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## Bredesen says basic budget principles will guide state through economic times

BY CAROLE GRAVES  
TML Communications Director

Urging lawmakers to stay focused on the basics, Gov. Phil Bredesen delivered his seventh State of the State Address earlier this month to members of the 106th General Assembly.

The forum traditionally includes the governor's budget plan for the next fiscal year. However, faced with a \$900 million deficit, Bredesen has delayed his budget presentation until sometime in March, to provide time to flush out the details of the federal stimulus package and its effects on Tennessee.

Bredesen was quick to point out, however, while the stimulus funds will provide some much-needed relief, it wasn't a "silver bullet" to the state's economic situation and substantial cuts are still necessary.

"It is vital to remember that this stimulus money is one-time funds," Bredesen said. "While there are doubtless states which will use this money to simply push the problem back two years, Tennessee will not do this. When we present a budget in March, we will recognize the money we receive as temporary help, and present a multi-year outline for how we will use these funds to ease the transition from current spending levels to what we anticipate for 2011 and beyond."

The main focus of Bredesen's remarks concentrated on three key areas: improving education, job creation, and health care. "If we educate our kids, if we keep them healthy and make sure there are good jobs for them to go to, we'll do just fine in the years ahead."



Photo by Carole Graves

Bredesen pledges family-style budget during his state address. See Pages 6 & 7 for more photos.

Citing health care as one of his immediate concerns, Bredesen called for a national solution for health insurance, recognizing that when people lose their jobs, they often lose their health insurance.

"Our health care system has become antiquated and unfair, and I deeply hope that a new President and a new Congress can fashion the solution that Tennessee and America deserves," he said.

In the area of education, Bredesen outlined the state's progress, citing increased funding to the BEP, improved teacher's salaries, tougher college entrance re-

quirements, and more than \$1 billion in capital improvement projects to college campuses across the state. But he also recognized that there was still a great deal of work to be done, especially in the area of higher education.

"We lag the national averages in the proportion of our citizens who have post-secondary degrees, and if we let that continue, we'll be pushed increasingly to the backwaters of the world economy," Bredesen said.

On the job front, Bredesen pointed to Volkswagen in Chattanooga and Hemlock in Clarksville as *See BREDESEN on Page 4*

## Unemployment Trust Fund in trouble

BY CAROLE GRAVES

With state unemployment numbers exceeding the national average and climbing, Tennessee officials are projecting that the state's unemployment trust fund will be broke by the end of this year if something isn't done to infuse more money into the account.

"Never in the history of Tennessee have we seen the level of claims skyrocket to what we have now," said James Neeley, state labor department commissioner, during a Joint Legislative Committee on Business Taxes held earlier this month. "The General Assembly is going to have to do something by early April before the April taxes go out. If not, we are going to go in the hole."

The state's December unemployment rate rose to 7.9 percent with the national unemployment rate now at 7.6 percent. In one month (Dec. 2008 to Jan. 2009), the unemployment trust fund took a \$73 million hit, depleting the fund to \$351 million and sinking.

States pay for unemployment benefits through payroll taxes levied on employers. In Tennessee, employers are taxed on the first \$7,000 dollars of each worker's pay. These taxes are deposited into the federal

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UI), which maintains a separate account for each state.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the unemployment system is a financial partnership between the federal and state governments. It was intended to be counter-cyclical, to accumulate and hold significant funds during good economic times, pay out benefits during bad economic times and simultaneously stimulate a stagnant economy. During good times, the federal government recommends a balance of \$1.2 billion for Tennessee.

By state statute, as the trust fund decreases, a higher tax rate is triggered in order to keep pace with the increase in claims. In January, the tax went from the third-lowest of six rate tables to the highest. The move from Table 4 to Table 1 meant the average employer, instead of paying about \$210 per employee into the fund is now paying \$315.

And with unemployment expected to reach 10 percent by the end of the year, the fund could run out of money as early as this summer and no later than year's end if nothing is done to shore up the fund, according to Dr. Bill Fox, director of the University of Tennessee's Cen-

ter for Business and Economic Research.

State officials are proposing raising the base wage amount subject to unemployment insurance tax from \$7,000 to \$9,000. If enacted, the change would increase employer's cost from \$60 to \$70 per employee. City governments in Tennessee employ some 40,500 workers.

ter for Business and Economic Research.

"The labor sector is much slower to come back," said Fox. "It will continue to deteriorate over the next couple of years. We could see a negative balance UI fund in 2009, 2010, 11 and 12."

Should the state's UI drop to a negative balance, the federal government requires that benefit payments continue, and will loan money to states. However, Neeley's department is not recommending that as a plausible option.

"It will be tough paying back any borrowed money in addition to building the fund at the same time," *See UNEMPLOYMENT on Page 3*

## Congress extends DTV transition to June

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

Analog TV is not yet a thing of the past. President Barack Obama signed a bill postponing the anticipated transition from analog signals to digital television broadcasting until June 12.

Estimates by the Nielson Co. project more than 6.5 million U.S. households were unprepared for the Feb. 17 switch. However, those numbers might be overstated according to reports by the Associated Press. Jonathan Collegio, vice president for the digital television transition for the National Association of Broadcasters argues that the Nielson report excludes customers who have already purchased digital converter boxes, but have not installed them, along with those who have requested the \$40 government coupons toward the purchase of the

boxes, but have not received them.

Nearly \$1.34 billion in funding for DTV converter box coupons has run dry leaving nearly 2.6 million requests on a waiting list, according to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Without the coupons, the boxes range in price from \$60 to \$80.

Studies indicate that primarily low-income and elderly consumers would have been at high-risk for losing television reception Feb. 17, due to an inability to purchase the converter boxes, or without sub-



A DTV awareness meeting held in 2008 in Nashville between the FCC, public and local broadcast officials targeted the percentage of the nation unprepared for a Feb. 17 transition.

scriptions to cable or satellite TV service or televisions with digital *See DTV on Page 3*

## Stimulus Act invests \$4.3 billion into state

The White House has released specific details on the local impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The compromise package of \$789 billion is designed to create and save jobs; help state and local governments with their budget shortfalls to prevent deep cuts in basic services such as health, education, and law enforcement; cut taxes for working families; and invest in the long-term health of the American economy.

The Obama Administration estimates that the Recovery Act will create or save 3.5 million jobs over the next two years. Jobs created will be in a range of industries from clean energy to health care, with more than 90 percent in the private sector. The analysis of the overall employment impact in Tennessee is estimated to be some 70,000 jobs.

The bill is made up of seven broad categories: tax relief for individuals and businesses (\$288 billion); state and local fiscal relief (\$144 billion); investments in infrastructure and science (\$114 billion); protecting the vulnerable (\$81 billion); investments in health care (\$59 billion); investments in alternative energy (\$43 billion); and education and training (\$53 billion).

Tennessee's portion under state and local relief is \$4.3 billion dollars. (See Page 8 for a breakdown of how the money will be allocated.)

The final package also includes funding for several programs that are municipal priorities, according to the National League of Cities, including:

- Investment in infrastructure, including: \$27.5 billion for modernizing roads and bridges; \$8.4 billion for improving public transit and rail; \$3.2 billion for the Energy Efficiency and Block Grant Program; \$6 billion for local clean and drinking water infrastructure improvements; \$1.2 billion for EPA's nationwide environmental cleanup programs, including Superfund; \$4.6 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers projects; \$1 billion for Community Development Block Grants to cities and states; \$2 billion for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to help communities purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed, vacant houses; and \$2.25 billion in HOME funds to support public housing projects that have stalled due to the credit freeze.

- Efforts to ease the credit crunch, including incentives for banks to purchase municipal *See STIMULUS on Page 8*

[www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov)

## New government Web site tracks federal spending

Over the upcoming months, the Obama Administration will provide more information on the distribution of the funds provided for in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

To ensure that taxpayer dollars are invested effectively, efficiently, and as quickly as possible, the recovery plan includes steps to provide oversight, accountability, and transparency.

A special Web site will post information about recovery spending, including grants, contracts, and all oversight activities.

Recovery.gov will let the tax-

payer see how the money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is being spent. There will be different ways to search for information; where it's going — to which states, to which congressional districts, even to which community. As soon as the first dollars start to go out, taxpayers will be able to track where the money is going. In some cases, detailed state maps will be available to assist in the tracking.

New information on the allocation of funds will be posted on Recovery.gov as it becomes avail- *See RECOVERY on Page 8*

## Norris elected TACIR chair

Sen. Mark Norris was elected as chairman of the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR) at their January meeting.

Sen. Norris replaces outgoing Chairman Rep. Randy Rinks, who did not seek re-election to the Tennessee General Assembly.

