



Photo by Victoria South

Major railroad projects such as bridges, new spurs and track upgrades and improvements required to run the Music City Star passenger trains— until recently— have been paid for by the state's Short Line Equity Fund, which is fed by a currently frozen 7 percent diesel fuel sales tax.

Diesel tax back in motion

BY VICTORIA SOUTH
TML Communications Coordinator

Legislation currently rolling through the Tennessee General Assembly has lawmakers considering a measure to switch a 7 percent sales tax on diesel fuel used by railroads to a tax similar assessed to the state's trucking industry. The bill (HB1769-McCormick) currently being discussed by the House, proposes to enact a 17 cents per-gallon fuel tax on diesel fuel to help level the playing field between railroads and other commercial users of diesel fuel.

A federal judge, last year, sided with CSX Corp. in a suit against the state Revenue Department, prompting the state to freeze the assets in its Short Line Equity Fund. The Fund, which provides for repairs and improvements of Tennessee's 18 short line railroads, gets its money from the state tax on diesel fuel. CSX and Norfolk Southern Railway Corp. filed separate suits in September 2013 in U.S. District Court in Nashville, contending that the state's 7 percent sales and use tax "on diesel fuel purchased and used for rail transportation purposes, is discriminatory and unlawful" under the federal Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act from 1976, because it doesn't apply to highway and water shippers.

U.S. District Judge Kevin Sharp sided with CSX and issued a preliminary injunction barring the state from continuing to collect the tax pending final disposition of those lawsuits along with an earlier case

between the state and Illinois Central Railroad, now under appeal by the state in the Sixth Circuit Court. That case claims Tennessee owes more than \$10 million in diesel sales taxes to Illinois Central Railroad dating back to 2005.

Legal opinion is that the cases could take years to resolve.

The new tax, proposed by the Department of Revenue, would not be subject to the discrimination-based legal challenges of a percentage-based sales tax on diesel, which fluctuates with the price of fuel.

"If approved, the per-gallon tax would actually be lower than the 21 cents per gallon railroads typically had to pay under the old tax system," argued Rep. Pat Marsh, Shelbyville, one of the bill's sponsors.

"For us, equivalent is not equal. It is likely, if you pass this legislation, what we're ultimately going to find ourselves involved in is two law suits," argued Tennessee Railroad Association Executive Director Tausha Alexander, before the House Finance, Ways and Means Committee. Alexander maintained that the proposed new tax would remain discriminatory, because unlike motorists, the railroad industry pays for its own infrastructure and pays millions in property taxes on its rail beds.

"We view this proposal as a new tax on railroads. On its face, it attempts to access against railroads, the 17 cents tax that motor carriers already pay— and when you look at it from that perspective— it looks like an apples to apples comparison. But in actuality, motor carriers don't

See DIESEL on Page 3

NLC joins Rails-to-Trails Supreme Court brief

BY LISA SORONEN
State and Local Legal Center

Perhaps your city is fortunate and has extensive biking and recreational trails. If so, have you ever wondered, where do bike paths come from? Many bike paths in the country come from abandoned railroad land grants or right-of-way grants and have been converted from "Rails-to-Trails." Cities are often responsible for converting and maintaining these trails.

Depending on how the Supreme Court rules, future trails could be in jeopardy.

In *Marvin M. Brandt Revocable Trust v. United States* the Court will decide who owns an abandoned federally granted railroad right-of-way: the United States or the land owner whose property the right-of-way runs through. The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) filed an amicus brief in this case supporting the United States. The National League of Cities has signed onto the brief.

In 1908, the United States granted the Laramie, Hahn's Peak and Pacific Railroad Company a right-of-way to build a railroad over public land pursuant to the General Railroad Right of Way Act of 1875. In 1976, the predecessor to the Marvin M. Brandt Revocable Trust bought land in Wyoming surround-

ing part of this railroad right-of-way. In 2004, the railroad abandoned the right-of-way. The Trust argued that it owns the abandoned right-of-way. The Tenth Circuit disagreed, concluding that a number of federal statutes provide that the United States retains a "reversionary interest" in General Railroad Right of Way Act of 1875 rights-of-way.

If the Supreme Court agrees with the Tenth Circuit, state and local governments will benefit. A federal statute, if applicable, grants the United States title to abandoned railroad rights-of-way unless a "public highway" is established on the right-of-way within one year of abandonment. Public highways include recreational trails.

The SLLC amicus brief argues that state and local governments have long relied on the federal statutes relevant to this case to build public highways in abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

The National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of Counties, the International City/County Management Association, the International Municipal Lawyers Association, and the American Planning Association also signed onto the SLLC's brief.

Oral argument was heard in January. The Supreme Court is to rule on the case by June 30.

It's not too late to register!

Gov. Haslam, TBI's Gwyn to speak at Legislative Conference in Nashville

The TML Legislative Conference is fast approaching, and will feature a number of leading voices on the issues that matter most to cities.

TML is excited to announce that Gov. Bill Haslam and TBI Director Mark Gwyn will join the conference line-up.

Slated for March 17 - 18 in Nashville at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown, Gov. Haslam is scheduled to speak on Tuesday morning; Director Gwyn will speak on Monday as part of the afternoon line-up.

Also on the agenda are both speakers, Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey and House Speaker Beth Harwell; Sen. Ken Yager, chairman of the Senate State and Local Government Committee, and Rep. Matthew Hill, chairman of the House State and Local Government Committee; and Sen. Randy McNally, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Rep. Charles Sargent, chairman of the House Finance Committee.

City officials will also hear from state Comptroller Justin Wilson, as well as key staff members from the state Treasury Department. Jill Bachus, TCRS director, and Steve Curry, first deputy treasurer, will provide an update on the Tennessee

Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS).

And as in years past, city officials will gain insights and perspectives from journalists covering the Capitol Hill beat during a moderated media panel scheduled for Monday afternoon.

Conference registration opens at 11 a.m. on Monday, March 17, followed by a buffet lunch at 12 noon. The conference will kick off at 1 p.m. and run through 4 p.m. on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday, March 18, things will get underway at 7:30 a.m. with a breakfast served until 8 a.m.. The conference program will begin at 8 a.m. and continue until 9 a.m.

City officials are encouraged to use their time in Nashville to attend Monday evening floor sessions and Tuesday morning committee meetings, as well as schedule time to visit with their legislators.



Haslam



Gwyn

The two-day conference provides an excellent forum for city officials to interact with their legislators and to be updated on the many legislative issues being addressed by the 108th Tennessee General Assembly.

The voice of Tennessee's municipal governments must be heard in the legislative process, and the TML Legislative Conference is a key opportunity to communicate that message.

To register on line, go to www.TML1.org. Contact the TML offices at 615-255-6416, for more information. We look forward to seeing you in Nashville!

Spring Hill partners with citizens, HOA's for new sidewalks

BY VICTORIA SOUTH

Prior to World War II, before urban sprawl and a glut of automobiles, sidewalks were the ultimate mode of transportation for a healthy, mobile society. Today, neighbors in Spring Hill are seeking a revival of those simple concrete paths leading to schools, parks, transit stations and all places in between, through a new Neighborhood Sidewalk Program.

As in many communities across Tennessee, there's a variance in sidewalk distribution in Spring Hill, where a 2005 city ordinance required sidewalk infrastructure in newer subdivisions. Sidewalks are absent in the front, older sections of the same communities, while grassy gaps and pedestrian dead-ends add to the general lack of connectivity among the city's 80-plus neighborhoods.

"For several years, we have identified the need to do something, but didn't know to what extent," said Spring Hill Alderman Jonathan Duda, a long time proponent of the sidewalk program. "We wanted to have a program that would take the requests and provide a way to justify the priority of all of them, because you can't fund them all."

The plan allows homeowner associations or groups of neighbors to petition for a sidewalk or multi-use trail installation in their neighborhood. Citizens or HOA's agree to put up the remainder of the cost to add to the 75 percent funding provided by the city.

The city developed a 5-year capitol improvement program three years ago, putting into place \$100,000 a year for the development of greenways and trails. Fifty thousand dollars remains in the current operating budget for this fiscal year, which ends June 30.

"The \$50,000 is in place and if it requires additional funding, I believe there's commitment from the board to consider it, depending upon how many requests we receive," Duda said. Although matching funds are part of the project scoring mechanism, it isn't a requirement for people to participate in the program, Duda added. A smaller funding share could be provided for less critical projects, if the neighborhood petitioners are willing to put up at least half the share.

At least 65 percent of property owners abutting the proposed sidewalk must sign the petition, in order to qualify for the program. The re-



Residents may petition for sidewalks to be installed in their communities, thanks to a new Neighborhood Sidewalk Program in Spring Hill.

quest is then submitted to the city's Public Works Department.

Spring Hill's board of Mayor and Alderman will consider projects, which do not fall under sidewalk repairs, based on certain criteria and availability of the city's funding and projects will be prioritized based on a scoring specification. Aspects of project feasibility will be evaluated such as: safety and location, proximity to schools, library or other facilities, and land use zoning or density of development.

From small projects such as ADA sidewalk ramps to a quarter-mile sidewalks along heavily trav-

eled collector roads, the city plans to RFP contractors to complete the projects in a timely manner, Duda said. "We can make progress in completing some infill sidewalks where they're needed, which is the whole purpose of the program."

"We are very excited about the potential for the city to partner with our neighborhoods and HOAs to improve, and increase the safety factor of our community's network of sidewalks," said Spring Hill's Mayor Rick Graham. "I hope that this kind of cooperative partnership continues in Spring Hill to promote impor-

See SIDEWALKS on Page 3

Why Cities Matter



As with all issues that affect the residents of a city, the power to zone is best exercised by the level of government that is closest to the people. Zoning authority empowers a city to protect residential neighborhoods, promote economic development, and restrict hazardous land uses to appropriate areas of the city. It is designed to reduce street congestion; promote safety from fires and other dangers; promote health; provide adequate light and air; prevent overcrowding of land; and facilitates the provision of adequate transportation, utilities, schools, parks, and other public services and facilities. Without zoning authority, the property values in a city would certainly drop.

