



Save the Date

TML Legislative Conference
March 15 Virtual
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. / CST

Be sure to mark your calendar and plan to tune into to hear state leaders address the municipal issues currently being considered before the 112th Tennessee General Assembly. Gov. Bill Lee, Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, House Speaker Cameron Sexton and Comptroller Jason Mumpower are among those who have been invited to address our membership. More program and registration information will be coming soon. So watch your email and be sure to register for the 2021 TML Virtual Legislative Conference.

Distributing \$458 M Federal COVID-19 rent relief in TN

An Interview with Ralph Perrey of the Tennessee Housing Development Agency

The federal COVID-assistance package adopted just before Christmas included \$25 billion in federal funds to assist households that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the pandemic. These funds are to be allocated directly to states and select local governments for distribution to eligible households through existing or newly-created rental assistance programs.



Use the link below to watch TML's interview with Ralph Perrey, THDA executive director, who answers questions about how funds will be distributed in Tennessee and what city leaders can do to help make citizens aware of the program.

Watch Interview. <https://play.champds.com/tml/event/27>

A 2021 Cybersecurity Checklist: How do you rate your city?

BY JOE HOWLAND
 VC3

You know cybersecurity is important. You hear about ransomware, viruses, and cyberattacks nearly every day. And you sense that your current cybersecurity defenses may not defend you in case the worst happens.

Yet, it can be so easy to put off improving cybersecurity. Why? Often, it's difficult to know where you should begin.

As a way to start building a plan, use this cybersecurity checklist to rate your organization. It will take you through foundational items, advanced items, and long-term cybersecurity strategies—and explain why each is important.

Rank each item:

- Yes (I am confident my organization has addressed this item.)
- No (My organization needs to address this item.)
- Don't Know (I am not sure if my organization has addressed this item.)

Obviously, you want more items in the "yes" category than in the "no" or "don't know" categories. The important thing is that you identify cybersecurity gaps so that you have a list of items to remedy by level of importance.

Foundational Items

1. Data backup and disaster recovery

To ensure you can recover data after a successful cyberattack, your data backup and disaster recovery need an onsite component (for quick recovery in case of a server failure or similar incident), an offsite component (in case of a severe cyberattack such as ransomware), and a testing component (to ensure that you can actually recover your data after an incident).

2. Antivirus

Antivirus software is one of the most basic tools of a cybersecurity defense. It's likely you have some sort of antivirus software, but it's important you use an enterprise-grade rather than a consumer-grade version.

3. Antispam / email filtering

Basic antispam and email filter-

ing tools make sure that most junk email—including many potential phishing email messages that could trick employees into downloading a virus or giving away sensitive and confidential information—never gets to your employee's inbox.

4. Software patching

Many devastating cyberattacks have been successful simply because organizations do not patch software vulnerabilities. Operating system and application vendors regularly provide software patches that shore up security vulnerabilities. Applying these patches is an essential part of a cybersecurity strategy.

5. Firewalls

Appropriately configured firewalls block most malicious website traffic.

6. Monitoring and alerting

It's important that experienced IT professionals monitor your systems and provide you security notifications when something seems wrong. This way, you start to proactively get ahead of security issues.

7. Password policy

Organizations need to create a policy that enforces the use of strong passwords or passphrases and the use of Two-Factor Authentication (2FA), as many cyberattacks succeed when criminals hack weak passwords.

See **CHECKLIST** on Page 7



Gov. Lee delivers State of the State Address



Photo credit: The Tennessean

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee delivered his third State of the State address to the General Assembly Feb. 8. Due to the COVID pandemic, the joint session took place in the War Memorial Auditorium to allow for social distancing. Lee outlined his legislative priorities and budget for the upcoming year. To read his full address, go to <https://www.tn.gov/governor/sots.html>

Farragut signs, seals, delivers warm wishes for local health care heroes

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

The town of Farragut is working with residents to show their support and appreciation for front-line medical workers through a letter-writing campaign.

The "Signed, Sealed, and Delivered - We Care" campaign aims to show gratitude to employees of Farragut's Turkey Creek Medical Center ranging from doctors and nurses to cleaning and support staff who have aided the community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Special green mail boxes have been set up outside the Farragut Community Center and Farragut Town Hall for residents to deposit letters, cards, pictures, notes, and other expressions of thanks. The town will then deliver these messages to the hospital where they will be displayed for staff. No postage is needed, but residents are encouraged to get creative with the project.

Karen Tindal, tourism coordinator for the town of Farragut, said inspiration for the project came from an unlikely source: Santa Claus.