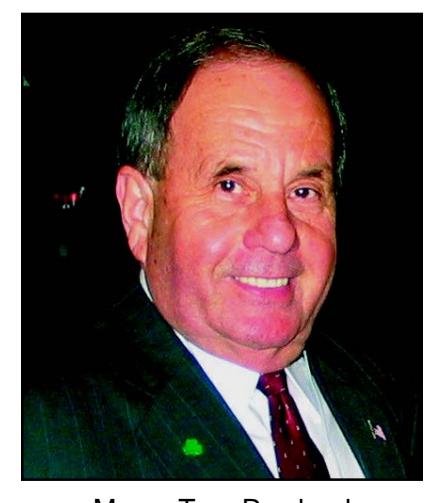
Mayor Tom Rowland of Cleveland was re-elected as vice-chairman.

Norris has represented Senate District 32 since 2000. He serves as the Leader of the Senate Republican Caucus. Sen. Norris also serves as chair of the Senate Rules Committee, and as a member of Senate Ethics; Senate Calendar; Finance, Ways and Means; and State and Local Government Committees. He previously served as a Shelby County Commissioner.

TACIR continues to be an important forum for intergovernmental communication and problem-solving in Tennessee. I am grateful to the commission for trusting me with the chairmanship," said Norris, who has served on the commission since his years as a Shelby County Commissioner. "I hope to work with my legislative colleagues and the other members of TACIR to find solutions for Tennessee's 21st Century concerns.



Sen. Mark Norris



Mayor Tom Rowland

tions and make recommendations for improvements. TACIR's mission is to serve as a forum for the discussion and resolution of intergovernmental problems, provide high-quality research support to state and local government officials in order to improve the overall quality of government in Tennessee; and to improve the effectiveness of the intergovernmental system to better serve the citizens of Tennessee.

# NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**BEANSTATION**

BAE Systems unplugged its operations on Jan. 14. The 114 workers laid off from the military vest manufacturer was due to the lack of Department of Defense contracts. Ironically, four weeks later, a U.S. Army contract created a buzz and all laid off workers were asked to come back. New employees are also needed to help pedal through the massive project. The Army placed an order for 75,000 improved outer tactical vests designed with enhanced performance and coverage. A quick release mechanism is also sewn in. The company needs to hire an additional 50 employees and an additional 50 employees for the Jefferson City facility, according to the director of operations. Thirty out of the 50 positions are still open at both sites. The jobs are all sewing positions.

**CLEVELAND**

Cleveland State Community College's mathematics lab received a prestigious Bellwether Award from the Community College Futures Assembly recognizing innovative programs at community colleges in the United States and Canada. The college redesigned its developmental studies program with a grant from the Tennessee Board of Regents redesigning its courses, including one hour of class time each week and two hours of lab work instead of the typical three hours of weekly classroom work.

**ETOWAH**

Johns Manville is eliminating 95 jobs at its Etowah factory in response to the economic downturn. It's the second blow to the area. The Waupaca Foundry announced it is cutting 70 jobs and changing its production model in an effort to survive the recession. McMinn County has been reeling from layoffs from numerous factories in the past year, with the job losses well over 1,000.

**FRANKLIN**

Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. corporate officers in Franklin will have their salaries reduced by 10-percent and an unknown number of jobs will be cut at plants in Smyrna and Decherd. The Japan-based Nissan plans to cut

its labor cost by 20 percent to 700 billion Japanese yen, or \$7.6 billion, cutting 20,000 workers worldwide because of losses in the global recession. The company currently employs 215,000 workers. The cuts are part of an overall cost-saving effort that includes job sharing and eliminating product.

**GOODLETTSVILLE**

Goodlettsville's city government expects further budget tightening measures as a result of a projected revenue shortfall for the coming 2009-10 fiscal year. There is good news, however, because the shortfall isn't expected to approach the approximately \$2 million deficit that occurred in the 2007-08 fiscal year. "We live and die by our sales tax revenue, and we budgeted for a slight decrease to match our income," said Vice Mayor Gary Manning. The economic downturn has continued to impact sales tax revenues for most governments.

**HARTSVILLE/  
TROUSDALE CO.**

Corrections Corporation of America is suspending construction of its 2,040-bed correctional facility in Trousdale County citing uncertainty over when the facility's beds can be filled. Officials say they are cautious about the year's economic outlook due to uncertainty around government budgets and spending associated with the economic downturn. CCA is the nation's largest private prison operator with its headquarters based in Nashville.

**JACKSON**

Armstrong Floor Products announced it will indefinitely lay off 110 people from its local hardwood flooring plant. Armstrong manufactures and designs wood floors, ceilings and cabinets. The company has 40 plants in 10 countries employing about 12,300 worldwide.

**JOHNSON CITY**

Johnson City became the first municipality in the state to offer curbside recycling service Feb. 27, 1989. Twenty years later, to celebrate this milestone and the more than 152 million pounds of materials diverted from landfills over the last two decades, the city has offered several programs and events throughout the month to recognize

the community's commitment to recycling. Activities have included a "Why I Recycle" essay by youths ages 14 and younger with prizes awarded in the form of gift cards: \$100 for first place, \$75 for second and \$50 for third along with citizen submitted photos and retrospectives of Johnson City's dedication to environmental stewardship.

**KINGSPORT**

Fuel prices have plummeted over the past six months, which could result in Kingsport spending \$500,000 less than expected on gasoline and diesel, according to city officials. Kingsport uses about 500,000 gallons of fuel each year. For the 2009 fiscal year, the city budgeted about \$1.8 million. However, with fuel prices dropping like a rock since July 2008, the city may spend about \$500,000 less than expected on fuel this fiscal year.

**KNOXVILLE**

The University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture plans to close the Buford Ellington 4-H Center in Milan by June 30. Plans for a new \$500,000 administrative facility for the Milan UT AgResearch and Education Center have also been put on hold due to budget constraints. The 4-H Center is operated by the UT Agricultural Extension Service and has three full-time positions. The university has other 4-H centers in Columbia, Crossville and Greeneville.

**LAFAYETTE**

A simple shrine will honor those, both young and old, whose lives were claimed by a tornado that swept across Macon County Feb. 5, 2008. The rural, tight-knit community is still suffering through the pain of loss and the labor of rebuilding. In all, 131 tornadoes were reported

**NASHVILLE**

Nashville has made a multimillion-

dollar commitment to the Teach for America program. TFA trains recent college graduates and working professionals to teach for two years in high-poverty communities. Mayor Karl Dean committed to raise the million-dollar per year cost from private sources to bring it to Nashville citing that TFA wanted a multi-year commitment. Lipscomb University will serve as the training site for the TFA teaching force, as well as the college TFA members attend to earn their teaching certification. Participants' salaries will be paid by Metro Schools. The Nashville site hopes to maintain 50 TFA teachers a year.

**OAKRIDGE**  
*The Oak Ridger*, the city's newspaper for 60 years, has put its building up for sale and intends to move into leased offices. Publisher Richard B. Esposito announced the plans in his column. *The Oak Ridger* office is currently in a 30,000-square-foot building on a 5.5-acre tract on Oak Ridge Turnpike. The newspaper outsourced its printing to the *News Sentinel* in March 2007. Over the last three months, *The Oak Ridger* has dismantled its old press and sold it for scrap, Esposito said, noting that outsourcing ended the need for the building's warehouse and pressroom.

**PIGEON FORGE**

Construction of the long anticipated \$14 million Belle Island Village entertainment project has come to a screeching halt. Since Jan. 1, \$1.2 million in liens have been filed in connection with the project slated to include Darrell Waltrip and Debbie Reynolds-themed attractions. The complex was due to open fall 2008 hiring more than 1000 employees. The opening has been delayed until April, according to the project's developer, Glen Bilbo.

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



## BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The Tennessee Press Association honored Gov. Phil Bredesen and three state lawmakers for Bredesen

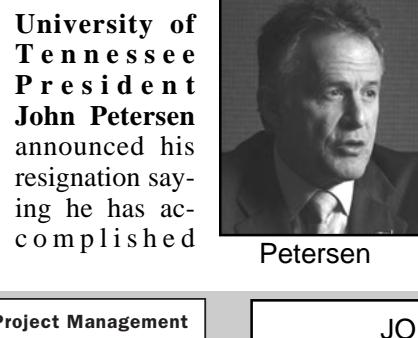


their efforts to improve open government in Tennessee and to make it easier for citizens to navigate the state's open records law. The TPA presented Open Government Awards to Bredesen; Sen. Randy McNally, Oak Ridge; Sen. Joe Haynes, Goodlettsville; and Rep. Steve McDaniel, Parkers Crossroads; during the association's annual winter meeting in Nashville.