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



CROSSVILLE

The city council has approved a proposed change to the city's charter that could give voters the opportunity to recall a city council candidate after being elected, but before the term is up. The matter will appear as a charter amendment question on the November ballot, giving city voters the opportunity to make a decision on the measure before it goes into effect. If approved in November, the recall provision would require a petition to recall a council member to be signed by 33 percent of registered city voters to put a recall on a public ballot. Then, the recall measure would have to be approved by 66 percent of voters for the council member to actually be removed.

DICKSON

Mohawk Industries, which creates flooring products and ceramic tiles, plans to build a production and distribution facility creating 320 jobs over the next four years. The company's investment amounts to about \$180 million. The 1.4 million-square-foot Mohawk facility will be built in the Dickson County Industrial Park, and leaders expect it to open in the fourth quarter of 2015.

GERMANTOWN

The city is one of Memphis' wealthiest suburbs, and according to a new ranking, it's also one of the nation's safest. The city on the eastern end of Memphis was ranked No. 10 by California-based online real estate brokerage *Movoto*. *Movoto* looked at per capita data for both property crimes and violent crime from more than 120 suburban communities to come up with its ranking. Germantown was ranked No. 10 for violent crime per capita, and ranked No. 18 for per capita property crimes.

GOODLETTSVILLE

Macy's Inc. has selected Moss-Wright Park as a park it will support during a nationwide partnership program through the National Recreation and Parks Association. Local store personnel from Rivergate Mall chose Moss-Wright Park as

one of the 681 parks in this customer engagement program. Customers will be able to make donations of \$1 or more when making a purchase at the Rivergate Macy's store and Macy's Inc. will match the first \$250,000, dollar for dollar during the campaign. Goodlettsville Parks will be fully empowered to apply the donation as it seems fit to support the park. The Macy's donation will be used for improved park amenities such as playgrounds, benches, and picnic tables. Customers may visit the store through March 31 to make a donation during checkout.

GOODLETTSVILLE

Allied Modular Building Systems Inc. plans to invest \$5.1 million in an expansion at its current facility, which will create 27 new jobs. Allied Modular specializes in creating modular panelized wall systems that are used for modular offices, wall partitions and guardhouses, as well as industry specific products like dressing rooms, tanning salon walls and cleanrooms.

KINGSTON

More than five years and \$1 billion after a catastrophic coal ash spill, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) says it has finally contained the spill. The TVA recently completed a 12-mile, four-foot-wide underground retaining wall to surround 240 acres of toxic coal ash. The wall was needed in December 2008, when a dike at TVA's Kingston Fossil Plant failed, sending 5.4 million cubic yards of coal ash into the Emory and Clinch rivers, polluting the water, destroying three homes and damaging dozens of other homes. TVA says their new containment system, which used more than 200,000 tons of cement and other materials, is earthquake resistant. It is expected to be capped off by the end of the year, where they hope to plant grass. Part of what made cleanup so difficult was a mixing of the coal ash with radioactive pollution from the Oak Ridge nuclear reservation, making it impossible to remove. TVA has already spent at least \$1 billion to clean up the spill and restore the area. Up to an additional \$1 billion

could be spent to finish the clean-up there and to better secure other coal ash storage sites in Tennessee. The new statewide coal ash security measures are expected to be complete by December 2022.

MEMPHIS

The city along with the Arts Alliance and other organizations broke ground on the first portion of a new bike project near Overton Park that will connect miles of cycling trails in Memphis and Shelby County. Hampline will be a two-way cycle track that helps connect Overton Park to the Shelby Farms Greenline and also the neighborhood of Binghampton and the Broad Avenue Arts District. Improvements have been made since 2012 throughout Overton Park, with special care in sprucing up entrances and making it more appealing for people to be outdoors. Public art will also be installed along the bike trail. The first leg of the Hampline will run down the greenway and cost \$80,000. "We and our partners at the Historic Broad Business Association, have been spearheading this project and raised money from the public, sponsors, donors from all levels throughout the community," Sarah Newstok of Livable Memphis said. When completed, the entire project will cost \$3.6 million. The remaining sections of the Hampline are set to start construction later this Summer.

NASHVILLE

The Nashville Clean Water Project's new Indiegogo campaign wants to collect \$22,000 to address the hundreds of thousands of cigarette butts lying around the city. Cigarette butts make their way into storm drains and then the region's rivers, lakes and streams and cause problems for aquatic life. A National Institutes of Health report called cigarette butts the most common form of litter in the world, releasing arsenic, nicotine, heavy metals and other pollutants into the environment. In Nashville, they're most commonly found at congested intersections and near businesses that don't allow employees to smoke on the property and don't provide cigarette disposal containers off the property. The money for the Nashville Clean Water Project is to launch the Cigarette Waste Brigade and form partnerships with local businesses and organizations to clean up the mess, plus print literature explaining the effort. The nonprofit will work to gather the butts and turn them over to TerraCycle, a Trenton, N.J.-based company that incorporates them into plastic pallets.

OAK RIDGE

The Oak Ridge City Council adopted a city ordinance to establish a Residential Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections Program in an effort to improve the rental housing market within the city. In August 2013, as part of the "Not in Our City" initiative, the existing Manhattan District Overlay (MDO) area was identified as being the geographic region of the city that is now subject to the provisions of this ordinance.

PORTLAND

Portland's water treatment operation recently received its highest sanitary rating in eight years. The city's water treatment plant and water distribution system received 99 percent on its 2014 Sanitary Survey, conducted by the Division of Water Supply under Tennessee's Department of Environment and Conservation. The score is based on a 599-point rating system. Portland scored 594 points, with 5 points subtracted for two violations. The city lost three points for what the water department deemed a technicality when flushing a new water line.

WHITE HOUSE

The board of mayor and aldermen approved a plan to sell property adjacent to White House High School to Sumner County Schools for \$16,000. The property is currently being used as overflow parking for the school's baseball fields. A deal was recently struck between city leaders and Sumner schools for the city to hand over ownership of White House High's football stadium in return for the school system lifting a deed restriction that requires the city to be caretaker of the stadium. The deal has cleared the path for the construction of a proposed new library. The city will continue the upkeep of the facility for the next three years, at an estimated cost of about \$16,000. The school board must approve the purchase. The funds will be used toward the school's football field.

Monterey celebrates second anniversary of historic depot



Photo by Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen

Ann Watson, assistant curator at the Monterey Depot Museum, looks over some exhibits. The depot celebrated its two-year anniversary this month with the unveiling of a new railroad research library and possibly a new caboose on the grounds.

The Monterey Depot celebrated its two-year anniversary this month with the unveiling of a new railroad research library and possibly a new caboose on the grounds. The caboose, which had been stored in Oak Ridge, was purchased last year by the Monterey Depot Historical Society for \$23,500 from a private owner in Texas. Once it arrives, it will rest on a 50-foot section of track donated by the Nashville and Eastern Railroad.

The book collection was donated by Illinois railroad enthusiast Stu Mackay. People may come to the library to research many of the railroads in the United States — past and present, from steam to diesel.

So far, 15,431 have explored the depot grounds. In its short two years as a museum, the Monterey depot

has won several awards, including two from the Tennessee Association of Museums in 2011 and 2012, along with the depot's exhibit on the 50-year anniversary of the John F. Kennedy assassination. The depot has also received a Cookeville-Putnam County Clean Commission award as well as an Ovation award for tourism advertising.

Monterey's cultural administrator pointed out the depot's economic impact, noting that many of its visitors are retired or soon-to-retire and have the time and income to explore and spend in the area.

Located at One East Depot St., the Monterey Depot is open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday from 1-4 pm, offering guided tours. Admission is free.

New technology will create efficiencies for Collierville Police Department



The Collierville Police Department has recently implemented an advanced technology system that will allow officers to enter and retrieve data from their patrol cars, thus increasing efficiency and responsiveness.

Through the use of new software and equipping patrol cars with laptops, officers will have fast access to pertinent information for making quick and effective decisions. And because officers will experience reduced time required to log in incident reports, they will be able to remain in the field on patrol for longer times.

"The implementation of this new technology will allow the Collierville Police Department to keep more officers on patrol because our reports can be processed more efficiently. The new system will also enable officers to quickly search records thus increasing responsiveness and the mobility of our force,"

Chief Larry Goodwin stated.

Funding for the Inform Records Management System (RMS) was made available from the Shelby County 911 Board. With a price tag of \$885,000, the allocation to the department to purchase the system means Collierville citizens will not bear the cost.

Within the next year, officers will have the ability to input data in the patrol vehicles and can also access violations and information from area police departments.

Additionally, Inform RMS will also aid in management of law records related to subjects or criminal activity and can capture and view images related to crime scenes and line-ups.

Other items coming later in the year revolve around new dispatch software called Inform Computer Aided Dispatching, false alarm tracking, as well as interfaces to the fire department reporting systems.

Knoxville looks to restore historic Farragut Hotel

Representatives of Halo Hospitality Group, based near Sacramento, Calif., were in Knoxville to talk with city officials about a proposal to restore the historic Farragut Hotel in the 500 block of South Gay Street. The potential developers are proposing restoring the historic property to a 190-room full-service hotel that would include a restaurant, ballroom, conference rooms and hotel rooms.

The developers, who still need to submit a financial package to the city, are hoping to begin restoration early next year, but it will still be several more years until the hotel will be available for use.

The development team hosted an open house and tour of select portions of the property and discussion of the proposed project at



the History Center, before a tour of the old hotel's first floor.

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Diesel tax back in motion

DIESEL from Page 3

pay for infrastructure. The 17 cents they pay goes into the Highway Fund, for the upkeep maintenance and repair of the public highway system.”

