City of Decherd  
Franklin County  
Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development  
South Central Tennessee Development District  
United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development  
Appalachian Regional Commission  
Economic Development Administration  
Nissan Motors Manufacturing Corporation

For project contact information visit the City of Decherd website at <http://www.decherd.net/>.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

**P a t r i c i a “Pat” Bearden** has been appointed as the new executive director of Rippavilla, Inc. The Rippavilla Plantation was recently donated to the city of Spring Hill by the non-profit Rippavilla, Inc., which continues to run the day-to-day operations of the historic home and grounds. A Spring Hill resident, Bearden is a realtor with Keller Williams Realty and has previously worked as a chief financial officer and vice president with Farmers and Merchants Bank. She holds a master’s in business administration from Middle Tennessee State University and serves on several local boards.



Patricia “Pat” Bearden

**R o g e r F r a n k s**, a 25-year veteran with the city of Savannah, has been promoted to assistant city manager. Franks began his career with the city in 1994 as a codes enforcement officer. In 1998, he became the city’s first community development director when codes enforcement was combined with planning and zoning. Franks also served several months in 2005 and 2006 as interim city manager prior to a permanent replacement being hired. Franks said he is looking forward to his new duties and will be available to help the next community development director transition into the job.



Roger Franks

honor. Smith has served as a municipal judge in Clarksville for more than 20 years and helped create the association so there would be a network for learning and sharing best practices among municipal judges. Smith also served as an associate professor of graduate educational law and ethics at Bethel University. Smith earned a bachelor’s degree in education and a master’s degree in secondary education from Middle Tennessee State University. He also holds a doctorate in administration from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and earned his law degree from the Nashville School of Law.



Charles Smith

New state commissioner of Commerce, Insurance named

Hodgen Mainda has been selected as the new commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance. Mainda currently serves as the vice president for community development at the Electric Power Board (EPB) in Chattanooga which is the first provider of Gigabit internet in the country. Mainda is also a member of the Leadership Tennessee Class of 2019 and a 2018 graduate of the Harvard Business School Young American Leaders Program. A native of Nairobi, Kenya, Mainda, moved to Tennessee in

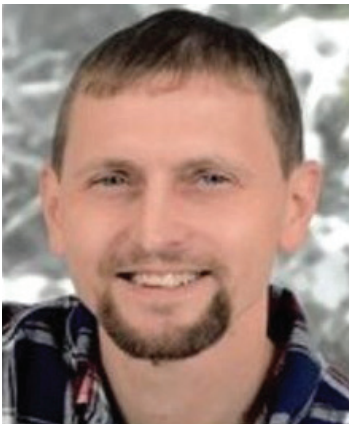


Hodgen Mainda

1997 to study at Middle Tennessee State University. He is a graduate of the University of Eastern Africa and currently resides in Chattanooga.

Clarksville mourns tragic loss of municipal employee

A Clarksville Street Department employee was killed Sept. 2, 2019, in a hit-and-run incident. Jeffrey Allan Prosecky Jr., 34, was honored the following Thursday by the Clarksville City Council for his work for the city. “Our city workers are links in a chain, and we lost one of those links this week,” Councilman Tim Chandler said. Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts said the incident had touched every member of the city staff. “It’s a sad day for us at the City of Clarksville,” Pitts said. “We lost a valued member of our employee family, and someone lost a husband and a son. We all are full of grief today.” Prosecky was born on Dec. 25, 1984, in Anchorage, Alaska, the son of Jeffrey Allan Prosecky Sr. and Tina Marie Baggett. In addition to his parents, he is survived by



Jeffrey Prosecky Jr.

his wife, Ericka Bone Prosecky; his brothers, Joshua and Justin Prosecky; and a sister, Katie Alder. The employees of Clarksville Street Department served as honorary pallbearers at Prosecky’s funeral. Law enforcement is investigating the incident that led to Prosecky’s death.

**J u l i a B r u c k** has been named as the new director of communications for the office of Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett. Bruck has more than a decade of experience in various media roles, most recently as a media consultant to state and local brands. She also held roles including director of digital entertainment for THEIL Audio/AURORA Nashville and in various roles with television stations in Nashville; Carterville, Ill.; Lubbock, Texas; Casper, Wyo.; and Jackson Hole, Wyo. She holds a bachelor’s degree in communication from Santa Clara University. She has lived in Nashville since 2012.



Julia Bruck

**J e n n i f e r M i l e l e** has been appointed to fill the Mt. Juliet City Commission District 4 seat recently vacated by Brian Abston after he moved out of the district. Milele will hold the seat until an election in November 2020. Milele is a freelance graphic designer and is also employed as a retail coverage merchandizer for Acosta Sales and Marketing. She is a 35-year resident of Mt. Juliet who has been an advocate for the Belinda City neighborhood.



Jennifer Milele

**M i k e U s e l t o n** has been named the new building inspector for the city of Humboldt. Uselton has been working part-time with the city’s permitting department and is certified with the state as a residential building inspector. Uselton is also working toward becoming a state-certified commercial building inspector. Uselton will take over building inspector duties from Gibson County Building Inspector Ricky Bailey, who has been filling in on an interim basis for the city of Humboldt while the city has searched for a new building inspector.



Mike Uselton

**J e n n i f e r C a s e y** has been named as the new public information officer for the city of Collierville. Casey has been employed with the city as a part-time writer and receptionist since 2013 and was promoted to emerging media specialist for the city in 2015, which consists of writing content for both traditional and online media as well as graphic design, photography, and videography. Casey stepped into the role of interim PIO for the city after its previous and first PIO Mark Heuberger left the position. Casey holds a bachelor’s degree in journalism with a concentration in advertising from the University of Memphis.



Jennifer Casey

**M a r c P e n d l e y** is marking 25 years with the town of Collierville. The town accounting manager began his career with Collierville in 1994, shortly after earning his CPA. Pendley was one of the first accountants employed by the town and today is one of two accounting managers who works for the town. Pendley earned his accounting degree from the University of North Carolina in Asheville and previously worked for a small accounting firm and for Terminix.



Marc Pendley

**K i m W a l l a c e** has retired from her position as Dover City Administrator and chief of police after six years in the position, 18 years with the city, and a total 30 years of service in local government. Wallace began her career as a dispatcher and jailor for the Stewart County Sheriff’s Department in 1989. When the Dover Police Department hired her in 1991, she became the first woman on the force. She was promoted to assistant chief in 1999 and chief in 2000. Wallace holds an associate’s degree in criminal justice and a bachelor’s degree in public management from Austin Peay State University and a master’s degree in public administration from Murray State University.



Kim Wallace

Brentwood Fire Dept. garners international accreditation



The Brentwood Fire and Rescue Department has received Internationally Accredited Agency status from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) for meeting the criteria established through the accreditation program. Brentwood Fire and Rescue is one of only 250 agencies worldwide to achieve this status with the CFAI and the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. (CPSE), and one of only six in Tennessee. The Brentwood Fire and Rescue Department was initially accredited in 2014 and reaccredited this year.