**Sen. Jim Kyle**

has been elected chairman of Shelby County's state legislative delegation. The Memphis Democrat, first elected in 1983, is the third-longest serving member of the General Assembly from Shelby County. Kyle, 57, is also Democratic leader of the Senate, which makes him the spokesman of the minority party there and Senate point man for Gov. Phil Bredesen's legislative agenda, including the state budget.

**University of Tennessee President John Petersen** announced his resignation saying he has accomplished d



Petersen

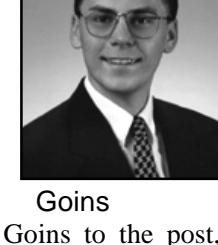
most of his goals for the university and believes it is in the institution's best interest for him to step down now with steep budget cuts on the horizon. Petersen, 61, who has been at the helm of the 42,000-student, five-campus University of Tennessee system since 2004, will take administrative leave beginning March 1. His resignation is effective June 30.

**Former state rep. Mark Goins**

was named elections coordinator, the state's top elections official. Secretary of State Tre' Goins Hargett named Goins to the post, citing his experience as a lawmaker and member of the State Election Commission.

**Franklin Arborist Todd Snackenberg**

has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC). The council is responsible for promoting healthy and sustainable urban and community forests throughout Tennessee. Hired in 2008, Snackenberg is the city's first arborist whose primary responsibilities include managing the health, placement, and inventory of all city trees as well as advising developers and residents on tree issues. He also serves as the staff liaison to the Tree Commission and recently facilitated a grant which allowed the city to plant more than 180 trees throughout its parks.



Snackenberg

**Mike Duncan**, former head of the Republican National Committee, has been voted chair of The Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors.



Mike Duncan

**Sergeant Charles Warner** of the Franklin Police Department was honored by the United States Attorney's Office for a case that involved child molestation of a minor child and the production of child pornography. Warner has been with the Franklin Police Department for 10 years.

**Jim Burchett**, Cookeville human resource director, is retiring after more than 20 years of service. Burchett began working for the city in January 1989 as risk management director. In 1990, he became head of the new human resources department, which would ensure the city was following personnel policies and procedures that had been adopted. "Jim's leadership built the department into a vital part of the city's organization," said City Manager Jim Shipley.

**Donna Nicely**, director of the Nashville Public Library has been named the winner of the 2009 Charlie Robinson Award by the Public Library Association. Established in 1997, the award honors a public library director who has been a risk taker, innovator and change agent in a public library.



## NATIONAL BRIEFS

## BY TML STAFF REPORTS

**In the first effort to calculate the national price of methamphetamine abuse, a new study said the addictive stimulant imposed costs of \$23.4 billion in 2005.** While the authors, from the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, Calif., caution that many impacts were difficult to quantify, their study suggests that methamphetamine takes an economic toll nearly as great as heroin and possibly more. Methamphetamine was named the primary cause of some 900 deaths in 2005, and the report estimates that premature mortality alone cost \$4 billion. Its abuse has spread from Hawaii and rural areas of the West and South since the 1990s, slowly expanding to the Midwest and the East.

**The U.S. Postal Service is raising the price of a first-class stamp to 44 cents May 11.** Forever Stamps will continue to be sold for the current 42-cent rate until the increase takes effect. The Forever Stamps

will remain valid in the future regardless of rate hikes. Postage rates go up annually in May, with the new prices announced in February. The overall change is tied to the rate of inflation in the year before.

**Ripples from the TVA ash spill continue with a congressional subcommittee holding a hearing on the structural soundness of coal ash impoundments nationally and a proposed bill calling for oversight.** The bill, introduced by U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick J. Rahall, would set federal standards to try to ensure the integrity of landfills/ponds used to dispose of ash from coal-burning power plants. The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources hearing focuses on the Coal Ash Reclamation, Environment, and Safety Act of 2009 (H.R. 493). It would require the Interior Department to set uniform design, engineering and inspection standards for structures like the one that ruptured at TVA's Kingston plant.

**McGill Associates**

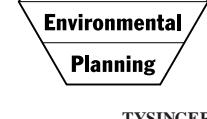
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## TCAPWA presents awards at Annual Conference in Memphis

During the annual awards ceremony of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association, recently held in Memphis, Jim Durrett, 2008 president of TCAPWA and chief of staff with the city of Clarksville, received the A.C. Lock Public Works Leader of the Year Award.

Other award winners include:

- Mark Macy, deputy Public Works director of Metro Nashville

received the Frank Kirk Meritorious Service Award.

- Beverly Gillespie, Metro Nashville, received the Roger Clark Award.
- Kenny Wiggins, Alcoa director of Public Works and Engineering, received the Larry Eddins Award.
- Bill Kilp, Collierville Public Services director, won the Charles Walter Nichols Award.
- Joe Dabbs, Germantown crew

leader, received the Award of Merit.

- David Brace, deputy director of the Knoxville Public Services Department, received the Ed Archer Young Public Works Leader of the Year; and
- The city of Clarksville won the Public Works project of the Year Award for the Legion Street Improvement Project.

Reprinted with permission from the *Tenn. Public Works Magazine*.



Clarksville received the Public Works Project of the Year Award for the Legion Street Improvement project. Pictured are: Bill Summers, Clarksville city councilman; James Lewis, Clarksville city councilman; Mike Flatt, Gresham Smith & Partners; Jim Durrett, Clarksville chief of staff; David Shepard, Clarksville Street Dept.; Brandon Goodwin, Roy T. Goodwin Construction Inc.; and David Bugg, Roy T. Goodwin Construction Inc.

## Unemployment Trust Fund in trouble

**UNEMPLOYMENT** from Page 1  
Neeley said. "It would mean imposing a 20 percent surtax on the business community. Most support a change in the rate base."

To keep the fund solvent, other options being considered are:

- raising the UI tax rate on employers by 0.6 percent;
- raising the base wage amount subject to tax (Tennessee is at \$7,000; the Southeastern average is nearly \$9,000); or
- reducing the maximum weekly benefit amount which is already among the lowest in the nation (Tennessee is at \$275, compared to a national average of \$410).

"No one is suggesting a decrease in employee benefits," said Jeff Hentschel, communications director with the state Department of Labor. "The state already has the lowest maximum weekly benefits, at \$275, with the national average at \$410."

The state's taxable wage base of \$7,000 is also among the nation's lowest; the average threshold is \$11,570.

Neeley is recommending increasing the base wage to \$9,000 in 2009 and to \$10,000 in 2010. The increase is projected to cost employers \$60 - \$70 more per worker.

Any changes to state unemployment laws must be approved by the Tennessee General Assembly.

### National Outlook

Tennessee's UI trust fund is not the only state in danger of insolvency. A growing number of states are running out of cash to pay unemployment benefits. Seven states are currently borrowing from the federal government to cover an increase in unemployment benefits for jobless workers, according to NCSL. Of the seven states borrowing money from the federal government, Michigan, alone, owes more than \$1 billion. The other states borrowing from the feds include California, Kentucky, Ohio, New York, South Carolina and Indiana.

In 2009, 30 states have increased UI taxes; 21 states have increased their taxable wage base; 15 states have increased their contribution tax rates; and seven states have increased their contribution rates and their taxable wage base.

The national unemployment rate now stands at 7.6 percent, which is a .4 percent increase from December 2008. Nearly 600,000 jobs were lost in January alone, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. More than 3.5 million jobs disappeared in 2008 and more than 11 million

Americans are unemployed.

Fourteen states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have unemployment rates higher than the national average of 7.6 percent. And Michigan, Rhode Island and Puerto Rico have unemployment rates higher than 10 percent. Four states are close to double digits with unemployment numbers hovering just over 9 percent.

### Stimulus Money

Some stimulus money was allocated for unemployment to cover extended unemployment benefits provided for in the stimulus bill and to cover administrative costs associated with the significant increase in unemployment insurance claims.

Since July 2008, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce has expanded its staff by 65 employees to handle the voluminous increase in claims.

Neeley told the legislators that in Jan. 2008, the department issued 38,400 unemployment checks; they issued 121,400 checks in Jan. 2009.

There is also money provided to states to be used for general government purposes – some \$171 million allocated to Tennessee – but it does not address the overall problem that states are facing with an insolvent UI fund.

their two sister stations were among those discontinuing analog signals on Feb. 17.

In 2005, Congress required broadcasters to switch from analog to digital signals in order to free up the airwaves for interoperable emergency-response networks, police, fire, and emergency rescue commun-

ications, while allowing broadcasters to offer programming with better picture and sound quality and more programming choices, and allow for advanced wireless service for consumers.