According to the Tennessee Short Line Railroad Alliance, the short line railroad rehabilitation program funding mechanism was created in 1988 as a response to the Class 1 railroad’s desire to abandon spur lines, which they viewed as nonproductive assets. The lines had suffered from decades of neglect and had costly track and bridge maintenance needs.

“State leaders recognized that they needed to create some mechanism to save these short lines from abandonment, so that they could continue to serve as vital arteries for economic development in the numerous small cities and counties through which they ran,” Alliance representative Matt Scanlan said.

“The deal that was struck between the cities served by the railroads and the Class 1 carriers was that short lines were transferred to railroad authorities made of city and county mayors in the areas served by the short line railroads.”

Today, owned by local rail authorities with boards primarily comprised of Tennessee’s county and city mayors from 44 local communities, the communities’ industries are highly dependant upon the short lines for viability. These Class 3 railroads haul tons of raw materials and finished products around the clock to customers as prestigious as the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga.

“Whether it’s Shelbyville or another city, the short lines are an economic development tool – a component of what we can offer industrial prospects or existing companies,” said Jay Johnson, Shelbyville city manager, who sits on the board of the Bedford Rail Authority, along with Mayor Wallace Cartwright. Shelbyville’s 8 miles of track connects with the CSX mainline, continuously bringing in raw molasses for the local animal feed plant along with plastic pellets for another of the community’s seven thriving industries.

“We agree that when the Class 1 started spinning off lines that were unprofitable, that it did create an issue,” Alexander conceded, adding that in 22 years, the fund has paid out \$210 million. “I would say when they decided to spin off these lines, the state and probably the federal agencies, probably said ‘you’re going to do something to help these lines that you’re spinning off because they’re in disrepair’ but at some point, you’re going to have to be able to pay your own way,” she countered. “We don’t think 22 years and \$210 million is just pocket change.”

Liza Joffrion, director of TDOT’s Division of Multi-modal transportation explained to legislators that TDOT’s rehabilitation funds are allocated based upon two assessments: a bridge assessment, conducted in 2001, and a track assessment in 2005.

“Those studies looked at the cost of bringing all the short line tracks in the state up to industry standards in terms of freight capacity,” said Joffrion. “Having calculated the costs of bringing everything up to industry standards, it de-



fines what each railroad authority’s share of that cost would be.”

Short Line Equity fund allocations are given out to the authorities annually in the form of grants, according to the Short Line Railroad Alliance. The grants are for specific projects that must be accompanied by proof that the project is being completed. The authorities were allocated 2 percent of the money from each grant to provide basic administrative support to administer the rehab grants.

Currently TDOT has frozen the \$40 million remaining in the fund.

“Our very large concern is capitol money,” Johnson worried. “We have a bridge at the very beginning of the short line rail that needs substantial repair or replacement, so the capitol monies available through TDOT are critical to short line railroads. We simply cannot fund projects like that through the city and county budgets. It’s not viable.”

“The loss of the program will change the landscape of the rail network in Tennessee,” said Scanlan.

“We realize that there may be some skepticism on the part of legislators and others that the short line industry will fail without these funds. We would like to point out that in the 20 years that this fund has been in existence, the short lines have not asked for additional appropriations or made requests to the governor’s office or general assembly for additional funding of any kind. The equity fund vehicle already in place worked for them and they understood that this process of bringing their lines up to standard was to be a long gradual process. It was their job to make their rail lines work. And they have done that.”

The legislation moves this week to the House Finance Subcommittee.

According to The Tennessee Short Line Railroad Alliance, the short line Track and Bridge rehabilitation programs, in data provided to TDOT by the short line railroads for one year of operations (2001) indicates that:

- 234 businesses were served by short line rail.
- 20,643 jobs were created by these businesses, not including direct railroad employees.
- The short line railroads served 34 counties
- The short line railroads provided service to at least 56 different towns/cities.
- The freight carried by the 47,973 railcars moved by the short line railroads in 2001 represents 119,932 truckload equivalents that have been moved off the highways during this period.

Cities make progress toward ending veteran homelessness

60 Minutes Profiles Nashville

BY ELISHA HARIG-BLAINE
National League of Cities

Last month, the 100,000 Homes Campaign was profiled on CBS’ *60 minutes* for their work with cities and other stakeholders across the country to change how we address homelessness. While Nashville was highlighted in the segment, other communities are also taking bold steps to bring together the necessary partners to ensure veterans and the chronically homeless have a place to call home.

In Nashville, the city provides the staff and capacity support for the How’s Nashville campaign. The campaign has brought the city together with the area housing authority, private landlords, the VA, and other service providers to prioritize people for housing based on how likely they are to die on the street.

Metro Homelessness Commission spokeswoman Judith Tackett said the effort has helped more than 360 people obtain permanent housing.

To accomplish this goal, housing units are paired with homeless individuals using resources such as Housing Choice Vouchers and HUD-VASH vouchers. The commitment of vouchers has been paired with philanthropic contributions of reduced rent apartments by private landlords.

Among the challenges the city faces is improving engagement with landlords to help veterans and the chronically homeless find a home more quickly.

The need for partnerships with private landlords has been recognized as a key to success among stakeholders in Dallas as well.

Recently in Dallas, Assistant City Manager Theresa O’Donnell joined representatives from the Mission Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Team, including officials from the Dallas Housing Authority and the regional VA and HUD offices for a landlord forum. Dozens of landlords attended the event to learn more about community efforts to end veteran homelessness and the need for



The CBS program *60 Minutes* recently covered the 100,000 Homes Campaign where Nashville was profiled for its work with cities and other stakeholders across the country to change how communities address homelessness.

landlords who are willing to accept veteran-specific (HUD-VASH) housing vouchers.

In April 2013, stakeholders from across the Dallas community came together at a homeless veteran boot-camp facilitated by the 100,000 Homes Campaign. During the 100 days following the boot camp, the team housed 130 homeless veterans. Since the boot-camp, a total of 515 veterans have been housed, with 62 percent being chronically homeless. This progress built upon a 25.9 percent drop in the number of homeless veterans in Dallas between 2011 and 2012. The 2013 Point-in-Time Count showed only 303 homeless veterans. With the 2014 Point-in-Time count recently conducted, the community will soon have more recent data to direct their efforts.

During the initial 100 days, team members worked with NLC and recognized that an obstacle to continued progress was a lack of landlords willing to accept HUD-VASH vouchers. To overcome this obstacle, NLC helped initiate discussions between the city and the team. With the support of team members and the city, NLC drafted a letter, which was signed by Mayor Mike Rawlings and sent to landlords and property managers already working with the city through other housing programs.

To further draw attention to the work and success of the team, Mayor Rawlings also recorded a public service announcement congratulating the team. The mayor used the PSA to urge the public to support the team’s efforts with donations to help with expenses not covered by programs serving veterans. In Nashville, these expenses have also been met by private contributions, but recently the city’s CDBG administrator also announced their commitment of up to \$200,000 to help with costs such as rental deposits or utility fees.

With continued focus, both Dallas and Nashville are on pace to join Phoenix and Salt Lake City as a city that have ended chronic veteran homelessness. As each city reviewed their challenges and successes, the need for improving engagement with landlords was identified as a recurring need to help veterans and the chronically homeless find a home more quickly. Combined with an ongoing use of data to drive decision-making, Dallas and Nashville are important illustrations of the success that is possible when local collaboration is joined with city leadership.

Spring Hill partners with residents for sidewalks

SIDEWALKS from Page 1

tant projects, rather than depending solely on city resources.”

City Administrator Victor Lay and others worked throughout 2012 and 2013 to make the project a reality, pulling property plats and cataloging all the city’s disconnected sidewalks with gaps.

“We first started with a neighborhood inventory and an areal section of each neighborhood’s recorded plat per section to quickly identify where easements may or may not exist in terms of multi-modal access,” said Duda, who scanned in all the information about the communities to create an electronic archive of existing sidewalks.



“We think its truly a partnership between those who wish to have a project completed, and the limited funding that the city actually has to complete projects.”

Spring Hill’s neighborhood sidewalk information is available to citizens within the city’s electronic fold maps.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey, Blountville, has been named to the 2014 Republican Lieutenant Governors Association Executive Committee.



Ramsey

Ramsey holds the distinction of being the first GOP Senate Speaker in Tennessee in 140 years and the first from Sullivan County in more than 100 years. Ramsey is currently serving his fourth term as Speaker. The RLGA is the only national organization whose mission is to elect Republican lieutenant governors.

Senate Majority Leader **Mark Norris** will help lead the Council of State Governments this year. The Collierville Republican



Norris

will serve as chair of the group headquartered in Lexington, Ky. Former chair and West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin will serve as president. CSG Executive Director David Adkins said Norris has gained a national reputation for his willingness to take on tough issues and find consensus. Tomblin and Norris have selected workforce development as the CSG Leaders' Initiative for 2014.

State House Democratic Caucus Chairman **Mike Turner**, 59, announced he will not seek reelection to the House District 51, after 14 years in office. Turner said he has not ruled out running for Metro-Nashville mayor in 2015.



Turner

Chris Dorsey, former Signal Mountain town manager, has been appointed interim city manager of Millington in Shelby County. Dorsey is a native of Memphis.

Red Bank District 3 Commissioner **Ken Welch** is leaving the city for a nursing job in Arcada, Calif.

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) Director **Jim Bassham** will retire effective April 7. The TEMA director is charged with the responsibility for ensuring that state and local governments are prepared to deal with disasters and emergencies that affect Tennesseans. In addition, the director has the responsibility to help prepare citizens to deal with emergencies and the aftermath. Bassham led TEMA through the response to hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Gustav; devastating tornadoes that ripped through Tennessee in 2006 and 2008; the Nashville floods in 2010; tornadoes through the southeastern part of the state in 2011; and the flooding of the Mississippi River in West Tennessee in May 2011. Department of Safety and Homeland Security Assistant Commissioner **David Purkey** will serve as the interim TEMA director through June 30 and a permanent director will be named at a later date.



