

Our campaign continues

On April 4, Gov. Bill Lee released his proposed budget amendment. It did not include any provision to address Tennessee's cities' request for restoring the historic shared sales tax arrangement on all sales tax revenues not earmarked for education.

The Covenant School tragedy in Nashville prompted the governor and legislative leadership to quickly assemble additional school safety measures in the budget. These proposals have taken priority over other items, including three "tax relief" proposals that were under consideration. One of those was our state shared sales tax proposal. While the governor's proposal is one step, it is **NOT** the final step in this year's budget.

As the General Assembly works to finalize the budget during the week of April 17, our work continues.

The following actions continue to be key for our success:

- Local officials and concerned citizens need to continue to contact their legislators, and ask them to commit to putting intent language



in this appropriations act so the process of restoring these shared sales tax dollars starts next year.

- Ask your legislators to communicate with their leadership, as well as finance committee chairs and members, to make a commitment to begin the restoration of the historic sharing of state sales tax with municipalities in this year's budget.

Our campaign continues so our state leaders do the right thing and send a small portion of the billions in overcollections from our cities, back to our cities.

Thank you for your commitment and support of this effort.

TBI: Education, communication needed to combat xylazine threat

By KATE COIL
TML Communications Specialist

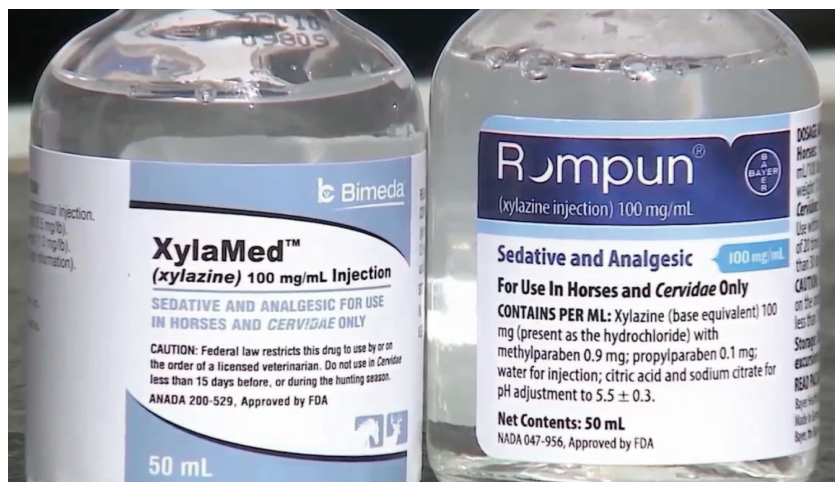
Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) officials are encouraging local officials to educate themselves and the public about a new drug being linked with overdose deaths nationwide.

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) recently issued a warning to the American public about a sharp increase in the trafficking of fentanyl mixed with xylazine, also known as "tranq." Xylazine is a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer most commonly used on horses and not approved for human use. In fact, human testing for the drug was shut down in the 1960s after xylazine was shown to have negative effects on human subjects, like respiratory depression and low blood pressure.

The CDC reported 107,735 Americans died between August 2021 and August 2022 from drug poisonings, with 66% of those deaths involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl. The DEA has reported xylazine and fentanyl mixtures have been detected in labs in 48 of 50 states with Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Connecticut reporting some of the most alarming trends.

TBI Deputy Director Brad Nealon recently addressed members of the Tennessee Municipal League about the agency's concerns over xylazine and other crime trends at the TML Legislative Conference in Nashville.

"The bureau has an advantage in seeing some of the trends that are coming forth through reporting by local agencies to our TIBRS system and our crime labs across the state," Nealon said. "In our crime labs, for example, 98% of what we process is more local than the other state agencies. We've all dealt with and heard about the opioid crisis for years. That really began with prescription drugs, but has morphed into other ones."



Used primarily in veterinary practices, the FDA deemed xylazine unsafe for human consumption following brief testing in the 1960s. However, recent lab tests have shown the drug is now being cut with fentanyl. One of xylazine's side effects is being resistant to overdose reversal medications like Naloxone, also known as Narcan.



TBI Deputy Director Brad Nealon discusses drug trends being reported by TBI labs at the TML Legislative Conference in Nashville. Xylazine is a new component cropping up in TBI labs and others across the nation, prompting concern from both state and federal law enforcement.

Nealon said fentanyl remains the second-most common drug detected in TBI labs, but an alarming new trend is the detection of xyla-

zine along with it. While xylazine has come back on TBI lab reports as early as 2019, Nealon said there *See TBI on Page 5*

Save the Dates!

TML Annual Conference July 22-25 in Nashville

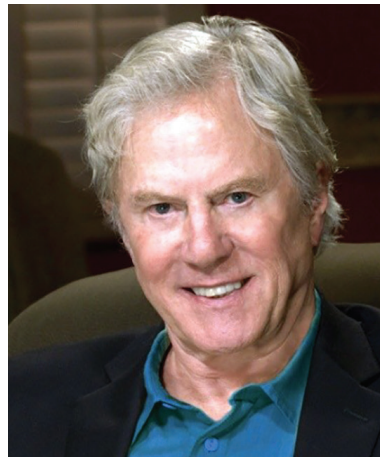
Save the dates and make plans to attend the TML Annual Conference in Nashville, slated for July 22-25 at the downtown Renaissance Hotel.

The four-day conference will feature top-notch speakers and workshop sessions, several special events, and ample time to network with your peers.

The opening general session on Sunday, June 23, will feature Joe Elmore, host of NPT's *Tennessee Crossroads*, who will share some of his favorite stories from his travels throughout the state.

Tennessee Crossroads is magazine-style, travel show that celebrates the interesting people and places mostly found on the back roads of the state. The show takes viewers on a journey exploring all of the unique personalities, crafts, food, destinations and events that make our state such a special place to live and visit. Each unique subject highlighted by the show is not only a point of pride for our state but is taking place in one of the 345 municipalities you call home.

Mr. Elmore has hosted the show since its inception at WNPT, Nashville, in 1987. "Crossroads" – now aired on stations throughout Tennessee and the Southeast – reigns as one of the highest-rated



Joe Elmore
Host, *Tennessee Crossroads*

PBS-based shows in the nation.

The conference will kick off Saturday afternoon, July 22, with several sessions offered by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service that will provide CPEs for CMFO graduates and required Utility Board Training.

Monday will feature additional workshops and TML's annual business meeting. And the conference will wrap up on Tuesday morning, July 25, with the Annual Awards Breakfast.

Registration will open this month, so be sure to watch your mailbox for more conference information.

Industrial boards, certified sites, and good data keys to landing Ford suppliers

By KATE COIL

While there are plenty of opportunities for communities across the state to land suppliers for Blue Oval City, economic development officials said those municipalities with active industrial development boards, ready sites, and that can quickly provide data on community assets will have substantial recruitment advantages.

Officials with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TN-ECD) conducted a roundtable focused on how communities can recruit coming automotive suppliers to the state during a recent Blue Oval Community Impact meeting. Speakers included Senior Director of Business Development Chassen Haynes, Southwest Tennessee Regional Director Tracey Exum, Northwest Tennessee Regional Director Jana Hellums, and Greater Memphis Regional Director Blake Swaggart and was hosted by Assistant Commissioner of Business and Workforce Development Jamie Stitt.

Swaggart said TNECD is already getting requests for information (RIFs) and site visits from automotive supply companies interested in the state because of Blue Oval.

"Tennessee has been blessed over the last 40 years with being home to so many suppliers that support the automobile industry," he said. "We have close to 1,000 suppliers in Tennessee right now, which makes our auto environment very attractive to existing suppliers. Most of our investments comes from the automobile industry across our state, bringing new jobs and capital investment. The suppliers are critical. As new



As Ford and SK suppliers look to get up and running to meet deadlines, Tennessee communities with active industrial development boards, ready sites, and access to community data points will have an advantage in landing new companies.

recruitment projects come in to supply Blue Oval, it is also critical that we have the inventory. We are starting to run out of available sites across our state. If we don't have that inventory, the suppliers are going to look outside of Tennessee."

Hellums said Northwest Tennessee is seeing a lot of movement on both the automotive and battery side, especially since the region is halfway between Ford's new sites in Tennessee and Kentucky. There are more than 50 certified sites across the state, but Swaggart said as lower tier suppliers begin looking for places to locate, more sites will be needed.

"I feel we have adequate sites for tier one suppliers," Swaggart said. "There are some existing buildings available. We have some capacity, but I feel like we need more inventory to be able to compete as we move forward. A lot of the requests for information we

have are for the same communities, and once those sites are taken, we are going to have a shortage of sites."

Haynes said that state-certified sites give communities an advantage when recruiting suppliers.

"The certified site program makes sure the sites are ready and has a reputation at this point," Haynes said. "When companies and specifically consultants come in, these communities have all the due diligence on the site and pathways for how to get utilities served to the site, it helps speed up the deliverability of a site. As soon as companies start turning dirt and spending money, they want to get vertical and get product out the door instead of continuing to spend money. It's the case across the state that certified sites are dwindling, and we need a lot more."

Exum said communities that *See SUPPLIERS on Page 3*

Due April 30, 2023

Approaching ARPA reporting deadline for small governments



By April 30, all municipal grantees from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program will have to file a Project & Expenditure report with the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Treasury has officially opened the reporting portal. Municipalities wanting to access the portal can do so [here](#).