For further information about the conversion, visit [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov) or call 1-888-CALL-FCC.

## Congress extends DTV transition to June

**DTV** from Page 1  
tuners.

The bill provided broadcast stations the opportunity to choose to make the switch earlier than June 12, with nearly 500 stations stating they intended to move forward with the switch on Feb. 17. Three Nashville-area stations, WZTV Fox 17 and

their two sister stations were among those discontinuing analog signals on Feb. 17.

In 2005, Congress required broadcasters to switch from analog to digital signals in order to free up the airwaves for interoperable emergency-response networks, police, fire, and emergency rescue commun-



Jim Durrett, 2008 TCAPWA president and Clarksville chief of staff, received the A.C. Lock Public Works Leader of the Year Award.



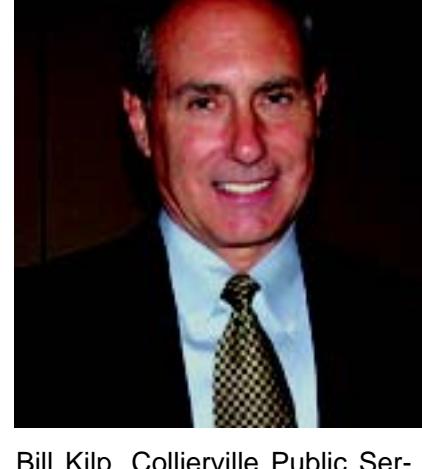
Mark Macy, deputy Public Works director, Metro Nashville, received the Frank Kirk Meritorious Service Award.



Beverly Gillespie, Metro Nashville, received the Roger Clark Award.



Kenny Wiggins, Alcoa director of Public Works and Engineering, received the Larry Eddins Award.



Bill Kilp, Collierville Public Services director, received the Charles Walter Nichols Award.



David Brace, deputy director, Knoxville Public Service Department, received the Ed Archer Young Public Works Leader of the Year.



Joe Dabbs, Germantown crew leader, received the Award of Merit.

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**STATE****BRIEFS**

BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions has gone online with Nationwide Mortgage Licensing, a federally mandated Internet-based system that allows mortgage companies and loan originators to apply for and manage their licenses electronically. All states are required to join the program under the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008, which was signed into law July 30. The act also requires mortgage loan originators to be fingerprinted for a criminal background check and demonstrate professional proficiency by passing a pre-licensure test and continuing education requirements.

**Cleaning up the coal ash that spilled from the Kingston Fossil Plant could cost up to \$825 million and take more than a year to complete, according to TVA officials.** And those millions could land on the shoulders of ratepayers. At a board meeting, TVA President Tom Kilgore said the agency already has spent \$31 million clearing roads and rail lines and buying 20 properties damaged when an ash retention pond ruptured Dec. 22.

**Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist announced the establishment of a collaboration that seeks to make education a top priority for Tennessee.** The State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a nonpartisan initiative, hopes to jumpstart education reform efforts across the state. Vanderbilt University will serve as a research partner to SCORE.

**A multimillion-dollar land deal will preserve one of Tennessee's best-known scenic views, the cliff-hugging overviews of the Cumberland Plateau's Savage Gulf.** The Conservation Fund, a national group, along with the Land Trust for Tennessee, orchestrated obtaining nearly 5,500 acres on the Cumberland Plateau from a timber company and private landowners. The \$6 million, 3,000-acre Savage Gulf property will be added this spring to the South Cumberland State Park and Natural Area, which has a million annual visitors. The deal also includes more than 2,400 acres that will preserve a portion of the South Cumberland's Fiery Gizzard trail, ranked among the nation's best trails.

Tennessee education officials have created the first national blueprint for alternative education programs to help at-risk students succeed in school. The program sets quality standards for educating students who have been suspended, expelled or have dropped out. The National Alternative Education Association has adopted Tennessee's program as the first national framework for alternative education programs, according to the state's Department of Education.

Tennessee saw 3,662 total foreclosure filings in January, a decrease of 5.7 percent from De-

## Gov. Bredesen delivers 7th state address

**BREDESEN** from Page 1

two of the biggest catalysts for job creation, with a future focus on clean energy technologies.

"While no one knows exactly which specific technologies will ultimately prevail, it seems beyond dispute that green energy will be an area of vast importance and growth in the decades ahead."

The governor's idea for harnessing that energy is to become a world leader in solar power research through the development of a solar institute in Tennessee utilizing the scientific expertise already available through Oak Ridge and UT Knoxville.

"Solar power today is a tiny part of the power equation," Bredesen said. "It remains far too expensive, and it's ripe for breakthroughs, but there's a lot of basic science to be done. We have the building blocks here in Tennessee to be major players in this."

Bredesen concluded his remarks by pledging to work with the General Assembly to keep Tennessee a sound, well-managed state.



ember and a 13.6 percent decrease from January 2008. According to RealtyTrac Inc., Tennessee ranked 18th in the nation for foreclosures, with one for every 744 households.

**The Tennessee Valley Authority will cut electric rates for customers this spring.** Last fall, TVA's rates shot up 20 percent, because of rising fuel costs along with poor hydroelectric output. Since then, rates dropped 6 percent in January, and now TVA will lower them another 7 percent in April. Board chair Bill Sansom says the drop results from formulas that account for current fuel costs.

**Seven West Tennessee high schools have been named to the 2009 U.S. News and World Report list of America's best high schools.** The schools include Adamsville High School in McNairy County, bronze medal; Big Sandy School in Benton County, bronze medal; Dyer County High School; Dyersburg High School, bronze medal; Gleason High School in Weakley County; Hardin County High School; and Middleton High School in Hardeman County. *U.S. News and World Report* analyzed academic and enrollment data from more than 21,000 public high schools to find the best across the country and placed them into gold, silver, bronze and honorable mention categories.

**Tennessee has no tracking system for citizens to see the names of the appraisers setting home values in their neighborhoods,** including the artificially high appraisals for properties used in mortgage frauds. People can learn if a property has been flipped and for what price through public documents, but these documents do not identify the appraisers. Houses involved in mortgage fraud schemes often end up vacant and dilapidated, adding to neighborhood blight. Although the public can't readily identify who the appraisers are behind questionable real estate sales, complaints filed against appraisers are increasing at a fast clip, according to the Tennessee Real Estate Appraiser Commission.

**Nearly 40,000 Tennessee households are on a federal waiting list for \$40 coupons to buy the televi-**

sion converter boxes they will need when a transition to digital television signals takes place, according to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The transition to digital television signals was scheduled for Feb. 17, but Congress approved legislation to delay the switch until June 12.

**Tennessee will launch a Web portal to allow citizens to more easily track government spending,** Gov. Phil Bredesen announced in a speech to the Tennessee Press Association. Tennessee's spending portal will be modeled on similar Web sites operated in Georgia and Kentucky and projected to be launched by the end of the year.

**The Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH) is now reporting a total of 11 cases of salmonella typhimurium infection in the state related to the nationwide outbreak associated with peanut products from Peanut Corporation of America.** Tennessee cases have been found in the following counties: Hamilton, Sumner, Roane, Greene, Bedford, Washington, McMinn, Shelby, Knox and Claiborne. All Tennessee patients have recovered from their illnesses. TDOH is continuing to work with federal and state health department authorities on the investigation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has updated information on the outbreak and consumer guidance on its Web site. This site includes a link to the Food and Drug Administration's searchable list of products that have been recalled due to this outbreak. Visit the TDOH Web site at <http://health.state.tn.us/salmonella.shtml>.

**The Tennessee Highway Patrol showed off its newest crime fighter at a recent Governor's Highway Safety meeting.** The F-6-A Remote Tech Robot is the second robot for THP's Special Operations Team. This robot is bigger and has updated software along with five cameras, including a rear drive camera, which helps it perform surveillance. The F-6-A can also help with pipe bombs, and suspicious packages. According to the THP, the robot could help save lives by allowing officers to remain remote, up to several 100 feet away, while the machine goes near the dangerous areas.

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports Tennessee farms are larger and fewer in number than they were several years ago.**



Photo courtesy of the THP  
The Tennessee Highway Patrol's newest crime fighter, the F-6-A Remote Tech Robot, is the second robot for THP's Special Operations Team.

There were 79,280 farms last year, down 9 percent from 2002, according to the U.S. Census of Agriculture. The amount of land in farms just less than 11 million acres was down 6 percent. The State Agriculture Commissioner attributes the fewer farms to less tobacco production in Tennessee. The number of tobacco farmers in Tennessee fell by

80 percent between 2002 and 2007. In many parts of the state, the pressures of urbanization also contributed to the change. Nationwide, the number of farms increased 4 percent between 2002 and 2007. Tennessee was one of 11 states that saw the number of farms decline over the five-year period.



