

NLC testifies against federal collective bargaining bill

BY NEIL BOMBERG
Nation's Cities Weekly

Ellis Hankins, executive director of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, testified in opposition to H.R. 413, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2009, before the House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions earlier this month.

The bill would require that every state, county, city and town collectively bargain with their police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and corrections officers, regardless of state and local laws. NLC has opposed this legislation since it was first introduced 15 years ago by Rep. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.).

Hankins asked the members of the subcommittee not to fix what isn't broken. For centuries, states and local governments have developed procedures for addressing the needs of their employees, taxpayers and citizens. They have done so with and without collective bargaining, through laws that are designed to "provide their workers with excellent working conditions, competitive salaries, excellent health and pension benefits, and a

working environment that is safe and appropriate." He added that this bill would put the federal government in charge of what has been a state and local function for no compelling reason.

Citing the Constitution, Supreme Court decisions and existing law, Hankins noted that this bill disregards and disrespects the democratic decision making process employed by states and localities to decide how best to interact with their employees.

"This bill seeks to replace local solutions with a one-size-fits-all national solution," he said.

Hankins added that it would substantially alter the relationship between local elected officials and their employees by forcing every local government to enter into federally sanctioned collective bargaining with their workers regardless of state and local law; it would place serious financial burdens on every state, county, city and town; and it would worsen the precarious fiscal situation states, counties, cities and towns face, thereby threatening the economic recovery currently taking place.

Hankins noted other problems with the legislation. It would only *See H.R.413 on Page 5*

TML keynote focuses on sustainable communities during challenging times

How do cities create highly competitive and sustainable communities in an era of economic uncertainty?

Dr. Jim Johnson, professor of entrepreneurship and director of the Urban Investment Strategies Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will explore how municipalities can invest in "community capital" in order to thrive and prosper in the twenty-first-century economy.

Johnson will give the opening keynote address at TML's Annual Conference in Gatlinburg, slated for Sunday, June 13 - 15 at the Gatlinburg Convention Center.

Based on his research, Johnson's presentation will highlight the economic and demographic challenges that cities will have to respond to in the years ahead, and the "smart" infrastructure that cities will need to put in place in order to remain attractive as places to live and do business.

Dr. Johnson is the William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor at Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler Business School. He has developed a conceptual model of a highly competitive community and will use it in his presentation as the framework for talking about these issues.



Dr. Jim Johnson

His research on these and related topics has been widely cited in a number of national media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Newsweek*, *Time Magazine*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *Business Week*. He has also appeared on a number of national television shows, including *The Today Show* on NBC, *CNN Headline News*, the *CBS Evening News*, *ABC Nightly News*, *Sunday Morning* on CBS, *In-See CONFERENCE on Page 5*

Feds amend Family, Medical Leave Act for military personnel

BY BONNIE JONES
MTAS HR Consultant

For the first time since its adoption in 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) has been amended. The revision provides two new entitlements for military personnel and their families and comes as a result of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181).

The expansion of FMLA as provided by the NDAA more than doubles the amount of protected leave some veteran families are entitled to under the act. Under the new regulations, eligible employees may be entitled to take up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave to care for an injured servicemember and up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for "any qualified exigency" if a spouse, son, daughter or parent service member is called up for active duty or is on active duty. While the term "qualifying exigency" was not defined in the original amendment, it has since been clarified by providing examples for what exigency leave can

be used.

Qualified Exigency Leave

Exigency leave is available to immediate family members of and relates to a call or order to active duty by members of the Reserve, National Guard and certain retired members of the Reserve and regular armed forces. It does not apply to family members of the regular armed forces on active duty status.

The servicemember must be a spouse, son, daughter or parent of the employee requesting leave.

Qualifying exigency leave may be used for:

- Short-notice deployment (defined as notice of an impending call or order to active duty within seven days of the date of deployment).
- Military events and related activities, such as informational briefings, family assistance programs or official ceremonies and events.
- Childcare and school activities, including arranging alternative childcare, caring for children on an immediate, urgent basis and attending school functions.

Legislature unanimously approves TML priority

Others still pending

Legislation to allow municipalities to receive payments of property taxes on installment was unanimously approved by the Tennessee General Assembly March 15.

Sponsored by Sen. Diane Black (SB 2792) and Rep. Mike McDonald (HB 2870), the legislation is one of TML's 2010 legislative initiatives.

The new law will allow municipalities to receive property tax payments in installments, provided they first file a plan with the state Comptroller's office that indicates the trustee's office has the technology to receive payment of property taxes on installment.

Property owners electing to make partial payments are still obligated to pay their property taxes in full by March 1.

"Municipalities have found that some of their residents, particularly senior citizens who may not have escrows and have their houses already paid off, find it

difficult to make property tax payments in one lump sum," Sen. Black explained before the Senate State and Local Government Committee. "They would like to have the same flexibility afforded to counties."

County trustees are allowed to receive property tax payments in installments. But no comparable provision in the law exists to allow cities and towns to accept payments of property taxes in this same manner.

"Municipalities want the ability to provide their citizens with more flexibility in budgeting," said Rep. McDonald. "They don't have this authority under current state law."

By expanding state law to include municipalities, property owners in those municipalities implementing this option, will be able to choose between paying their property taxes on installment or making a lump sum payment.

SB 2792/HB 2870 is the first of several legislative priorities TML has initiated in 2010 to be approved.

Legislation designed to protect municipal governments from the *See LEGISLATION on Page 3*



Sen. Diane Black



Rep. Mike McDonald

Adopt-A-Meter program to help Nashville's homeless population

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

Although this downtown meter never expires, the spare change or dollar bills fed into it could make the difference between someone getting into low-cost housing or living on the streets. The Adopt-A-Meter program, announced by Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and coordinated by Key Alliance, an initiative of the Metropolitan Homeless Commission, refurbishes old parking meters donated by the Department of Public Works, to create housing opportunities for homeless people, an initiative that unites nonprofit, faith-based, government, and for-profit organizations toward a common goal.

"Homelessness is not a government issue or a nonprofit issue," said Dean. "It is a community issue. The Adopt-A-Meter program is a way for citizens to channel funding directly toward the outreach efforts that benefit homeless individuals and families in our city."

The project is based upon a similar program implemented in 2007 in the city of Denver, where 86 meters now generate more than \$100,000 a year toward homeless projects.

Nashville's homeless population is currently served by less than 10 outreach workers striving to get people off the streets and into the city's Housing First program. Funds

from the Adopt-A-Meter project will help put more outreach workers on the streets, according to Harris.

"On any given night, there are 4,000 people out there who are homeless," said Clifton Harris, Key Alliance executive director.

"Outreach workers spend a tremendous amount of time developing a relationship and a level of trust with homeless individuals," said Harris.

"Trust and the relationships are especially important when you're dealing with a homeless person who is suffering from a mental illness who is reluctant to enter shelters or engage in services," Harris explains. "Building these relationships often leads people to change their minds and move into housing."

According to Harris, Nashville is starting with 30 meters, donated by the Department of Public Works, and will install a second round of about 40 or 50 after the initial meters are sold. So far, more than 12 have been sponsored at \$1,000 each. Businesses will have the option of decorating the meters in their company colors and logos through a special project with the Arts & Business Council.

"The success of Housing First has been phenomenal," said Harris. "We've seen a reduction in jail time, hospital visits, health conditions and decreased time on the streets. The program shows a housing retention rate of 92 percent." The program



Photo courtesy of Mayor Karl Dean's Office

Southwest Airlines is the first to take part in "Adopt a Meter," a new program in Nashville that uses old parking meters to raise donations for the homeless.

works through private landlords across the city.

Housing First moves a homeless individual or family into permanent housing as soon as possible and requires a range of supportive services, including case management, mental health services, substance abuse services, employment and training, special needs child care and life skills training. Once the *See METERS on Page 3*



Under the new regulations, eligible employees may be entitled to take up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave to care for an injured servicemember and up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for "any qualified exigency" if a spouse, son, daughter or parent service member is called up for active duty or is on active duty.

NEWS
ACROSS
TENNESSEE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

BRENTWOOD

The city’s Tree Committee held its annual Arbor Day celebration at Crockett Park. Each year, the Tree Committee plants a tree and dedicates it to an individual or group that has performed exemplary service to the city and its citizens. A special Autumnalis cherry tree, donated by the Brentwood Woman’s Club, was planted in Mayor Betsy Crossley’s name as a thank you for her years of service to the city. Crossley was elected to the city commission in 2007 and has served on the Brentwood Planning Commission, Brentwood Historic Commission, Brentwood Tree Board and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. She currently holds the office of district board representative to the Tennessee Municipal League. This will be Brentwood’s 21st year to receive the Tree City USA Award.

CLARKSVILLE

Since breaking ground last year on one of Tennessee’s largest manufacturing investments, Hemlock Semiconductor Group is making significant progress on construction and infrastructure activities in order to meet its 2012 operation start-up date. The \$1.2 billion project reflects worldwide demand for polysilicon to support the growing solar industry. There are currently 300 construction workers on site, with the total construction workforce expected to top 1,000 by early 2011. Eighty Tennessee-based companies are prequalified and prepared to compete for these construction contracts.

CLEVELAND

The Cleveland Bradley Chamber of Commerce is co-sponsoring a series of workshops called “Understanding the German Way.” With \$2 billion investments in the area from Volkswagen and Wacker Chemical come German natives and the potential for new business. The workshops will be geared toward helping local business people and others get

acquainted with German culture and German businesses. The Chamber will offer six sessions covering topics such as the school systems, communication, and consumer habits.

FRANKLIN

A local grassroots effort spearheaded by Leadership Franklin and a few city employees has resulted in more than 120 businesses signing up for the Live Green Partnership. Companies like Nissan, Healthways, Mars Petcare and almost all of Main Street in Historic Franklin are talking about the ways their businesses are being more sustainable through efforts such as recycling, using energy efficient appliances, energy efficient vehicles and more. Franklin is the first in the state to start this type of community driven partnership, and hopes to be a leader in sustainability in the nation. The Live Green Partnership was a primary goal of the Public Education Committee in Franklin’s 2009 Sustainable Community Action Plan. The committee’s goal was to establish a green partner program that enables entities to be publicly recognized when they go green, which will encourage environmental stewardship and create awareness in the community.