Non-entitlement units of local government, which make up most municipalities with a population of less than 50,000, will be filing their second annual report.

Filing does not have to be complex. And it's important to file early.

Remember to keep a copy on file. When your municipality files,

download, print out a copy of your filing and put in a safe place.

Step-by-Step Guide and Video

The National League of Cities (NLC) created a step-by-step walk through in PowerPoint slide format of everything a city needs to know to file a report. The slides can be accessed [here](#)

In addition, the U.S. Treasury has developed a new, simplified video on how to report for smaller communities and can be accessed [here](#).

For help from the U.S. Treasury regarding ARPA reporting questions, contact the help desk at SLFRF@treasury.gov or call (844) 529-9527.

Cities may also contact NLC by emailing SLFRFhelp@nlc.org.

NEWS
ACROSS
TENNESSEE



CLEVELAND
Duracell manufacturing officials announced the company will invest \$25 million to expand its existing battery component manufacturing operations in Cleveland, creating 25 new jobs. The expansion will support Duracell’s LaGrange, Ga., site by providing strategic battery components support and allowing the company to meet and exceed its growing North American battery demand. The Cleveland plant opened in 1961 and has been producing batteries under the Duracell brand name since 1964. Duracell’s \$25 million investment in Tennessee represents the company’s continued focus on providing the highest quality alkaline batteries.

EAGLEVILLE
The city of Eagleville has broken ground on its first ever public safety facility to cater to the growing community. The bank building currently on the property will be renovated into a police station and municipal court while a fire hall will be built on an empty portion of the property. The city’s first responder departments have outgrown their current facility and cannot operate to full capacity. Grant money and tax dollars are financing the facility, which will be named after late city Councilman David W. Rigsby Sr., who helped shape the city’s emergency response units. The new facility is projected to open by July 2024.

ENGLEWOOD
TDS Telecommunications has begun installing up to 1-gigabyte high-speed internet in Englewood with plans to extend fiber service to more than 1,200 homes and businesses by the end of the year. The Madison, Wis.- based company has already provided service to more than 700 initial customers since breaking ground on the project in November. By the end of the project, the majority of Englewood’s 1,500 residents will have access to service. The project will bring more reliable internet service to some of the most rural areas of McMinn County and help strengthen educational opportunities, business entrepreneurship, and access to vital services like telemedicine. While 1-gig is the top speed available, residents can choose other speeds within their budget with up to 10 gigs for commercial ventures and a low-cost 200-megabit service that is fully covered by the Federal Communications Commission’s Affordable Connectivity Program benefit that also provides discounts to consumers.

GREENEVILLE
Firefighters and city officials in Greeneville participated in a ceremonial “uncoupling” ceremony to dedicate Greeneville Fire Station No. 2. The fire station replaces an older facility that had been in service since the 1950s. Funds obtained through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) were used to build the \$2.3 million new station, which is one of four stations operated by the city. The new three-bay station includes an operation center and a new fire truck will join the station.

JACKSON
The city of Jackson will be the first city in the country to launch an initiative providing members of their Cardiac Arrest Rapid Engagement (CARE) Team with the first FDA-approved, portable automated external defibrillators (AED). The city, Jackson Fire Department, and a number of local organizations are partnering with Avive Solutions to distribute the portable AEDs along with providing training in CPR and the usage of the devices to help prevent deaths by sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Approximately 350,000 Americans die annually from SCA, largely because they do not receive AED shocks in time. The distribution of the devices to local organizations and Jackson residents aims to increase the survivability rate of SCA in Jackson from 6% toward the national rate of 10%.

JACKSON
Toyota Boshoku Tennessee, LLC (TBTN) officials will invest \$54.4 million to expand manufacturing operations at its metal stamping facility in Jackson, creating 80 new jobs. The expansion will add an additional 87,000 square feet to TBTN’s existing Jackson facility, which will allow the company to consolidate its stamping operations to become a lower arm seat supplier while also supporting Toyota Boshoku America’s subsidiary locations. Headquartered in Jackson and one of Toyota Boshoku America’s subsidiary operations, Toyota Boshoku Tennessee, LLC specializes in metal stamping for the automotive industry. Upon completion of the project, TBTN will employ more than 600 Tennesseans.

LINDEN
NYX Linden LLC officials announced the company will expand its manufacturing operations, creating 137 new jobs in Linden. NYX Linden will invest \$10.4 million in the expansion at its Squirrel Hollow Drive facility in Tier 4, distressed Perry County. The project represents NYX Linden’s first expansion since establishing a presence in Tennessee in 2012 and will support the company’s growing customer demand. Upon completion, the company will add an additional 16,000 square feet of space to its molding bay and a 24,000-square-foot shipping warehouse. NYX Linden LLC is a subsidiary of NYX, Inc., which is headquartered in Michigan. The company designs and manufactures automotive parts and components, including door panels, center consoles, grab handles and more.

MORRISTOWN
The \$32 million Morristown Landing Recreation Center is officially open to the public and is expected to draw in thousands of visitors. A regional basketball tournament was the first major event hosted at the new center which has space for games and tournaments for basketball, volleyball, swimming, and climbing. The center also houses a 10,000-square-foot fitness center with a variety of workout equipment, a 10-lane swimming pool, conference rooms for meetings and events, childcare facilities, a family aquatic center, splash pad, and more.

NASHVILLE
United Record Pressing officials announced the company will expand manufacturing operations at its headquarters in Nashville by investing \$10.8 million and creating 209 new jobs. Once complete, the additional manufacturing capacity and improvements to the facility’s infrastructure will allow the company to better serve its growing customer demand. With the creation of 209 new jobs, United Record Pressing will more than double its total employment in Tennessee. Founded in 1949 in Nashville, United Record Pressing is the oldest and largest vinyl record pressing plant in North America. The company is known for its storied history, which includes having pressed the first Beatles single in America, as well as many of the classic Motown hits during the 1960s and ‘70s. Today, United Record Pressing manufactures approximately 50,000 records per day for artists of all scale and genres of music.

PURYEAR
A new solar farm in Puryear is officially in operation after a switch-flipping ceremony was held. The Paris Solar Farm in Puryear is a 6.75-megawatt solar farm constructed through a partnership with Silicon Ranch, the Paris Board of Public Utilities, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Paris BPU will purchase 5% of its energy from the solar farm, which has already saved the agency \$70,000 during the first three months of operation alone. Similar savings are expected as an electric price has been locked in for the next 30 years. The farm has the capacity to generate enough power to supply 1,000 homes each year.

Dyersburg celebrates upgrades to Kiwanis Park



Dyersburg city officials and Kiwanis Club members recently opened new playground equipment installed at the city’s Kiwanis Park. Several community members and organization, including Kiwanis, made contributions of money, time, talents, and labor to install the new equipment including Jordan’s Grab’n Go, Summit Roofing of Dyersburg, Ford Construction Company, Barron Surveying and Mapping, John Young, Choctaw Transportation, and Ryan Hicks.

New Market receives grant for Little League fields



The town of New Market recently received a \$25,000 Sports Matter grant from the Dick’s Sporting Goods Foundation for repairs to the Little League fields in the area. Trent Excavating will also be working for a reduced rate to complete necessary repairs to the field. Suzanne Long, manager of Morristown’s DICK’S Sporting Goods, presents a commemorative check to New Market Mayor Danny Willock and JCLL President Jeff Grambrell. They are flanked (left to right) by youth athlete Owen Durham; Scott Durham, of DICK’s; New Market councilmembers Maurice Solomon and Frank Solomon; Josh Heinrichs, assistant manager of the Morristown store; youth athlete Grant Sexton; and DICK’S Community Marketing Manager Brian Johnson.

Brownsville cuts ribbon on new city hall



Officials with the city of Brownsville recently cut the ribbon on a new city hall. Located in a renovated bank building on East Main Street in Brownsville, the two-story building will house offices for the mayor, vice mayor, and other employees as well as rooms for meetings and conference spaces. The facility is part of an overall renovation of downtown and Main Street Brownsville aimed to bring revitalization to the community.

Work progresses at new splash pad, playground at Dickson’s Henslee Park



Work is progressing on the new splash pad and playground at Henslee Park in Dickson. The new play areas are part of a \$3.2 million investment in the park and will result in a 25,000-square-foot playground and 4,000-square-foot splash pad. Both areas are designed to include parent-child interaction as well as inclusive for children of all abilities. Other additions to the site include shaded seating areas, a pavilion, and musical features. The 126-acre Henslee Park is a former golf course that now houses paved and unpaved walking trails, frisbee golf, and fishing ponds.

Industrial boards, certified sites, and good data keys to landing Ford suppliers

SUPPLIERS *from Page 1*

already have prepared and certified sites will have an advantage over those who don't, but communities without these sites aren't necessarily out of the game.

"Communities that have followed our guidelines early on when it comes to site development and being prepared, going through the PEP process, and received grants for site development are going to have a leg up on the communities that are playing catch-up right now," Exum said. "Many of our communities have not received an RFI in a long time. A lot of those RFIs have very lengthy questionnaires connected to them, and if you haven't completed one of those questionnaires in a long time, it may be a good idea to ensure you can do so with accurate data and information. We can help you with that and gathering that information. When we get a request for information, the turn-around time on that is often very short. It is recommended you can pick and pull from your catalog to fill out that questionnaire completely. I am also finding that many communities have inactive industrial boards. Those boards can be critical when it comes to offering local incentives such as tax abatements."