Bassham



Purkey

Peter M. Ahrens, 38, a building inspector and building official in Franklin County Va., and Manheim Township Penn., has been hired as Knoxville's new director of building inspections. Ahrens is an International Code Council master code professional and has more than 14 years of experience in building code application and enforcement. In his new job, Ahrens will manage 29 employees and a \$2.4 million annual budget. Ahrens also worked as vice president of DPA Construction Inc. in Lynchburg, Va. Tom Reynolds will remain as deputy director for the department.



Ahrens

Milan Chief of Police **Tim Wright** has retired after nearly 26 years on the force. Wright was chief for six years.

John D. Stites of Cookeville has been appointed to the Tennessee Board of Regents. Stites, 67, is chief executive officer for J&S Construction Co. and served as a Navy lieutenant during a tour in Vietnam. Stites will represent the Sixth Congressional District. His term will run until June 30, 2018.



Stites

Tonya Hinch, Crossville resident, board member and director of Economic Restructuring for Downtown Crossville, will join the internationally recognized Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., this spring to assume the role of managing director of the Henry Crown Fellowship Program. Hinch will be responsible for arguably the most prestigious fellowship program in the United States. She currently owns and operates an insurance company in Crossville.



Hinch

Cal Wray, 35, of Dublin, Ga., is the first executive director of the Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Development Council. A business development leader, Wray comes on board after the resignation of EDC President and CEO James Chavez. After Chavez's exit, the leadership position and bylaws of the EDC were restructured to create the position of executive director. Wray formerly served as the president of the Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority.



Wray

Former assistant planner **Jim Atkinson** is Lakeland's new director of planning and administration. He has been with the city since 2005. Atkinson, 40, will supervise a staff of eight



Atkinson

\$600 million in Federal TIGER grants announced

President Obama recently announced a new round of federal Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants totaling \$600 million, as part of a broader four-year transportation program.

These grants allow cities and towns across the nation to leverage federal government seed money and pair it with local resources to transform their communities. Initially created as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the previous five rounds of the program have funded 270 projects across all 50 states.

Cities can begin applying for the TIGER grants on April 3 and must submit final applications by April 28, 2014. Up to \$35 million of the program may be awarded for planning grants.

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or

TIGER Discretionary Grant program, provides a unique opportunity for the DOT to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. Since 2009, Congress has dedicated more than \$4.1 billion for six rounds to fund projects that have a significant impact on the Nation, a region or a metropolitan area.

The TIGER program enables DOT to examine a broad array of projects on their merits, to help ensure that taxpayers are getting the highest value for every dollar invested. In each round of TIGER, DOT receives many applications to build and repair critical pieces of our freight and passenger transportation networks. Applicants must detail the benefits their project would deliver for five long-term outcomes: safety, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, livability and environmental sustainability.

TDEC begins public process for Solid Waste Management Plan

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) beginning the process that will lead to development of the 2015-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan. The solid waste management plan will outline how Tennessee will reduce, manage and dispose of its solid waste in the future.

The planning process will include three rounds of public participation opportunities in locations across the state in addition to a web-based public input session. Written input and comments will also be accepted. Once developed, the plan will serve as a roadmap for the state's activities to reduce and manage solid waste.

The plan will consider current solid waste and recycling capacity in Tennessee and project future infrastructure needs to meet reduction, recycling, and disposal goals. A series of four special focus meetings will be held in various regions of the state March 17-20.

The first sessions will provide information about the purpose and potential components of an integrated solid waste management plan. There will be an opportunity for the public to voice any concerns and to ask questions.

The general public, environmental stakeholders, county solid waste directors to industry representatives are invited to participate in the process. The meetings will be followed by a series of public input sessions to be held in April or May, including one web-based meeting to

encourage participation from across the state, and a series of public hearings later in the year to obtain public comment on a proposed plan. Stakeholders interested in the process are invited to keep up to date on public input opportunities and materials on TDEC's website at <http://www.tn.gov/environment/solid-waste/plan-2025.shtml>.

The schedule for the first round of special focus meetings includes: **March 17:** Memphis, 5 pm CST, Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library Meeting Room A, 3030 Poplar Ave. **March 18:** Nashville, 12:30 pm CST, William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower, 3rd floor, 312 Rosa L. Parks Ave. N.

March 20: Knoxville, 10:30 am EST, Knoxville Environmental Field Office, 3711 Middlebrook Pike

March 20: Chattanooga, 5:30 pm EST, Chattanooga Environmental Field Office, Chattanooga State Office Building, Downstairs Auditorium, 540 McCallie Ave.

To encourage statewide participation, the meeting at 12:30 pm CST on March 18, may be joined via video conference from the TDEC Environmental Field Office locations in Columbia, Cookeville, Jackson, Johnson City, Knoxville or Memphis.

Questions or comments about the process for developing the 2015-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan may be submitted to TDEC's Division of Solid Waste at solid.waste@tn.gov.

Stimulus dollars advance energy efficiency in cities

Survey shows successful use of Block Grant funding

The US Conference of Mayors released the results of a new survey pointing to city successes in using Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The results document the responses of 204 mayors – representing cities of all population sizes and from all regions – to a series of questions from the Mayors' Climate Protection Center designed to show generally how cities invested their EECBG program funds to help further local initiatives to reduce energy use, deploy new energy technologies and curb harmful energy emissions, among other local outcomes.

"These findings underscore that mayors have been leading by example on energy efficiency and conservation for years," said Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, chair of the Conference's energy committee. "Mayors all across the country have been actively working to advance energy-saving measures in communities large and small, and what we see in this report translates into real budgetary savings, local job creation and small business growth."

While the full report can be found at www.usmayors.org, some of its key findings are below:

- The three top uses of EECBG dollars by cities were energy retrofits of government buildings (83 percent of cities), LED/other energy-efficient street lighting (42 percent), and solar energy systems on public buildings and facilities (31 percent).
- Most mayors directed a majority

of their EECBG funds to investments in municipal projects and operations. Nearly seven in eight mayors (87 percent) expended a majority of their EECBG grant dollars on municipal projects and operations.

- LED/other energy-efficient lighting ranked first among energy technologies that have already been deployed by cities, with local and federal resources, most notably EECBG grants, providing the primary sources of funding for these deployments.

- The availability of EECBG funds to cities has influenced city budgetary priorities, and also prompted new partnerships with a range of private sector and governmental entities.

- A majority of mayors cited energy service contracting as the innovative energy financing strategy that EECBG funds helped most often.

Of the report's findings, Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch, who Co-Chairs the Conference's Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force said, "Even as mayors were confronting budget constraints due to the recession and federal spending cuts, this report shows that cities leveraged EECBG dollars by making investments that are still paying dividends today."

Five years ago, as part of ARRA, EECBG formula grants were distributed directly to cities by the U.S. Department of Energy. Of the \$2.7 billion provided to the program in formula funding, about half of these dollars (\$1.3 billion) were distributed directly to cities to support their energy efficiency efforts.

Side by side,
community by community,
state by state.
Opportunity at every step.™

The demands facing government entities are more challenging than ever. So our specialized client teams work side by side with you to turn challenges into opportunities. To help you do more with less with greater efficiency, transparency and control. After more than a century of experience serving the public sector, we're here with advice and a range of solutions including credit, treasury and liquidity. Bringing the capabilities of a global financial services organization to the state and community level.

Tom Boyd
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STATE BRIEFS



Transparency TN kicks off
Gov. Haslam announced the launch of "Transparent Tennessee," an overhaul of the state's transparency website to offer more user-friendly information online to Tennessee taxpayers. Transparent Tennessee is a one-stop shop for searching public data on how state dollars are spent. The site includes a searchable checkbook with more interactive data related to state agency expenses, vendor payments and travel reimbursements. Transparent Tennessee includes the new checkbook function along with an interactive financial overview of where state dollars come from and where they are spent. The site has a public opportunities section that links to public meetings, open records information and a page for feedback. Visitors to the website will also see quick links to state audits and the state salary database. Transparent Tennessee can be found at <http://tn.gov/opengov/>.

New human trafficking report spotlights cases in Tennessee
Human trafficking was brought to the forefront in Rutherford County in 2012, when a potential missing person report uncovered an alleged prostitution ring with ties to Murfreesboro and Memphis. A report released by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, "The Geography of Trafficking in Tennessee 2013," uses data collected for a 2011 study into the impact of human trafficking on children to assess the extent of adult and minor sex trafficking throughout the state. "Domestic issues, the drug trade, poverty and other socio-economic factors serve as catalysts for human sex trafficking," TBI Director Mark Gwyn said. "It is important to analyze the Tennessee counties that were identified as having the highest rates of minor human sex trafficking to provide better awareness and focus resources in those areas of Tennessee." According to the report, Rutherford County falls in the middle of the state with 51-100 minor sex trafficking cases and 26-50 cases of adult sex trafficking reported in the study period.

TN Bar Association releases handbook
The Tennessee Bar Association has released a handbook to help the state's senior citizens better understand things like federal and state benefits and new health care laws. *The Legal Handbook for Tennessee Seniors* is available for free downloading at the bar association website. Printed and electronic copies on flash drives also are available from the bar association while supplies last. Some of the specific issues addressed by the handbook include applying for benefits, understanding tax and housing laws, protecting pensions and retirement accounts, preparing wills and powers of attorney, and selecting assisted living facilities or home health care provid-

ers. The bar association is offering presentations on the handbook across the state. More information is available at <http://www.tba.org>.

Visitors spend \$541 million at TN state parks
A recent report shows that more than 8 million visitors to national parks in Tennessee spent \$541 million in 2012. The most recent figures from the National Park Service show the hundreds of millions of dollars supported nearly 8,000 jobs in the state. Nationally, the report shows more than \$15 billion of direct spending by 283 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. The spending supported 243,000 jobs and pumped about \$27 billion into the U.S. economy. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park accounted for 9.6 million visitors who spent \$741 million in communities near the park in 2012, with more than half of the visits attributed to Tennessee and the remainder to North Carolina.