JACKSON

Jackson has been ranked one of the sixth-best places to locate a company, according to a new survey by *Site Selection* Magazine. The magazine ranked Tennessee the fifth-best place to do business, the highest ranking of any Southern state given by the magazine this year. Part of last year’s business occurrences that helped lift Jackson to the sixth-place spot was the announced arrival of Carlisle Tire and Wheel. The company is moving into the former Whirlpool Jackson Dishwashing plant and is expected to hire 440 people this year.

JOHNSON CITY

Michigan-based Robert Bosch LLC is closing its Johnson City automotive brake production plant and lay-

ing off 140 people. The plant will begin closing down from April 23 and end by July 31. Bosch said it was closing the Johnson City facility as part of a restructuring of the company’s brake division. Bosch LLC produces a range of products in automotive, industrial technology, consumer goods and building technology markets.

KNOXVILLE

The city plans to submit a proposal to Google Inc. in hopes of becoming a test site for its ultra-fast Internet system. Cities across the country are hotly competing to be one of Google’s preferred towns, and the Internet company is encouraging them to make bold, creative statements as to why they are deserving. A more important part of the selection process is the number of nominations cities receive. Knoxville is making its intentions to be a Google city known on its website, where it is asking residents to fill out the nominations on the search site’s web page.

LA VERGNE

Borders Books will lay off 120 workers at its distribution facility in La Vergne. Borders alerted employees of the job cuts in late December. The positions are part of a unit that handles returns for the book store chain and will be consolidated to another site in Pennsylvania. The shifting still leaves 600 jobs at Borders’ logistics hub in La Vergne.

LAWRENCEBURG

Modine Manufacturing Inc., based in Wisconsin, is expanding its operations into the North Murray building in Lawrenceburg. The expansion could create approximately 200 new jobs in the next three years. The announcement represents the largest existing industry job creation project in Lawrence County in a decade. Work in the new building will begin in late summer. Modine designs, tests and makes heat transfer products.

LINDEN

After years competing with more centrally located counties for infrastructural dollars and manufacturing attention, Vision Perry, an economic development program funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, is working to

build infrastructure along the digital highway. Unlike a bricks-and-mortar approach, a digital factory functions as a virtual job site, working remotely for national companies via the Internet or telecommunications. Selected for its technical resources already at hand, Vision Perry houses the pilot training program, which has received funding from the Rural Technology Assistance Grant program and the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance. Like a standard factory, production lines exist based on training and skill level, including programming, customer service for call centers and crowd-sourced tasks qualifying data or performing simple “cut and paste” tasks online. At the highest skill set, workers will train for six months in Linux, Apache, MySQL and Php/PERL (collectively known as “LAMP”) programming languages. Enterprise LAMP Group of Nashville will then assist with job placement.

MT JULIET

Electronics distributor Celestica is closing its computer peripherals packing and shipping center by April 15, eliminating 43 positions.

NASHVILLE

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is giving Metro Nashville more than \$7 million to stem rising obesity rates. The grant is part of a new initiative called Communities Putting Prevention to Work. It aims to create public health programs that reduce obesity and smoking, increase physical activity and improve nutrition. More than 44 communities across the nation received the grants as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Nearly 30 percent of adults in Nashville are obese and the state is ranked fourth fattest in the nation.

ONEIDA

Tennessee officials and the National Park Service are looking to plug and reclaim at least 45 orphaned oil wells around Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. The project in the 125,000-acre woods is aimed at preventing groundwater pollution and to ensure public safety. According to an environmental study, many of the park’s abandoned wells could cause injuries and property damage by spontaneously releasing pressurized and highly flammable fluids. Funding for the National Park Service’s efforts comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. No new wells have been drilled in the Big South Fork since about 1990.

SHELBYVILLE

Shelbyville’s city council approved spending \$30,000 for a railroad spur that could serve a potential industry that is looking at locating there. Walt Wood of the Shelbyville & Bedford County Chamber of Commerce said that the city is a finalist for an industrial prospect that is considering the former DESA Industries building on Eagle Boulevard. Wood said the business would be a \$7.2 million investment, which would be spent on the land, the building and equipment to be used at the proposed facility. At least \$30,000 would be required from the city for the local match for the grant.

TRI-CITIES

American Eagle Airlines will begin regional jet service between Tri-Cities Airport and Chicago O’Hare International Airport with two flights a day, starting on July 2. American Eagle will operate the service with 44-seat Embraer ERJ-140 jets. Chicago O’Hare (ORD) is one of American Airlines’s premier international gateways and provides convenient connections to American’s extensive domestic network. “Air service is vital to allow our region to compete in the global marketplace. We are excited about American’s new Chicago service and how it will benefit business passengers traveling in and out of our area,” said Newt Raff, chairman of the Regional Alliance for Economic Development.



TENNESSEE
FESTIVALS



The 4 Bridges Arts Festival presents some of the finest contemporary artworks from around the country.

April 17 & 18-Chattanooga

10th annual 4 Bridges Arts Festival Produced by the Association for Visual Arts (AVA). Presenting some of the finest original artworks by contemporary artists from around the country. Located in the First Tennessee Pavilion: painting, glasswork, jewelry, textiles, sculpture and more. Enjoy eclectic foods and Kid’s Art Creation Area. For more information, call 423-265-4282 or visit the website at <http://4bridgesartsfestival.org/www>

April 24- 25:Franklin

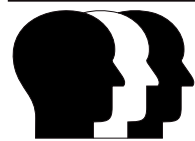
Main Street Festival Franklin’s signature family friendly event brings more than 200 artisans & crafters, four stages, two carnivals and two food courts to historic downtown Franklin and Main Street. Hours are 10am to 7pm Saturday, with the Fourth Avenue Street Dance continuing until 10pm, and all activities reopening noon to 6pm Sunday. Arts and crafts booths line Main Street from First to Fifth Avenue. Three food areas offer a tasty variety of foods like roast corn on the cob and stuffed baked potatoes, Polish sausage, Greek gyros, Asian and Mexican cuisine, fried green tomatoes, barbeque, burgers and hotdogs, cinnamon roasted nuts, ice cream, smoked turkey legs, funnel cakes, kettle corn and more. There will also be a full scale, traditional carnival at Margin Street and Second Avenue North the site of the future City of Franklin Bicentennial Park. For more information, call 615-591-8500.

April 24-25: South Pittsburg

National Cornbread Festival An open-air shoppers’ mall where the streets are filled with live entertainment, juried arts and crafts, and great foods to taste. This Southern cuisine festival honors cornbread with the National Cornbread Cook-off. Step back to a slower pace of life where people take time to visit, meet family and friends and sample a world of various cornbreads and main dish recipes. Cornbread Alley is a taster’s delight. For more information, call 423-837-0022 or visit www.nationalcornbread.com

April 29: Crossville

Mayor’s 2nd Annual Sustainability Fair Held in and around the Exhibit Building of the Cumberland County Community Complex. Times: 9am-5pm. For more information, contact Louise Gorenflo at 931-484-2633 or by email lgorenflo@gmail.com.



PEOPLE



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Rep. **Joe McCord** of Maryville announced he won’t seek election to a sixth term representing his East Tennessee House seat. McCord, 41, decided against another term in office so he could devote more time to his family and work. McCord was first elected to the House District 8 seat representing parts of Blount and Sevier counties in 1998.



McCord

House Republican Leader **Jason Mumpower** of Bristol has also announced that he won’t seek reelection to his District 3 House seat, a position he has held for seven terms. He was first elected to the General Assembly in 1996 at the age of 23. He was elected by his colleagues in December 2006 to serve as Republican Leader, and was re-elected to the position in 2008. “It’s always better to leave the party early,” he said as he announced to the House his decision to not seek another term.



Mumpower

The University of Tennessee will award an honorary doctorate to **Al**

Gore May 14, when he delivers the commencement speech in Knoxville. He is the third person to receive the honor following Dolly Parton and Howard Baker.



Gore

Ed Cole, TDOT’s environment and planning chief since 2003, has been hired by Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee, a private alliance pushing for a significant overhaul of mass transit in Middle Tennessee, to head its efforts. The move signals a new level of commitment by the group to urge Metro and surrounding communities to explore ways to pay for a multi-billion-dollar public transportation projects Cole will join the Transit Alliance on April 15



Cole

Joe Carpenter has been named as the new Chief of Environment and Planning for TDOT. Carpenter currently serves as the assistant chief engineer for Design for TDOT. He began working with TDOT in 2001 as a



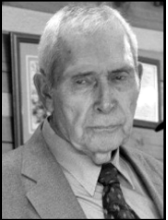
Carpenter

Civil Engineering Manager in the Design Division. Carpenter holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering and maintains professional engineering registration in Arkansas and Tennessee.

Mark Brown is leaving his position as Bartlett finance director to become Collierville assistant town administrator. The city is expected to re-hire former chief administrative officer **Jay Rainey** to return to that role in Bartlett. **Lisa Ernest**, Bartlett’s assistant finance director, will head the department on an interim basis until the vacancy is filled.

Retiring County Commissioner **Curtis Adams** has become Crossville’s new city manager.

Long time volunteer firefighter instructor **Lewis Baker** has passed away. Baker taught firefighters statewide classes for fire pumper, aerial trucks, maintenance and instructor schools at the Tennessee State Fire Academy in Murfreesboro from the early 1970s until the school closed in 2001. He was scheduled to be present March 17 when the pumper operations building was named in his honor at the Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy in Deason.



Baker

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Home Office:
2835 Lebanon Road
P.O. Box 140350
Nashville, TN 37214
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UT- IPS Organizational Review Committee releases final report

Last year, the University of Tennessee initiated an in-depth study regarding the reporting structure for the Institute of Public Service. The sole intent of the study was to position IPS to best carry out its mission.