Hellums said officials may want to know in advance who the members of the team are that will meet with potential suppliers when they come on site visits and have run through presenting to them.

"Know how they are coming into your community," Hellums said. "There may be a better route that highlights more of the assets in your community than driving them by the dump. If you have been through that site development and certification program, you have that source of ready information to pull for your RFI. You will know exactly what are your capacity and capability needs. You know everything you need to know about your site, and it relieves some anxiety of preparing for that site visit. TVA is another huge resource. They have specific training programs that do a mock interview process for a site visit."

While many officials may want to participate in the site visit, officials recommended that a small team of the right stakeholders may be more effective. This will allow company officials to better know who to approach for specific information and prevent them from being overwhelmed by getting to know too many faces. It is also important to be honest with potential companies when you don't know the answer to a question they have asked and get back to them with the right information quickly. Community leaders should also be honest about their weakness but present examples of how they are working to address those.

While West Tennessee is a major destination for many suppliers, Haynes said these companies are looking around the state.



The Northwest Industrial Park is a certified site in Union City. While many suppliers will be looking at West Tennessee, others will want to branch out to where they can serve multiple OEMs or have ease of access to transportation of their productions. As a result, suppliers to Blue Oval City could be coming to communities across all three grand divisions of the state.



There are approximately 50 state-certified sites in Tennessee, but officials with TNECD said more will be needed to meet the demand of suppliers interested in providing parts to Blue Oval City. Sites with spec buildings may become more in demand as lower tier suppliers look to locate in the state. Spec structures will help them save costs and get their production lines up and running more quickly to meet deadlines.

"The certified sites in West Tennessee are getting a lot of the looks for automotive suppliers because Ford wants to be ready in 2025. Time is of the essence," he said. "These companies are looking in Middle Tennessee and Northeast Tennessee. They are wanting to mitigate as much risk and get up and going as quickly as possible. Throughout this year, you will see more tier one announcements. Through next year you will see some tier two as well. Not all of the suppliers will have the same ramp up time. A tier one supplier will have more infrastructure needs and development. We will start seeing more tier twos and tier threes as we get closer to 2025. Those tier two and tier threes are going to want to identify some existing buildings because they won't have extensive capital investments on the front end. Communities who can work with developers to have spec buildings ready to go may have an advantage."

With hotels, apartments, and houses filing up just from the construction workers, Haynes said housing and quality of life are going to become more important as Ford, SK, and their suppliers bring


more permanent employment to the region.

"Many communities are probably already seeing, from a livability standpoint, housing is going to become a pinch point," Haynes said. "Communities that are able to talk about quality of life, the affordability of living in their community, and the ability to show you have a plan in place to mitigate housing shortages are going to have an advantage. The communities who are better able to articulate how they are addressing these issues are going to do well. Particularly in the more rural areas of Tennessee. Your ability to articulate your labor and workforce situation, how you will be able to meet their needs either from a skilled workforce or bodies, and understanding commute times are helpful. You are going to need to plan where neighborhoods are going, how to provide those neighborhoods with infrastructure, and the communities most prepared to address those issues are getting the most looks right now. Growing pains may take place as you deal with infrastructure on the back end."

Hellums said childcare and education are another consideration


for communities.

"In addition to livability in terms of housing, you also need it in terms of childcare," she said. "A double-income family with kids will need extended family or something for their childhood. We have seen some unique opportunities. Tyson in Humbolt started their own childcare service for their employees. There is going to be some creativity that is needed."




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The Town of Tazewell recently closed a PBA loan in the amount of \$1.5 million to finance the acquisition of a building to be used as the new Town Hall. Hearthside Bank, a local bank, worked with TMBF to provide the financing. The Town of Tazewell first began using TMBF programs in 2001. Seated: Town Recorder Robin Sorke and Mayor Bill Fannon. Standing: TMBF Marketing Representative Steve Queener and Hearthside Bank Vice President Gary Rowe.

The Town of Huntingdon has used the TMBF programs 24 times beginning in 1986. The most recent loan was a \$1.3 million loan for sewer system improvements, which closed in January 2023. Carroll Bank and Trust in Huntingdon worked with TMBF to provide the financing. The Town also closed a \$795,000 note issued in November through our note program with Carroll Bank and Trust. Pictured are: TMBF Marketing Representative Justin Hanson, Town Recorder and Treasurer Kim Carter, Mayor Nina Smothers, TMBF Legal Coordinator and Marketing Director Linda Mooringham, and Collin Pruett with Carroll Bank and Trust.

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PEOPLE

Charles Booth has been named the new community relations director for the city of Brentwood, taking over from Deanna Lambert who served in the role for six years. Booth comes to Brentwood with 22 years of experience in journalism, marketing, and public sector communication experience, most recently serving for 15 years with the Austin Peay State University communications department. Booth spent the last five of those 15 years as the director of communications. He also was employed as a reporter for *The Tennessean* from 2004 to 2008, covering Williamson and Rutherford counties. Booth holds a bachelor's degree in English with a focus in creative writing from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, a master's degree in English from Austin Peay State University, and a master's of fine arts in creative writing from Murray State University.



Charles Booth

Randy Brackins, chief of the Gatlinburg Police Department, has announced his intent to retire effective June 2. A 49-year veteran of law enforcement, Brackins has spent his entire career at the Gatlinburg Police Department, joining GPD in 1974. He worked his way up through the ranks, serving first as a police officer then being promoted to corporal in 1978, sergeant in 1980, captain in 1987, and was finally appointed the department's chief in 2004. He is a graduate of the Walters State Community Public Safety Program and also taught classes for the program between 1998 and 2001. A member of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (TACP), Brackins was awarded the organization's highest honor – the Joe Casey Award – in 2022.



Randy Brackins

Raquetta Dotley has been elected by her colleagues to serve as the next chairperson of the Chattanooga City Council, making her the first African-American woman to hold the position. Representing Chattanooga's District 7 since 2021, Dotley recently served as the council's vice chair from 2022-23, a position that will now be held by District 2 Councilwoman Jenny Hill. Before joining the city council, Dotley served as administrator of Westside Missionary Baptist Church and as executive director of the Net Resource Foundation. She has also been involved in numerous local organizations including the Trust for Public Land, Downtown Chattanooga Alliance, TNDP State Executive Committee, Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, Family Justice Center, and Mayor's Council for Women. Dotley holds a bachelor's degree in human resources management and business management from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and a master's in Christian education from Tennessee Temple University.



Raquetta Dotley

Rosemary Golden, city recorder for Tullahoma, is retiring from her role after a 22-year career with the city. Golden has served as city recorder since 2009. She began her career with the city of Tullahoma as a city purchasing officer, being promoted to assistant finance director and director of finance and administration. Golden holds a bachelor's degree in finance with a minor in business administration from Illinois State University. She is both a Certified Municipal



Rosemary Golden

Finance Officer (CMFO) and a Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB).

Randy McDonald has been selected as the mayor of Petersburg by his fellow members of the town's board of mayor and aldermen following the resignation of former Mayor David Thompson after a move out of the area. McDonald has been a member of the Petersburg Board of Mayor and Aldermen since he was appointed to fill a vacant seat in August 2022.



Randy McDonald

Mike Musick has been hired as the new director of parks and recreation for the town of Jonesborough. Musick comes to Jonesborough from Bristol where he has spent 13 years as a recreation superintendent. During that time, Musick has also served on the board of directors of the Bristol Theatre and has performed in plays at the Jonesborough Repertory Theatre. Musick holds a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.



Mike Musick

Rose Steagall, a police officer with the Franklin Police Department, will retire after 18 years with the department. Prior to joining the Franklin Police Department in 2004, Steagall served the community as a paramedic. During her service with FPD, Steagall was assigned to the bike patrol, segway patrol, community relations, honor guard, crisis negotiations, intervention, and as an instructor with women's self-defense, CPR, and the International Police Mountain Bike Association.



Rose Steagall

Chris Shockley has been selected as the new town administrator for Dandridge after previous administrator Matt Rudder announced he will be leaving the town to take a position at the Sevier County mayor's office. Shockley has been employed with the town since 2012 and presently serves as assistant town administrator and recreation director. Shockley holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and management from



Chris Shockley

TNDAGC announces leadership transition

The Tennessee District Attorney's General Conference (TNDAGC) has announced the retirement of its current executive director and the selection of a new executive director.

Guy Jones will retire from his position as executive director, which he has held since July 2020. Prior to that, Jones spent more than two decades as deputy director of TNDAGC during which he managed legislative approval of conference initiatives to strengthen reporting and punishment of child sexual abuse, broaden homicide to include deaths due to illegal drug trade, create greater protection for domestic violence victims, and multi-year efforts to enact Elder Adult Protection laws, among many others.

During his time as deputy director, Jones guided three public education efforts, including the nationally recognized "Meth Destroys" campaign, for which the Conference received a Silver Anvil Award awarded by the Public Relations Society of America. He was the 2010 recipient of the Conference's highest honor, the Patrick H. McCutchen Award, for advancing the goals of the Conference.

Before joining TNDAGC, Jones served in all three branches of state government. He is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University and Nashville School of Law. He will step down from the role in July.



Guy Jones

The new executive director will be Tenth Judicial District Attorney General Stephen Crump who presently represents Bradley, Polk, McMinn, and Monroe counties. Crump will serve in the role until 2024 when it will then be the choice of TNDAGC to reappoint him.

Crump has served as the district attorney general for Tennessee's Tenth District since July 2014, when he was appointed to the role by Gov. Bill Haslam and was then elected in August of that same year to fill the eight-year term.