The city of Morristown closed a \$3 million loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to be used for energy systems improvements. Pictured are Morristown Mayor Barbara "Sami" Barile, City Manager Jim Crumley, and TMBF Representative Joe Muscatello.

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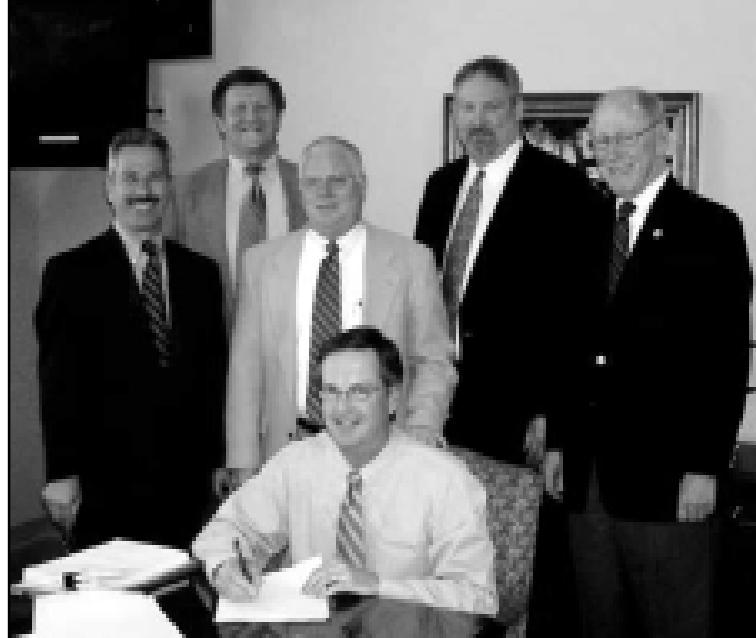
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The city of Murfreesboro closes a \$103 million loan, the largest in TMBF history.



The town of Nolensville closes a \$21,000 loan.

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# New Google Group a resource for fire, emergency personnel

Fire management consultants Ray Crouch and Gary West and Kevin Lauer, have created the Tennessee Fire Service Google Group as a communications tool for the fire and emergency service officials.

The site contains topic discussions, photos, files and useful Web links. Subscribers receive e-mail notification of each new site posting and have access to more than 700 archived discussions. Topics include grant opportunities, upcoming training statewide and nationwide, legal issues and legislative updates, job postings, and changes in regulations and codes.

The group currently has more than 1,100 subscribers, ranging from fire service personnel to Emergency Management Services and Emergency Management Agency directors and state officials.

State and local emergency officials have submitted most of the information. Recently, the International Association of Fire Chiefs asked to link to the Google group from the association's Web site as well. In addition to the Tennessee Fire Service Google Group, four



Crouch

groups formed to communicate with specific areas within fire services.

Three are dedicated to mutual aid, executive team members, district coordinators and county coordinators. The fourth is a user group for the fire department management software assistance. This group allows users to post questions and solutions to software issues as they manage their fire department data.

The site creators represent different agencies of the statewide UT Institute for Public Service. West and Crouch are with the UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service, and Lauer is with the UT County Tech-



West



Lauer

nical Assistance Service.

To view the Google site, visit <http://groups.google.com/group/tennesseefireservice?hl=en>.



## TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

**March 21: Irish Day Celebration**  
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**April 16: April 18: Rivers & Spires Festival**

Clarksville. Showcases the city's heritage and history and honors military heroes. Entertainment on five stages, free. For more information, call 931-245-4344.

**April 24: Annual National Cornbread Festival**

South Pittsburg. Historic downtown hosts cornbread cook-off, tastings, carnival, exhibits, musical entertainment, arts & crafts, historic tour of homes and much more. For more information, call 423-837-0022 or visit [www.nationalcornbread.com](http://www.nationalcornbread.com).

## COMING UP

**March 10 & 12:** Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park public meetings. A planning process for a new General Management Plant. Two public meetings will be held to obtain input for the future of the historic park on March 10, Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center, 4 p.m. until 8 p.m., 3370 Lafayette Road, Fort Oglethorpe, GA and March 12, Walker Pavilion, Coolidge, Park, 4 p.m. until 8 p.m., 150 River Street, Chattanooga. For more information, contact Sam Weddle at 423-752-5213 ext 113, or visit the park planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/chch>.

**April 2 - 4:** The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Greenways and Trails program will hold its annual forum at East Tennessee State University, which will be hosted by Johnson City and the Commissioner's Council on Greenways and Trails. Registration fees include full access to the event, including educational sessions, one of three field trips, a reception and lunch on Fri. and Sat. More information on the "Connect with Tennessee" forum, including a list of speakers, an official event brochure, event sponsors and registration forms is available at: [www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/#gtforum](http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/#gtforum).

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# Gov. Bredesen delivers annual State of the State Address



Gov. Phil Bredesen receives a standing ovation as he delivers his seventh State of the State Address.



First Lady Andrea Conte greets well-wishers as she enters the House Chamber.



Deputy House Speaker Steve McDaniel, Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, and House Speaker Kent Williams



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House Speaker Williams and George Little, commissioner of the Department of Corrections