This study was a very thorough undertaking. It involved discussions with IPS staff members, with Advisory Committee members, with representatives from the county and city government organizations—with input from all of IPS’ customers, stakeholders and funding agents.

The study has been completed and its findings strongly support the determination that as a statewide organization providing valuable service to the state of Tennessee, the Institute for Public Service, through its leadership, should report directly to the UT President.

The committee considered several organizational alignment alternatives including: a direct report to the Vice President for Public and Government Relations; a direct report to the President; joining with UT Extension; a direct report to the UTK Chancellor; becoming an additional unit of the Institute of Agriculture; and joining the UTK Baker Center.

“I believe the study’s clarification of the reporting role and its underscoring of the mission priorities will further strengthen IPS and enhance its growth and scope in the future,” said Jan F. Simek, UT Interim President. “I was particularly impressed with the strong level of interest and support among constituents across the state.”



“The Institute is a high-quality organization with a very large and broad scope. It is a unique asset for the University and connects us with elected and appointed leaders in every county and municipality in Tennessee. The organization is functioning extremely well, with less than five percent of its budget going to administration,” said Simek.

The study offered some opportunities for improvements:

- Increase engagement with faculty in providing advice and service to constituents and in developing opportunities for scholarly efforts associated with that engagement;
- Build more synergy between IPS and UT Extension through collaborations in service and outreach;
- Engage more students in IPS activities, particularly at the advanced undergraduate and master’s levels so that students can gain hands-on experiences and assist in solving real world problems.

“Dr. Mary Jinks has proven herself as an excellent manager and leader. I look forward to working with her and with the Advisory Committee as we go forward,” said Simek.

The full report is available at www.ips.tennessee.edu



Billy Wilson, Greenbrier Mayor and volunteer fire chief



Sgt. Mark Chestnut
Metro Nashville Police Dept.



Corporal Charles McWhirter
Mt. Juliet Police Dept.

Tennessee’s first responders among America’s Most Wanted

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

You don’t have to be a bad guy to be on the most wanted list. That’s what three middle Tennessee first responders have discovered after being nominated among their peers across the nation for an All-Star award presented by the popular Fox Network television program “America’s Most Wanted” hosted by John Walsh. While the program will make its final decision in April, these gentlemen already hold top honors in the cities and towns who know them.

Billy Wilson

In Greenbrier, Billy Wilson has been the city’s mayor and volunteer fire chief since 2004, but some just call him their angel, according to city Alderman Wayne Dugger. Helping folks became a passion early on for Wilson, who moved into the local fire hall at the age of 18 to become a firefighter. Thirty-four years later, he is not only a certified firefighter, but a medical first responder with extensive training in homeland security, extrication rescue, and numerous hazardous materials certifications. In his second term as mayor, Wilson carries a 911 pager everywhere he goes, but the 7,000 folks who know him as Mayor, can also call him at home.

“He repeatedly amazes me,” said Dugger. “Rarely have I run across an individual who cares more about people than he does. He takes care of the day-today operations of the city, yet constantly looks for ways to help someone in need.”

With more than 70 Life Saving Awards, commendations, medals and Firefighter of the Year awards, Wilson has had to put his training to work many times. Last year, Greenbrier received 700 calls for help and Chief Wilson responded to almost all of them, including a massive house fire last week. Wherever he goes, according to Dugger, someone will approach and say Wilson saved their father, their brother, and the list goes on.

“I happened to be with him one day when a lady approached him and hugged his neck,” said Dugger. “Her injured child had passed away at home and Billy was on call. He worked to help the family through the ordeal. She called him her ‘angel’.”

Wilson recently received the coveted “Citizen of the Year” Award, issued by the Green Ridge Civitan Club. As part of a tag team with his wife Lisa, together the Wilsons have helped to raise 80 foster children along with six kids of their own. During the holidays, Wilson can be spotted on the street collecting for the Green Ridge Toys for Tots, which he founded in 1994.

“He’s just a hero to a whole bunch of people,” said Dugger.

Sgt. Mark Chestnut

Sgt. Mark Chestnut’s brush with death began as a routine traffic stop June 25, 2009. The 23-year veteran of the Metro Nashville Police Department was well known for his desire to protect Nashville’s children, families and visitors. He worked as a supervisor on the Interstate Interdiction Unit along with the Child Abuse Unit.

Chestnut had pulled a car over and was running a computer check on the driver’s license and plates when suddenly shots rang out from the passenger’s side of the vehicle. Although he was injured, Chestnut’s years of training kicked in immediately. He instinctively threw his police car into reverse distancing himself from the shooter, and radioed for assistance as the car sped away. Chestnut was able to communicate the direction the vehicle was taking, which resulted in a quick apprehension of the two suspects. Although he had been wearing a bullet proof vest, the gunshots had entered his abdomen. Chestnut was hospitalized for several weeks at Vanderbilt Hospital, retuning to light duty in November 2009. However, in January, Chestnut had to undergo even further surgery to repair internal damage.

In April, Sgt. Chestnut will be awarded the police department’s highest honor given to surviving members of the agency, the Distinguished Service Medal. The award exemplifies performance of an exceptional act in a commendable manner in the line of duty, while demonstrating great personal bravery in an extremely dangerous situation.

“Mark Chestnut’s bravery in this instance, combined with his compassionate dedication to Nashville’s families as a 23-year veteran officer,

personifies what the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department is all about,” said Chief Ronald Serpas. “Mark is a survivor in every sense of the word. I am proud to serve with him and look forward to joining with Mayor Karl Dean in presenting Mark with our Distinguished Service Medal in April.”

Corporal Charles McWhirter

The events that unfolded in 2003, the day Officer Charles McWhirter began his new job with the Mt. Juliet Police Department, were not for the faint of heart. McWhirter, a transfer from the Vanderbilt Police Department, hadn’t even been issued his uniform that morning, when two beloved veteran law enforcement officers attempting to end a high speed chase by deploying spike strips across Interstate 40, were mowed down in cold blood. The scene was surreal and the community lost its innocence.

A recent graduate of the police academy, McWhirter seriously considered leaving the department. He had everything to live for in his 9-month old daughter. Yet at the officer’s funerals, the services provided by Nashville’s Metro Police Drill and Ceremony Team stirred something within. McWhirter moved forward, helping to raise the funds for Mt. Juliet to have their own squad. He appealed to the community as well managing to raise \$10,000. Mt. Juliet’s honor guard has provided their services to police departments in neighboring areas and performed the color guard at Titans football games.

“Chuck McWhirter even went to school to learn the proper protocol for the squad,” said Deputy Chief James Hambrick. “He did the legwork from the onset and has done a tremendous job.”

Still with the Mt. Juliet Police Department, Corporal McWhirter wrote his department’s policy for honoring fallen officers and has trained other honor guards as far as Alabama. He has received various awards and commendations including Officer of the Month and a life saving award.

“Being a dad and a cop is one of the toughest jobs to have,” said McWhirter. “But when your kids run up to you when you get home, the troubles of the day disappear.”

NLC names committee chairs

National League of Cities President Ronald O. Loveridge, mayor, Riverside, Calif., has announced committee, council and panel leaders for 2010.

“NLC’s strength lies in its members and their involvement to advance the organization’s mission, especially advocating for municipal priorities on Capitol Hill and in their hometowns,” said Loveridge. “Committee, council and panel chairs and vice chairs, along with the elected leaders of the NLC constituency groups, play a key role in making the NLC’s legislative priorities count. This is an impressive leadership team and 2010 calls for nothing less than our best.”

Among those selected from Tennessee are:

IT and Communications Policy and Advocacy Committee

- Vice Chair: Vivian Wilhoite
Nashville Councilmember

Small Cities Council

- Co-Chair: William Bo Perkinson
Athens Vice Mayor

University Communities Council



Wilhoite



Perkinson



Gilmore



LaMarche

- Vice Chair: Erica Gilmore
Nashville Councilmember

Congress of Cities Program Committee

- Vice Chair: Dot LaMarche
Farragut Alderman/Vice Mayor

TML priorities moving

LEGISLATION from Page 1

misuse of city or town logos will be heard on the House floor Monday, March 29. HB 2842 sponsored by Rep. Charles Sargent and SB 2933 by Sen. Jack Johnson prohibits the unauthorized use of officially adopted governmental logos.

When a local government logo is reproduced in a publication, in a solicitation, in a display, or on a website without permission, it may incorrectly imply official sponsorship or endorsement by the local government.

The bill unanimously passed the Senate Feb. 17.

Also calendered for the House

floor is HB 2766 by Rep. Harry Tindell. TML’s Fuel Stabilization bill amends existing law to remove the “sunset” date and provide local governments with clear and permanent authority to enter into and renew fuel stabilization contracts with a financial institution; provided the term of any single contract does not exceed two years.

It’s companion bill in the Senate, SB 2688 by Sen. Jim Tracy, is still being heard in committee. To learn more about this proposed legislation, as well as other legislative priorities initiated by TML go the Hometown Connection on TML’s website, www.TML1.org.

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STATE BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

The state and several Tennessee cities have been ranked among other cities and states for their economic development performance in 2009 in the *Site Selection* magazine’s annual Governor’s Cup rankings. Cookeville tied for 17th place with Lewisburg in the Top Metropolitan category, while the state ranked number five, the highest ranking of any southeastern state. Tennessee had a total of 10 communities ranking among the top small cities in the country, including Tullahoma, which tied for 12th place, Greeneville, Humboldt, Athens, Columbia, McMinnville, Shelbyville and Union City.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation will use federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to provide rural residents with better access to daily public transit. TDOT plans to use \$3.1 million in Recovery Act funds to expand direct intercity bus routes. The funds will be used by existing intercity bus carriers to purchase 23 buses, security equipment, support vehicles, computers, intelligent transportation system software, for ADA enhancements to vehicles and preventive maintenance. TDOT announced the first intercity bus routes in the state in March 2009. The program provides fixed route public transportation services between rural areas and the state’s urban centers.