Crump began serving as a prosecutor in 1997 when he was appointed an assistant district attorney general by then District Attorney General Jerry Estes. He was later made team leader for the South Team of the district and served in private practice from



Stephen Crump

2006 until 2014.

During his role as DA, Crump has sought to increase efficiency and accountability in the office and implemented guidelines that set minimum sentencing recommendations in violent crime, drug trafficking offenses and home burglaries. He also has created a Gang Task Force and a Cold Case Task Force to deal with violent and unsolved crimes. Most recently, he created the Special Prosecutions Unit to deal with complex cases and violent crimes.

An active member of TNDAGC, Crump recently served on the executive committee of the conference and has served on the organization's justice and professionalism committee. He also chairs the legislative committee and serves as an advisor to the Tennessee General Assembly.

Milligan College and a master's in educational leadership and administration from Emporia State University.

Will Tholken has been selected as the new parks and recreation director for the city of Dayton. Tholken comes to the city from Bryan College where he served for nearly 10 years as director of baseball operations, coordinator of athletic operations and most recently as associate athletic director. Tholken holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Bryan College.



Will Tholken

Deb Wallace has been selected as the new city manager of Athens. A native of McMinn County, Wallace will join the city from Tennessee Wesleyan University where she has been serving as director of the Professional Leadership in Criminal Justice (PLCJ) program since 2021. Prior to that, Wallace spent 19 years with the state of Georgia's Office of Inspector General, including more than seven years as the state's inspector general and more than 10 years as senior deputy inspector general. Wallace retired as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy in 2000 after a 20-



Deb Wallace

year career. During that time, she also served as director of education and internal affairs investigator with the Tennessee Department of Corrections, as a fraud investigator with the U.S. Department of Army Civilian Personnel, as a security specialist with the U.S. Department of Energy, and as a special agent/criminal investigator with the U.S. Navy. Wallace also holds a bachelor's degree from Chaminade University of Honolulu and a master's degree from Troy University.

Michael Williams Sr. has announced his retirement as the chief of the Paris Fire Department after a 39-year career. Williams will remain with the department in an advisory role until the end of June. Williams joined the Paris Fire Department in 1984, working his way up to lieutenant in 1995, captain in 1997, fire marshal in 2000, and interim chief then officially as chief in 2008. Prior to coming to the department, Williams joined first the National Guard and then the U.S. Army where he served for five years in Germany. He eventually returned to the National Guard, retiring as a master sergeant in 2015 after a 30-year career. Williams is a member of the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, International Association of Arson Investigators, Tennessee Fire Safety Inspectors Association, and a board member of Henry County 911. He is a state-certified fire safety inspector.



Michael Williams

Steve Willis has been selected as the new assistant city manager of Johnson City, returning to the city after serving as its human resources director from 2015 to 2021. Willis has 31 years of experience in human resources and is presently serving as director of the Tennessee School Board Association Northeast District and chairman of the Unicoi County Board of Education. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from East Tennessee State University.



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Ed Stewart, ChFC, CLU, CF
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TBI: Education, communication needed to combat new xylazine threat

TBI from Page 1

was a spike in detections last year.

“While 157 submittals in the state of Tennessee may not seem like a lot, going from virtually nothing to this is a big deal,” he said. “In 2020, there were 57 deaths associated with xylazine and there were 94 in 2021. That continues to grow. What we are seeing is not individual deaths with xylazine; it is always mixed with other drugs.”

Thomas Farmer, special agent in charge with the TBI and state director of the Tennessee Dangerous Drugs Task Force, said xylazine is used as an adulterant or cutting agent in combination of other drugs like fentanyl.

The fact that it is available on the veterinary market may also make it easier to obtain than other similar substances, and it is also cheaper than other agents that are used for similar purposes.

“Xylazine acts as a respiratory depressant and can slow down the metabolism,” Farmer said. “In slowing down the metabolism, it intensifies the high. It itself as a muscle relaxant doesn’t make the person high, but it makes the effects of what is in that person’s system last longer and intensifies the high. It being used as an adulterant does pose significant harm to the individual that is using the drug. One of the long-term effects of the drug is a rot. We do have some examples in Tennessee already where we have seen significant muscle decay and nasty scars at the injection site.”

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a part of the National Institute of Health (NIH), has confirmed similar harmful side effects of the repeated use of fentanyl cut with xylazine including “kin ulcers, abscesses, and related complications,” such as eruptions of a scaly, dead tissue known as eschar.

When left untreated, eschar can result in the need to amputate both the unhealthy skin and in some cases, large portions or entire appendages. Some users have also found themselves unconscious for hours as a side effect of the drug, which has left many users vulnerable to robbery and physical attack.

Because it is a non-opioid, the use of xylazine in mixture with other drugs can mean those who overdose from this combination may not respond to overdose reversal medication like Naloxone.

“A side effect to xylazine is that it operates as a respiratory depressant and slows down the system as well as fentanyl or opioid slows down the system,” Farmer said. “Where that becomes a problem is when we introduce Narcan to that system, it knocks out the opioid. It does not work on xylazine.”

In fact, TBI officials said one of the earliest indicators many law enforcement and first responders receive they are dealing with xylazine is that patients are not responding to Narcan typically. Often times, more than the typical dose of Naloxone is needed to revive these overdose victims, if it works at all.

Darryl Richardson, assistant director of the TBI Drug Investigation Division, said it often isn’t until substances are submitted to the lab and technicians break down what the exact chemical components of the substance are that it can be verified that xylazine is part of the combination.

“Sadly, more often than not, we can be aware of it and the word is already out that it is circulating

in ours and other states, but we aren’t going to recognize it until a death or we are notified of it,” Richardson. “A substance may say ‘fentanyl’ when it is submitted to the lab. It will be tested and broken down further, which is when we may identify the xylazine. By that time, most of the time, a death has already occurred from it.”

While xylazine may not be the most common drug reported on TBI lab tests, Farmer said the major concern about xylazine is its association with deaths.

“It’s significant because it’s causing more overdoses and more deaths,” he said. “The faster we can identify that there is something else in there, the better. Unfortunately, if it gets to the medical examiner first, it resulted in a death. Xylazine is significant in that it is causing overdoses. We look at it causing death and how widespread those deaths are.”

Richardson said xylazine usage is being reported in all three grand divisions of the state, but often those reports are coming after it has already contributed to a death.

“It has popped up in all three regions,” he said. “We’ve seen it in Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis, but more so in East Tennessee. That is where we continue to see more of it. Second to that is the middle part of the state. Our friends at the medical examiners’ offices started raising the red flags that it was popping up in a lot of their tests, and we noticed it was popping up in our lab tests as well.”

The use of xylazine may also be underreported nationwide because not all state and national labs are required to test for it. Xylazine is not yet a controlled substance under the federal government or state of Tennessee, which may make it easier to be ordered online from foreign companies or locations.

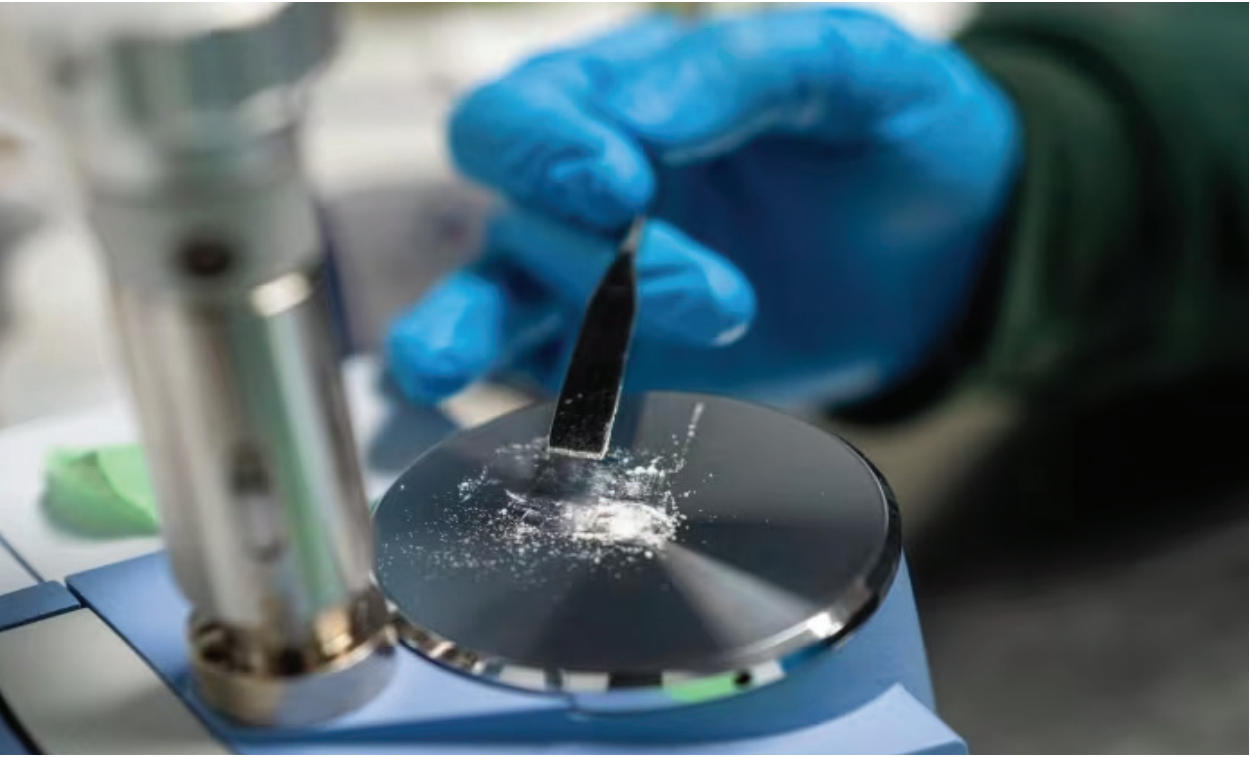
Work is being done with pending state and federal legislation, but there is some pushback from veterinary groups.