Two Tennessee veterans homes named best in country
The *U.S. News & World Report* 2014 has named the Tennessee State Veterans Homes in Knoxville and Murfreesboro among the best in the country. Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Many-Bears Grindler joined the Tennessee State Veterans Homes (TSVH) Board in celebrating the announcement. *U.S. News and World Report* rated more than 16,000 nursing homes using data research on nursing home safety, health inspection and staffing. The source of the data originates from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). In 2013, CMS issued five star ratings to the Senator Ben Atchley State Veterans Home in Knoxville and the Tennessee State Veterans Home in Murfreesboro. This is the third year for the distinction for the home in Murfreesboro and the second for the home in Knoxville. The W.D. "Bill" Manning Tennessee State Veterans Home in Humboldt also received a perfect score in clinical, fiscal and life safety from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs during the survey in January, 2014, and was named Best of the Best Long Term Care Facility by the Gibson County community.

Number of adults with jobs drops
The share of Tennessee adults with jobs fell last year by the biggest amount of any state in the country, according to a new federal report. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that only 55.6 percent of those over the age of 16 in Tennessee had jobs in 2013, down 1.1 percent from the 56.7 percent with jobs in the previous year. Nationwide, an estimated 58.6 percent of adults had jobs in 2013, unchanged from the previous year. The share of adults working is at three-decade low as more adults are retired, more stu-

dents are staying in school longer and unemployment remains at historically high levels. Economists said many persons have simply dropped out of the labor force.

WGU enrollment grows to 1,000
Since WGU Tennessee was launched in July 2013, the number of Tennesseans in the online Western Governors University program has grown from about 600 to almost 1,000. WGU Tennessee Chancellor Kimberly Estep said this is a step in the right direction for a goal of having 5,000 active WGU students, which as a group are an average of 37 years old and generally have families and full-time jobs. "Our goal is for 5,000 students in five years," Estep said, adding that WGU Tennessee has about 700 alumni. Estep said the WGU growth, in turn, will help propel Gov. Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 program, an effort to have 55 percent of Tennesseans with a certificate or at least two-year degree by 2025. That number is 32 percent now.

"Sandy" the official state artifact
State lawmakers voted to make "Sandy," an ancient stone statue discovered in 1939 on Sellars Farm in Wilson County, the official state artifact of Tennessee. The stone sculpture of a kneeling man is believed to be one of the oldest pieces of Indian art ever found in Tennessee. The piece was made during the Mississippian Period, which ran from the ninth century through the 15th century. The University of Tennessee's McClung Museum has owned the sculpture since 1940.

TN incentives for "Nashville" up in the air
Government incentives for a third season of the show "Nashville" are up in the air as stakeholders wait to see if the ABC drama will be picked up for a third season. "Nashville" is expected to receive \$13.5 million in incentives from the state, Metro and Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp. to film its ongoing second season. A report by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development put the anticipated budget for season 2 at \$106 million, with \$69 million of that total expected to be spent directly in Tennessee. Officials say the show has been a boon for tourism in Nashville, and a study released last month showed that many visitors chose to come to Music City because of the show.

TN Water Well Assoc. promotes Groundwater Awareness Week
Thirteen million American households, including many in rural areas, use privately owned and maintained water well systems for their water supply. The Tennessee Water Well Association is joining the National Ground Water Association (NGWA) in urging citizens to take care of their water wells during National Groundwater Awareness Week March 9-15. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that 99 percent of all available freshwater in the world is groundwater. For more information about National Groundwater Awareness Week, visit www.NGWA.org.

Tennessee Arts leaders celebrate new arts specialty license plate



The Legislative Arts Caucus, Tennesseans for the Arts and the Tennessee Arts Commission along with arts leaders from across the state celebrated that the new Arts specialty license plate is now available at County Clerk offices across the state. Tennesseans can support and help fund the arts by choosing specialty plates. The cost is \$35 annually and the plates can be ordered at the County Clerk's offices. Pictured left to right: Leslie Haines, Arts license plate designer; Rhea Condra, chair of Tennessee Arts Commission; Liza Zenni, outgoing president, Tennesseans for the Arts; Brian Salesky, executive director, Knoxville Opera; Rep. Curtis Halford, Dyer; Sen. Becky Duncan Massey; Incoming President, Tennesseans for the Arts, Bonnie Macdonald; Sen. Doug Overbey; Anne B. Pope, executive director, Tennessee Arts Commission

State, Federal partnership launching new IDEA initiative

27 Tennessee Main Street communities to benefit

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development is partnering with the United States Department of Agriculture and the Appalachian Regional Commission to launch the "IDEA Initiative" that will assist Tennessee Main Street designated programs in setting achievable, effective and sustainable development objectives. There are currently 27 Main Street communities across Tennessee.

"We are pleased to partner with the United States Department of Agriculture and the Appalachian Regional Commission on this innovative and exciting new program," TNECD Commissioner Bill Hagerty said. "Tennessee's downtown districts are the backbones of our communities, fostering job growth and revitalization efforts. This new program is a welcome addition to the efforts our Main Street communities make on a daily basis to further economic development."

IDEA stands for "Ignite Downtown Economic Action." The initiative will provide each participating community with an assessment and a set of specific recommendations for economic development based on the National Main Street Center's Four Point® model: design; economic restructuring; organization; and promotion.

"Vibrant downtowns are valuable community assets because of the way they contribute to local economies," Tennessee Main Street Director Todd Morgan said. "Main Street programs work with small businesses and entrepreneurs every day and the IDEA Initiative will assist them with creating a downtown environment conducive for successful businesses and job creation."

USDA Rural Development State Director Bobby Goode said that the

three partner agencies are contributing a combined \$121,500 to fund the initiative. "The amount of money invested for each town may seem pretty small, but by working together at the state, local and federal levels we leverage each other's strengths for this next step and future steps that grow out of the plans each community makes as a result of the IDEA Initiative," Goode said.

The National Main Street Center will utilize Barman Development Strategies, LLC, to help each community identify the strengths of its downtown, market position, and a specific development need or opportunity that exists. The process will include public workshops in each community throughout 2014.

The IDEA Initiative will sharpen the focus on the role of local Main Street programs as drivers and contributors to comprehensive local economic development efforts. This proven strategy works by strengthening local Main Street teams, improving action plans, increasing understanding and confidence in Main Street districts for investors, and developing economic restructuring resources and reference tools for each local program.

In 2012, designated Main Street communities generated more than \$82 million of public/private investment and created 604 new jobs. Main Street programs are located in Bristol, Cleveland, Collierville, Columbia, Cookeville, Dandridge, Dayton, Dyersburg, Fayetteville, Franklin, Gallatin, Greeneville, Jackson, Jonesborough, Kingsport, Lawrenceburg, Lebanon, Leiper's Fork, McMinnville, Morristown, Murfreesboro, Ripley, Rogersville, Savannah, Sweetwater, Tiptonville and Union City.

TN Downtowns accepting applications

Revitalization program offers technical assistance, workshops, grant funding to select communities

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development is now accepting applications for Tennessee Downtowns, a competitive education and training program for communities seeking to revitalize traditional commercial districts. The program is open to communities with downtown commercial districts established at least 50 years ago and whose citizens are ready to organize efforts for downtown revitalization.

Applications are available upon request and must be completed by April 30. Visit www.tennessee-mainstreet.org for more information.

"The economic strength of a community can often be measured by the health of its historic downtown district. "Economic and Community Development Commissioner Bill Hagerty said. "Vibrant downtown districts make our communities better places to live and work, which can make all the difference when it comes to furthering economic growth and winning new jobs and investment."

The Tennessee Downtowns program is affiliated with TNECD's Tennessee Main Street Program. Communities selected to participate

in Tennessee Downtowns will form a volunteer committee of local citizens who will participate in a 24-month training curriculum supported by the National Main Street Center. The curriculum is based on the successful "Main Street Four-Point Approach to Downtown Revitalization" and is designed to teach citizens about comprehensive, sustainable downtown revitalization and historic preservation. The training includes workshops, webinars, mentoring and a \$15,000 grant to complete individualized downtown improvement projects.

"Tennessee Downtowns has been very effective with helping communities learn more about how to launch a successful downtown revitalization effort based on the Main Street Approach," Tennessee Main Street Director Todd Morgan said. "We look forward to working with six newly selected communities as part of Round 4."

Communities participating in the Tennessee Downtowns program may wish to continue a self-initiated downtown revitalization effort at the end of the program or apply for certification in the Tennessee Main Street Program through a separate

application process. Successful completion of the Tennessee Downtowns program does not automatically result in a designation as a Tennessee Main Street program. Downtown revitalization is a comprehensive, incremental, self-help economic strategy that also focuses on developing public-private partnerships to enhance community livability and job creation, while maintaining the historic character of the district.

Tennessee's Main Street program provides communities with technical assistance and guidance in developing long-term strategies that promote economic growth and development. Designated Tennessee Main Street communities meet or are in the process of meeting National Main Street Center's accreditation standards.

To apply for the Tennessee Downtowns program or for more information, visit www.tennessee-mainstreet.org. For questions about the program, please contact Todd Morgan, 615-253-1894 or todd.morgan@tn.gov

The six newly selected communities will be announced on June 17. Round 4 will run from July 2014 until June 2016.

Regions' Roundtable Network, NADO publication spotlights Tennessee's success stories

A new publication from the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network, sponsored by the NADO Research Foundation, highlights innovative community and economic development projects being implemented throughout Tennessee. Stories presented from the state's diverse regions and communities demonstrate collaborative leadership, strategic partnerships, and implementation-funding techniques that local government, planning, and community and economic development leaders can put to use in their own communities.

The new publication, entitled *Navigating our Future: Best Practices Case Studies from the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network*, is the first project for Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Surdna Foundation grant to build out the operations of the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network.