The size of Tennessee’s construction workforce grew in January, according to data published by the Associated General Contractors of America. In Tennessee, 1,200 construction jobs were added from December 2009 to January 2010, the latest month for which data is available. Tennessee was one of about 20 states to add workers in January. The January gains were not enough to make up for losses recorded in the previous month-to-month cycle, which saw a loss of 3,800 jobs from November 2009 to December 2009. The Volunteer state ranked No. 27 for construction employment losses over a 12-month period, shedding 16,600 jobs, or 13.9 percent, from January 2009 to January 2010. In January, there were 119,000 people employed in Tennessee’s construction industry.

The Tennessee Secretary of State says more than 10,000 dead voters have been removed from records as part of an effort to clean up the election rolls. Tennessee has connected with 14 states to share voter registration information and see if some voters are also casting ballots in other states, said Secretary of State Tre Hargett. The effort to purge dead people from voter rolls was inspired by a 2005 Memphis special election in which the identities of dead voters were used to cast ballots in a tight state senatorial race.

Tennessee is stepping up efforts to control feral hogs – wild pigs that eat crops, sometimes carry disease, and are prolific breeders. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says they’re almost impossible to eradicate, and costly to control. So to keep the hogs’ population in check, the state is beginning to hunt them

from helicopters. According to the USDA Wildlife Services, feral hogs aren’t that different from farmyard pigs – just with a longer snout, shorter tail, and bigger canine teeth and are nothing new to Tennessee, particularly in the East and the Cumberland Plateau. But in the last few years they’ve expanded into more developed areas, including Williamson and Sumner Counties. Feral swine can have anywhere from four to eight young per year. Sometimes they can reproduce twice a year. And they can begin reproducing at less than one year of age.

About three dozen states, including Tennessee, will soon offer a rebate of as much as \$250 for trading in select old appliances for a more efficient model. Under the federal stimulus act, the government has allocated \$300 million to the states and seven U.S. territories for appliance rebates. Total funding for Tennessee is \$5.96 million. The state’s program is tentatively scheduled to start April 22. The link to the program’s website is at www.energy.savers.gov/financial/70022.html.

Drivers across the nation are safer on today’s roadways than they have been since the 1950s, and those in Tennessee and Georgia might be even more so. The U.S. Department of Transportation announced that overall traffic fatalities reported for 2009 reached their lowest level, 33,963, since 1954, dropping by nearly 9 percent from 2008. Officials in Tennessee and Georgia report similar decreases in traffic fatalities, with Tennessee’s fatalities decreasing by 6 percent and Georgia’s by 14 percent. The fatality rate in Tennessee has also dropped over the past three years. “We have set a record in each of the last three years for our fatality rate,” said Kendell Poole, director of the Tennessee Governor’s Highway Safety Office in Nashville. “We’re all the way down to unprecedented levels in our fatality rates.” Fatalities have decreased by about 25 percent during that time.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act created or retained 7,507 jobs in Tennessee in the fourth quarter of 2009, according to Office of Tennessee Recovery Act Management Director Mike Morrow. Half of the money that Tennessee expects to receive still hasn’t been awarded. As of Dec. 31, the state expected to receive \$5.3 billion in stimulus funds, had been awarded \$3.5 billion and has obligated \$2.6 billion. The state spent \$1.6 billion as of Dec. 31.

More than 200 state Department of Transportation (TDOT) vehicles in East Tennessee can now fill up with cleaner burning E85 fuel. E85 is a blend of ethanol and gasoline that helps reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and a variety of ozone pollutants. The fuel stations at TDOT’s Region One Complex Office on Region Lane in Knoxville now have E85 fuel available. It can be used in flexible fuel vehicles that run on higher ethanol blends. Approximately 225 vehicles will switch to E85 fuel in TDOT’s Region One. Ethanol is a high octane, domestic and renewable fuel

made by the fermentation of plant sugars. In the U.S., it’s typically produced from corn and other grain products. Ethanol is blended with gasoline when used as vehicle fuel, usually in blends up to 10 percent (E10) or as E85, which contains up to 85 percent ethanol.

A \$100,000 donation has been made to provide free books to children in Middle and East Tennessee through Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program. The Appalachian Regional Commission donated the money to Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen’s Books from Birth Foundation, which will disperse the funds among 52 counties in Tennessee.

Tennessee’s five-member Race to the Top team, led by Gov. Phil Bredesen, presented the state’s case to peer reviewers in Washington earlier this month. Also participating were Education Commissioner Tim Webb, Sen. Jamie Woodson, Knox County Schools Superintendent Jim McIntyre, and Tomeka Hart, a Memphis City Schools board member who serves on the new Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee. Tennessee is among 16 finalists in Round One of the education reform grant program. Winners will be named next month.

A University of Tennessee study quantifies the significant positive impact Tennessee State Parks have on the state’s economy. The study indicates Tennessee State Parks pump millions of dollars into local economies and create thousands of jobs. The study, entitled “Economic Impacts of Tennessee’s State Parks,” was conducted by the UT Human Dimensions Research Lab in the Institute of Agriculture. It concluded that in FY2008-2009, Tennessee State Parks visitors directly spent \$725.2 million on items such as food, gas, lodging and activities for visits to state parks, financing nearly 12,000 jobs in Tennessee communities. Additionally, the study indicates that for every dollar spent on trips to Tennessee State Parks, an additional \$1.11 of economic activity was generated, resulting in \$1.5 billion in total industry output. That brings the total number of jobs supported by state parks in Tennessee to more than 18,600. Indirect business taxes from state park visitors were estimated at \$106.3 million. According to the study, state parks also play a role in reducing physical and mental health costs and increasing overall productivity, while increasing the state’s attractiveness to industries and individuals looking to relocate in an area rich in natural amenities.

Environmentalists conceded defeat for their bill in the Tennessee legislature that if passed would have placed a five-cent refundable deposit on beverage bottles. Sponsors of the “bottle bill” said it would encourage recycling, reduce litter and create jobs at 500 planned redemption centers that could earn as much as \$200,000 a year by selling the recyclable containers to scrap buyers. The bill’s opponents, which included the National Federation of Independent Business and the Tennessee Grocers & Convenience Store Association, contended the deposit amounts to a new tax and that it would create a burden for retailers.



More than 200 state Department of Transportation (TDOT) vehicles in East Tennessee can now fill up with cleaner burning E85 fuel. TDOT’s Region One Complex Office on Region Lane in Knoxville now have E85 fuel available.

NATIONAL BRIEFS



BY TML STAFF REPORTS

Prisons in eight states let convicts work in jobs that give them access to Social Security numbers and other personal information for the public, despite years of warnings that the practice should end, a federal audit finds. Most of the prisoners hold jobs processing public records for federal, state and local governments, according to the audit released by the Social Security Administration’s Office of Inspector General. The work often involves entering and processing data on documents such as student transcripts, tax files, and health care and labor claims forms. “Although we recognize there may be benefits in allowing prisoners to work while incarcerated, we question whether prisoners have a need to know other individuals’ Social Security numbers,” the audit says. “Allowing prisoners access to Social Security numbers increases the risk that individuals may improperly obtain and misuse (the data).”

President Obama signed a landmark health-care bill into law last week, enacting a sweeping overhaul of the nation’s \$2.5 trillion health system. The legislation was the subject of a fierce partisan battle and passed with only Democratic votes. Republicans have vowed to continue their opposition. The bill will require most Americans to have health insurance by 2014, adds an estimated 16 million people to the Medicaid rolls starting in 2012, and subsidize private coverage for low-

and middle-income people, at a cost to the government of \$938 billion over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It is expected to extend coverage to 32 million additional Americans by 2019.

For those who haven’t flown in a while, be prepared to be scanned, swabbed or thoroughly patted down. Maybe all three. Airport security measures have been stepped up following an incident in December, when a man was accused of trying to blow up a U.S. jetliner using explosives hidden in his underwear. The Obama administration is committing tens of millions of dollars to deploy more state-of-the-art screening equipment, and is tightening enforcement of some older security measures. As the extra measures are rolled out security lines are expected to grow.

U.S. Senators cleared the path for a final vote on legislation to bolster the safety and nutritional value of school lunches, including provisions to improve training for cafeteria workers and to alert schools more quickly about recalls of contaminated food. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 would commit an additional \$4.5 billion to child-nutrition programs over the next 10 years and implement the most sweeping changes to those programs in decades. Among other things, the bill directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture to set new nutrition standards for all food served in schools, from lunchrooms to vending machines.

Apply for innovations award

Harvard University invites local governments to submit an initiative program for the Innovations in American Government Award. Administered by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School, the Innovations Award is heralded as the premier public-sector award in the nation. It is given annually to programs that serve as examples of creative and effective government at its best. This year the Innovations program has also launched a new initiative, *Bright Ideas*, designed to recognize and promote promising government programs and partnerships. All units of government—federal,

state, local, tribal, and territorial—from all policy areas are eligible to apply for recognition. The top winner of the 2010 Innovations Award will receive a \$100,000 grant to support replication and dissemination activities. Top finalists will also receive monetary grants. Applications and additional information for both initiatives are available on our website: www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu Applications are due April 7. For smart ideas that deliver public value and lower the cost of government services, check out the website Better, Faster, Cheaper: www.bfc.ash.harvard.edu

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Tennessee selected to develop strategy for transportaion and land use planning

NGA Center selects Tennessee to participate in 10-month initiative

Tennessee has been selected by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) to participate in the Policy Academy on *Shaping a New Approach to Transportation and Land Use Planning*.

The state will develop a Corridor Management Agreement in one of the state’s urban areas that will later be applied to other transportation corridors across the state. The goal is to create a system that helps local planning agencies learn how to make land use decisions that better coordinate with transportation decisions made at the local and state level. Colorado, Maryland, Washington and West Virginia have also been selected to participate in the program.