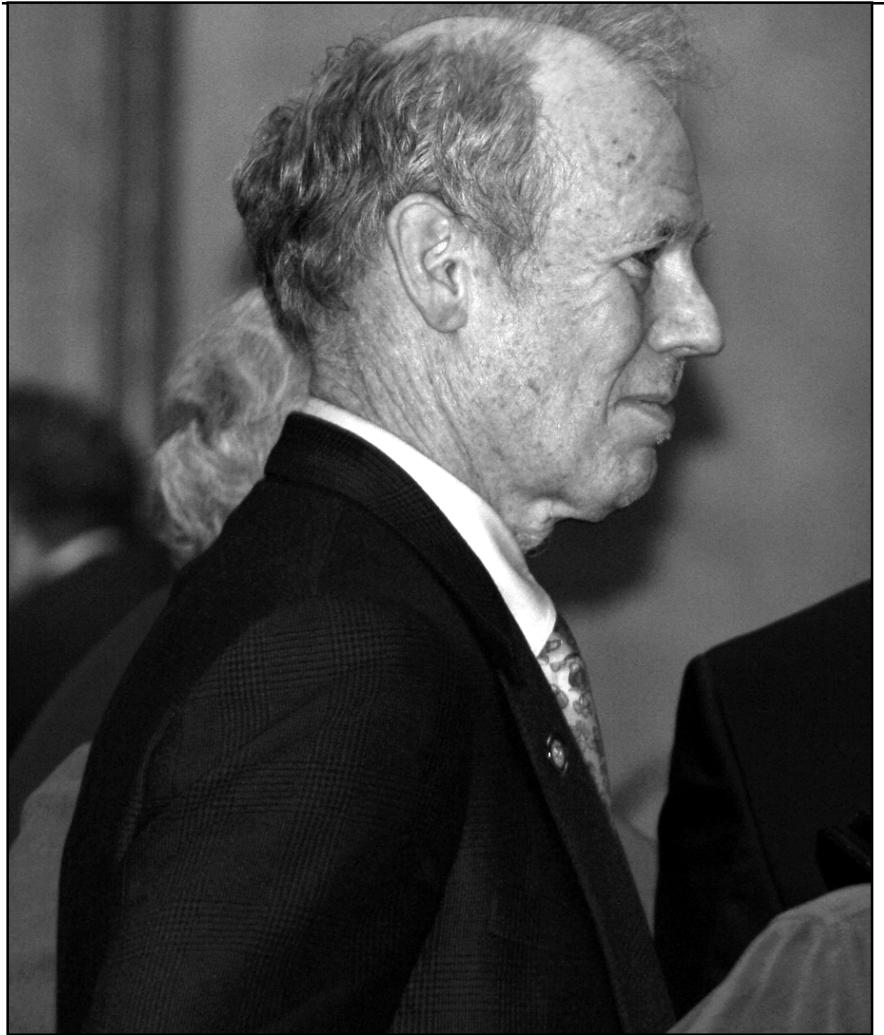
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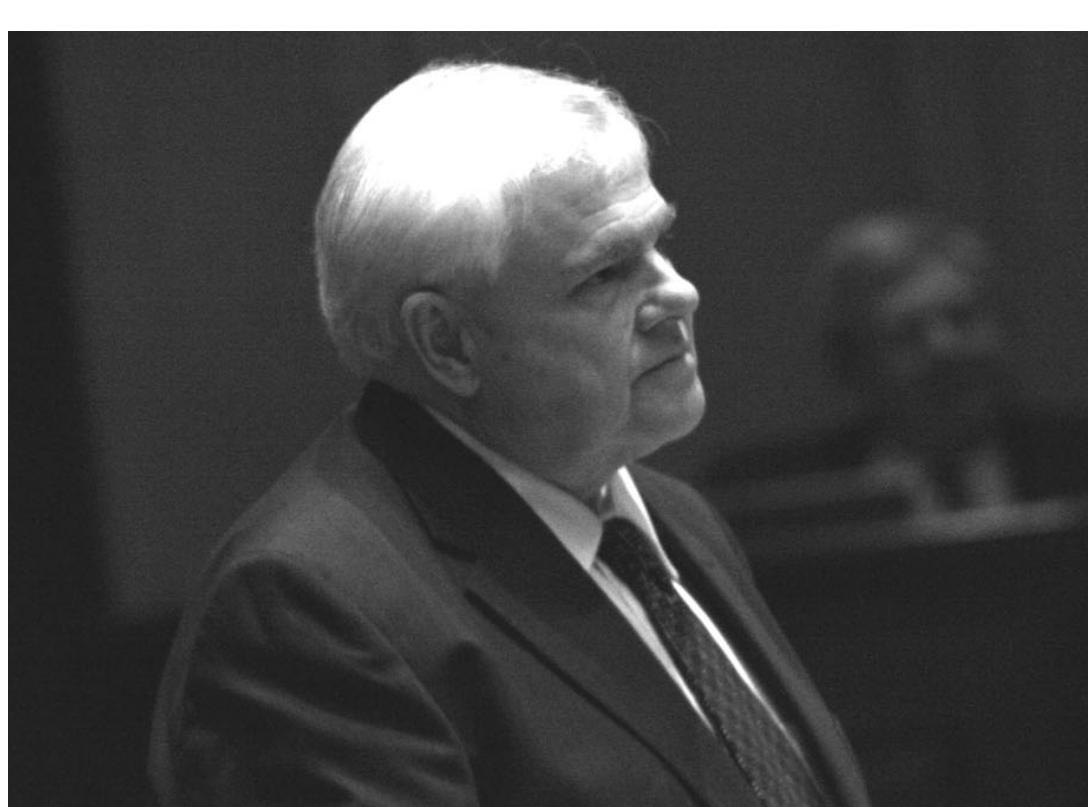
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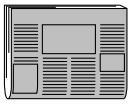
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Columbia and Maury County Government are seeking candidates with combination of education and experience equivalent to: AS Degree (BS Degree preferred) in Business Administration, Animal Science or health related field. Must possess thorough experience working with animals, knowledge of nutritional and emotional needs of animals; strong leadership, organizational, interpersonal, and decision making skills; supervisory experience; experience performing administrative and accounting duties. Must possess a valid TN Drivers License. Current Tetanus vaccination on record, and must maintain a valid Certification for Euthanasia through the State of Tennessee Division of Health-related board. Salary range is \$33,440-\$50,160. Beginning salary commensurate with experience. Deadline to apply, March 16, 2009. Residency requirement applies. We are a Drug-Free, Smoke-Free workplace. Pre-employment drug screen and physical exam required. EOE. Applications are available Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Maury County Human Resource Dept., One Courthouse Square, Suite 303, Columbia, TN. 38401. [www.maurycounty.tn.gov](http://www.maurycounty.tn.gov).

### ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF

ARDMORE. The city and town of Ardmore TN/AL, are accepting applications for the position of Assistant Police Chief, with the anticipation of advancement to Chief. Certification in either Tennessee or Alabama and the capability of being certified in the other state is required. The successful candidate should have a minimum of five years in law enforcement. Salary is negotiable. Applications and/or resumes should be submitted to the Ardmore, TN or Ardmore, AL city halls by 4 p.m., March 15. For more info, call 931-427-2124.

### BUILDING OFFICIAL

GALLATIN. The city is accepting applications for the position of Building Official. Reports to the Mayor, and responsible to the City Council, the Building Official manages the Codes Department; performs field inspections; supervises staff, interprets various codes and ordinances; acts as the appeal step when there are issues between customers and inspectors; works closely with local contractors and builders in enforcing building ordinances; interfaces daily with Planning and Engineering Departments. Minimum qualifications include any combination of education and experience equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university in a relevant area coupled with significant supervisory experience. Considerable related leadership experience (10 years or more) and preferably at least 5 of these years in the public sector. Certification as a Building Official through a recognized certification program required, or the ability to become certified within 18 months. At a minimum, must be a Certified Building Inspector. Must possess a driver's license valid in the State of Tennessee. Current salary range is \$48,313 to \$77,236 with excellent benefits. To apply, submit cover letter summarizing reasons for interest and qualifications, detailed resume including salary history, and three professional references. Mail resumes to City of Gallatin, 132 West Main Street, Gallatin, TN 37066, Attn.: Dave Crawford, Personnel Official. Position open until filled. EOE.

### CHIEF OF POLICE

DYERSBURG. The city is seeking applicants for the position of Chief of Police. The Chief of Police reports directly to the mayor, and is responsible for performing administrative, managerial, and technical functions associated with overseeing the activities of the Police Department and enforcing all city statutes/ordinances and State laws/regulations for which the police Department is accountable. Duties and responsibilities include planning, coordinating and directing all aspects of department operations; supervising the enforcement of laws/ordinances/responding to

and directing major calls/occurrences; formulating orders/regulations; developing department budget and controlling expenditures; supervising assigned employees; and providing information and assistance to the general public. Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice is preferred, supplemented by formal training in law enforcement methods/practices with extensive experience in law enforcement work to include five (5) years of management/supervisory experience or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Requires Police Officer Certification by the State of Tennessee and a valid Tennessee driver's license. Salary is competitive and negotiable with benefits. Resumes along with three (3) references may be mailed to Sue Teague, Human Resources director, 425 W. Court Street, Dyersburg, Tennessee, 38024 or emailed to [s-teague@dyersburgtn.gov](mailto:s-teague@dyersburgtn.gov)

### CITY MANAGER

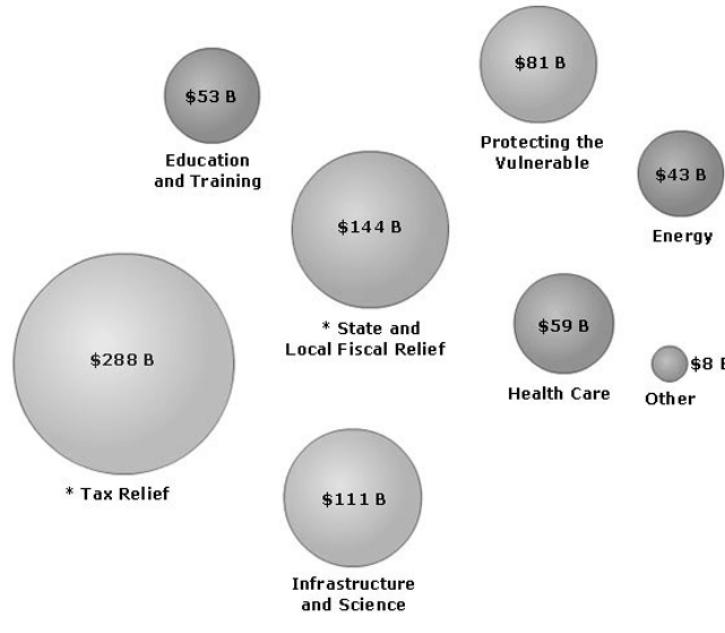
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO. The city is seeking to replace the retiring City Manager. A Council/Manager government with the Mayor elected at large and six Council members elected from wards. The ideal candidate will lead our full-service organization including public works, parks & recreation, fire, police, administrative services, airport, and development services, and will have demonstrated skills in leadership, strategic planning, problem solving, finance, decision making, public relations/communications, fostering active community involvement, and downtown revitalization. An MPA/MBA and 5-10 years City Manager or Assistant City Manager or President/CEO experiences with a city/company of similar size, complexity and financial strength preferred. We offer a competitive compensation package commensurate with qualifications and experience. Submit resume, cover letter with current compensation package, and five professional references to Human Resources Manager, 401 Independence, Cape Girardeau MO 63703 by March 20, 2009. For more information, visit the website [www.cityofcapegirardeau.org](http://www.cityofcapegirardeau.org).