More than 20 case studies are featured in the publication demonstrating a wide range of projects in urban, suburban, and rural Tennessee, including regional initiatives, neighborhood and corridor revitalization, historic preservation, multi-

modal transportation investments, entrepreneurship and small business development initiatives, tourism strategies, and others.

Along with the Surdna Foundation, the publication was funded in part under awards to the NADO Research Foundation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Highway Administration. For more information, contact one of the five Steering Committee members from lead regional partner organizations:

- Memphis and Shelby County Office of Sustainability: John Zeaneh, Program Manager for Mid-South Regional Greenprint & Sustainability Plan 901-576-6601
- Southwest Tennessee Development District: Joe Barker, Executive Director 731-668-7112
- Cumberland Region Tomorrow: Bridget Jones, Executive Director 615-986-2698
- Southeast Tennessee Development District: Beth Jones, Executive Director 423-266-5781
- Knoxville Transportation Planning Organization: Amy Brooks, Senior Transportation Planner and Project Manager for PlanET 865-215-4001.



CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertising: \$9.25 per column inch. No charge to TML members. Send advertising to: TT&C Classified Ads, Mona Lawrence, 226 Capitol Blvd. Suite 710, Nashville TN 37219; e-mail: mlawrence@TML1.org; or fax: 615-255 4752.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/BOOKKEEPER

OAK HILL. The city is accepting applications for the position of Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper. The successful candidate will be a team player, comfortable in working in a small office environment. The position will work closely with the city manager and volunteer board members. The successful candidate will also possess good organizational and communication skills and be attentive to details. Job responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, preparing and entering journal entries, posting checks, deposits, ACH payments, and payroll transactions to the general ledger, preparation of budget reports, reconciliation of bank statements, answering telephones, greeting visitors, coordinating meetings, coordinates packets and agenda for city boards, filing, website administration, opening mail, and general clerical functions. The minimum qualifications include a total of five years experience (Bachelor's degree in a related field is equivalent to four years of experience) doing bookkeeping and journal entries, experience with other job responsibilities, knowledge of Microsoft Office and Quickbooks (or similar accounting software), ability to obtain Certified Municipal Finance Officer designation from the State of Tennessee. Preferred qualifications include college degree in a related field, experience working in a local government office, experience working with Local Government Data Processing software, experience with or knowledge of planning and zoning issues, Certified Municipal Finance Officer designation, and experience with website upkeep. To apply, submit cover letter and resume to: City Manager, City of Oak Hill, 5548 Franklin Road, Suite 101, Nashville, TN, 37220. Cover letter should include minimum acceptable salary. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Salary range is \$26,000 to \$36,000 per year, depending upon qualifications. Excellent benefits are provided.

ASSISTANT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
FARRAGUT. The town is seeking candidates for the position of Assistant Community Development Director. This position will assist the Community Development Director in administering different aspects of the town's land use related provisions, including the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update. This position will involve assisting with site

planning and evaluation, visual analysis, plans review, and site inspection. Strong computer and graphics skills and familiarity with Low Impact Development. Public facilitation and mediation techniques are strongly desired. This position will staff a variety of meetings and address a wide range of items from sign and zoning related matters to tree protection and guidance in the development of subareas identified in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update. Excellent written and oral communication skills are a necessity. Minimum qualifications include: bachelor's degree in planning, landscape architecture, geography, or related field and a minimum of five years experience or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Preference will be given to candidates possessing a master's degree in, planning, landscape architecture, or geography. AICP or ASLA is desired. Hiring salary range is \$47,257.00-\$60,253.41. Current benefit package includes 100% town paid medical, dental, life, LTD, and a matching 401(k) retirement plan. Visit www.townoffarragut.org/jobs to download the complete job description and submit the required application. Application deadline is 3 pm, Fri., Mar. 14, 2014. EOE /ADA Employer.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PARKS & REC

SHELBYVILLE. The city is accepting applications for the position of Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. This is a highly responsible professional position, reporting to the Parks and Recreation director. Duties include management of nine parks consisting of a total of 127 acres, numerous ball fields, soccer fields, and related activities. Exceptional skills in planning, development, maintenance, rehabilitation and expansion of parks, related programs, and capital improvements is required. A bachelor's degree in recreation, turf management, or a related field is desired. A minimum of five years experience in supervisory role with a parks and recreation department is required. Salary is based upon education and experience. Salary range is 39.5K-46.8K, plus excellent benefits. The city is an EEO Employer and a Drug Free Workplace. A completed city application form, cover letter and resume shall be submitted to: City Recorder, City Hall Administration Office, 201 N. Spring Street, Shelbyville, TN 37160 on or before March 28, 2014. Position shall remain open until filled. First review of applications begins March 28, 2014. For more information and job description, please visit our website: www.shelbyvilletn.org

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
MCMINNVILLE. The city is seek-

ing well-qualified, innovative, professional applicants for the position of City Administrator. Minimum qualifications include a bachelor's degree in public administration, or a closely-related field (master's degree preferred), with at least five years' experience in municipal government management and finance. Major duties include: supervision of all city departments, staff employment and assignments, work procedures and schedules, budget preparation, monitoring of revenues and expenditures, development and implementation of goals and visioning for the city, provision of proper reports, initiation of grant writing, and the implementation of new technology across each department. The administrator will perform duties which will reflect the needs of a progressive city by serving on various boards, committees, agencies and civic organizations that promote retail, tourism, and industrial development in the area. The administrator will possess all the skills necessary to complete the successful operation and management of the city while fulfilling the expectations of the elected officials. The city administrator is selected by and reports to the mayor and a six-member board of aldermen. The starting salary and benefit package will be market competitive, depending on the professional experience and qualifications of the selected candidate. Reasonable relocation expenses will be negotiated. Interested applicants should email cover letters, resumes with references and salary history to Warren Nevad, The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service at warren.nevad@tennessee.edu.

FIREFIGHTER

LA VERGNE. The city is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Firefighter. This position is under close supervision of the fire chief and assistant fire chief's. This position performs fire suppression and fire prevention duties to protect life and property; provides emergency rescue and basic medical treatment as required; utilizes various tools and power equipment in rescue operations; maintains department equipment, vehicles and facilities; and performs related duties as assigned. Detailed job description along with benefits information can be found by applying online at http://www.lavergnen.gov/?page_id=172.

POLICE OFFICER

WAYNESBORO. The city is accepting applications for the position of police officer. Applicants must be 18 years of age, POST certified, pass a complete physical, drug screen and have a valid driver license. Applications and/or resumes should be submitted detailing experience and training to Waynesboro City Hall, P.O. Box 471 Waynesboro, TN 38485 or email to the City Manager jhickman@cityofwaynesboro.org by March 3, 2014. Benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, paid vacation, paid sick leave, holi-

days, retirement plan and deferred compensation plan. The city is an EOE employer and reserves the right to reject any or all applicants.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR

ROCKWOOD. Rockwood Water Sewer and Gas is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator. The position operates under the direction of the chief plant operator (CPO). Job duties include: assisting the CPO with daily plant operation to meet wastewater system requirements and demands, performing daily laboratory tests; operating the plant, and preparing and maintaining operational reports within EPA, TDEC and governing agency permit requirements. Physical demands include: ability to stand, kneel or stoop for extended periods of time and lifting objects weighing 40 -100 pounds. Salary DOQ. Qualifications include: 5 + years' experience in Wastewater treatment plant operation/maintenance; must have a current Grade 3 Certificate from the State of Tennessee for the WWTP and a valid Tennessee driver's license and a minimum high school diploma or GED equivalent (degree in Science or Math preferred). This position is subject to the provisions of the Utilities Emergency Procedures. Subject to pre-employment drug and alcohol testing as set forth in 49 CFR Part 40.25. Random and/or probable cause drug and alcohol testing as set forth in the utility's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Plan. Resumes accepted until Mar. 28, 2014. To apply, submit resume to Attn: Angie Isham, 110 N. Chamberlain Avenue, Rockwood, TN 37854.

SENIOR SERVICES MANAGER

JOHNSON CITY. The city is currently taking applications for a Senior Services Manager. The employee in this position performs complex professional and difficult administrative work in the development, implementation and general direction of all operations and affairs of a comprehensive multi-purpose Senior Services Division, including oversight and administration of a wide array of programs and services for seniors and responsibility for the development, organization and implementation of a comprehensive plan of such programs; carries out administrative duties; community relations; financial responsibilities, does related work as required. Graduation from an accredited college or university with specialization in sociology, gerontology or other related field; extensive administrative experience in all phases of social service activities center work; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities. Post offer physical and drug screen required. Salary \$42,130.59 annually. Online applications accepted until Mar. 26. Apply at www.johnsoncitytn.org. EEO/AA



TENNESSEE FESTIVALS

Mar. 15: Chattanooga

Great Southern Old Time Fiddler's Convention
Chattanooga Convention & Visitor's Bureau, 901 Lindsey St. Listen to the old-time musicians of the South compete for top honors and cash prizes in categories such as - old time banjo, dance, traditional song and string band. The main event is the old time fiddle competition where fiddlers from half a dozen states let the rosin fly as they battle each other with fiddle and bow for the coveted honor - Champion Fiddler of the South. Admission is \$10 and children under 12 are free. Food and drinks available for purchase. For more information, visit <http://www.oldchattanooga.com/>.

April 4-6: Knoxville

Rhythm N' Blooms
Jackson Ave. downtown and Knoxville's Botanical Garden & Arboretum. Celebrates the crossroads of Knoxville's varied musical history. Spotlights songwriters and performances from jazz to world-class bluegrass to indie. For more information or to purchase tickets visit <http://rhythmbloomsfest.com>.

April 4: Jonesborough

Music on the Square Spring Tune Up
Held from 6 to 10 pm at the Storytelling Center featuring music, a live auction, food and beverages benefiting the annual Music on the Square. For tickets and information, call 423-753-5401 or visit musiconthesquare.com.