“As Tennessee continues to grow, both economically and in population, a coordinated approach to land use and transportation planning will help avoid the gridlock and pollution problems seen in other cit-

ies and states,” said Gov. Phil Bredesen. “I’m pleased Tennessee is working with NGA to develop new strategies for better coordination between local, state, public and private industries when it comes to economic growth and the transportation infrastructure needed to support it.”

As part of the Academy, Tennessee will benefit from the experiences and knowledge of experts from across the nation who have studied the issue of land use and transportation planning. The Tennessee team will be composed of state, local, public and private leaders involved in transportation and land use decisions including representatives from the Tennessee Departments of Transportation, Environment and Conservation, Economic and Community Development, Agriculture and Tourist Development.

“Improved linkages between transportation and land use planning are essential in beginning to address the growing problem of congestion on our roadways,” said TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely. “With state and local communities working together, we can better serve the

needs of our citizens while also promoting economic development in our state.”

Through the Policy Academy, Tennessee and the other selected states will work over a 10-month period to:

- Establish new governance models that work to align infrastructure development and state goals;
- Create a new planning framework that addresses the state’s unique needs and concerns for mobility, accessibility, emissions, financial stability, demographics, climate and topography;
- Adapt new funding and financing approaches that better reflect user costs and benefits, manage demand and help pay for transportation system management and maintenance; and
- Develop enhanced goals and metrics that best reflect the state’s transportation goals.

For more information about this and other initiatives of the NGA Center Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Division, visit www.nga.org/center/eenr.



Collegedale closed a \$2 million loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) to use for various city improvements. Seated left to right are: Ted Rogers, city manager, and Mayor John Turner. Standing are; Joe Muscatelo, TMBF representative; Cristy Pratt, city recorder; and Michelle Brown, finance director.

Feds amend Family, Medical Leave Act

FAMILY from Page 1

quest job-protected leave from his or her employer.

Under the revised law, military caregivers may be permitted to take up to a combined total of 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a single 12-month period to take care of a child, parent, spouse or next of kin who sustains an injury during active military service when that injury results in the servicemember being unable to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank or rating. FMLA defines a covered servicemember as a member of the armed forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy; is otherwise in outpatient status; or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious illness or injury.

The employee requesting leave must be a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin.

Unlike other types of FML, the age limits on servicemember leave are different. For covered servicemember leave, an eligible employee may take leave if he or she is the “son

or daughter of a covered servicemember,” which is defined as the covered servicemember’s biological, adopted or foster child, step-child, legal ward or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age. The new law was effective Jan. 28, 2008, and requires the Department of Labor (DOL) to review the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (Section 585) and to issue final regulations on the changes to the FMLA. Specifically, the DOL will attempt to better define the designation of “any qualifying exigency” and provide guidance regarding rights and responsibilities under the revised act. In the interim, the Department of Labor encourages employers to act in good faith and amend their leave policies to accommodate families of the armed forces.

It is important to note that the revisions to FMLA do not change the eligibility requirements or general provisions for employers and employees covered by the FMLA of 1993. Employees are still required to work at least 1,250 hours and 12 months before becoming eligible for family and medical leave. In gen-

eral, employers with fewer than 50 employees are not subject to the FMLA requirements.

An eligible employee may be required to use accrued vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave or other types of leave as defined by the employer for any part of the 26-week period. The regulations do not require the employer to offer paid medical leave in any situation in which the employer would not normally provide paid leave.

Requests for leave must be supported by a certificate issued by the healthcare provider of the eligible employee or of the son, daughter, spouse or parent of the employee, or the next of kin of an individual in the case of leave taken. An employer may require that an employee’s request for leave related to active duty be supported by a certification. The Department of Labor is expected to address this issue when it clarifies the regulations.

For more information on FMLA, visit http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/NDAA_fmla.htm, or contact Bonnie Jones or Richard Stokes, MTAS human resource consultants, at (615) 532-6827.

NLC testifies against federal union bill

H.R.413 from Page 1

apply to public safety officers, thereby giving one type of employee different rights than other types of employees; would affect every state and local government, even those with collective bargaining, because they would be subject to a federal review and might have to make substantial changes in their state collective bargaining laws to meet federal standards; and would force states and local governments to meet collective bargaining standards that it, the federal government, refuses to

apply to its own law enforcement personnel.

“Simply put,” Hankins said, “you may think your collective bargaining laws and practices are fixed, [but] the federal government may find that you are broken.”

Joining NLC’s testimony were the North Carolina League of Municipalities, National Association of Counties, National Association of Towns and Townships, National School Boards Association, International City/County Management Association, International Municipal Lawyers Association, Interna-

tional Public Management Association for Human Resources and National Public Employer Labor Relations Association.

This bill is in the first step of the legislative process. It is important that local governments remain vigilant in our opposition to this harmful legislation. More than 200 co-sponsors have signed onto this bill, including five Tennessee congressmen: Reps. Steve Cohen, Lincon Davis, John Duncan, Bart Gordon, and Zach Wamp. If they represent your district, please contact them, and urge them to vote “no.”

TREEDC hosts two spring workshops

The Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council (TREEDC) has scheduled two workshops for Spring 2010.

The first workshop is a three-hour symposium for the city of Jackson and neighboring communities on April 13 at the UT West TN Research and Education Center from 9 am to 12 pm. Ernest Brooks, II, Jackson City Councilman and West TREEDC Advisory Board member, and Warren Nevad, MTAS management consultant and TREEDC executive director, are organizing this event.

Also, TREEDC, the city of Franklin and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture are sponsoring a six-hour regional workshop on June 8 at the Factory in Franklin. Ken Moore, Franklin alderman and Middle TREEDC Advisory Board member, and Nevad are organizing this workshop. University of Tennessee President Emeritus Dr. Joe Johnson will provide the keynote address in Franklin.

Some of the topics to be presented at both workshops include

- wood waste power systems,
- e85 conversions,
- solar development and next generation biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel produced from waste vegetable oil.

One of TREEDC’s goals is to build relationships by connecting innovative renewable energy providers with communities in Tennessee. TREEDC will also update everyone on the various city and county projects across the state, proposals regarding energy efficiency upgrades, municipal biodiesel production systems, and a development of mobile energy educational unit.

Please contact warren.nevad@tennessee.edu if you are interested in attending the Jackson and/or Franklin workshops. TREEDC and MTAS can also visit your community to help craft a strategy and model resolution to meet you city’s goals in sustainability.

TML Conference June 13 - 15 in Gatlinburg



CONFERENCE from Page 1

side Politics on CNN, and This Week in Review on NBC.

The conference will kick off Sunday, June 13, with registration, vendor presentations, and the opening general session followed by the host city reception.

An awards breakfast on Tuesday will conclude the conference.

Workshops and general sessions will focus on key elements that help mold and shape prosperous hometowns during tough economic times.

While in Gatlinburg be sure to make time to check out the many attractions the city has to offer, including exciting attractions, quaint shopping, great dining, and an extensive arts and crafts community.

To register, go to the League’s website: www.TML1.org.

Schedule At-A-Glance Saturday, June 12

7 - 9 pm Welcome Reception

Sunday, June 13

9:00 - 5:00	Registration
10:30 - 11 am	Feud Game
11-11:45 am	Vendor Workshop
12 noon	Lunch
12 - 2 pm.	Ice Cream
1:15 -2 pm	Vendor Workshop
2:15-2:45 pm	Feud Game
3 - 3:45 pm	District Meetings
4 - 5:30 pm	General Session
6:30 - 8:30 pm	Host Reception

Monday, June 14

8 - 8:45 am	Breakfast
9 - 10 am	General Session
10:15-11:15 am	Workshops
11:30 - 12:15	Business Meeting
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2 pm	Door Prizes
2:15 - 3:15 pm	Workshops
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Workshops
6:30 - 11 pm	Pool Party

Tuesday - June 15

8:00 - 10:00	Awards Breakfast
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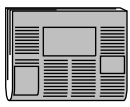
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FIRE CHIEF

JOHNSON CITY. The city is looking for a fire professional to serve as Fire Chief. Minimum salary is \$66,574 or higher depending on experience. The chief will plan, direct, coordinate and supervise the city's fire department while actively and visibly supporting the city's vision. Requirements include: at a minimum, a bachelor's degree in fire science, public administration or business administration; ten (10) years previous experience in fire suppression and prevention; six (6) years progressively responsible fire administration and fire supervision at the managerial level; to obtain or possess and maintain a valid Tennessee certified firefighter certification; emergency medical technician certification; hazardous materials technician certification. To succeed in this role, applicants need teambuilding and leadership skills; a comprehensive knowledge of the principles and practices of equipment employed in modern firefighting; fire hazards and fire prevention techniques; the use of fire records and their application to the solution and evaluation of fire problems and in the effective planning of fire programs and assignments; federal, state and local laws and ordinances; the ability to command the respect of officers and personnel; establish and maintain effective working relationships with other city officials and the public; flex, learn, and grow with the changes and challenges of the city. Send a confidential resume and application to City of Johnson City, Human Resources Department, P.O. Box 2150, Johnson City, TN 37605. Visit the website to download an application and for full job description, at www.johnsoncitytn.org. EOE.

MTAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service is conducting a search for applicants for the MTAS Executive Director position. The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) provides consulting and training services to all incorporated cities in the State of Tennessee as part of the university's public service mission. The MTAS Executive Director is responsible for leadership of the agency including strategic planning, workforce development, stakeholder relations and private fund raising. The Executive Director must establish and maintain relationships with cities through an advisory committee and with the TN Municipal League and its affiliate organizations. The executive director is responsible for overall agency management including human resource and budget issues and performance measures. Qualifications include a master's degree in public administration, city management or a related field and a minimum of 10 years experience as a senior leader in a complex organization, preferably in a local or state government or nonprofit organization with similar work goals. Experience as a city manager and/or managing staff in remote locations a plus. Applicant must have strong oral and written communication skills, ability to lead a multi-talented, multi-disciplined municipal consulting agency, and ability to manage budget and human resources. The position will be based in Knoxville and will require extensive statewide travel. Applicants should send a resume and cover letter detailing how the applicant's credentials meet the requirements of the position. Include information on salary expectations. Send all information to MTAS Executive Director Search Committee Chair Chuck Shoopman via email at chuck.shoopman@tennessee.edu. For more information on the position and the statewide UT Institute for Public Service, visit www.mtased.ips.tennessee.edu. The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.