“We understand because there is a legitimate use out there,” Farmer said. “This is always the balance we have to take to make sure we can protect public safety and public health and while keep the veterinarians or those who could be adversely affected by that legislation from being too adversely impacted. We are looking on the state level at making this a Schedule III, and I don’t see any need of it going to a Schedule I or Schedule II.”

Education and prevention are some of the biggest tools to fight new concerns like xylazine. Public officials – both law enforcement, emergency responders, and others – can help by educating themselves and then, in turn, educate citizens about what threats are out there.

“I think the key thing is to share the alerts that are sent out by Tennessee Mental Health, DEA, and us,” Richardson said. “TBI collaborates with mental health and we have quarterly meetings with the Dangerous Drugs Task Force where this information is shared. There are members from local municipalities from across the board. They go back with that information, and it is key to get it out there. We also need to share information with addictive persons so they know what is out there. I think dialogue and communication is key.”

Farmer said it also important for local agencies to communicate with the state because they are often the first to see what is happening



While xylazine is detected in drugs sent to TBI Crime Labs for testing, officials said they more often than not hear of the drug from medical examiner reports on overdose deaths. The DEA has reported xylazine and fentanyl mixtures have been detected in labs in 48 of 50 states with Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Connecticut reporting some of the most alarming trends.

“The key is top-to-bottom, bottom-to-top sharing of information and resources and across disciplines. It is important to know what your law enforcement is seeing, your medical examiners, and your departments of health. Educating yourself, having town hall meetings, and knowing what is going on in the schools is important. You can’t turn a blind eye to these things.”



Thomas Farmer
TBI Special Agent

in the state.

“Staying connected, staying plugged in, and communicating are essential,” he said. “We have to have that, because we need to know what is going on and what is being seen. If there is a problem, that problem is going to be at the local level. You may go to the state or federal government for funding, but the solution is often at the local level. The key is top-to-bottom, bottom-to-top sharing of information and resources and across disciplines. It is important to know what your law enforcement is seeing, your medical examiners, and your departments of health. Educating yourself, having town hall meetings, and knowing what is going on in the schools is important. You can’t turn a blind eye to these things.”

In addition to information, collaboration can also be important to meeting these crises

head-on.

“Drug dealers don’t stop at county lines or city limits,” Richardson said. “We aren’t in the money-making business, but we are in a business that can impact your budgets. If your law enforcement and emergency services are doing what they should be doing, and you enable them to do that, they are going to do it much better. Your community is going to reap the advantages of that.”

State March revenues \$161.2M above estimates

Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson announced Tennessee tax revenues exceeded budgeted estimates in March.

Overall March revenues totaled \$1.6 billion, which is \$65.8 million, or 4.26% more than the state received in March of 2022 and \$174.5 million more than the budgeted estimate for the month.

“March sales tax receipts and corporate tax revenues outperformed budgeted expectations and led all tax growth for the month,” Bryson said. “A careful examination of monthly retail sales tax collections reveals growth in all categories except building materials, which was lower by 3.76%, and the furniture and home furnishings category, which was 9.76% lower than the same time last year. Strong growth from state business taxes and mixed drink taxes also aided in the month’s outperformance. We continue to be pleased with the overall tax growth for this fiscal year and we are anxiously awaiting to see April tax receipts. Historically, about 13% of our yearly revenue collections occur in the month of April, as nearly one-fourth of our yearly corporate franchise and excise tax receipts are remitted in the month.”

On an accrual basis, March is the eighth month in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. General fund revenues were \$161.2 million more than the budgeted estimate while the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were \$13.3 million more than the estimates.

Sales tax revenues were \$112.2 million more than the estimate for March and were 7.27% more than March 2022. For eight months revenues are \$981.1 million more than estimated. The year-to-date growth rate for eight months was 8.92%.

Franchise and excise tax revenues combined were \$53.5 million more than the budgeted estimate in March and the growth rate was 5.82%. For eight months, revenues are \$436.7 million more than the estimate and the year-to-date growth rate is 12.17%.

Gasoline and motor fuel revenues for March increased by 2.36% compared to March 2022 but were \$0.6 million less than the budgeted estimate of \$85.9 million. For eight months, fuel tax revenues are below estimate by \$8.4 million. Motor vehicle registration revenues were \$1.5 million more than the March estimate, and through eight months are \$25.8 million more than budgeted. However, year-to-date growth com-

pared to last year is lower due to the one-year registration renewal waiver for class A and class B drivers.

Tobacco tax revenues were \$6.2 million less than the March budgeted estimate of \$21 million. For eight months, revenues are \$13.1 million less than the year-to-date budgeted estimate. Privilege tax revenues were \$6.5 million less than the March estimate. On a year-to-date basis, August through March, revenues are \$45.4 million less than the estimate.

Business tax revenues were \$9.4 million more than the March estimate. For eight months, revenues are \$25.1 million more than the budgeted estimate.

Mixed drink, or liquor-by-the-drink, taxes were \$5.7 million more than the March estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, revenues are \$43.3 million more than the budgeted estimate. All other taxes were more than budgeted estimates by a net of \$5.5 million.

Year-to-date revenues, August through March, are \$1.5 billion more than the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for eight months is 7.33%. General fund revenues are \$1.3 billion more than the budgeted estimate and the four other funds are \$135 million more than estimated.

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STATE BRIEFS



Unemployment rates in Tennessee remained at 3.5% for February 2023, the fifth month in a row of unchanged unemployment. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development said the state’s seasonally adjusted jobless number has been at or below 3.5% since January 2022. In a year-to-year comparison, the statewide unemployment rate is up 0.1 of a percentage point from 3.4% to 3.5%. There were 4,800 new nonfarm jobs reported across the state in February. The leisure and hospitality sector accounted for the largest number of new jobs, followed by the professional and business services sector and the government sector.

The state of Tennessee will receive more than \$10.89 million from the Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF) appropriations, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Tennessee will receive more than \$10,897,000 to help communities upgrade essential wastewater and stormwater systems to protect public health and treasured water bodies. The funds are part of \$755 million in funds to be distributed across the nation in 2023 and part of the second wave of \$2.4 billion EPA announced for clean water infrastructure upgrades through President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in February.

The state of Tennessee will receive \$4,125,000 from a pot of \$1 billion in federal grants being awarded to states and territories to increase equitable access to trees and green spaces in urban and community forests where more than 84% of Americans live, work and play. The grant funding is available to community-based organizations, tribes, municipal and state governments, nonprofit partners, universities, and other eligible entities as they work to increase tree cover in urban spaces and boost equitable access to nature while bolstering resilience to extreme heat, storm-induced flooding, and other climate impacts. This historic level of investment will enable the Forest Service to support projects to improve public health, increase access to nature, and deliver real

economic and ecological benefits to cities, towns and tribal communities across the country. For more information on how to apply for the program, [click here](#).

A new project is helping map historic cemeteries throughout Tennessee. The Tennessee Historic Cemetery Preservation Program has created a map in ArcGIS format of the state’s historic cemeteries available to the public. The Tennessee Historical Commission defines historic cemeteries as those 50 years old or older. Identifying locations of the state’s numerous cemeteries is an on-going project and the map is subject to change as more information is available. To view the map, to learn more about the project, or for information on how to add a local historic cemetery to the list, [click here](#).

Tennessee is in the top 10 most affordable states for retirees, according to national data gathered and analyzed by senior living website Seniorly. Tennessee ranked tenth on the list, behind Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Virginia, Colorado, New Mexico, Delaware, and West Virginia. Rankings were based on cost of living, average retirement income, the number of seniors who spent 30% or less on housing, average electricity bill, senior poverty rates, average annual Medicare spending per beneficiary, average annual cost for home health aides, and tax-friendliness for retirees. Tennessee’s 80.2% of seniors who spend 30% of less on housing was less than the national average of 74.2% and its elderly poverty rate was, at 10.2%, slightly lower than the national rate of 10.3%. Tennessee also scored points for being one of the most tax-friendly states for retirees and for the fact that it costs an average of \$52,912 per year to provide home healthcare, less than the national average of \$61,776. However, Tennessee’s average electric bill of \$131 was higher than the national average of \$121, it’s average retirement income of \$26,338 lower than the national average of \$31,631, and the state spends an average of \$11,894 per Medicare beneficiary, below the national average of \$12,271.

NATIONAL BRIEFS



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of naloxone nasal spray – often known by the brand name Narcan – for over-the-counter use in a move being praised by mental health and first responders, including Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS). Naloxone is a medication that rapidly reverses the effects of opioid overdose and is the standard treatment for opioid overdose. The action paves the way for the life-saving medication to reverse an opioid overdose to be sold directly to consumers in places like drug stores, convenience stores, grocery stores and online. Available by late summer, public health officials have said the new availability will help fight the ongoing opioid crisis in the country as well as better protect first responders from exposure to substances like fentanyl.