### PUBLIC NOTICE FOR THE SALE OF SEWER SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

Arlington is seeking sealed bid offers for the sale of the following listed sewer surplus equipment: ABS Submersible 90 Horsepower Pump - Model Number: AFD 1501-1; Pumpex Submersible Pumps - Model Number: K-154-CD-332; Pressure Systems Transducer - Model Number: 700-140-4030; Phoenix Vector AC Drives - Model Number: 0400-0100-N1-S; Smith & Loveless Standard 2-Pump Lift Stations; Smith & Loveless 10 Horsepower, 200 GPM, 4" Check Value Pump - Model Number: 4B2D; Smith & Loveless 15 Horsepower, 500 GPM, 6" Check Value Pump - Model Number: 4B2B; Smith & Loveless 15 Horsepower, 550 GPM, 6" Check Value Pump Model Number: 4B2B; Smith & Loveless Standard Triplex Pump Lift Station; Smith & Loveless 30 Horsepower, 600 GPM Pump - Model Number: 8D4D; Allen Bradley 1336 Plus II Adjustable Frequency AC Drives w/Enclosure; Gast Manufacturing Corporation 5 Horsepower Blowers - Model Number: R-6350A-2; ASI Diffusion Stationary Aeration Grids; House Manufacturing Paddlewheel Aerator-Model Number: MPW144TA3223100; House Manufacturing Paddlewheel Aerator -Model Number: MDD144TA3223100; House Manufacturing Paddlewheel Aerator - Model Number: MPW144A103. Bids must be placed in an envelope, sealed and delivered to the town of Arlington on or before the bid closing date and time. The envelope containing the Bid must be plainly marked with the following information: (Failure to do so will be cause for rejection of bid) The Bidder's name and address, due date of bid package, and equipment name. The deadline for submitting bids will be Tuesday, March 31, 2009 at 2 P.M. Bids should be mailed or delivered to Arlington Town Hall, P.O. Box 507, 5854 Airline Road, Arlington, Tennessee 38002. For questions or to view and inspect you may contact Mr. Dickie Wiseman, Public Works Superintendent at (901) 867-4980. The Town of Arlington reserves the right to reject any or all bids. High bidder must be financially stable and will be notified of award.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry will accept Urban Forestry project proposals from local governments, private non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Projects for 2009 that will be considered for funding include those that address the development of four elements of an urban or community forestry program, urban forest resource management, and education/training that pertains to urban and community forestry, among others. Additional details on the types of projects along with application forms and proposal instructions are available in grant information

## Stimulus Act creates 70,000 jobs in Tennessee



The bill provides money for: tax relief for individuals and businesses (\$288 billion); state and local fiscal relief (\$144 billion); investments in infrastructure and science (\$111 billion); protecting the vulnerable (\$81 billion); investments in health care (\$59 billion); investments in alternative energy (\$43 billion); and education and training (\$53 billion).

### STIMULUS from Page 1

bonds by allowing them to deduct the interest paid and a provision to exclude private activity bond interest from the alternative minimum tax.

- Assistance to vulnerable families, including: \$87 billion for Medicaid; nearly \$49 billion for unemployment insurance; \$20 billion for food stamps; nearly \$25 billion to help unemployed individuals maintain their COBRA health insurance coverage; \$3.95 billion for job training including funds for adult, dislocated worker and youth programs, including \$1.2 billion for up to one million summer jobs for youth; \$1.5 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants; and \$2 billion for Section 8 project-based housing assistance.

The bill also includes funding for local crime prevention activities — \$1 billion for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program and \$2.25 billion for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program.

"We applaud the Senate and the House of Representatives for passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan," said NLC President Kathleen Novak, mayor, Northglenn, Colo. "This bold legislation unites all levels of government in an unprecedented effort to get our country back to work and provides new resources that will help us create and preserve good jobs, strengthen the economy, and provide long-lasting benefits to our communities."

## Recovery Act provides unprecedented oversight, accountability and transparency

### RECOVERY from Page 1

able. Users are encouraged to check it frequently.

Other oversight provisions include:

- distribution of funds whenever possible through existing formulas and programs that have proven track records and accountability measures already in place;
- numerous provisions in the bill provide for expedited but effective obligation of funds so that dollars are invested in the economy as quickly as possible;
- the Government Accountability Office and the Inspectors General are provided additional funding for auditing and investigating

recovery spending;

- a new Recovery Act Accountability and Transparency Board will coordinate and conduct oversight of recovery spending and provide early warning of problems;
- state and local whistleblowers who report fraud and abuse are protected; and
- there are no earmarks in this bill.

In addition, the President is directing Federal agencies to take critical steps in preparation for the Act's implementation, focusing on five crucial objectives:

- recovery funds are awarded and distributed in a prompt, fair, and

reasonable manner;

- the recipients and uses of all recovery funds are transparent to the public, and that the public benefits of these funds are reported clearly, accurately, and in a timely manner;
- recovery funds are used for authorized purposes and every step is taken to prevent instances of fraud, waste, error, and abuse;
- projects funded under the recovery legislation avoid unnecessary delays and cost overruns; and,
- programs meet specific goals and targets, and contribute to improved performance on broad economic indicators.

## 2009 Urban Forestry Grant information, application packet now available

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry will accept Urban Forestry project proposals from local governments, private non-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

Projects for 2009 that will be considered for funding include those that address the development of four elements of an urban or community forestry program, urban forest resource management, and education/training that pertains to urban and community forestry, among others.

Additional details on the types of projects along with application forms and proposal instructions are available in grant information

packages. Proposals must be received in the Nashville office of the Division of Forestry by 4:30 P.M. April 9, 2009.

To request a grant information package or to get more information about the urban forestry grants, call: Bruce Webster at 615-837-5436, bruce.webster@state.tn.us; Tom Simpson, 865-908-4434, tom.

[simpson@state.tn.us](mailto:simpson@state.tn.us); Brian Rucker, 615-837-5439, [brian.rucker@state.tn.us](mailto:brian.rucker@state.tn.us) or Shawn Posey, 901-754-5185, [shawn.posey@state.tn.us](mailto:shawn.posey@state.tn.us).

The funds are provided by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and are administered by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry.

## TML requests E-mail addresses

The quickest way to keep city officials apprised of legislative happenings is through e-mail or fax. Please send any changes in your contact information to Mona Lawrence, by fax at 615-255-4752, by e-mail to [mlawrence@TML1.org](mailto:mlawrence@TML1.org), or call 615-255-6416.

## Good Risk Management is just Good Management



The TML Risk Management Pool is one of the largest providers of workers' compensation coverage in Tennessee. The Pool insures more than 40,500 of Tennessee municipal employees, including those who perform some of the most dangerous jobs like utility line workers, firefighters and law enforcement officers.

Controlling accidents through an effective loss control program is a vital foundation of the Pool's program. By each member taking responsibility to continuously reduce risk exposures through good risk management practices, municipal governments are helping taxpaying citizens get the very best for their tax dollars.



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The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIP), National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) and National Association of Fleet Administrators (NAFA) endorse the use of Life Cycle Costing as a preferred procurement method.

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# CRT's quality growth efforts in Middle Tennessee

## "Helping communities design the future"

BY VICTORIA SOUTH  
TML Communications Coordinator

*This article is the first segment of a four-part series addressing Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Quality Growth Toolbox Pilot program highlighting the town of Kingston Springs as a pilot city.*

The storm clouds brewing over Kingston Springs were no match for the torrent of ideas flooding city hall. Local officials, representatives from TDOT and planners from Gresham Smith and Partners were at the drawing board, examining aerial maps and discussing strategic action for improvements to a heavily congested section of town. A quaint, rural hamlet, visitors exiting the I-40 ramp are currently greeted by a rush of traffic, an absence of sidewalks and greenery, a truck stop and a hodgepodge of fuel and fastfood places.

Each year, the issues faced by local governments have region-wide impacts, from air and traffic congestion to housing and water standards, where the quality of life of 1.4 million citizens of Middle Tennessee relies upon decisions made by the leaders of the 10 individual counties comprising the Cumberland Region: Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties.

Having created a shared vision for their community in 2008, along with design and development strategies facilitated through The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Blue Print for America grant, Kingston Springs is ready to realize their visions one step at a time as a pilot city utilizing the strategies, methods and resources found in Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Quality Growth Toolbox.

Since 2000, Cumberland Region Tomorrow (CRT) has provided support and encouraged quality growth in Middle Tennessee with an emphasis on land use, transportation, and preservation of the rural landscape and character of the region's communities.

"The Cumberland Region has many assets to build upon, including our commitment to preserving our unique communities and beautiful landscapes," said Dr. Bridget Jones PhD., executive director of CRT.

"Maintaining and enhancing these assets is critical to our region's continued livability and economic vitality."