TML associates awarded for engineering excellence

An audience of more than 250 Tennessee engineers, business and civic leaders, and state, city and county officials attended the awards banquet for the 2010 Engineering Excellence Awards competition sponsored by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Tennessee (ACEC). Awards were presented to winning projects completed for cities, towns and counties across the state.

Wilbur Smith Associates, Franklin and Knoxville, won top prize, the Grand Iris Award, for the firm's work on the SmartFIX 40 project in Knoxville completed for the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

Among the Grand Award winners for engineering excellence, the highest honor in individual competition entry categories: Kingsport Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades Construction Management at Risk Implementation, completed by engineering firm CDM, in the special projects category and Murfreesboro's Stones River Treatment Plant Expansion and Upgrade completed by Smith Seckman Reid, Inc., in the water and wastewater category.

Among the Honor Awards recipients: Giles County Water Utilities Planning Evaluation by Gresham Smith; Livingston New Water Source Cumberland River by J.R. Wauford & Company; Nashville International Airport runway project by PBS&J; Coordinated Signal Timing and Corridor Operations Study completed for Murfreesboro by Neel-Schaffer, Inc.; Wastewater Treatment Plant Renovation in Pulaski by J.R. Wauford & Company; Ripley Courthouse by Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Associates, and Shelby County Rails to Trails by EnSafe, Inc.

Knoxville SmartFIX40
Wilbur Smith Associates

The Tennessee Department of Transportation, after consultation with Wilbur Smith Associates, initiated SmartFIX40, the state's first accelerated highway project. This \$220 million reconstruction project included complex interchange upgrades, freeway widening, safety improvements, and city street reconstructions to reunite neighborhoods that were severed by the original interstate. Greenways, creek restoration, wall and noise barrier finishes, and a "signature" bridge were designed in an effort to blend this urban interstate into its historic downtown setting.

Kingsport Wastewater Treatment Plant
Upgrades, CDM

The city selected CDM to serve as planning and design engineer, operations and start-up consultant, and construction manager at risk. The construction management at risk approach completed the comprehensive wastewater treatment plant upgrades more than \$1 million below the \$22.3 million guaranteed maximum price and achieved substantial completion nearly one year ahead of the project final completion date. By completing the original scope of work ahead of schedule and under budget, the city was able to implement additional improvements at the wastewater treatment plant, increasing the value of their infrastructure investment.

Murfreesboro Water Treatment Plant
Smith Seckman Reid, Inc.

The Stones River Water Treatment Plant was constructed in 1967 as the first lime softening water treatment plant in Tennessee. The Murfreesboro Water & Sewer Department wanted to expand the plant's rated capacity to 20 million gallons per day and improve the protection from both microbial pathogens and disinfection byproducts. The department also wanted to replace aged treatment systems and renovate every building while maintaining treatment production. This level of renovation required complex construction phasing, extensive coordination between disciplines, and communication between engineer, owner and contractor. The expanded and upgraded facility is the largest membrane filtration system with the largest onsite sodium hypochlorite system installation in Tennessee. Through an innovative piping configuration, it may also be the only water treatment plant in the U.S. that can operate its granular activated carbon adsorption basins either prior to or after membrane filtration.

Livingston Water Source, J.R. Wauford

As the result of a depleting raw water source in both quantity and quality, the Town of Livingston commissioned J. R. Wauford in 2000 to conduct a feasibility study to acquire a new water source. Butlers Landing on the Cumberland River in Clay County some 19 miles northwest of Livingston was concluded to be the most economical and viable water source. Due to the complexity of the project, the construction was let through nine contracts so Livingston would receive competitive bids.

The Water Treatment Plant was designed by J. R. Wauford and built in 1963, expanded in 1981. In 2006, the plant capacity was increased to treat 4 million gallons per day and modernized with a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system. Construction of the raw water lines and the Surge Tank at Hilham began September 2007. The raw water intake was designed to serve at least 100 years, to resist flooding if Wolf Creek Dam fails, and was completed September 2009. The new raw water facility is operating as designed and has improved water quality and plant operations.

Ripley Courthouse

Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Assoc., Inc. The city and the Ripley Downtown Development Corporation selected Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Associates, Inc. (A2H) to produce a Master Plan for the Ripley Courthouse Square. A new plaza on the east side of the courthouse was designed five feet lower than the existing grades to create an entrance



Iris Award Winner Smart FIX40
Wilbur Smith Associates



Murfreesboro Treatment Plant Expansion
Smith Seckman Reid, Inc.



Livingston New Water Source
Cumberland River, J.R. Wauford

into the fully finished basement floor. An inside chairlift gives wheelchair access to the entire building. These plazas and all areas of the square will be connected with extra wide crosswalks to make it easy and inviting for a pedestrian to stroll and shop without feeling the need to get into a car and drive to the other side. The new design provides wheelchair accessibility from the street into every business front door.

Nashville International Airport, PBS&J

The Nashville Airport was tasked with investigating and analyzing the various pavement conditions that existed throughout the airfield, focusing on its longest runway. Runway 13-31 is utilized by large and heavy air cargo aircraft. Because of this, the reconstruction needed to support very large loads while, at the same time, had to be sensitive to long-term maintenance that would require taking this critical runway out of service for repairs. The \$17 million runway rehabilitation project was a multi-year assignment, which involved replacing the existing asphalt runway with new concrete pavements and the rehabilitation of five intersecting taxiways, all totaled, some 100,000 square yards of airfield pavements. Due to the slow economy, lower-than-expected bids allowed the scope of the runway project to be increased by nearly 50 percent over initial budget estimates to include the design of a new runway intersection that was completed within a 60-day period, allowing nearly \$3 million in new work to be completed prior to winter shutdowns.

Signal Timing & Corridor Study
Murfreesboro, Neel -Schaffer

Neel-Schaffer performed a traffic operations study of the most congested corridors in Murfreesboro with the goals of reducing travel times, reducing fuel use and improving air quality. The project optimized traffic signal timing at 37 intersections along five major corridors in Murfreesboro. This optimization work resulted in saving motorists an estimated 414,150 gallons of gas per year – equivalent to \$1.03 million at \$2.50 per gallon. Based on the fuel savings alone, the project had an estimated benefit to cost ratio of 11 to 1. The reduction in gasoline consumption is equivalent to approximately 977,000 tons of carbon monoxide each year, which represents about a 20 percent decline across all project corridors.

Pulaski Wastewater Treatment Plant
J.R. Wauford

Due to environmental issues, the Pulaski Wastewater Treatment Plant was renovated to comply with enforcement action issued by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. The original plant was constructed in 1959, and the unit processes that were still in operation were either outdated or overloaded. Renovation was inevitable which included an earthen 24 million gallon inflow holding basin, headworks expansion, the aeration basin walls were raised and the aerator was converted from coarse bubble aeration to fine bubble aeration, new centrifugal blowers, a new 100 diameter ground level clarifier, converting a malfunctioning elevated clarifier to a gravity thickener, and replacing chlorine disinfection with ultraviolet light disinfection followed by step post aeration. This project utilized part of the existing facilities along with implementation of more recent technologies to achieve permit limits and decrease energy usage becoming more environmentally sustainable. The facility also produces as a reusable by-product Class 'A' sludge, a fertilizing agent.



Kingsport Wastewater Treatment, CDM



Murfreesboro Signal Timing & Corridor
Operations Study, Neel-Schaffer, Inc.



Shelby County: Rails to Trails
EnSafe, Inc.



Ripley Courthouse
Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Associates



Nashville International Airport, PBS&J



Pulaski Wastewater Treatment Plant
J.R. Wauford

Giles County Water Utilities Planning
Gresham Smith

When water utilities formed throughout the region more than 50 years ago, they had one common goal: to provide the public with safe drinking water. While that goal is still the same today, most utilities have maximized their distribution networks to provide potable water to rural customers in a financially feasible manner. Through a strategic mail response survey and hydraulic modeling, Gresham Smith helped Giles County develop a plan that would provide water accessibility to residents without a safe and reliable drinking water source. State legislators have taken note of the results achieved and are considering rolling out similar programs throughout the state.

Shelby County Rails to Trails, EnSafe

EnSafe helped set the stage, both in the forefront and behind the scenes, for the redevelopment of a 13.34-mile-long eyesore – an abandoned rail corridor – into a Greenfield that will provide health and economic benefits for the residents of Shelby County, as well as the surrounding metropolitan area numbering. Using a soil management plan that EnSafe developed, the property will be restored to a beneficial reuse for Shelby County residents; rid the county of an eyesore; prompt economic development through the creation of a park/greenway/recreational property; eliminate risks to human health and/or the environment while promoting health activities. EnSafe also assisted the county in obtaining the Site-specific Brownfield Assessment grant that funded the investigation.

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NLC supports Local Jobs for America Act

BY CAROLYN COLEMAN
Nation's Cities Weekly

Earlier this month, NLC President Ronald O. Loveridge, mayor, Riverside, Calif., joined House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (D-Calif.) and other members of Congress on a conference call to announce new legislation, H.R. 4812, the "Local Jobs for America Act," that, if passed, will put a million people to work by restoring services in local communities in both public and private sector jobs.

"I would like to thank the Congressmen for their leadership in sponsoring this vitally important bill," said Loveridge. "This is a key piece of legislation that comes as cities face the worst of the economic storm, with revenues down and service needs at their highest. The actions of cities are not insignificant, as collectively we are the nation's fourth largest employer. The economy cannot recover quickly if cities falter, and so federal action now is essential."