The U.S. job market added 236,000 jobs in March, indicating the labor market is cooling off amid the Federal Reserve’s continued rate-hiking intended to chill inflation. The unemployment rate dropped to 3.5% in March, which was below economists’

predictions. This is the first sign of the labor market cooling under the weight of interest rate hikes. In the past year, the labor market has seen a net gain of 4.1 million jobs, average 345,417 jobs per month and helping drop unemployment to low levels not seen in decades. Despite the March drop, the job market remains above pre-pandemic norms and well above the average 183,000 jobs gained per month between 2010 and 2019.

U.S. consumer prices rose in March with the smallest year-on-year gain since May 2021. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) climbed 0.1%, having advanced 0.4% in February, according to the U.S. Labor Department. Lowered energy prices helped reduce CPI, but stubbornly high rental and shelter prices kept the rate on the increase. Grocery prices also fell for the first time since September 2020. CPI is one of the major factors in determining inflation. The annual CPI peaked at 9.1% in June, which was the biggest increase since November 1981, but has subsided since. Inflation remains more than double the Fed’s 2% target, making it likely that interest rates will rise again.

Tennessee cities celebrate strawberry season

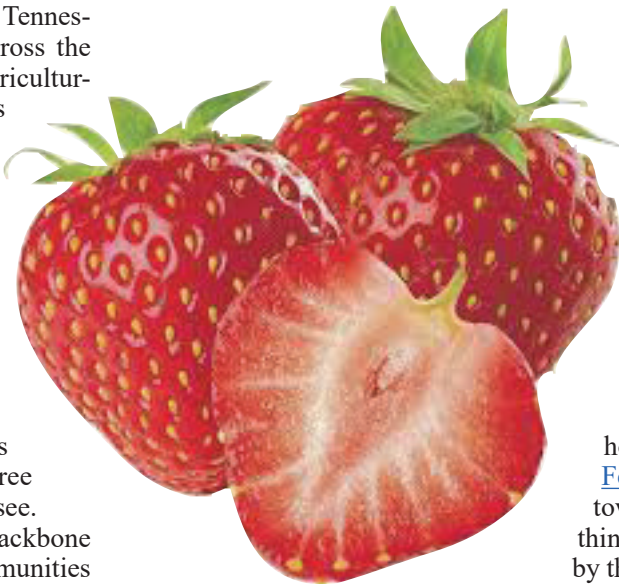
It’s strawberry time in Tennessee and municipalities across the state are celebrating the agricultural heritage of strawberries in their communities.

May is peak season for Tennessee strawberries and the industry still has a \$10 million impact on the state.

While strawberry production has tapered off somewhat in recent decades, this crop does exceedingly well in all three grand divisions of Tennessee.

As a result, it was the backbone of many agricultural communities across the state who still honor its contribution to their local economies.

Humboldt kicks off the festivities with the [85th Annual West Tennessee Strawberry Festival](#) running from May 7-13. Held since 1935, this festival serves both as a homecoming event for former residents as well as a celebration of



how strawberry farming impacted the local economy.

In East Tennessee, **Dayton** hosts the [76th Annual Tennessee Strawberry Festival](#) from May 8-13. What started as a one-day agricultural festival sponsored by the Dayton City Lion’s Club has grown to celebrate the region’s pre-

miere crop and brings together visitors from all over.

Portland hosts the [82nd Annual Middle Tennessee Strawberry Festival](#) from May 12-13. Dating back to 1941, this festival honors how the peak of strawberry season would bring Portland residents together to harvest, pack, and ship out dozens of railroad cars full of the crop.

Also on May 13, **Wartrace** hosts the [Wartrace Strawberry Festival](#) in its historic downtown. The festival celebrates all things strawberry and is hosted by the Wartrace Chamber of Commerce.

Unicoi will hold its [20th Annual Wayne Scott Strawberry Festival](#) on May 20. The festival is named for a local strawberry farmer whose family farm still grows the crop in the area. The farm still provides the majority of the strawberries used in the festival.

TDEC: 41 municipalities to share in more than \$203M in ARP water, wastewater grants

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has announced 41 municipalities will share in 43 grants totaling more than \$203 million that will finance more than 130 drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure projects.

The \$203,244,525 in grants come from state’s American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund and include 14 collaborative grants and 29 non-collaborative grants. These bring the total ARP funds awarded by TDEC to \$401,694,562 since August.

A total of 16 cities will benefit from the 14 collaborative grants. These include \$1,989,846 to **Dickson**, in collaboration with the Water Authority of Dickson County, to modernize facilities and equipment for wastewater systems and manage risk and resilience to extreme weather events

Dunlap, in collaboration with Sequatchie County, will use \$2,837,193 in ARP funds to address water loss in the service area through the installation of approximately 20 boundary meters along the Dunlap Water System’s pipe and the replacement of pipes and accessories creating a reoccurring water loss prevention program.

Gibson, in collaboration with Gibson County, received \$683,498 to focus on reducing (I/I) in the wastewater system and replacing system lines that are more than 50 years old.

Greeneville will receive \$2,346,912 to address aging infrastructure and modernize drinking water and wastewater equipment while the city of **Hohenwald** will receive \$4,332,532, in collaboration with Lewis County, to make improvements to the wastewater system.

In collaboration with Carroll County, **McLemoresville** will use \$850,512 to address critical needs, such as the replacement of aged water valves and meters and the installation of a new water line.

Pikeville will work with Bledsoe County to use \$3,357,399 for the construction of a new sludge treatment facility in an effort to compensate for increased sludge flow in the area.

Working with Marion County, **South Pittsburg** will utilize \$1,393,628 to alleviate capacity issues and renew aging infrastructure, including building a new flocculation basin as well as a new sediment basin.

Spring City will work with Rhea County to use \$1,551,237 to replace an undersized and damaged water line, install a low-pressure

force main, and cap the force main for future use.

The \$9,637,392 awarded to Sullivan County will also benefit the municipalities of **Bristol**, **Bluff City**, and **Kingsport** as part of 13 drinking water and wastewater projects across the region aimed at improving resiliency and reliability by addressing issues with water lines, pump stations, and water treatment plants. **Trimble** will receive \$935,315, in collaboration with Dyer County, for the replacement of two lift stations and the rehab of 2,500 linear feet of sewer lines.

The non-collaborative grants will see 27 cities share in 29 grants. **Chattanooga** will utilize \$16,667,052 to implement a comprehensive plan to restore the Wastewater Collection and Transmission System’s capacity, reduce (I/I) and sanitary sewer overflows, improve the reliability of wastewater collection system, and comply with state and federal regulations.

Erwin will use \$1,504,154 to create an Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) Reduction and Elimination Plan and support a wastewater project and a stormwater project while **Fayetteville** will leverage \$1,470,191 and State Revolving Fund (SRF) funding to develop a comprehensive Asset Management Plan and address the community’s critical need of excessive (I/I)

Galloway will use \$975,561 to address excessive (I/I) and include cleaning and monitoring of 16,000 linear feet in the system that are older than 50 years. **Gainesboro** will leverage \$2,197,243 with SRF and U.S. Department of Agriculture funds to replace existing raw water intake and future replacement the existing water treatment plant.

Gordonsville will use \$683,010 for renovation of the main pump station and the installation of higher efficiency equipment to improve solids handling and aeration in the treatment plant while **Hollow Rock** will use \$704,545 to replace several water lines throughout the system, install 1,680 linear feet of new water lines, and the replace of aged water meters.

Huntingdon will use \$1,389,471 to replace aerators that will allow for adequate treatment of water in the system while **Loebelville** will use \$679,909 to reduce excessive (I/I) through the identification of problematic areas in the sewer system and implementation of appropriate improvements and modifications.

Lookout Mountain will use \$663,338 to address excessive (I/I) during wet weather events as well as chronic sanitary sewer overflows and other improvement projects while **Lynnville** will utilize \$581,400 to rehab the system to improve an integral system line and system equipment.

Memphis will use \$102,639,945 for nine wastewater and nine drinking water projects to improve treatment processes at water treatment plants, including updates to the city’s filtration systems, and update aged plant components. **Mount Carmel** will use \$1,448,730 for projects including repairing the system’s clarifier, installing a new drainage pump, and replacing the old sanitary sewer lift station.

Mt. Juliet will use \$2,500,288 for the replacement of 9,000 linear feet of sewer lines to improve the significant (I/I) while **Oneida** will use \$3,416,220 for improvements

to the system’s water treatment plant that will reduce the volume of raw water required to produce the volume of potable water pumped into the distribution system.

Paris will use \$1,887,631 to address the deterioration, erosion, and sedimentation present in the stormwater system while **Ridgetop** will use \$746,563 for sewer rehab efforts to address excessive infiltration and inflow (I/I), as well as an extension of a sewer line. **Ripley** will leverage \$1,770,145 with SRF funds to replace approximately 9,000 linear feet of 50-year-old asbestos cement line as well as wastewater asbestos cement lines, their asbestos cement water main, and water valves.

Rocky Top will use \$1,376,111 to rehab 33,000 linear feet of sewer lines through pipe bursting, cured-in-place pipe lining, open cut repair, and manhole lining. **Smyrna** will use \$3,880,604 for sewer rehab efforts that will address pipe bursting and includes the replacement of 4,000 linear feet of sewer lines, as well as manhole repair.