No loan is too large or too small



Martin recently closed a \$1,350,000 capital outlay note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) issued to finance various public works projects. Martin has used TMBF’s various loan programs 30 times since 1987 and has borrowed more than \$25 million during that time. Pictured are Kelly Wilson, city clerk; Mayor Randy Brundige; and Tommy Green, TMBF marketing representative.



McKenzie recently closed a \$2.7 million fixed-rate loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) to finance energy saving improvements throughout the city. McKenzie has used TMBF’s various loan programs since 1987. Pictured are Jennifer Waldrup, city recorder; Mayor Jill Holland; and Tommy Green, TMBF marketing representative.

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STATE BRIEFS

One in three Tennessee teachers said they would choose another career if given the chance, according to the recent Tennessee Educator Survey. The survey found that a third of the state’s teachers would leave their job if presented a higher-paying job in another field. One third of teachers also wish they had not initially chosen teaching as a career. Despite this, three-fourths of Tennessee teachers said they feel positive about the way their school is run and nearly 90 percent said they would recommend their schools to parents. The survey comes at a time when the number of people entering the education field is on the decline. Despite the \$71 million investment on the state level to increase teacher pay, the average Tennessee teacher earns about \$53,980 – well below the national average of \$60,477. Minimum teacher pay in the state is at approximately \$36,000. For more on the survey, visit <http://educator-survey.tnkl2.gov>

Tennessee is the second friendliest state in the nation, according to travel research website Big 7 Travel. A poll of 1.5 million people found that Tennessee ranked second out of 50, coming in behind Minnesota as the friendliest state in the nation. Tennessee’s charm, hospitality, and lively music scene were all reasons why participants gave the state a high ranking.

Unemployment increased across Tennessee for the second month in a row, according to newly released data from Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Reports from July 2019 indicate that 93 of the state’s 95 counties saw an increase in unemployment while two remained the same. Of the state’s counties, 51 now have an unemployment rate of 5 percent or higher while 44 have an unemployment rate of less than 5 percent. Williamson and Davidson counties tied for the lowest unemployment rate at 3.2 percent – though both saw a 0.2 percent increase in unemployment. Hancock County remained the county with the highest rate of unemployment at 8.2 percent, increasing half a percentage point over the previous month.

Tennessee is a finalist in four categories for national awards for information technology services that will be announced during a ceremony in October in Nashville. The National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) selected 30 finalists across 10 categories for the State IT Recognition Awards. The Tennes-

TML policy process underway for 2020

**POLICY** from Page 1  
“eligible local official” means any member of the governing body of the sponsoring city and the city/town manager or administrator. As we have moved to an online form, completing the boxes for affirmation of local officials at the bottom will satisfy the signature requirement.  
Only those proposals that are submitted on the online form and by the Sept. 6 deadline will be considered.  
If a municipality submits a fully completed proposed initiative but is unable to send a representative to present the submission to the committee, then the committee will send that municipality’s proposal to the TML Legislative Committee without recommendation.  
The committee will rank all of the qualifying proposed initiatives in order of preference, as determined by a vote of the committee. The committee’s final ranking of proposed initiatives will be submitted to the TML Legislative Committee for consideration.

see Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service’s Electronic Clinical Record was nominated in the business process innovations category, the Department of Revenue’s Rip, Replace, Revitalize Project was nominated in the digital government: government to business category, TennCare Connect was nominated for the digital government: government to citizen category, and the Department of Correction’s facial recognition system project was nominated in the emerging and innovative technologies category.

The Tennessee Department of Health has reported six cases of suspected serious respiratory disease linked to vaping devices. The six cases are among 215 cases of illness linked to e-cigarette use across 25 states recently reported to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after three deaths linked to vaping devices were reported. THD is asking health care providers across the state to report any cases of suspected serious respiratory illness they treat among patients who use electronic cigarettes or other vaping devices. Patients have had symptoms including cough, shortness of breath and fatigue, with symptoms growing worse over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Other symptoms may include fever, chest pain, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Most of the cases are among adolescents and young adults. TDH previously issued a public health advisory in 2018 related to the risks posed by electronic nicotine products. For additional information, visit [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm).

ADA plays important role in municipal employment, public services

ADA from Page 1  
protected under the law.”  
Stokes said that having a written description of a job can be one way to legally define what a job’s “essential functions” are.  
“If a person spends 80 percent of their time doing a task that is an essential function of the job,” he said. “Have in the written job descriptions what the essential functions of the job are. If the Department of Labor comes to you with a complaint, the first thing they will ask for is the description of the job.”  
If the essential function of a job has to be eliminated for a person to accept the position, it is not considered a reasonable accommodation. An employee who is disabled should also be expected to produce the same quality and quantity of work as one who is not.  
There are three major types of accommodations. The first is adjustments to the job application process that allows individuals to apply. The second is a modification or adjustment to a work environment or the manner or circumstance in which the position is held. The final accommodation is an adjustment that would enable an employee with a disability to enjoy all the benefits other employees enjoy.  
Making a job accessible begins from the moment of advertising the job. A person can request an accommodation at any time during the process from the time they apply to the job until after they have accepted a position.  
“Individuals have to be able to read the notices, access and apply for the job,” Stokes said. If a person in a wheelchair wants to apply for a job, can they even get in the building? You have to ask if the place where the interviews are being held are accessible. You have to think about how a visually impaired person can read the job posting or do any testing for a position.”  
Stokes said there is often confusion when it comes to making proper accommodations within ADA guidelines. Statistics show that 35

Two new programs to help workforce development in rural TN communities

Two new programs will help improve workforce development in the state’s rural and economically distressed counties.  
The state of Tennessee has received a \$1.4 million grant to create and expand apprenticeship programs across the state. The funds will be awarded to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) in the next three years through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Apprenticeship State Expansion grant.  
“I am committed to expanding work-based learning across the state, and I’m pleased that USDOL is partnering with us in these efforts,” said Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee.  
Employers continue to face obstacles in attracting and retaining workers with in-demand skills. Tennessee’s challenge is to identify effective workforce solutions and collaborative approaches that benefit both job seekers and employers.  
Register Apprenticeship programs are a proven strategy for developing a talent pipeline of qualified workers for employers and industries and providing opportunity and nationally recognized credentials for participants. They are created and sustained through strong partnerships.  
A key part of the strategy will be to engage TBR institutions in forming group apprenticeship models. This approach will encourage small and medium-sized companies to partner in apprenticeship programs. By joining forces, companies would have a lower investment and still realize increased workforce outcomes.  
TDLWD leadership, along with state partners, will develop a strategy in the coming weeks that



The Mobile American Job Center is one of the many tools the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development uses for outreach in rural areas.

will set forth a new era for apprenticeships and workforce development in Tennessee.  
Additionally, Tennessee Workforce Development Board recently approved a \$3 million investment to support Gov. Lee’s rural initiatives.  
The Rural Initiative Funding Opportunity Announcement (RIFOA) will make monies available to local workforce development boards over the next three years. Tennessee’s distressed, at-risk, and rural counties face workforce challenges that do not exist in the state’s urban and metropolitan areas.  
Tennessee’s distressed, at-risk, and rural counties face workforce challenges that do not exist in the state’s urban and metropolitan areas.  
Often, local leaders in rural counties are forced to navigate workforce obstacles such as geography, demography and high demand for employees, but a low supply of a qualified workforce.  
The goal of the RIFOA is to increase workforce funding in lo-

cal workforce development areas that contain distressed and at-risk counties. New programs will create greater opportunity for residents in these counties to take part in skills training in high-demand growth sectors. These programs will also include work-based models such as on-the-job training.  
Expanded workforce development opportunities will originate from American Job Centers in selected counties to allow for easier access to programs and services.  
Money for the RIFOA will come from the Governor’s reserve of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) funds. TDLWD will provide additional program guidance to the local workforce development boards deemed eligible to receive this funding.  
The state will send a funding opportunity notification to the Local Workforce Development Areas in the coming weeks. Leadership in those areas will need to submit a budget and budget narrative before the state allocates the RIFOA funding.

been in a car accident, you have just been put on notice. When a doctor releases an employee to do ‘light labor,’ that is a notice of accommodation. An employee can also say they don’t want an accommodation.”