April 5: Pulaski

Sweetheart Day at Milky Way Farm
Milky Way Farms, 520 Milky Way Rd. This 1100-acre home place of candy legend, Frank Mars, is just one hour from Nashville or Huntsville on US 31 between Columbia and Pulaski. Enjoy a fun time down on this great American farm. Tour the 20-bedroom Manor House, stroll the grounds, shop the specialty items, pet the animals, explore the grounds by hayride. Drawings and prizes held from 10am -4pm Sat. and Sun. from Noon-4pm. Price is \$7 for adults \$5 for children under 10. Milky Way Farm fudge pie with coffee served to the first 100 guests daily. For more information, visit <http://milkywayfarm.org/>.

April 5: Granville

Genealogy Festival
Held at the Granville Museum, 169 Clover St. Features great genealogy speakers, seminars, genealogy family booths, craftsmen, historical town tours, music, cemetery tours, museums and great food. Celebrating the history of Sutton General Store's Anniversary & Sutton Ole Time Music Hour. For more information, visit <http://granvilletn.com/>.

April 12: Goodlettsville

Heritage Days
From 9 am-3 pm at Moss Wright Park's Bowen Plantation House, 705 Caldwell Rd. Step back into the 18th century at this free family event. See how people lived, made and washed their clothes, baked on an open fire and fired their guns. Listen to music, learn a dance, and enjoy hands on activities for all ages. For more information, email: abaker@cityofgoodlettsville.org or call 615-859-3678.

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TMBF Board meets March 17

Notice is hereby given that the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund Board of Directors will meet in regular public session on Monday, March 17, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., local time, in the Vanderbilt Room on the lobby level of the Doubletree Hotel at 315 Fourth Avenue North, Nashville, Tenn., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said board. Some members of the board may participate in such meeting by telephonic means, which will be audible to any member of the public attending such meeting. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Friday, March 14, at the offices of TMBF, 226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 502, in Nashville. Additional information concerning the above may be obtained at 615-255-1561.

TML Board to meet March 17

Notice is hereby given that the Tennessee Municipal League Board of Directors will meet in regular public session on Monday, March 17, 2014, at 10:00 a.m., local time, in the Tennessee Room of the Doubletree Hotel at 315 Fourth Avenue North, Nashville, Tenn., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business that may properly come before said board. If reasonably possible, an agenda will be available on Friday, March 14 at the TML offices, 226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 701, in Nashville. Additional information concerning the above may be obtained at 615-255-6416.

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NATIONAL BRIEFS

As the solar industry thrives, states are bracing for more show-downs this year between solar advocates and utility companies over how to balance reimbursing those who generate solar energy with supporting the country's power grid. *Stateline.org* notes various state and federal tax credits for installing solar panels on homes, businesses and farms makes economic sense for those who make the investment. What concerns utilities is the system of rolling over credits for excess electricity to future utility bills, called net-metering. The Coalition for Solar Rights, which advocates for solar, called net-metering "one of the most important state policies for empowering Americans to generate their own power from the sun." Utilities, however, say many solar customers aren't paying their fair share. While net-metering policies vary by state, solar customers are usually credited at the full retail electricity rate, which includes the cost of the power and all fixed costs of the poles, wires, meters and other infrastructure that make the electric grid safe and reliable. An average residential customer paying \$110 a month for electricity is receiving \$60 worth of grid service, according to a report from the Edison Electric Insti-

tute. Some utilities are now pressing state regulators or legislatures to charge solar customers a fee or to reduce the rollover credits with the money going to help maintain the power grid. Solar advocates want to increase the caps while utilities largely do not.

Decades after people thought the U.S. textile industry was dead, the industry generated \$54 billion in shipments in 2012 and employed about 233,000 people. Business is on the upswing as Southern states, in particular, woo textile companies with tax breaks, reliable utilities, modern ports and airports and a dependable, trained workforce. In 2013, companies in Brazil, Canada, China, Dubai, Great Britain, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico and Switzerland, as well as in the U.S., announced plans to open or expand textile plants in Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The workers produce yarn, thread and fabric for apparel, furnishings, home products and industrial use. Textiles, mostly cotton, once dominated the economy of the South. Employment peaked in June 1948 with 1.3 million jobs. About 650 textile plants closed between 1997 and 2009, draining

thousands of jobs and depressing communities. But rising wages in China and other countries, combined with higher transportation costs and tariffs, have prompted foreign and domestic companies to consider American manufacturing sites. Also, more consumers are looking for the "Made in the USA" label, prompting companies to turn to American goods.

A federal proposal to clean up the smoke from wood-burning stoves has sparked a backlash from rural residents, lawmakers and manufacturers. Proposed regulations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would significantly reduce the amount of particulate pollution allowed from the smokestacks of new residential wood-powered heaters. Some manufacturers contend the proposed standards are so stringent that higher production costs would force them out of business or raise prices too high for consumers. The EPA's existing regulations date to 1988 and don't apply to all of the different kinds of wood-burning devices now in use. Under the proposed rule change, the EPA would give manufacturers five years to meet the standards to reduce emissions by an estimated 80 percent.

UT MTAS EOA Level II Classes

Held March 28-29 in Knoxville, each of the sessions are designed specifically for the elected official and also allows time for networking and sharing ideas with other cities. These sessions will be informative for both the seasoned and newly elected officials. Participants must complete five sessions to receive the Elected Officials Academy Level II certificate.

Cost: The cost is \$200 per person. This one-time fee includes registration for Elected Officials Academy Level II. Meals and snacks are provided both days; dinner Friday evening and breakfast Saturday morning.

Location: UT Conference Center, 4th floor, 60 Henley St.

Schedule of Sessions
Mar. 28- 1-3 pm:
Municipal Fire Review
Mar. 28- 3:30-5:30 pm:
Municipal Human Resources
Mar. 28- 6-8 pm:
Municipal Police Review
Mar.29-8am-10 pm:
Municipal Public Works
Mar. 29- 10:30 am-12:30 pm:
Municipal Risk Management

To register for a course, go to www.mtas.tennessee.edu and click on "Register for a Class" under the training tab.



Return payment/completed form to: UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service; Attention: Doug Brown, EOA Open Enrollment Registration, 120 Conference Center Building, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-4105. Or fax your form to 865-974-9140.

You may contact Doug Brown at 865-974-9140 or e-mail doug.brown@tennessee.edu

UT MTAS March Classes

Worker's Compensation

Credits: 4 CEU or 4 CPE/CMFO (Other/Non-Financial)

Schedule of Sessions
April. 1 - Johnson City
April 2 - Knoxville
April 15- Jackson
April 16- Franklin

Locations:
Franklin, Embassy Suites, Cool Springs
Jackson, University of TN - West Tenn. Research & Education Center; 605 Airways Center
Johnson City, Carnegie Hotel; 1216 W State of Franklin Rd.
Knoxville, University of TN Conference Center; 600 Henley St.,4th Floor

This course is an overview of Workers' Compensation. Participants will learn "best practices" in maintaining records, reporting incidents and other necessary tasks regarding the handling of such compensation claims.

The class provides an overview of the overall changes that have taken place between the Current Workers' Compensation Law and the New Law, with an emphasis on reporting, filing deadlines and other sensitive time restraints which will be imposed by the new law.

Time: All classes begin at 8:30 am and end at 12:30 pm with Johnson City, Knoxville at EST and Jackson and Franklin at CST.



Cost: Municipal Employees- \$50/person/class. All other participants \$65/person/class.

To register for a course, go to www.mtas.tennessee.edu and click on "Register for a Class" under the training tab. You may pay with a credit card or request an invoice. For registration assistance, call 865-974-0411 or for more information, contact Kurt Frederick at 615-253-6385 or kurt.frederick@tennessee.edu.

COMING UP

April 4: TREEDC 3rd Annual Forum at Hiwassee College in Madisonville. Area community leaders, faculty, staff and students encouraged to attend. Former University of Tennessee President Dr. Joe Johnson will discuss TREEDC's 2014 workplan and attendees will hear about sustainable practices for college campuses along with TREEDC's International Exchange Program. Max Shilstone, director of Business Development for TREEDC Gold Member Clean Line Energy Partners will describe the Plains & Eastern Clean Line Project, which will connect Tennessee to wind resources in Oklahoma with a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line. There is no charge for the forum, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Register by April 1 at http://www.treedc.us/forum_registrations/index.html.

April 5: Franklin Park Day at Eastern Flank Battle Park from 8:30 am -12 noon. Volunteer work day in preparation for the Sesquicentennial programs held in November. Volunteers for trail building to vegetation/brush removal. Free refreshments provided. Participants will need to fill out a waiver and all minors under 15 must be accompanied by a parent. Bring sunscreen, gloves, rakes, shovels, loppers, eye protection and bug spray. Meet at the circle in front of Carnton Plantation. For more information, contact Deanna Scheffel at 615 794-2103 ext. 6971 or e-mail at deanna.scheffel@franklin.tn.gov.

April 9-11: Resource 2014- Local Government Corporation at the Gatlinburg Convention Center. For more details or to register, visit www.localgovcorp.com.

April 23-25-TAMCAR Spring Conference held at the Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro. For registration and information, visit http://www.tamcar.org/upcoming_events/index.htm.

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Clarksville's Curtis Johnson devoted to military, Austin Peay

BY LINDA BRYANT

Tennessee State Representative Curtis Johnson (R-Clarksville) was already a seasoned public servant before he was first elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 2004. Johnson served eight years on the Clarksville City Council, including two years as mayor pro tem.

Fort Campbell and veterans affairs have been at the center of Johnson's service from the very beginning. He is past president of the Tennessee-Kentucky Chapter of the Association of the United States Army. When he led that 10,000-member group, it was rated the No. 1 chapter in the world.

Johnson is devoted to Austin Peay State University, his alma mater. He served as president of the Austin Peay Alumni Association for Montgomery County and was the president of the Austin Peay Governor's Club.