The non-profit, citizen-based regional organization began as an outgrowth of a 1999 Regional Planning Summit sponsored by Vanderbilt University and the Greater Nashville Regional Council, where local and national speakers spoke about the current state of the region and shared best practices from other regions facing similar growth issues.

"The main thing that we learned from this effort was that residents of the Cumberland Region want to preserve our unique communities and beautiful landscapes," said Jones.

"These treasures are not only valued for their intrinsic worth and contribution to our region's livability; but are also seen as crucial to the region's long-term economic vitality."

CRT has been on the move since then, publishing its *Report to the Region* in 2003; the result of a visioning process engaging hundreds of citizens toward the region's future growth. This visioning process produced 20-year growth trend data and two possible scenarios for the region's future.

Then, entering their second work phase in 2004, CRT has developed implementation tools and technical resources for *The Quality Growth Toolbox* to assist government officials, other decision makers and citizens bring new growth and development patterns to reality. The program is assisted by key regional leaders, qualified consultants and lead partner agencies.

"As an architect and designer of the built environment, I find that my profession has prepared me to play a role in shaping our communities," said Marion Fowlkes, Toolbox Project chair and principal at Centric Architecture in Nashville as well as a resident of Kingston Springs and member of the town Planning Commission.

"CRT offered an opportunity for me to network with regional leaders while utilizing my skills to encourage and support growth planning emphasizing land use, transportation and preservation. Good design affects the safety, health and the environment as well as the quality of

life in our neighborhoods, towns, cities and regions."

As an important step, fostering community-wide communication to help define goals and objectives, CRT, AIA, and the Nashville Civic Design Center partnered to jointly offer community visioning and design workshops to Robertson County, Lebanon and Kingston Springs.

As pilot cities, the communities' growth progress utilizing the strategies, methods and resources found in *The Quality Growth Toolbox* will be monitored by CRT. The design workshops are a series of forums where architects, citizens and community leaders come together to address distinct needs or issues not currently addressed in their communities.

CRT educated town leaders on the importance of growth planning and managed the schedule of visioning activities. AIA Middle Tennessee

provided the professionals to help facilitate the visioning process applying their Ten Principles of Livable Communities questionnaire, and the Civic Design Center organized the community visioning process.

"We had a huge response," said Laurie Cooper, Kingston Springs city manager. "We invited 130 and it was open to the public. About 90 people showed up both days."

According to the AIA report, there is a general perception in Kingston Springs of two different town centers, one historic near the former downtown rail depot, and the other a commercial strip leading north from the Interstate interchange. The town had already engaged in the process of restoring local sidewalks and infrastructure in their historic main street area.

"We found out that a large part of the community does not like the way the Interstate 40 area looks," said Cooper. "As businesses and things have grown, there are pedestrian issues, increased truck traffic and safety issues."

General observations by AIA during the town's visioning process are that the interchange does not reflect the character of the town, is unattractive, and doesn't function well. AIA professionals have suggested Context Sensitive Design (CSS), as described in *The Quality Toolbox*, as a method of developing the existing build and natural design environment of the community. Additionally, a railroad line connects the town with Dickson and Nashville suggesting that transit-oriented development would be feasible in the historic downtown area.

"Kingston Springs is a rural village with an historic downtown that grew along a railroad," said Fowlkes. At Kingston Springs' interstate exchange, the context sensitive design might suggest that streetscapes in the downtown area influence the design of pedestrian development.

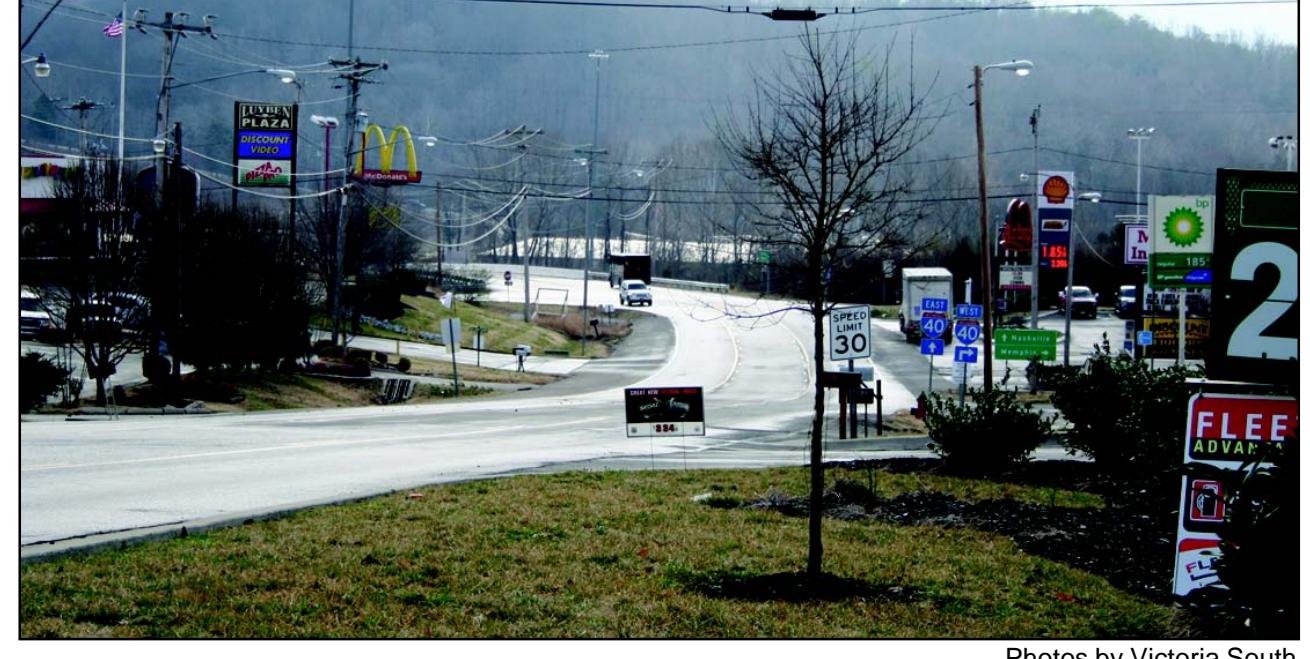
"Items that contribute to Kingston Springs' unique character should be embraced and further developed to create pride in this community," Fowlkes continues. "Another contextual element is the Harpeth River. The river runs through the edge of town and connects with our city park system. By building along the river, we could respond to the needs of the river paddlers and floaters that utilize this natural resource."

During the visioning process, Kingston Springs' citizens were happy to add their hopes for the future which include: providing bikeways and sidewalks with trees and benches; a Farmer's Market; encouraging mixed-use development; repairing an old Civil War bridge to link the town's two parks; hosting more annual and monthly events downtown, and reinforcing all of Kingston Springs as a walkable, interconnected community linking its town centers, neighborhoods, schools and natural resources.

"The meetings helped us to discover what the citizens of our community would like to see in future development," said Cooper. "It added closure to previous projects and helped to expedite the process by working with professionals."

Like many communities in the state, Kingston Springs does not have all the resources required to deliver on many of the improvements outlined in their visioning.

"Cumberland Region Tomorrow's



Photos by Victoria South  
Kingston Springs would like to revitalize an unattractive and hazardous part of town at the I-40 Interchange ramp utilizing techniques and design principles learned through Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Quality Growth Toolbox.

*Quality Growth Toolbox* is a resource we are using to educate our community on quality growth principles. Accessing the funding necessary to bring in professional land planners and designers to advise our community on the many alternative design guidelines and development solutions that exist will be a challenge," said Fowlkes.

"Developing and implementing comprehensive planning and aligning supporting codes, regulations, and budgets can present a challenge for local governments," agreed Jones.

The Quality Growth Toolbox suggests that the region can develop methods to provide additional planning resources for local governments in three basic ways:

- Develop matching grant programs for comprehensive planning projects that support regional planning priorities;
- Make planning technical assistance available through qualified consultants having the expertise to meet community and regional needs; and
- Make available technical staff to provide additional help in comprehensive planning, design, and other technical areas.

According to CRT's *Report to the Region*, changes in policy and systems in the Cumberland region will occur more easily as large numbers of people are informed of different growth possibilities, become interested in alternative types of development and request that they are made possible.

"It's been such a pleasure working with Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Quality Growth Toolbox," said Jones. "There's been great support and interest. We can only hope more communities will entertain the challenge of a new approach to economic development."

Professional development credit

for local elected officials and staff for the 4-hour Quality Growth Toolbox Intro course was approved for APA/AICP credit Jan. 2008. CEU credit for local government leaders is also available through the UT's Institute for Public Service and Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

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