"We do a Santa Mail Box during our Light the Park event, and we had a record-year this year," Tindal said. "We collected more than 1,700 letters for Santa. I was blown away by the number of letters we had collected. My daughter



Farragut residents are encouraged to drop off messages of support for employees of the town's Turkey Creek Medical Center, which will be delivered free of charge by town officials. The messages are meant to brighten the day of hospital employees ranging from doctors and nurses to support staff who have ensured things remain running smoothly during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

is a registered respiratory therapist at Turkey Creek Medical Center. As I was working on those Santa letters, I was thinking about her and our medical workers. Our COVID numbers were pretty high in Knox County at the time, and I am often sending her text messages to tell her I love her or to lift her spirits and help get her through the day. Then a light bulb went off in my head, and I thought what if we did something like this for our frontline workers."

Tindal then worked with Farragut Parks and Recreation Director Sue Stuhl, members of the city's public works department, and

the marketing director of Turkey Creek Medical Center to organize the campaign.

"The hospital was thrilled we were going to take the initiative to collect letters," Tindal said. "They were so thankful, because I think, in a way, they have felt a little isolated. They were so appreciative that the town was reaching out and saying that we appreciate them and the value they bring to the community. I talked to the public works department to ask if we could put up some mail boxes. We've been promoting it on social media. We See **FARRAGUT** on Page 3

What type of training is required for TN firefighters

BY DENNIS WOLF
 MTAS Fire Consultant

The coronavirus pandemic has caused major disruptions to normal training activities. The Tennessee Fire and Codes Enforcement Academy (TFACA) is conducting training and the campus is open. Students attending courses on campus must provide documentation of a negative test for COVID. The COVID test should be administered no more than 14 days before the start date of training. Students are screened each day with CDC approved questions including temperature checks. Social distancing is in place in buildings. Masks are required in classroom settings and where social distancing cannot be maintained.

At the local level, fire department training activities should continue, as the Insurance Services Office (ISO) has not relaxed any of the training hours listed in the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). ISO prorate the credit awarded for meeting the different training standards, so the fire department should strive to obtain as many training hours as possible to avoid receiving reduced training credit from ISO. MTAS recommends the use of masks, hand washing/hand sanitizer, and social distancing in the classroom. On the drill ground,



The Tennessee Fire and Codes Enforcement Academy (TFACA) is conducting training and the campus is open. Students attending courses on campus must follow specific COVID protocols.

masks and social distancing should be practiced as much as possible given the specific training drill. Online training is also an option.

MTAS is often asked about what training firefighters are required to have. When in fact, it varies from none-at-all to minimal. The key word being "required," which is defined as mandatory by a state law or regulation.

Every community in Tennessee has some level of fire protection, but the level of protection, and the qualifications of the firefighters staffing the community's fire stations, varies across the state. Firefighting is a dangerous and demanding job

that requires specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities. The best way to acquire and maintain this specialized skill set is through a comprehensive training program for both new recruits and seasoned firefighters. This article will discuss the three levels of firefighter training and certification found in Tennessee.

The first level is locally defined. At this level, the local governing body, or the fire department, sets the minimum standards required for the hiring, training, and promotion of firefighters. The standards can vary from no-training-is-required See **FIRE** on Page 5

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



ATHENS

The city of Athens saw one of its largest years for new construction in 2020. The city ended the year with more than \$30.3 million in new construction, the third highest amount the city has seen in the past decade. The highest-value projects included the \$13.7 million McMinn County Higher Education Center, the \$4.7 million addition at HP Pelzer Automotive systems, and an \$1.5 million addition to Midlab. The city also reported 23 new housing starts valued at \$2.8 million, the most new housing starts in 12 years. The fourth quarter of 2020 saw just under \$3 million in new construction, including a \$650,000 new dental office and \$300,000 worth of upgrades to the Athens Utility Boards. New housing starts for the quarter were valued at \$1.1 million.

BRENTWOOD

ICON Clinical Research, Inc., will expand its Brentwood research operations, creating 85 new, high-paying jobs in the next five years. ICON is adding research managers, product managers and research coordinators for contracts within the oncology, cardiovascular and CNS space. In addition to hiring, ICON will invest in available office space and software and research equipment. ICON Clinical Research is a global provider of outsourced development services to the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device industries. It currently has 369 employees in Tennessee and more than 15,250 employees worldwide.

COLUMBIA

Documotion research has announced it will establish new manufacturing operations in Columbia, investing \$9.3 million and creating 80 jobs. This is the company's first operation outside of California, where it is headquartered. Documotion will renovate an existing building in Columbia that will operate as the company's facility for new manufacturing operations or point-of-sale labels. Headquartered in Santa Ana, Calif., Documotion manufactures labels for various business sectors including food service, healthcare, retail, libraries, inventory management and others. The family-owned company was established 40 years ago.