Through a funding formula based on the Community Development Block Grant program, the bill would direct \$75 billion to cities, towns and counties to save municipal jobs and prevent layoffs. Of the \$75 billion, \$52.5 billion would go

directly to communities with at least 50,000 residents, and \$22.5 billion would go directly to states to distribute to communities with fewer than 50,000 residents. The funds may only be used for compensation of full-time, full-year positions and jobs that are regular government or local community organization jobs, under the proposed legislation.

The bill, which was developed with the input of city officials, will put 1 million people to work by restoring these services in local communities, in both public and private sector jobs. It also includes \$23 billion to help states support an estimated 250,000 education jobs; \$1.18 billion to put 5,500 law enforcement officers on the beat; and \$500 million to hire and retain firefighters and \$500 million for approximately 50,000 additional on-the-job training positions slots to help private business expand employment.

"Cities continue to make the difficult choices of cutting services and furloughing workers," said Loveridge. "We are now beginning to see cities cut fire and police services — activities essential to the quality of life and safety of citizens in our communities. Traditionally, this is an option of last resort, and only serves to demonstrate the arduous situation facing cities.

States relieved by school graduation plan

BY JAKE GROVUM
Special to Stateline.org

One state at a time, the push for common school graduation standards has been gaining traction. In just five years, the number of states with such standards for college and career-readiness has increased from three to 31.

But behind the progress there has consistently been a looming concern: Would the federal government move in and supersede the gains that states have been making? That concern grew into genuine alarm a few weeks ago when the Obama administration announced that a new set of federal graduation requirements would be forthcoming. State education officials worried out loud that this might mean an attempt to hand down standards from Washington to every school in the country.

Gov. Phil Bredesen of Tennessee expressed the alarm candidly earlier this month. "To the extent to which they say, 'OK, you guys have taken this a little way down the road, we got it now,' that's not a good thing," Bredesen said. "Far better to be building on the foundation that has been generated from the ground up, and has that anchoring and that tie to what's really going on out there in the world, than something up that springs full-blown from the brows of congressional staffers."

Earlier this month, the administration threw the states a curve on this issue — but one that most of them were relieved to see: President Obama's blueprint for a No Child Left Behind overhaul generally allows states and localities to keep control over college and career

readiness standards.

The blueprint calls for states to adopt standards, but stops short of a federal mandate. Instead, it lets states develop their own, or work in clusters. Federal funding would simply be an incentive to move ahead. In that sense, the protests from state capitols turned out to have the intended effect.

"We're offering support, incentives and national leadership, but not at the expense of local control," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said. "We don't think we can micromanage 95,000 schools from Washington."

Like the administration's Race to the Top program, the new blueprint relies largely on rewards for positive achievement rather than punitive funding cuts. States get a certain number of points if they include common education and college or career-ready graduation standards. Top-performing schools are rewarded and underperformers receive assistance.

"We really do feel this is a step forward and a step in the right direction," says Joan Wodiska, director of the National Governors Association's education and workforce committee. "This is a vision, and now we have to roll up our sleeves and get to work on the details."

Many states have already started down this path. Last week the governors association, along with the Council of Chief State School Officers, released a new draft of common graduation standards that states will agree individually to sign on to. "There is a role for the federal government, but the role is to look at where to assist, not where to direct," said former West Virginia Governor

"The central focus and approach of this new legislation is something that we at the National League of Cities have advocated for some time," Loveridge added. "It will provide much needed assistance to cities as they seek to protect public safety and avoid laying off municipal workers, which would only dig a deeper hole out of which America's economy would have to climb. It also will help build a foundation for future growth by making available funds to cities that can be used to create useful jobs in both municipal and nonprofit agencies, and in the process put large numbers of unemployed Americans back to work."

While the nation's economy may be approaching the late stages of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, local government budget tightening and spending cuts over the next several years could well impose a significant drag on the nation's economic recovery.

According to the latest NLC research brief, issued in January, cities face layoffs, canceled contracts with small businesses and vendors, reduced services and sizable budget shortfalls for 2009 that are expected to grow much more severe and widespread from 2010 to 2012.

Bob Wise, head of a group called the Alliance for Excellent Education.

The standards released this month by the Governors Association are the product of a state-based Common Core State Standards Initiative, which is being led by the governors and school officials of 48 states and the District of Columbia.

The draft common standards are broad guidelines for what children should be learning at a given grade level, but don't go so far as to dictate, for example, what books they should be reading. That's by design, to allow local control over the specifics of the curriculum.

"What's encouraging about this one is that it's really boiling up from the state level," says Gary Huggins, director of the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind. "I think what we keep an eye on is make sure it's a state-led effort."

It seems the White House has essentially endorsed the work of the Common Core Standards Initiative. On a conference call with reporters, Duncan pointed to Common Core specifically, saying "they're providing extraordinary leadership."

Of course, the entire process still has to make it through the U.S. Congress, and in an election year with no shortage of partisan squabbling on Capitol Hill, everything's subject to politics. But for the time being, Obama's plan to build off what the states have already done seems to be exactly what many officials want to hear.

"It's nice to see the federal government getting on board with the state agenda," says Dane Linn, director of the NGA Center's Education Division.

COMING
UP

April 5-6: OSHA 10-hour training exclusively for the roadway construction industry. Held at the National Transportation Research Center, 2360 Cherahala Blvd. Knoxville, 37923. Call 865-974-1500 for directions. Also **April 8-9 in Jackson** at the West Tennessee Research & Education Center, 605 Airways Blvd., Jackson, 38301. Call 731-424-1643 for directions. This 2-day training program developed by American Road and Transportation Builders Association and the National Safety Council sets the standard for the entire industry. There is an administrative fee of \$25 for this ARTBA grant-sponsored workshop, which is free. Instructor is Jerry Teeler, ARTBA Director of Safety and Health. For registration form, visit http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/ttap_april2010.pdf

April 14-16: TAMCAR Certified Municipal Clerk Institute and Master Municipal Clerk Academy. Held at the Airport Embassy Suites in Nashville. For more information, visit the website at <http://tamcar.org/>

April 15-16: ICMA Southeast regional Summit at the Courtyard Nashville Downtown. Register online by April 8 for this networking and professional development opportunity for members and state officers in the Southeast. Visit ICMA's website at <http://icma.org/main/ns.asp?nsid=3357&t=0>

April 14-16: The Tennessee Preservation Trust Statewide Conference in Greeneville hosted by the Tennessee Preservation Trust in conjunction with the Tennessee Main Street program. Held at the General Morgan Inn, this conference offers educational sessions, tours and networking opportunities. A Commission Assisted Mentoring Program will be offered which is required certified training for preservation commissions and those applying for certification with the Tennessee Historical Commission.

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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.

Sen. Jack Johnson avid communicator with district, uses Facebook and Twitter

Conservative about social and fiscal issues, he wants 9th and 10th amendment used to protect states and local governments

BY GAEL STAHL

The new chair of Senate Commerce, Labor & Agriculture, Jack Johnson, has a new office too in the Legislative Plaza, Suite 11. He likes it and likes its history. For 32 years it was occupied by the dean of the Senate, Sen. Doug Henry who took up residence there in 1977 (half a dozen years after Johnson’s birth). Johnson, in his fourth year as the senator representing Williamson County and a bit of Metro Nashville/Davidson County, has already chaired two important committees. In 2007, his first year as senator, Republicans won a Senate majority since Reconstruction. In 2007, Republican Sen. Ron Ramsey became the first Republican elected speaker and went about increasing the number of committees chaired by Republicans. Freshman Johnson eventually became Chair of Government Operations. Nine months later, when the chair of the Commerce Labor and Agriculture Committee resigned the senate, Johnson replaced him.

Johnson wasn’t really raised to play a role in Texas, much less, Tennessee politics. Born July 25, 1968, in Amarillo, he was raised in Burnet, an hour’s drive northwest of Austin. Its population of 3,400 then, is now 7,100. He attended Burnet schools and went to college at Southwest Texas State, 30 miles south of Austin. His major interest was political science. He also earned a teacher’s certificate not with the idea of starting a teaching career but because getting certified seemed to be a good thing to acquire, just in case. When that other Johnson from Texas, Lyndon Baines, attended the same school, he definitely had teaching in mind and always prized his teaching years. The school, strictly a teachers college then, was called Southwest Texas Normal School. George Strait went there for a couple of years, until a band lured him away and he took a musical career path. After Jack Johnson graduated with a degree in education in 1989, the school would come to be called Texas State University in San Marcos.

After finishing his student teaching and graduating, Johnson pondered what he wanted to do with his life. Others were still going west. He was looking east to Nashville. Why? “The reason I came is because I was young and carefree. Didn’t know any better. Just wanted to spread my wings and fly a little bit. Loved Texas, loved my family but just wanted to go somewhere different. At 22, I thought I’d go live in Nashville for awhile. I didn’t know a soul. Put everything I owned in my car and drove up here.”

He had visited Music City a couple of times and liked it enough to drift that way in 1991. It was a more exciting urban life with green rolling hills in all directions. While he missed the gray-green desert, sagebrush and manzanilla plains where you can see for endless miles, all that green in every direction was inviting and refreshing.

His father is a banker, so Johnson naturally looked in that direction, in case that was his destiny. When through a friend of a friend of a friend he landed a job interview with Third National Bank applying to work in its wealth management area, he was hired and spent 14 happy years there. He is currently Senior Vice President and financial advisor at Pinnacle Financial Partners.

Two other important destinies were triggered in the spring of 1992, when he and a friend attended a Davidson County Young Republican meeting in House Committee Room 29, a few doors down from Suite 11. It was there that he met his future wife, Deanna. They eventually married and he eventually went into elective politics. He and Deanna married in October 1996, 10 years before he ran for office. They now have three children. She is a practicing attorney. In the spring of 2006, Johnson had two days to prepare to decide to seek an unexpected open Senate seat. He ran and won and is now a Senate chair and up for his first re-election campaign. He is appreciative that when faced with a fork in the road – to run for senator or stay in banking – he was able to do both.