**ADA AS GOVERNMENT SERVICE**  
In addition to following ADA guidelines as employers, municipalities must also follow guidelines as they relate to public services. Elisha Hodge, legal consultant with MTAS, said services ranging from police and fire to parks and rec, animal control, codes, and sanitation must accommodate residents with disabilities.  
“We have to ensure that an individual who has a disability is also available to participate in any program or service just like those who do not have a disability,” Hodge said. “Title II requires the government to provide effective communication for government services. Not only do people have to be able to receive information from cities; they have to be able to provide information to cities. That might be through the use of auxiliary aids. It might mean at a meeting you need an interpreter or that your minutes are read aloud or put in large print or braille. Cities can use alternative aids if they can prove that the alternative is as effective as the aid requested, if it is a financial burden, or if it will disturb services being provided.”  
When providing information about city services or ADA compliance, Hodge said it is important to make sure the target audience actually has access to these notices.  
“All entities are required to provide a notice to anyone who might be interested of what their rights are and a city’s responsibilities under ADA,” Hodge said. “You also need to think about where and how your notice will be provided. For entities with 50 or more employees, in addition to this, you have to list who your ADA coordinator is. Cities with more than 50 employees are also required to have a grievance

procedure put in place for those who wish to make complaint.”  
By December 2019, all cities with more than 50 employees are also required to have a transition plan. This plan is a self-evaluation process looking at facilities, programs, and services to ensure they are up to ADA standards.  
Any building that is constructed or altered after Jan. 26, 1992, must be readily accessible to persons with disabilities. This doesn’t always mean that new construction is required. Moving an office to an accessible floor or having employees come to meet with disabled visitors can solve the issue.  
“There is a safe harbor in the ADA that says that if facilities, programs, or services are compliant with the 1991 standards, that is fine until you make new alterations to that building,” Hodge said. “However, the 1991 standards did not cover a variety of programs and services that cities offer. Those include swimming pools, play areas, exercise machines or equipment, sports facilities, and boating and fishing piers. All of those facilities have to meet 2010 ADA standards.”  
Many questions have come to the forefront lately about service and emotional support animals. While service animals are protected under ADA, the only two type of service animals recognized under Title II are dogs and ponies. Hodge said emotional support animals are not covered under Title II, but that there are separate restrictions for public transportation and accommodation.  
“There are two questions you can ask someone with a service animal,” she said. “You can ask the individual is that animal required because of your disability, and you can ask what task the animal has been trained to perform. You cannot ask any other questions. You cannot ask for documentation of the training of the animal. You cannot ask further questions about the disability.”  
However, service animals must be under the control of the individual they serve.  
“An individual must be able to control the animal before bringing it into a public setting,” she said. “A person does not have to have the animal on a leash if that precludes the animal from performing their duties or if the person is not able to hold onto that leash. You can ask them to remove the animal if they cannot control it via a tether, voice or other commands or if the animal is not housebroken.”  
For more information about ADA compliance, visit [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu).

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# CLASSIFIED ADS

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**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

GALLATIN. The purpose of this position is to perform professional and administration work in the creation, managing, planning and organizing of programs while assisting the director in the overall departmental administration. Serves as the director of Human Resources in the director's absence. Manages the staff in the department. Responsible for all aspects of HRIS payroll system functions, including but not limited to, inputting the payroll actions, and verifying actions and setting up workflows with IT for department use. Reports final payroll to director for auditing. Administers the city's program for classification and pay, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, and creates reliable strategic planning programs for those areas and ensures compliance with all regulations governing human resources. Oversees the development of a compensation strategy with the HR director and finance director, recommends pay structures and rules. Develops and maintains the performance appraisal program. Assess current performance review process and recommend best practices. Recommends changes to Personnel Rules, regulations and policies, and develops policies as needed. Administers the planning and execution of all recruitment strategies, including distribution of all applicant and employee information to departments. Ensures compliance with all applicable state, federal and municipal regulations, formulates HR policy changes. Responsible for the coordination of the HR employee newsletter. Coordinates the preparation of all HR ordinances and resolutions for consideration by the city council. Oversees the processing, maintenance and production of personnel records for open records requests, and audits files for compliance with federal/state and municipal regulations. Fosters community outreach by developing a recruitment plan to increase minority and female applications and participates in local job fairs. Develops and administers recruiting and examining programs to obtain an adequate supply of competent applicants to meet the needs of the city. In coordination with the risk management coordinator, develop training and safety programs and the Americans for Disabilities Act compliance for HR. Fosters and develops programs for the improvement of personnel effectiveness, performance appraisals, safety, health, counseling, and welfare, including web based training initiatives. Bachelor's degree in human resources, business or closely related field with a minimum of three to five years professional progressively responsible experience in human resources. Prior experience with municipal or county governmental payroll and human resources is preferred. To apply, contact Debbie G. Johnson, Director of Human Resources, Department of Human Resources, 132 West Main Street, Gallatin, TN 37066.

**BUILDING AND CODES INSPECTOR**

HENDERSONVILLE. The city of Hendersonville is currently accepting applications for a building and codes inspector. This position is responsible for performing all necessary and required inspections of buildings, property, and related systems to ensure compliance with applicable building codes. This position is eligible for possible merit and COL increases as well as longevity and other excellent benefits. Monthly Pay: \$3,944 - \$4,248 or DOQ. Candidate must possess one or more valid and current ICC Inspector certifications, one of them being building (either residential or commercial); 1-3 years of related work experience; high school diploma or GED; possession of or ability to obtain a valid TN Driver's License; and the ability to satisfactorily utilize basic computer applications. To apply go to [www.hvilletn.org](http://www.hvilletn.org) or come by Hendersonville City Hall at 101 Maple Drive North, Hendersonville, TN 37075. Open until filled. EOE

**CODE ADMINISTRATOR BUILDING OFFICIAL**

BRISTOL. The city of Bristol is accepting applications for a code administrator building official. Under direction of the development services director, the person will be responsible for professional, technical, managerial, and administrative work of the Code Enforcement Department. A degree in building technology, construction management, business administration preferred. At least 5 years in managing building and code enforcement functions. Have or be eligible to obtain building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical certifications designated by the state of Tennessee. Prefer certification as a certified building official from the ICC. Experience in plan reviews. Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite. Prefer experience with Blue Prints and EnerGov software. To read additional information concerning the city of Bristol and the code administrator-building official position, please apply and upload a resume at: <http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx>. EOE.