Soddy-Daisy will use \$1,724,121 on three priority basins in the service area and include the rehab of approximately 9,300 linear feet of pipelines, 40 manholes, and 60 service laterals. **Spencer** will leverage \$2,879,867 with SRF, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Natural Resources Conservation Service funding to replace the existing raw water intake and booster station to become the main water source for the city as well as address water quality and quantity concerns.

Spring Hill will use \$2,369,085 to replace and modernize aging assets, develop an inventory and condition assessment plan, and develop a work order system. **Tusculum** will use \$855,091 to expand the city’s drip field and increase capacity for its wastewater system.

Walden will use \$685,680 to improve the conveyance system, subsequently protecting the watershed which includes improving the water quality of waterways in the community.

Two cities also received both a collaborative grant and a non-collaborative grant.

The city of **Pigeon Forge** will collaborate with Gatlinburg and Sevier County to use \$1,335,432 to conduct improvements to the centralized drinking water system serving those communities. Pigeon Forge also received a \$135,769 non-collaborative grant that will improve resilience as the city addresses increased demand from the rising population and includes the development of a new intake and a raw water transmission line to supply the existing water treatment plant.

Signal Mountain will use \$240,516 for a project including system interconnection in an effort to improve resiliency and reliability of the water supply. Signal Mountain also received a non-collaborative grant of \$758,033 that will fund the replacement of a booster pump, the installation of a new pump station, and the implementation of a zone metering plan.

A \$9,088,702 to Hamilton County will significantly reduce the number of sanitary sewer overflows and (I/I) to the Signal Mountain Sewage Treatment Plant.

Claiborne County also received a collaborative grant of \$2,801,212 and a non-collaborative grant of \$3,273,422.

TN Workforce Services to host grant writing workshop in Nashville

The Tennessee Workforce Services Division and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day grants workshop in Nashville on May 4-5, 2023. This training is for grant seekers across all disciplines.

Attend this class and you’ll learn how to find the funding sources and write winning grant proposals.

For event details visit: <http://grantstraining.com/tn0523>

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Collier Engineering

Cunningham Recreation

Environmental Products Group

Local Government Corp.

Mauldin & Jenkins

Onsite Environmental

Performance Services

Recreational Concepts

Rubrik

Siemens

Simmons Wealth Management

Waste Management

BRONZE LEVEL

A2H, Inc.

Ameresco

Employee Benefit Specialists

Mattern & Craig, Inc.

Mark III Employee Benefits

Pavement Restorations, Inc.

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Tennessee Health Works

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Taking the Lead: How city officials can promote civility

BY MATT LEHRMAN

Civility in local government is similar to the guardrails on a highway — providing structure by which municipal leaders and the public can navigate around each other. Securing the travel lanes provides mutual safety for people heading in all directions.

When civility breaks down, however, people and perspectives collide — resulting in misunderstandings and disagreements that can harm relationships and fracture a community’s sense of togetherness.

Guardrails can’t provide complete protection from conflicts, but they are the fundamental structures of cooperation and coexistence.

In the first half of this article, I’m going to make the strategic, and perhaps idealistic, case for celebrating disagreement. If you’ve already been on the receiving end of anger and vitriol, I’ll understand if you skip to the second half, which offers thoughts on how to stand strong against incivility.

Taking the lead

Every city official owns the responsibility for the infrastructure of civility in their municipality. Whatever your personal agenda or philosophy, you are — by nature of your position — undeniably responsible for ensuring access, information, and respect for all, including for those with whom you disagree.

Creating an environment that is open, fair, and considerate to everyone is crucial. This means basing your decisions on factual information, being transparent in your actions and decision-making processes, and being accountable for promoting a sense of pride and togetherness throughout your community.

By prioritizing civility, you set a positive example and build trust and confidence — not just in local government, but in your community’s essential quality of togetherness. A civil local government is not just nice to have but a must-have. It is the foundation upon which a healthy and functioning democracy is built.

Welcoming disagreements

Disagreement is not a sign of dysfunction, but rather a prerequisite for effective decision-making in a free society. The ideal of democracy is that it enables people with assorted knowledge, values, and lived experiences to come together to recognize and solve community problems. The civic leadership for which you’re responsible cannot be achieved without the presence of diverse and even passionate perspectives and viewpoints.

Disagreement also helps to expose underlying assumptions and biases. When individuals with different perspectives come together, they are often forced to articulate and defend their assumptions and values — a process that reveals hidden biases and assumptions. By engaging with dissenting viewpoints, municipal leaders can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem they are trying to solve. Diverse perspectives can help to identify issues that may have been overlooked or underappreciated. In this way, disagreement can be a catalyst for creativity and innovation.

When citizens are encouraged to express their views and engage in constructive dialogue, they are more likely to hold their leaders accountable for their decisions. Can you make yourself comfortable with feedback and criticism? By engaging with — rather than avoiding or repelling — diverse perspectives, even

dissent, you have the potential to create a culture of accountability that ensures decision-making is truly transparent and responsive.

As a civic leader, when you say “community,” it’s especially important for people to remember that you are responsible to serve not a specific constituency but the entire population of your city. While it may be tempting to focus on the interests of your most vocal supporters or a community’s loudest voices, doing so can lead to short-term thinking and neglect of the long-term interests of the broader community.

Disagreement builds trust and strengthens relationships. When individuals feel that their opinions are valued and respected, they are more likely to be invested in that decision-making process. By creating forums for meaningful dialogue, municipal leaders demonstrate their commitment to the community and build relationships of trust and mutual respect. In this way, disagreement can be a powerful force for social cohesion and community building.

While disagreement can be challenging and uncomfortable, leaders must foster an environment that encourages open and honest communication. This may require the development of formal mechanisms for soliciting feedback and dissent, such as public forums or advisory committees. Leaders must also be prepared to model constructive dialogue and demonstrate a commitment to the values of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity.

Standing strong against incivility

The American ideal of government is rooted in the belief that reasonable people can work together to find solutions to shared problems. Compromise is not a weakness, and ample time and space exist to make community decisions. While not everyone will always agree on the final outcome, the process must be fair and thorough — ensuring that everyone feels heard. This is encapsulated in the American motto, *e pluribus unum*: “Out of many, one.”

Unfortunately, this ideal is being threatened by the prevalence of anger and outrage in American media, where clicks, shares, and time spent engaging translate into profit. This business model has created a market for incivility and negativity that pervades our society, leading to issues such as polarization and divisiveness. It’s a conundrum.

To counteract this, local governments must actively practice respectful communication and behavior that promotes collaboration, compromise, and constructive dialogue. Incivility, which demonstrates a lack of respect and consideration for others, creates a self-centered attitude that can leave others feeling hurt, disrespected, and excluded. It can extend beyond individual interactions to affect relationships, productivity, and broader societal issues community-wide. Therefore, it’s essential to strive for an environment that encourages civility and respectful engagement, helping to restore the American ideal of government.

If you want to stand against incivility, you need to recognize and call it out when you see it, in particular:

- **Obstinace** — stubborn adherence to one’s own opinion despite reason or persuasion.
- **Demagoguery** — emotional and prejudicial appeals to sway public opinion, rather than engaging in rational argument.
- **Dogmatism** — the inflexible adherence to a particular set of principles, beliefs, or ideology, without considering alternative viewpoints or evidence.

Changing these behaviors is not something that can be achieved overnight. If you’re looking for a quick fix, I’m sorry to disappoint, but there is no magic phrase or verbal jiu-jitsu tactic that can instantly reverse an instance of incivility



Matt Lehrman

during a council meeting.

The following is the civility that all local leaders need to get good at:

Energize obstinance. Find shared goals and values that underlie the debate. By identifying common ground, you can frame the conversation in a way that encourages compromise and collaboration. Bring in outside experts, facilitators, or neutral third parties to provide fresh perspectives and objective feedback.

Counter demagoguery. Focus on presenting the facts and evidence that support the proposed course of action. By presenting data and statistics in a clear and compelling way, you can help to move the conversation away from emotional appeals and toward rational and fact-based decision-making. Engaging in active listening and making space for the consideration of alternative solutions is vital.

Overcome dogmatism. Frame the debate in terms of outcomes rather than ideology. By focusing on the practical implications of different policy choices, you shift the conversation away from entrenched beliefs and toward pragmatic solutions. Building alliances and coalitions across ideological lines can also be an effective way to seek out common ground and work together toward shared goals.

You have a crucial responsibility to govern your community in a fair, equitable, and just manner. This requires standing strong against incivility and disrespect, even when it’s being thrown at you. By modeling respectful behavior and promoting constructive dialogue, you set the standard for your community.

Connecting, respecting and listening

As a civic leader, you are the guardian of a thriving community, responsible for making decisions that impact the lives of your residents. Facing incivility and negativity during council meetings and community events can be disheartening, but giving up is not an option when it comes to civic leadership.

Remember that your mission is to create a positive and inclusive environment for all. By prioritizing respect and collaboration, you set an example for others to follow, creating a ripple effect that can spread throughout the community. Keep your focus on how people in your community deserve to feel about civic engagement — connected, respected, and heard — and find the motivation to push through challenging situations and work toward constructive solutions.

Local leaders hold the power to shape decisions that impact people’s daily lives. Making those decisions with integrity, fairness, and a commitment to the greater good is crucial. By bringing people together, bridging divides, and creating a better future for your community, you have a responsibility worth fighting for.

Stay strong, stay committed, and keep striving toward creating a more positive and inclusive community.