Johnson is a serious and effective banker, but not necessarily a staid banker. When asked for the names of his children, he quickly responds: “My 10-year-old daughter is Mackenzie. My 8- and 6-year-old sons are Seek and Destroy.” Pause. “Well, actually Trevor and Walker.” On his Twitter site, he tells how his younger son came home wanting a swift Army knife. The older wanted a Mow Hog. What’s that? It’s a haircut where they shave the sides of your head. Both accounts are mostly about his roles as senator and father, sometimes serious, sometimes humorous and often entertaining. If you click on <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Senator-Jack-Johnson/58310435761> and <http://twitter.com/SenJohnson> you’ll see a more whimsical side of the senator.

TT&C: What’s the story behind your magical entry into politics?

JJ: I’d participated in Republican Party activities over the years and worked in seven election campaigns, served on community initiatives and was a board member of many municipal and county organizations. Then, by the grace of good timing, a senate seat suddenly was open in early April 2006.

What happened was that my predecessor Sen. Jim Bryson announced that he would run against incumbent Gov. Bredesen who was up for re-election. He was also up for election to



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his senate seat and couldn’t run for both offices. The filing deadline to run for his seat was Thursday at noon, giving me little time to file if I wanted to run.

I decided to file, campaigned hard, and in November was elected. I served two years as a member on several committees after Speaker Ron Ramsey was elected in January 2007. He named me chair of the Government Operations Committee in January 2009. That’s the committee that deals with Sunset Law reviews of all boards, commissions, agencies and departments in state government. I enjoyed serving on that committee. I’m still on it as a member. In the late summer of last year, the former chair of the Senate Commerce Labor and Agriculture Committee resigned from the Senate, and I was named chair.

TT&C: Your district is known for its municipalities being well run, beautiful, and forward thinking with regard to high-quality services?

JJ: We elected officials representing Williamson County are so aware that we stand on the shoulders of giants. The folks representing our area over the last 20, 30, 40 years did an incredible job of making the area one of the more desirable places to live in the nation. It’s a very affluent community in terms of per capita income and median home prices. The schools are top quality with Franklin Special and Williamson County schools showing up as two of the top school districts in the nation. I just love everything about the communities in Williamson County.

TT&C: What are your goals for your district and its cities in terms of economic development?

JJ: I’m a pretty fierce defender of local control. Our city councils and county commission are the ones that help their communities determine what their long-term goals are. At the same time, I should do everything I can here at the state level to help them get to where they want to be with regard to their planning decisions. My role in state government is to be responsive to their planning needs. I work for them. Their job is to communicate their vision and policy to me and to Reps. Charles Sargent, Glen Casada, and Philip Johnson who represent Williamson County in their House districts.

I never take for granted the great working relationship we four have with our county mayor and city mayors and other local government officials. We talk, if not daily, certainly weekly about various issues happening up here in the legislature.

We play a lot of defense up here with regard to bills that are filed that might not be favorably viewed by local governing authorities. We’re especially on the look out for bills that mandate a municipality to do something or that affect in any way the revenue stream. When we spot them, that’s when I reach for the phone or email this legislation to the local folks asking them to take a look at how it will impact them.

As a resident in the district and as the father of three children who live in Williamson County and as someone who cares deeply about the area, I have personal viewpoints about where I want to see my city and community go. But when I’m in my capacity as senator, I need to work for and represent the voters and the citizens.

TT&C: Your committee is so often referred to as “Commerce” for short, but it includes labor and agriculture interests that could have contradictory issues. Is this an inherent contradiction?

JJ: It is a big committee. In the past, I believe, there were separate agriculture and labor committees. We handle any legislation that deals with business, banking, insurance, and commerce, but also with the agriculture business side and the labor side, workers’ compensa-



Photos by Carole Graves

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tion, insurance reforms and regulations. We deal somewhat with some of that on a parallel track with the Health Committee. There is a lot of health insurance legislation at the state level. I don’t think it is contradictory. It is just a big committee that has a tremendous volume of legislation coming through here.

Personally, I’m a huge fan of agriculture. When I was in high school, my main activity was Future Farmers of America. I raised hogs and chickens and rabbits and other barnyard animals. In fact, I’m in the first generation in my family going back as far as we can see that did not grow up on a farm. My father did. He got into banking; I’m in banking now. Maybe I’m starting another tradition.

As chairman of this committee, I look beyond Williamson County to the importance of agriculture to our state economy. We recently passed legislation dealing with dairy farmers and milk production though that is decreasing. When you travel the state and look at all the cattle producers, dairy farmers, and crop farmers, especially in West Tennessee, you see it’s a big part of our economy. As a senator, I look at it from my district standpoint. As chairman of the Commerce Committee, I’m serving the state.

TT&C: A question we’ve never asked anyone before is, why do you regularly use Facebook and Twitter to communicate? Do you think it is a safe and useful tool for local officials too?

JJ: I’m learning as technical advancements in communication come about and think that on the whole it’s a good thing. There are more mediums for me and my constituents to communicate with each other than ever before. It’s hard to fathom that they didn’t have email up here about 20 years ago. When Sen. Henry was here during his first 20 years up here, if anyone wanted to contact their legislator, you tried to call them or wrote a letter, stamped it, sealed it, and mailed it. I sometimes get hundreds of emails in a day. That’s a good thing even though it means additional work going through them and responding to them. It’s good that my constituents can reach me and I can stay in contact with them. We’re building our growing email data base every day. People have given me thousands of email addresses. I send them my weekly email updates and communicate back to them.

Facebook and Twitter are also valuable tools. We have some fun with them. I put items on there about my kids and what my kids say, because a lot of the folks following me are friends and family. Constituents respond as well. So far, I don’t use Facebook and Twitter for substantive policy; but that could change.

I realize there are dangers because once something is on the Internet, it can haunt you for years and get you in trouble if you’re not careful. I use those methods of communication occasionally. With Twitter limiting you to 144 characters, you can’t go into any great depth when we pass a substantive bill. But we *can* have some fun with it.

TT&C: What current issues are important to you this session?

JJ: This year, having just become chairman of Commerce, I’ve kind of established a policy not to tackle or sponsor any overly difficult or controversial legislative issues personally. Chairing this committee, trying to get my arms around it and figure out what’s coming through this committee is my top priority.

We’re continuing to work on some bills – workers’ compensation issues that are important to the state. On the social issue front, I have a bill that’s important to me in the context of women who are coerced into having an abortion. You’d be surprised how often that happens. That’s illegal already. This bill requires anyone who performs an abortion to post in their facilities in clear language that it is a significant crime to coerce a woman. We’re going to have testimony about women whose boy friend or husband or anyone else

who forced them to abort a pregnancy. If a woman chooses to have an abortion, that is her decision and her decision only.

TT&C: What’s your political philosophy on state and federal relations?

JJ: I’m glad you brought that up. Like many folks, I’m concerned about things happening at the federal level. I serve in state government and am a proponent of the 9th and 10th Amendments and of states’ rights. I believe our founding fathers wanted a federal government that derived its power from the states, not the other way around. Incidentally, Doug Henry has been the General Assembly’s strongest advocate for the 9th and 10th amendments for many decades. (Note: The 9th declares “The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.” The 10th says: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”)

But right now, over 50 percent of our state budget is what is called “federal dollars,” meaning money we taxpayers sent to Washington. The federal government distributes it back to the states through federal appropriations attached with federal conditions and strings that we have to comply with. That’s not the way our founding fathers intended the government to work.

Federal government, unlike our more responsive state and local governments, does a lot to us – and for us – that we don’t really like. Decisions should be made at the most effective level of government. That is usually your city council, the government closest to you. Then your county commission and your state government. The least effective is your federal government.

TT&C: Last year you introduced a resolution opposing cap and trade legislation currently pending before Congress. Why?

JJ: Cap and trade is a good example of how the federal government based on a bad premise, can take precedence over our local and state priorities. Tennessee derives the bulk of its energy from coal fire plants. As proposed, cap and trade would attack those methods of energy production as harmful. That would have a *tremendously* detrimental effect on our economy and raise our energy prices through the roof.

Cap and trade lets the federal government determine for cities and businesses their allotment of energy to use. If you exceed that, you have to buy credit, pay taxes, in order to consume more energy. I was vehemently opposed on philosophical grounds as well as for the consequences to our state and local governments. I passed a resolution in the Senate that unfortunately did not pass in the House. It was a more strongly worded resolution than any I’ve ever seen. It said that we’re opposed to your cap and trade scheme. If you pass it, we will not participate. I’m running another bill now through the Senate that I’m looking forward to passing.

We also passed the Health Care Freedom Act that said if the federal government passes a health care bill proposed in Congress mandating Tennesseans to buy a particular type of insurance, that it’s unconstitutional. The federal government lacks the authority to do that, so the Health Care Freedom Act passed in the Senate compels the state attorney general to sue the federal government if the bill is passed and pushes that mandate on our people.

TT&C: What’s the status of the bill Brentwood brought to TML that deals with municipal control of their logos?

JJ: The bill was on the consent calendar and sailed through the Senate with very little discussion or debate. It’s a simple but important piece of legislation. Brentwood learned municipalities don’t have the same trademark protection on their logos, seals, flags that the private sector has. Somebody was using the city logo of Brentwood without permission. Its use made it appear the city was sponsoring a fundraising event.

The city looked into it and found no law gave them authority to forbid someone to use its logo since elements of the city seal, e.g., eagles, are already copyrighted. So the city asked legislators for a stipulation that says the city could copyright its municipal logo. Cities certainly should have that ability. The Senate bill says it’s up to the local government to decide if they want to allow someone to use their logo. That’s a good example of how we work with our local governments by carrying any number of bills from the cities into law.

TT&C: Do you meet much with the city officials in your district?

JJ: Brentwood has a great idea about that. On a quarterly basis, they invite elected officials such as the school board, county commissioners, county mayor, legislative delegation, and representatives from Rep. Marsha Blackburn’s office to join city officials. We sit around, have a nice dinner, and chat informally about what we’re doing. Franklin doesn’t do anything that structured, but we certainly get together and spend time with the local folks down there on a frequent basis and of course see them all the time when we’re out and about in the community.