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR**

BRISTOL. The city of Bristol Tennessee is accepting applications for a community relations director. Under direction of the city manager, the community relations director performs work related to communications, public relations, and marketing. The community relations director drives the development and execution of the city's communications and public relations strategy, directly managing communications activities that promote, enhance and protect the organization's brand reputation and

further its mission. This position is responsible for the development, integration and implementation for a broad range of public and media relations activities, building strong relationships with the media and other key influencers to expand the reach and impact of the city message and mission. It is essential that the candidate has the ability to work with others who want to build a remarkable and vibrant city. A master's degree in marketing, communications journalism or related field with seven years of relevant experience and three to five years of progressive supervisory experience preferred; or equivalent combination of education and relevant experience. To read additional information concerning the city of Bristol and the community relations director position, please apply and upload a resume at: <http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx>. EOE

**FINANCIAL ANALYST**

PORTLAND. The city of Portland is seeking a financial analyst to be responsible for a broad range of administrative, accounting, and support services under the direct supervision of the finance director. The qualified candidate will have a bachelor's degree in accounting and/or business administration and 1+ years of accounting/finance experience, preferably in a government setting. Starting pay \$23.08/hr. DOE. Must have the ability to be bonded and possess a valid driver's license. CPA candidate is desirable; must have ability to achieve CMFO (Certified Municipal Financial Officer) certification within 1.5 years of employment. Additional qualifications include: knowledge of accounting principles and procedures for governmental finance; knowledge of best supervisory and management techniques and skills; advanced skills in Microsoft Office Excel and Word, data entry and use of a 10-key calculator; strong organization skills and ability to work effectively with minimum supervision; skilled active listener with ability to read with understanding and speak and write clearly and effectively; ability to learn and accurately use applicable computer programs/software and office equipment including fax, scanner, copier machine, etc.; ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing and deal effectively with the public; ability to perform mathematical computations accurately and quickly; ability to work under pressure and deadlines with frequent interruptions and minimum supervision; must have strong work ethic and excellent work and attendance records. Performs, plans, and organizes duties of the general accounting department, billing and utilities collection department and general administration; responsible for accounting and financial records for all funds of the city; performs and supervises treasurer and cash management functions; responsible for risk management administration including filings, premium administration, asset control and reporting; Assists in preparation of annual budgets and budgetary reporting for all funds of the city; To apply, visit <https://cityofportlandtn.gov/government/careers/>, or send resume and cover letter to: City of Portland, ATTN: Human Resources, 100 N. Russell St., Portland, TN 37148

**FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR**

LAKELAND. The city of Lakeland is seeking qualified applicants for the position of finance and human resources director. This employee is responsible for a broad range of administrative and support services under the general supervision of the city manager. The finance and human resources director is primarily responsible for planning, organizing and directing the fiscal affairs including accounting, operational, capital budgeting, and financial reporting. Duties include: serving as the general accountant and auditor of the city, ensure proper fiscal accounts, records, settlements and reports on all collections and expenditures of money and controlling and auditing the same. Ensure that adequate appropriations exist in budgeted line items, responsible for the reconciliation of bank statements to city cash and revenue and expenditure records, prepares statements and makes a variety of reports showing the financial operations of the city, responsible to manage the investment program, oversee preparation of the annual budget and capital budget for all funds, and assists the city manager and department heads. Successful applicants will possess the proven ability to maintain effective working relationships with the public, city officials, and other employees and the ability to prepare and present accurate reports to the governing body; five to seven years of progressively responsible managerial positions in accounting, finance and human resource management required. Similar experience in the public sector is preferred. Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or closely related field is required. CPA and/or Certified Municipal Finance Officer designation is required. Competitive salary and benefits offered. For more information and for a complete job description, please visit [www.lakelandtn.gov/jobs](http://www.lakelandtn.gov/jobs).

**IT ADMINISTRATOR**

PORTLAND. The city of Portland is seeking an IT Administrator to serve as system administrator, network administrator, and network security administrator for all city departments. This position is responsible for the upkeep, configuration, and reliable operation of the city computer systems, servers, and data security systems. Starting salary \$48,964/YR DOE. Open until filled. The qualified candidate will have a bachelor's degree in computer science (preferred); exposure to local government IT operations (preferred); Certification in CompTIA A+ or equivalent; 5+ years of experience in

computer information systems maintenance and administration; 4+ years of experience with MS server and desktop operating systems; or any appropriate combination of education, training, and experience providing the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential job functions. Knowledgeable and able to use various desktop operation systems including LINUX and MS server operating systems. Knowledge of IIS and webserver software; knowledge of MICROSOFT SQL server on an enterprise level, SSMS, and SSRS. Knowledge of SONICWALL/object-oriented firewalls, barracuda or similar d/r systems, VOIP phone systems. Knowledge of network operations, including system or security administration; knowledge, skill and ability to forecast emerging needs for IT infrastructure, project impact to the city, and analyze budgetary constraints and impacts. Knowledge of record retention, preservation, and data integrity best practices; ability to analyze and solve computer, system and it architecture issues; ability to effectively communicate complex technical information, verbally and in writing, to contractors/vendors, employees, consultants, other governmental agency representatives, city officials and the general public; and ability to respond to emergent issues remotely or in person to provide operational continuity of city information systems. Maintains network and network security; analyzes and resolves network problems; maintains web servers and services; manages and maintains all security cameras/devices throughout the city; recommends the purchase of software and hardware based on specifications; executes vendor contracts for computer needs; handles all software and hardware licensing; administrator of software used by the city and its various departments; installs network architecture and software; analyzes, designs, programs, maintains data and implements assigned projects; creates, manages, and delivers IT work orders using urgency and importance of needs as classifiers of service delivery priority; serves as a member of various employee committees. Performs other related duties as assigned. Work is generally performed inside, although occasionally, outside work may be required. Work performed indoors is in an office environment, temperature controlled, well-lit with low noise levels. This position may experience extended periods of sitting or standing, frequently shifting schedule, and emergent demands from internal customers. To apply, visit <https://cityofportlandtn.gov/government/careers/>, or send resume and cover letter to: City of Portland, ATTN: Human Resources, 100 N. Russell St., Portland, TN 37148. Contact [hjohnson@cityofportlandtn.gov](mailto:hjohnson@cityofportlandtn.gov) or via fax: 615-325-1481. EOE.