Editor’s note: Matt Lehrman is managing director of Social Prosperity Partners. He delivered the opening keynote “From Conflict to Conversation” at TML’s Annual Conference in 2021 in Chattanooga.



April 22: Clinton
3rd Annual Mosaic Art Festival
This festival for artists and art lovers features fine art vendors, performances from area school art programs, local businesses, dancing, acting, interactive murals, projects for kids and more. Learn more [here](#).

April 22-23: Franklin
Main Street Festival
More than 120,000 visitors come out to enjoy eclectic arts and crafts vendors, superb entertainment, great food and drink, and fun for the entire family in historic downtown Franklin. Learn more [here](#).

April 23-30: Paris
69th Annual World’s Biggest Fish Fry
More than 12,500 pounds of catfish will be served, along with parades, carnival, rodeos, catfish races, dances, and arts and crafts. Find out more [here](#).

April 29: Gallatin
Gallatin Square Fest
This annual spring event in downtown Gallatin includes more than 170 vendors and draws in excess of 25,000 visitors to enjoy art and crafts, food, two stages of entertainment, and a large children’s area. Learn more [here](#).

April 29-30: South Pittsburg
26th Annual National Cornbread Festival
Come and enjoy all things cornbread including a carnival, fireworks, street dance, entertainment, and plenty of cornbread treats. For more info, visit [here](#).

April 29-May 6: Dresden
44th Annual Tennessee Iris Festival
Celebrate Tennessee’s state flower in bloom while enjoying local art and music, vendors, and crafts. Learn more [here](#).

April 30-May 6: Trenton
42nd Annual Trenton Teapot Festival
A week-long event honoring Trenton’s rare collection of porcelain veileuses, the Trenton Teapot Festival features music, fireworks, a parade, tennis and softball tournaments, arts and crafts how, car show, street dance, food, vendor, and more. Learn more [here](#).

May 5-6: Sweetwater
Blooms, Bluegrass & BBQ Festival
Historic downtown Sweetwater plays host to this festival featuring a BBQ Competition, carnival, kid’ zone, arts and crafts, vendors, live music, and more. Learn more [here](#).

May 6: Dickson
Old Timers Day
Enjoy food, music, kids’ activities, car shows, pageants, a golf tournament, parade, bingo, farm-to-table food, and more at this festival honoring Dickson and local heritage. Learn more [here](#).

May 6: Erwin
Great Outdoors Festival
Downtown Erwin gives visitors and residents a chance to try their hands at a variety of outdoor activities while showcasing the best outdoor opportunities in the region. Learn more [here](#).

May 6: Tellico Plains
Tellico Trout Festival
Fishermen, river sportsmen, and families come to Tellico Plains for this annual festival providing education, food, entertainment, and outfitter services as well as honoring the trout industry in the region. Learn more [here](#).

May 6-7: Collierville
Fair on the Square
Since 1976, the Fair has grown to be the largest arts and crafts fair in Collierville, attracting 160+ vendors and thousands of visitors. [Learn more here](#).

WAUFORD

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TSLA exhibit honors ‘Legacy of Tennessee State Parks’

By **KATE COIL**
TML Communications Specialist

For nearly 90 years, the 57 parks in the Tennessee State Park system have preserved the state’s natural and cultural resource while also allowing opportunities for recreation and economic development. Considered one of the best park systems in the nation, the legacy of Tennessee State Parks is being highlighted in a new exhibit at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Titled “The Legacy of State Park,” the exhibit draws from more than 16 collections housed at TSLA to show the people, places, and items that helped make the system what it is today.

Guests can view this new exhibit and the permanent interactive exhibits in the Library & Archives lobby from Monday to Saturday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. CST. The Legacy of Tennessee State Parks exhibit is free and open to the public until May 13, 2023.

“We are honored to work with Tennessee State Parks to celebrate the history of one of the best park systems in the country through the Tennessee State Library and Archives’ Legacy of Tennessee State Parks exhibit,” said Secretary of State Tre Hargett. “Through the Legacy of Tennessee State Parks exhibit, guests learn about early conservation efforts in Tennessee, the establishment of Tennessee State Parks, and how the park system has grown into what we all enjoy today. After seeing the exhibit, we hope guests are inspired to explore our state’s parks, making their first stop just outside the Library and Archives door at the Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park.”

Commissioner David Salyers of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, said the exhibit charts the journey of the state park system from early conservationists and state leaders who wanted to preserve the state’s natural resources to the way Tennesseans and visitors to the state have enjoyed the recreational opportunities provided by the park system.

“Our parks have 86 years of rich history, preserving natural resources, providing recreation for families, and enhancing communities,” Salyers said. “We’re indebted to the state’s leaders who years ago had the foresight and commitment to give our parks a special role in Tennessee. We’re delighted to see such awareness and appreciation of our parks with this exhibit.”

The mission of the Library and Archives, a division of the Department of State, is to preserve Tennessee’s history for current and future generations. As the designated repository for Tennessee State Parks materials, the Library and Archives has some of the state’s largest collections related to our state parks.

Guests visiting the exhibit will see maps, photos, letters, and more that show decades of conservation efforts in Tennessee. Items in the exhibit include a letter from W.A. Nelson, State Geologist to Governor

nor Austin Peay in 1924 advocating the creation of state parks to a letter from Congressmen Joe L. Evins to the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation favoring for the development of a park at Center Hill Lake.

The exhibit also highlights the preservation of Tennessee traditions through the State Parks Folklife Project, which launched in 1979. Folklorists traveled across the state to document the craftspeople, musicians, storytellers, and other Tennesseans contributing to the state’s unique cultural identity. The project resulted in thousands of hours of taped interviews, musical recordings, and photographs housed at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Kim Schofinski, spokesperson with Tennessee State Parks, said the parks themselves tell the story of Tennessee and its communities.

“With a system of 57 parks across the state, you are never more than an hour from one of these areas, so state parks can truly be thought of as local parks supporting the communities they are in,” Schofinski said. “Over the past few years, we have only seen the love for our state parks grow as a place where Tennesseans can come relax, explore, and connect.”

Much like the National Park system, the Tennessee State Park system grew out of a larger movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s seeking to preserve and protect unique cultural and geographical assets across the country as well as provide the public with opportunities for outdoor recreation as America’s population became increasingly urban.

Many of Tennessee’s state parks – like others throughout the country – also grew out of New Deal projects like the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Work Progress Administration (WPA), and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) that aimed to put young men to work building roads, picnic shelters, camping cabins, and other recreational infrastructure.

Tennessee’s first state parks were largely started as property purchased by TVA and then sold to the state, such as Norris Dam, Harrison Bay, Warrior’s Path, and Panther Creek. Big Ridge, Pickett, Cedars of Lebanon, Chickasaw and many others still preserve the iconic CCC “parkitecture” of this period. On May 21, 1937, Governor Gordon Browning signed legislation which created Tennessee State Parks.

By 1957, every Tennessean lived within 50 miles of a park, which catered to the post-War boom in outdoor recreation that continued into subsequent decades. The park system continued to grow as desires for conservation, recreational opportunities, and the economic development and investment created by state parks continued to benefit communities across the state. Most recently, Gov. Bill Lee announced the addition of Tennessee’s newest state park, Savage Gulf, in 2022 with plans to increase the number of state parks outlined in this year’s budget.



Modern day campers enjoy a cookout at Norris Dam State Park. Like many of the earliest state parks, Norris Dam traces its roots to activities undertaken by the CCC, WPA, TVA, and other New Deal projects.



A couple enjoys the flowering rhododendrons on Roan High Knob at Roan Mountain State Park in the 1950s. The blooms have long been drawing viitors to the area.

Officials also hope the exhibit will encourage people to visit new state parks or revisit their favorite parks.

“We are hopeful this exhibit encourages an even greater appreciation for our parks, which really are a crown jewel of our state,” Schofinski said. “Tennessee is one of only a handful of states that do not charge an entrance fee to enter state parks, so the outdoors in Tennessee is truly open for everyone.”

The exhibit remains open until May 13 and is accompanied by a lunchtime speaker series through April 14. For more information on the exhibit and how to view other items in the collection related to Tennessee State Parks, [visit here](#). To learn more about the Tennessee State Park system, [visit here](#).



A gathering of Tennessee State Park superintendents a Cedars of Lebanon State Park in 1941. At the time, the nascent system only had a dozen parks.



Wilbur A. Nelson, one of the founding fathers of the park system, hanging out at Reelfoot Lake in the 1920s.



T E N N E S S E E State Parks By the Numbers

57

the number of state parks in Tennessee. While Reelfoot Lake dates back to 1925, Harrison Bay is considered the first park to join the system in 1937. Savage Gulf is the newest park, created in 2022.

256

the number of feet water flows from Fall Creek Falls, the highest waterfall in the state park sytem. More than 80 major waterfalls can be found throughout the state parks.

372

the number of cabins available in the park system. Visitors can also take advantage of a wide variety of camping options at 36 campgrounds or stay in one of six park lodges.

1937

the year the state park system was established. Gov. Gordon Browning signed the Tennessee Public Act on May 21.

1377

approximately the number of miles of trails visitors can traverse across all 57 state parks.

6285

the number of feet to the top of Roan High Knob at Roan Mountain State Park, the highest point in the system and highest point in the state outside the Smokies.

38.5

how many million visitors came to Tennessee State Parks in 2021 alone. This is up from 34.7 million in 2020.

2.1

how many billions of dollars in revenue Tennessee State Parks generated in 2021, up from \$1.84 billion the previous year.