"I've worked very closely with the administration at Austin Peay," Johnson said. "We've been able to get funding for several building projects over the past few years. It's great to see the school getting so much attention. It's the fastest growing university in the state."

Johnson's commitment to veterans has been lauded by many, including the Department of the Army Commanders Award for Public Service, and the U.S. Department of Defense, which cited him in 2011 for his "leadership on public policy changes positively impacting the quality of life of service members and their families."

The award of appreciation came after Rep. Johnson successfully passed several bills to aid military service members and their families. One new law—House Bill 1106—requires a court to hold an expedited hearing, if appropriate, for a temporary modification to a decree for child custody or visitation when a parent is mobilized into military duty. It also requires the court to allow testimony to be given by electronic means while the military parent is out of the state and authorizes the court to permanently modify a decree of child custody or visitation, if a parent volunteers for successive or frequent duties that removes the parent from the state.

"Fort Campbell and Austin Peay are two very vital components in my community," Johnson said. "They continue to have a huge economic impact on Clarksville and surrounding areas."

He has served on important legislative committees as secretary of House Finance Committee, vice chair of the Fiscal Review Committee, chair of the Ethics Committee, member of the House Government Operations Committee, and member of the Joint Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Last year, he was elected House speaker pro tempore.

Johnson grew up in Clarksville and graduated from Clarksville High School, where he was a standout football player and captain of the track team. He is a veteran of the United States Navy, serving from 1972 to 1975. He graduated from Austin Peay State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration. His wife, Marsha, has been a teacher for 35 years and currently is a teacher for the Fort Campbell Independent School System. They have three sons. His oldest is a computer programmer; his middle son works for Firestone; and his youngest passed away the year he was first elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives in 2004.

TT&C: You served on the Clarksville City Council for two terms. Do you think your previous experience in local government enhances your effectiveness in the legislature? And if so how?

CJ: It was a very valuable experience being elected in Clarksville. When I was elected, it gave me the opportunity to understand the importance of how local government works. Over time, I built a lot of relationships and learned the importance of working with my fellow councilmen, the mayor, legislators—and with the community—to get things done.

I served during a period of phenomenal growth. We were the second fastest growing county in the country. We created a lot of industry in Clarksville and Montgomery County, and that's something I'm proud of.

TT&C: You recently helped secure funding of the \$4.3 million Clarksville Veterans Nursing Home. Why is that project important to you?

CJ: Fort Campbell is, of course, home to the 101st Airborne Division, 160th SOAR, and 5th Special Forces Group. There is a large population of active duty military as well as retired military and their families in the Clarksville and Montgomery County area. They are my constituents, neighbors, and friends.

TT&C: How is that construction coming along?

CJ: They have broken ground, moving dirt and actually starting to put up walls now. They are about a tenth of the way done. This project took a long time to get accomplished—about 10 years from when we started to when it actually got approved. The entire community is proud of the project, and so am I.

TT&C: Last year, you were sworn in for the first time as speaker pro tempore of the House. What was it like to step into a role previously held by such a legend like Lois DeBerry—who had held that position for more than 20 years? Was she helpful or did she give you any advice on how to serve in this new role?

CJ: Lois was always helpful. I could ask her for advice and she was always very candid. It was such an honor to be elected speaker pro tem because there are only two positions in the house that are elected by the entire body. One is speaker and the other is speaker pro tem. It was a unanimous vote, so it was not only an honor to be elected, but an honor to be elected by the entire body.

TT&C: As speaker pro tem, you can vote on any piece of legislation and in any committee that you want. Are there times when you exercised this privilege?

CJ: Yes, Beth Harwell, the speaker of the House, and I can vote on any committee. The Speaker voted on a committee last year, but I have not voted yet. The Republicans now have a super majority and the committees also are made up of super majorities. Because of this situation, we don't have to vote. I'm not saying that I will not have to, because I probably will at some point in the future.

TT&C: What about any hot issues this year? Do you see anything where you would like to jump in and help with a particular piece of legislation?

CJ: At this point in time, I don't know about any issue where I would be needed. Of course when it comes down to a situation where it looks like it is going to be a tie vote—then there is a possibility that I would be called in. And, there are some hot issues floating around this year.

TT&C: What do you see as your major challenges as speaker pro tem and being in such a key leadership position?

CJ: My No. 1 role is to assist Speaker Harwell in her duties and to work with all the members of the Tennessee House. I have an open door policy; so, if a member comes in with a problem; it's my obligation to see if I can solve that problem. My goal is to work with all the members to hopefully get everyone pulling in the same direction.

TT&C: How hard is that to do?

CJ: Actually, with a super majority we work well together. We also have a good caucus. What we have done in the last couple of years is try to expedite the process; whereas in the past, we may have come in and spent many weeks just getting organized. Now we have the 15 bill limit, and we are able to pretty much hit the ground running and try to get our work done as swiftly as possible. This saves the taxpayers money.

TT&C: You have sponsored quite a bit of legislation. Can you tell us what's been most important to you in that realm of accomplishment?

CJ: As far as this year, one of the hottest issues I'm sponsoring is a bill that deals with litigation funding and the industry that loans money to people who have lawsuits and who need living expenses. This is an industry that will come in and advance funds to these individuals in anti-



Photo by Carole Graves

Rep. Curtis Johnson pictured last year after being sworn in as House Speaker Pro Tempore.

pation of a settlement. Right now in Tennessee the industry is not regulated at all. My bill would put some regulations on the industry.

I have another bill that would allow members of the armed forces getting out of the military to go to an institute of higher learning in Tennessee and not have to pay out-of-state tuition. At the present time, the GI Bill won't pay for out-of-state tuition. This bill would allow those individuals getting out of the military to go to colleges or universities in our state. I hope it will result in many deciding to stay here and become residents of our state.

TT&C: You have also sponsored a significant amount of legislation that focuses on military veterans. Is there anything else that particularly stands out that you have worked on for the military?

CJ: In 2012, I sponsored the Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children. It helps children of military personnel transition from school to school when moving from state to state. It means that if you have a child whose parents are stationed in North Carolina and they get transferred to Fort Campbell, Ky., they can make a seamless transfer and wouldn't have to repeat what they had already been through in their previous school.

TT&C: You were recently quoted in the Clarksville Leaf Chronicle saying that you have a desire to focus on jobs and the economy. Can you talk a little more about this and how your role as a legislator relates to it?

CJ: We have been very fortunate in Montgomery County in attracting jobs and industry. Recently, the Hankook Tire Co. announced it will invest \$800 million in a new manufacturing facility and bring 1,800 jobs with it. Of course, Hemlock Semiconductor also pledged a large investment in our community. Both of these major projects are in my district in Montgomery County. We are really proud of that fact.

When it comes to recruitment and job creation, you have to work very closely with local governments. It's not like there can be any one person that can make it happen. It's like a big wagon wheel with a lot of spokes. If you have all the spokes except one, it doesn't work; but it works well when you have all the spokes and they are all pulling in the same direction. It's been an honor to be able to work with the county



Photo by Knoxville News Sentinel

Rep. Curtis Johnson speaks at a House Republican Caucus meeting. Majority Leader Gerald McCormick is pictured in the foreground.

paying jobs to Tennessee. We have done a lot of good things over the past few years that would attract industries; and, of course, we don't have an income tax. Those are pluses. We are in the process of doing away with the inheritance tax—or death tax—and we have done away with the gift tax. We have noticed over the last several years that we have a good proportion of people who are getting older and moving to states like Texas and Florida because of issues such as the inheritance tax. We are trying to do everything within our power to make sure Tennessee is very pro-business. We are already a very attractive state. Put it all together and now we have people moving to our state from other states simply because of these changes we've made over the past couple of years.

TT&C: How do you see local government involvement in helping to solve some of the challenges? What can local governments do to help solve education and job challenges?

CJ: I think it goes back to what we were talking about earlier. The local government has to have a good relationship with their legislators and the governor. It makes things so much easier when you have the local and state government working together. You get so much more accomplished with good communication and relationships.

TT&C: Do you think we are doing well in that department?

CJ: I think in Montgomery County we definitely are. I get calls frequently from locals officials to give me a heads up on something that is coming down the pike. And if I pick up on something—a bill that's been introduced that I feel would impact Montgomery County—then I get on the phone and communicate with my constituents and local leaders.

TT&C: Money is so tight. If there isn't enough money at the state level for something to get done then can local elected officials bring in private contributions and find other ways of partnering to fund projects?

CJ: Yes. One example is with TDOT and a particular road project that is important to a local government. It might take TDOT 12-13 years to address that particular project. We have found when there is a project that is very important to a community; the most effective thing to do is to get local governments to work closely with us. They might say something like, "OK, we will pay for the engineering and acquisitions and right-of-way to get this thing expedited." So that is just one example of both state and local government putting in funds on a project together.

TT&C: You are the sponsor of one of TML's top legislative priorities, which proposes that any rule or regulation by the state that fiscally impacts local governments must include a written justification, fiscal note and cost-benefit analysis. Talk a little about this legislation and why it was important enough for you to sponsor it.

CJ: It is a very important piece of legislation because any bill that goes through the General Assembly must have a fiscal note with it before it goes through the committee system. This fiscal note will tell if the fiscal impact is positive or negative to the state. This bill would require what the fiscal impact is going to be to local governments. At the state level, we do not like unfunded mandates from the federal government. I know from having served on a city council that local governments do not like unfunded mandates from the state. If a bill passes and it has a negative impact on local governments, then everyone needs to know that before they vote on that bill.

TT&C: What has it been like working with Gov. Bill Haslam?

CJ: Gov. Haslam is a great governor to work with. He is very open. When I need to speak with him or get with him about anything—his door is always open. He has been to Clarksville and Montgomery County on numerous occasions. He is very business-minded and he has done a lot of good things for the state. I believe he's going to do a lot more.

The economy and job creation is important. We need to attract higher