**PLANNER I**

PORTLAND. The city of Portland is seeking a planner I in the City Planning Department. Starting Salary \$41,876/YR DOE. Open until filled. The qualified candidate will have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in urban planning, urban design, urban geography, public policy, or related area of study plus one year relevant work experience; a master's degree may be substituted for experience. Special consideration may be given to those candidates with CNU-A or AICP candidate. Provides customer service to developer representatives or property owners for proposed projects on development requirements for various city departments. Meets with applicants about development proposals; visits and evaluates site locations for development proposals; conducts field evaluations and assessments. Conducts field inspections of building facades, landscaping, and site layout; coordinates with the Technical Review Committee in reviewing plans submitted for consideration to the Planning Commission; interprets and applies city regulations, plans and policies, including, but not limited to subdivision regulations, land use plan, and municipal codes; reviews or assists in the review of moderately difficult subdivisions and site plans for conformance with ordinances, plans, and regulations. Evaluates or assists in the evaluation of rezonings, ordinance amendments, special use permits, variances and other proposals; makes presentations to the planning commission, board of zoning appeals, city council and other elected and appointed boards and commissions as necessary. Assists in developing and updating comprehensive plans, transportation plans, small area plans, and programs. Conducts research and prepares statistical reports on land use, physical, social & economic issues. Assists with and coordinate site and subdivision sureties with city departments; assures that citizen complaints and inquiries are researched and resolved in a timely fashion. Investigates violations of planning regulations and ordinances, including site visits; researches and compiles information on a variety of planning issues from multiple sources. Provides technical support of the GIS system and graphics production; proficient in application of GIS and mapping to planning processes. May represent the city of Portland at meetings in the absence of the city planner; assists with other planning activities and supports other city departments as directed by the city planner. Serves as coordinator for assigned components of Title VI, ADA Title II, and Section 504 compliance programs; and performs other duties as assigned. Work is generally performed inside, although occasionally, outside work may be required. Work performed indoors is in an office environment, temperature controlled, well-lit with low noise levels. To apply, visit <https://cityofportlandtn.gov/government/careers/>, or send resume and cover letter to: City of Portland, ATTN: Human Resources, 100 N. Russell St., Portland, TN 37148, [hjohnson@cityofportlandtn.gov](mailto:hjohnson@cityofportlandtn.gov), FAX: 615-325-1481. EOE.

**POLICE OFFICER**

WHITE HOUSE. The city of White House is currently accepting applications for police officer. Applicants must have a high school diploma or

GED. They must possess an appropriate driver's license valid in the State of Tennessee. P.O.S.T. Certification must be obtained within six months of employment. Must meet Minimum Standards Law (TCA 38-8-106) requirements. Applicants must be a citizen of the United States, at least 21 years of age and meet the physical, psychological and criminal records and other standards for the assignment established by the White House Police Department. Starting salary is \$14.86 - \$17.66 hourly (\$35,233.06 - \$41,871.86 annually) DOE with an excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit a city of White House application. Applications and additional details on how to apply are available on the city of White House's website at [www.cityofwhitehouse.com](http://www.cityofwhitehouse.com) or in person at the Human Resources Office at 105 College Street, White House, TN 37188. Open until filled.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

GATLINBURG. The city of Gatlinburg is seeking a public information officer. Varied duties include: developing communication plans for various city initiatives with the media, citizens and employees and coordinating public-relations activities; representing the city at various functions/events; developing informational materials, social media and website content. Job responsibilities require considerable experience performing public-relations activities, knowledge of surveying and research practices and methods, knowledge of the technical requirements for the production of print, radio, television, and internet marketing materials, knowledge of desktop publishing software programs and strong organizational, interpersonal, and decision-making skills. The city of Gatlinburg currently offers a market-based salary, 100% city paid medical, dental, and ancillary insurance plans, and a retirement plan. Minimum qualifications include graduation from an accredited four year college with a bachelor's degree in journalism, public relations or a closely related field, experience in public relations administration, preferably within a local government (or related); or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job; or any equivalent combination of education or experience to provide the necessary body of knowledge. Applications and job description are available on the City's website, [www.gatlinburgtn.gov](http://www.gatlinburgtn.gov); or at City Hall, 1230 East Parkway, PO Box 5, Gatlinburg 37738. Please enclose resume with application along with three references and mail or email to [hr@gatlinburgtn.gov](mailto:hr@gatlinburgtn.gov). Applications accepted until position is filled. The city of Gatlinburg is an AA/EO Employer..

**SOLID WASTE MANAGER**

JOHNSON CITY. The city of Johnson City is accepting online applications for a solid waste manager. This position has overall responsibility for planning and directing solid waste crews engaged in refuse collection and disposal, recycling collection, roll off collection, and other related activities. Prepares the annual budget for the division to include personnel, capital improvements, regional and city collections and recycling. Will frequently communicate with the public regarding solid waste operations and will respond to complaints and inquiries. Will work closely with other city departments related to budget and customer billing. The solid waste manager reports directly to the public works director. Completion of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university with emphasis in civil engineering, business or public administration, or other related field. Extensive and verifiable experience in refuse collection activities at the management level. This position will be open due to the impending retirement of the current solid waste manager. Salary DOQ. To apply visit our website at [www.johnsoncitytn.org](http://www.johnsoncitytn.org).

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

MCMINNVILLE. The city of McMinnville is seeking qualified candidates for the position of public works director. The director is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the overall operations of the public works department including street, sanitation, urban forestry, animal control, and vehicle maintenance. Responsibilities include overseeing department projects and coordinating efforts with the public works street maintenance supervisor, consulting with engineers, contractors and design professionals on construction and maintenance projects, interacting with state and federal agencies, preparing bid documents and specifications, writing grants or assisting with grants. The ideal candidate must have a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, public administration, public works or related areas, five years of progressively responsible experience in, construction trades, road maintenance, business management, or civil engineering of which two years experience must have been at a responsible supervisory or administrative level. Ten years of heavy construction management experience may be substituted for the above educational and experience requirements. The successful candidate will be examined by city physician to determine if applicant can perform all essential duties required of this position. Residency requirements per the city's personnel policy and procedure manual is required within 90 days of employment. The full job description can be viewed at <http://www.mcminnvilletn.gov>. The salary for this position is dependent on experience and qualifications. In addition the city offers a progressive benefit package that includes paid vacation, paid holidays, an extensive benefit package that includes; health insurance, dental, vision etc., and contributions to the state of Tennessee retirement plan. Qualified persons should submit an application, a resume of experience and qualifications, letter of interest, salary history and professional references to: Jennifer Rigby, Human Resource Administrator, City of McMinnville, P.O. Box 7088, McMinnville, TN, 37111. Deadline for applications is Sept. 27.

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

SPRINGFIELD. The city of Springfield is currently seeking a new director for the public works department. The public works department is vital to the success of the mission of the city of Springfield and contains four primary functions of the city: street maintenance, sanitation/refuse collection, stormwater management, and vehicle maintenance. The public works director plans, organizes, directs, controls and evaluates all activities of the department and oversees department personnel. The position is also responsible for administrative function such as budgeting as well as preparing cost estimates for construction projects. The director works under the general supervision of the city manager. Bachelors' degree from an accredited degree-granting, four year college or institution in management, public administration, business administration, construction trades, engineering, political science, or applicable area of study; prefer 10+ years of progressively responsible supervisory/management experience in street construction and maintenance, stormwater operation, drainage construction and maintenance, and management of employees - 5 of which were in a mid-level or higher decision-making position; or a combination of experience and training equivalent to the required knowledge and abilities. Salary range is \$74,737 - \$102,847 (DOQ); plus full health, dental, and vision insurance plans; and 100 percent of retirement costs as a member of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System's defined benefit plan. To apply or for more information, visit our website at [springfield-tn.org](http://springfield-tn.org) or contact the Personnel Office at (615) 382-2200. The city of Springfield is an AA/EO Employer.

**WASTEWATER SYSTEMS MANAGER**

WHITE HOUSE. The city of White House is currently accepting applications for wastewater systems manager. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in biology, chemistry, mathematics, environmental science, environmental health or related field. They must possess an appropriate driver's license valid in the state of Tennessee. Applicants must possess a valid Class II Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System Operator's certificate issued or recognized by TDEC, or have the ability to obtain an appropriate state certified license within 12 months of employment. This position requires a minimum of 5 years of directly related experience in the operation and maintenance of wastewater systems similar in size and complexity to the city of White House. Applicants must have proven management skills; a minimum 2 years of experience developing and managing budgets; good communication skills, both verbal and written. Applicants must have a strong knowledge of applicable compliance requirements and state and federal (EPA) regulations; Must have knowledge in the operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment procedures and methods, and operation of pumps, motors, drive units, electrical controls, etc.; Must be computer literate in spreadsheet and word processing software and be able to create and maintain documents and spreadsheets. Starting salary is \$51,701.00 - \$61,456.25 annually DOE with an excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit a city of White House application. Applications and additional details on how to apply are available on the city of White House's website at [www.cityofwhitehouse.com](http://www.cityofwhitehouse.com) or in person at the Human Resources Office at 105 College Street, White House, TN 37188. This position is open until filled.

**WATER/WASTEWATER OPERATIONS**

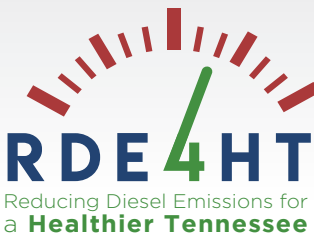
MCMINNVILLE. The city of McMinnville is accepting applications from qualified individuals for the position of director of water/wastewater operations. The ideal candidate will possess highly developed technical, presentation and communication skills. The ideal candidate will have in-depth knowledge and experience in management of water/wastewater systems. The ideal candidate will have significant operational experience, and will be responsible for the general administration of the department's operating budget and enforcement of city policies regarding employees, facility use and overall supervision of the activities of three divisions of the water department. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to, preparing operating budget, working with city administrator and water committee to develop capital plan and budget for department, overseeing and coordinating the various operations at city facilities, and the ability to plan, organize, delegate, supervise and inspect work of subordinates. The ideal candidate will have a minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in water and wastewater operations of which two years must have been in a responsible supervisory consultative, or administrative capacity or a bachelor's degree from an accredited four year college or university with a major in civil engineering or related field or an associate degree may be substituted with eight years of progressively responsible experience required. The successful candidate will be examined by city physician to determine if applicant can perform all essential duties required of this position. Residency requirements per the city's personnel policy and procedure manual is required within 90 days of employment. The full job description can be viewed at <http://www.mcminnvilletn.gov>. The salary for this position is dependent on experience and qualifications. In addition the city offers a progressive benefit package that includes paid vacation, paid holidays, an extensive benefit package that includes; health insurance, dental, vision etc., and contributions to the state of Tennessee retirement plan. Qualified persons should submit an application, a resume of experience and qualifications, letter of interest, salary history and professional references to: Jennifer Rigby, Human Resource Administrator, City of McMinnville, P.O. Box 7088, McMinnville, TN, 37111. Deadline for applications is Sept. 27.



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Proper communication vital to serving needs of deaf citizens

**DEAF** *from Page 1*

born to hearing parents, only 28 percent of parents say they have used ASL with their children.

“Most of these children are growing up without access to communication from the two most important people in their lives,” Steele said. “This means no one is communicating with them about how to live. I have a deaf friend who didn’t file income taxes for eight years because neither his parents nor anyone at school ever taught him he had to. I can promise you, the IRS did not care about him being deaf. A lot of the time, these people can’t read. If they can’t read, they can’t read a newspaper or the captioning on the news.”

ASL is also a complete language unto itself and therefore cannot be directly translated into writing the way one language could be translated into English. This inability to communicate in the hearing world can have drastic consequences for members of the deaf community.

While 88 percent of people who are deaf – and have no other disability – graduate high school, less than a quarter of deaf Americans graduate college. An estimated 70 percent of the deaf community are chronically underemployed.

Many of the departments

reported using reading and writing to communicate with the deaf community, but Steele said this is not the best way to communicate with deaf members of the community.

“Our deaf are graduating on a third to fourth-grade reading level nationally,” she said. “It isn’t that deaf people don’t have the ability to read; we haven’t found the way to best educate them yet. Deaf people understand written language about as well as most of us remember the foreign language we took in high school. If you went to France, you might not be able to understand a police warning or read the language if they handed you a piece of paper with your rights on it. Especially in our rural areas, our deaf do not read at a third grade level as adults. If the person is a child, you can about guarantee you won’t be able to communicate with them through written means.”

While there are live interpreters available, in issues of immediate need Steele said many departments have reported success in the use of video remote interpreting (VRI) services.

“Police departments we have provided VRI training to said that they have found it useful both within and outside their department,” she said. “Members of their gas and electric department were having interactions with the deaf, and because of the inability to communicate, tensions rose. They ended

up calling the police department. Now, before tensions rise, the police department brings out the VRI to the call. Now, tensions with every department in the city became better because they have access to this technology. Any department can use this technology; the law only requires police departments to do it.”

In the Tennessee state code, officers are prohibited from using family members or potential abusers as interpreters when investigating abuse situations wherein a child might be a victim or a witness to abuse. A trained and certified interpreter must be used to communicate with the child, either in person or via telecommunications. The interview must be conducted outside the presence of potential abusers.

“A qualified interpreter is required for each part of the legal process,” she said. “No statement taken from a deaf person before the qualified interpreter is present is admissible in court. I have been in situations with deaf children we knew were being abused but because they didn’t use an appropriate interpreter everything the child said was inadmissible in court.”

For more resources on deaf services provided in Tennessee, visit [www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-services.html](http://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-services.html)



**Sept. 21: Bristol**  
*Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion*  
The award-winning Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion music festival celebrates 18 years in historic downtown Bristol. Located on the Virginia and Tennessee border with 20 outdoor stages and indoor venues and more than 120 acts of live music, Bristol Rhythm takes visitors on a journey through Appalachia’s musical past, present, and future. For more info, visit [www.birthplaceofcountrymusic.org](http://www.birthplaceofcountrymusic.org).

**Sept. 21: Munford**  
*Celebrate Munford*  
A free, family event in Downtown Munford held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m, featuring live music, craft and business vendors, art contest, car show, talent contest, kids areas, fun, and food. For more information, please visit [www.munford.com](http://www.munford.com).

**Sept. 27-28: Townsend**  
*Fall Festival and Old Timers Day*  
the Townsend Visitors Center celebrates the traditional music, crafts, Appalachian skills, and heritage of Townsend, East Tennessee, and the Great Smoky Mountains. For more information, please visit [www.smokymountains.org/what-to-see/fall](http://www.smokymountains.org/what-to-see/fall).

**Sept. 28: Morristown**  
*Morristown Craft Beer Festival*  
The inaugural Morristown Craft Beer Festival is free to the public, featuring an extensive variety of craft beers, food, live music, corn hole tournament, fun activities, and games. Learn more at [morristown-craftbeerfestival.com](http://morristown-craftbeerfestival.com).

**Sept. 28: Jackson**  
*Sixth Annual Jackson International Food and Arts Festival*  
Spend the day enjoying the parade of cultures, performances from around the world, and food, art, and crafts vendors. Learn more at [www.jifaf.com](http://www.jifaf.com).

**Oct. 11-12: LaFollette**  
*5th Annual Big Creek ATV Festival*  
The city of LaFollette and Ride Royal Blue will host this annual event in downtown LaFollette. The Big Creek Fall ATV festival offers art and crafts, food, music, guided trail rides, competitive races, and the Big Creek ATV Run. The night ends with a firework show by Pyros. For more information, you can go to [www.lafollettetn.gov](http://www.lafollettetn.gov) or call 423-562-4961

**Oct. 11-12: Lewisburg**  
*Goats, Music and More Festival*  
For more than 16 years, the Goats, Music and More Festival at Rock Creek Park in downtown Lewisburg has showcased the biggest names in country music from Charlie Daniels to Lorie Morgan, Confederate Railroad, John Anderson and more. For more information, go to [www.goatsmusicandmore.com](http://www.goatsmusicandmore.com).

NATIONAL BRIEFS



**A report from the U.S. Department of Labor indicates hiring in the country is slowing with only 130,000 jobs added in August – down from the 160,000 predicted for the month.** Economists believe that business owners are holding off on hiring because of concerns stemming from trade wars with China with industries including mining, manufacturing, and others dependent on overseas trade struggling. Many companies are also scaling back on spending on buildings and equipment in addition to hiring. One of the boosts to the August job numbers were the 25,000 temporary workers hired by the U.S. government for the 2020 Census. Private sector job gains fell to 96,000. So far this year, the U.S. has averaged 143,000

jobs gained per month, down from last year’s 192,000 per month.

**The average public school teacher spends \$459 per year on school supplies for which they are never reimbursed,** according to a new study by the National Center for Education Statistics. Teachers in California and Michigan spend the most out of pocket at \$664 and \$628 per teacher respectively while North Dakota and West Virginia teachers spend the least at \$327 and \$333 respectively. The study also found that teachers are more likely to spend more money out of pocket if they work in a high -poverty school with teachers in high-poverty districts spending \$523 out of pocket on average. Teachers in low-poverty areas, by comparison, only spent \$434 on average.

**More than half of Americans are concerned that tariffs will impact their holiday shopping.** A new study conducted by independent firm Coresight Research found 57 percent of Americans are concerned tariffs will raise prices on holiday goods – roughly six in 10 Americans. Early research indicates that 91.6 percent of apparel, 68.4 percent of home textiles, and 52.5 percent of footwear imports from China were expected to be hit with the 15 percent tariff that went into effect in September. As a result, nearly 70 percent of survey respondents said they would purchase less if costs rose. The study also found that Americans prefer shopping online or at big box stores like Walmart over department stores and at malls.

UT-MTAS OCTOBER MAP CLASSES

DRINKING FROM A FIRE HYDRANT

This course will cover an overview of the municipal water system; TDEC rules and regulations regarding fire hydrants; protecting water systems from physical damage by fire department personnel; nonrevenue water use, water loss, and theft; fire hydrants, types, models, and standards, calculating needed fire flows, how to conduct a flow test; locating and spacing fire hydrants based on needed flow; and fire hydrants and ISO credit.

Dates/Locations/Times

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8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EDT

Oct 16 Knoxville  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EDT

Oct 17 Collegedale  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EDT

Oct 18 Franklin  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CDT

Oct 24 Jackson  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CDT

Oct 25 Bartlett  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CDT



Credits: 4 CPE

To register for a course go to the MTAS website at [www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu) and select training calendar under the “Training” tab. You can pay upon registering with a credit card or request an invoice. For registration assistance, call 865-974-0411.



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Ed Stewart,ChFC,CLU,CF  
Financial Advisor

# Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts talks growth, managing expectations

*Pitts works to manage the city’s extensive growth while keeping the sense of close-knit community he loves about his hometown.*

**BY KATE COIL**  
*TML Communications Specialist*

After he was sworn in as mayor of Clarksville in January of this year, Joe Pitts began his new job by holding meet-and-greet breakfast sessions with each city department and took on an aggressive schedule encouraging intergovernmental relations, administrative and budget-planning initiatives, and strengthening government transparency and communication with citizens.

A Clarksville native, Pitts graduated from the city’s Northwest High School in 1976, followed by earning a bachelor’s degree from Austin Peay State University in 1980. He went on to complete post-graduate work at the Institute for Organizational Management at the University of Georgia and the Emerging Political Leaders program at the University of Virginia.

Pitts served as chief of staff under Clarksville Mayor Don Trotter in 2002 and 2003. He was then elected to six, two-year terms in the Tennessee House of Representatives’ District 67, which he served from 2007 until earlier this year when he ran for mayor of Clarksville.

During his tenure as a state lawmaker, Pitts was lauded for his involvement in education through awards such as being the Tennessee Education Association’s 2014 Friend of Education and the 2013 Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents Legislative Leadership Award.

He is actively involved in the Clarksville chapter of the NAACP and won the branch’s Jerry G. Jerkins Community Service Award in 2019. He was also selected as the Public Official of the Year by the Tennessee Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers in 2009.

Professionally, Pitts served for more than 13 years as vice president of Clarksville’s Planters Bank, a regional community bank based in Tennessee and southern Kentucky.

He has been married to minister Cynthia “Cyndi” Haley Pitts. The pair have five sons and nine grandchildren – with twin boys on the way.

**TT&C: As a Clarksville native, what was it like growing up in the community? Who were your biggest influences?**  
**Joe Pitts:** My father had an eighth-grade education because he had to drop out of school. His father had a stroke and out of the seven kids, he had to leave school and go fend for himself. He then joined the Army and served in the Korean War. My mother had a high-school education and worked hard to support us. She provided the opportunity for me to go to college and get a great education. I had a lot influences from my parents and a lot of great teachers all the way through school who provided encouragement in my life. They helped me along the way and made me a better person because of the challenges they placed before me.

**TT&C: Why was Clarksville a city where you wanted to stay as an adult and raise a family?**  
**JP:** It’s the people. For me, what makes Clarksville different is the people. It’s not just family but the people who make up our community. We get people from all over the world and every place imaginable. You get different perspectives and different opinions on things, which is really our strength. It’s not just cultural diversity; it’s diversity of thought, of opinion, and perspective that really makes us stronger.

**TT&C: What first prompted your interest in politics?**  
**JP:** I had always been interested in politics and political campaigns, growing up in the ‘60s like I did. My parents grew up in the Depression area so President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was sort of an idol in our household. He was president for almost four terms during their younger years, so I got to hear a lot about what he did for the country. My parents weren’t politically active, but they were politically astute. They paid attention to politics and elected officials. They instilled in my sister and me an interest in voting and being engaged in our community.

I sort of took it from there and thought one day I might run for public office. It took me a few years to get there. I worked with Mayor Don Trotter back in 2002 and 2003, functioning as his chief of staff even though he didn’t call it that. I worked for him for a couple of years. I learned a lot about city government, how to relate to people, talk with employees, and how to pay attention to issues that were important.

In 2006, I had the opportunity to run for the State House of Representatives. I was blessed to win that seat with a lot of help, especially from my wife who was right beside me, walking with me every step of the way. I served there 12 years and then the Lord opened the door for the mayor’s job, and here I am.

**TT&C: What made you to decide to run for mayor, especially since you already held a seat in the Legislature?**  
**JP:** It wasn’t a one-step decision. We made the decision right after the election of 2016 even though we didn’t announce it to the end of the legislative session in 2017 that we were retiring from the House.

By ‘we’ I mean my wife and I because we



Left to Right: Austin Peay State University President White, APSU Community and Government Relations Director Carol Byrd Clark, Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts, and Mayoral Chief of Staff James Halford. Pitts himself is a 1980 graduate of APSU.



Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts

When in college, Pitts crafted this shirt proclaiming “J.E.P. for Mayor.” He found the old photo while on the campaign for mayor and told his social media followers: “As this blast from the past photo (circa 1977) shows, I have had a long held desire to be your mayor.”



are a team. We wanted time to pray and ask what our next step should be. It was almost a year after that they we got the clearance and received the call to run for mayor. We didn’t retire from the House with the intention to run for anything. We just thought we would retire from the House and see what other doors would open.

It is an honor to serve in this role. I am the 21st mayor the city has had. It is a challenge and the pace can be frantic. It can be the highest of highs and the lowest of lows.

**TT&C: What are some of the differences you have found between being a mayor and state lawmaker? What parts of the job are similar?**  
**JP:** I came in with the mindset when I ran for the House of Representatives that I would be the best at customer service or constituent service. I wanted people to be able to say that when I got phone calls or emails I responded in a timely fashion. I went in with that mindset to this job. We need to be the best at customer service.

The difference is in the House you are one of 99 votes. You aren’t an executive in charge of everything. As mayor, you are chief executive officer of the city, and everything that gets done runs across my desk. That can be a huge difference.

**TT&C: What do you think are the most important characteristics for a leader to have?**  
**JP:** First of all, you have to have compassion for people. You have to be a good listener. You have to have a desire to help people and support people. I have to make sure all of our city employees – all 1,370 or so – have all the support and encouragement they need. During the first month, my wife Cyndi and I did meet-and-greets with every department where we met all the employees, fed them food, and sat around, talked to, and got to know them.

That’s what I think leadership is about: showing the people you work with that you care about them, you want to enable them to succeed, and you want to enable them to be innovative. Sometimes that means they need to take risks, and sometimes that means they need to fail.

**TT&C: Clarksville was recently named one of the 250 fastest-growing cities in the country. Has Clarksville changed much since you were younger?**  
**JP:** We have a lot going on, all at the same time, but it’s all good. The area where I was born wasn’t even in the city limits but now it is in the heart of the city limits, so that tells you a little bit about how the boundary of our city has grown in the past 60 years. We have literally grown a city around a city with suburbs now completely encircled by the city.

We have done a pretty good job of trying to maintain and manage that growth, meet the

needs of a growing city. Plus being a border city, we have to be mindful of Fort Campbell being our neighbor.

When I was a kid, Clarksville was Fort Campbell driven. It still is somewhat today, but we have diversified our job base. Our manufacturing base is diversifying at a rapid pace and so has the service sector, both government and non-government. When I was a kid, we had a very large agriculture and agribusiness industry with both small and large family farms. We have less so now because of the growth, need for housing, commercial development, schools, and all those things that go along with being a growing city. We have transitioned as a growing city.

**TT&C: Clarksville is a city with many facets. It’s a military town, a college town, a town with a lot of history, and a town looking to the future with projects like the new Google installation. How does the city bring all of these identities and backgrounds together to work for common goals?**  
**JP:** You have to listen to what people are telling you. Their priorities may be as simple as the streetlight in front of their house or that their street needs to be paved, issues with traffic, or building sidewalks so their children can walk to school.

Then there are larger issues like parents who want their children to be able to stay in Clarksville and earn a good living. You have to put the wheels in motion so that the jobs are there, and 21st Century jobs, not just the same thing that’s always been done. You have to cast that vision and hope that people catch that vision and want to follow it along.

Clarksville is a diverse city. We are proudly patriotic. We are decidedly Southern. You can walk downtown and hear someone say ‘bless your heart.’ There is still that Southern charm to us. Because of our diverse population, we are not the typical Southern city like a Savannah or Charleston. But we are Southern – make no mistake.

**TT&C: Your wife Cyndi has taken a very active role as First Lady of Clarksville. How does she help serve the community?**  
**JP:** My wife, the First Lady, has started a Women of Clarksville series of events where she invites women to come together on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of topics ranging from menopause to diabetes among women as well as mental and spiritual health. It is gratifying to see 150 to 200 women to come together monthly to discuss issues that are unique to them.

It really came out of her desire to go into the different communities in our city – the Asian-American community, Hispanic-American Community, the African-American community, the Indian-Americans – to try to give them a voice, find out what is important to them and get them engaged in our

community. We don’t want them to feel like we are only paying lip service to diversity in our community.

**TT&C: What are some of the big projects Clarksville is undertaking or that you would like to see Clarksville undertake?**  
**JP:** We have to address our traffic. Every city that is growing like we are and virtually every city in Middle Tennessee is experiencing traffic issues. We have a very aggressive Traffic 2020 Plan coming together. We are going to be building some roads. We appreciate our partnerships with TDOT and Montgomery County. The General Assembly is doing a heck of a job for us, making sure we get our share of transportation money. We have got to address traffic, and we are seeing some results. We have to meet the growing demands of the city as far as parks and recreation and quality of life.

One of my goals coming in is leadership development among our city employees. I want to reach out into the ranks of our city employees and do some leadership development training. I want our brand-new, first-year city employees to say they want to make a career as a city employee and move up to management ranks. I want these employees to have the tools and training the need. We have already started putting those together and executing some of those programs. We have what I call a ‘Leadership Next’ program we have implemented. We are bringing in a cohort of city employees and putting them through leadership training. We’ve had great results and feedback so far.

**TT&C: What are some of the city’s biggest challenges? How do you plan on tackling those?**  
**JP:** I think our biggest challenge is managing expectations in people. Everyone has a different idea of what should be done. You have to take all of that in and see what resources you need to make that happen. We don’t have all the time we need, and we don’t have all the money we need. If time and money weren’t a factor, everyone would be happy. They aren’t barriers as much as they are obstacles.

We also have to be more efficient, and we have to tell our story. We have to let people know what we are doing with their money because it is their money. They are investing it in us, so they deserve to know what we are doing with it. They want to know we are spending their tax money on things important to them.

**TT&C: What do you enjoy the most about being mayor?**  
**JP:** I enjoy getting out and seeing folks, being around people in the community. It’s my hometown, and I just love this city. People are so kind, but they are also very pointed about saying ‘here is what we need.’ I take it very seriously; I don’t take it personally, but I take it seriously.