DYERSBURG

ERMCO, a subsidiary of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., will build a 200,000-square-foot manufacturing plant at the site of the former Caterpillar plant in Dyersburg, projected to create 150 manufacturing jobs in the next five years. ERMCO (Electric Research and Manufacturing Cooperative, Inc.) is headquartered in Dyersburg and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECL), Little Rock, Ark. With all product lines made in the USA, ERMCO is one of the largest producers of oil filled distribution transformers and transformer components in the U.S. Incorporated in 1964, transformer production began in January 1971 in a new 32,000-square-foot facility. Since that startup, ERMCO has expanded into 400,000 square feet in two buildings in Dyersburg, plus 100,000 square feet of production area in a leased facility in Greeneville for its components business. ERMCO has been manufacturing single phase pole and pad transformers in the same building since its beginning in 1971. The Dyersburg property

includes approximately 40 acres to support additional growth well into the future.

GLEASON

The town of Gleason is moving forward with a lease-to-own agreement that will relocate the Gleason Police Department from city hall to its own building. The town has entered into the agreement to relocate the Gleason Police Department to a former insurance office with the town leasing the building at \$350 a month for 57 months until it becomes town property. The town has also budgeted for an estimated \$3,400 in renovation costs to the building, including the installation of a sign on the building. Renovations will be done largely in-house to save money. At present, the department operates out of a single room at Gleason Town Hall. Police Chief Paul Eddlemon said the new building will allow officers the privacy they need to do their jobs as well as extra room needed for administrative purposes.

GOODLETTSVILLE

The city of Goodlettsville and the Goodlettsville Fire Department are proud to announce an improved Insurance Service Office ISO rating from Class 4/4X to Class 3/3X. With this improved rating the Goodlettsville Fire Department ranks as one of the top 14% of all fire departments in the nation and in the top 7% of departments in Tennessee. Effective June 1, 2021, the city's improved score may help residents and businesses within Goodlettsville city limits achieve lower insurance costs. Property owners are urged to contact their insurance company regarding this new ISO rating and provide a copy of the official letter from ISO found on the city's website.

JASPER

Valmont Industries officials announced that the company will expand its Jasper operations by investing \$15-20 million to increase the size of its manufacturing facility, creating 65 new jobs in the next five years. Valmont Industries' Jasper location is part of the company's North American infrastructure operations, which supplies steel poles and structures to utility and transportation markets nationwide. The project will increase the size of Valmont's existing 100,000-square-foot manufacturing facility by more than 30% and convert an adjoining 11-acre lot into a new laydown yard to store equipment and materials. Established in 1946, Valmont Industries is a global leader of engineered products and services for infrastructure and water-conserving irrigation equipment and technology solutions for agriculture. The company is organized around four primary business segments, which include utility support structures, engineered support structures, irrigation, and coatings.

LOUDON

The city of Loudon has received a \$2.56 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce for a water production expansion project by the Loudon Utilities Board. The grant requires a \$640,000 local match for the project. The project is needed to help with development of the nearby industrial park as well as creates a redundancy for the existing water system, allowing the system to have two major pipes operating rather than a single pipe. This will allow one pipe to serve as a backup and keep the system operating should the other fail. Officials are hoping the new project will allow the city

New Newbern City Hall takes shape



Construction is advancing on the new Newbern City Hall. The project began in September 2020 and is projected to be completed by October 2021. The estimated cost of the project is \$1,861,291. The city is presently operating out of a building across the street from its former city hall building, which is being demolished.

to handle as much as 20 million gallons of water a day and sustain development for another 20 to 30 years.

MEMPHIS

Cognate BioServices will be nearly doubling the capacity at its Memphis global manufacturing facility and headquarters, creating more than 550 new jobs. In addition, the company will expand its cell and gene therapy manufacturing capacity, laboratory space, warehousing capabilities, and increase office support at its facilities in the U.S. and Europe. Cognate will add two separate facilities – a distribution center to help manage global supply chain needs, and a third site focused on commercial manufacturing capabilities – all totaling nearly 250,000 square feet of space. Construction has already begun on Cognate's GMP Distribution Center and is expected to finalize in early 2021. Build out of the commercial manufacturing location will begin in 2021 with the goal of coming online as quickly as possible.

MILAN

Hargett Materials, Inc. (HMI) officials announced that the construction materials manufacturing company will build a new facility to expand its Milan operations, investing \$2.2 million and adding 50 jobs in the next five years. HMI will expand its operations by constructing a new 100,000-square-foot production facility and rail spur to serve the Milan facility with raw materials and help export finished products nationwide. HMI is an industrial aggregates processing company that supplies a wide range of blended sands and cements, concrete cleaners, primers, and curing compounds for the concrete industry. In addition, the company manufactures a product called Elephant Armor, a high-performance patch material for asphalt and concrete pavements. Another portion of HMI's business is supplying components for buildings and data center modules that shield critical infrastructure from Electro Magnetic Pulses (EMPs). The shielding provides protection for utility companies, defense systems and communications hubs throughout the U.S. This expansion project is needed primarily due to an increased demand to protect critical infrastructure systems.

MONTEAGLE

The town of Monteagle's May Justus Memorial Library has received national recognition for its public access to internet and media. The library was named one of America's Star Libraries in the December edition of *Library Journal*, which rates libraries based on fiscal year data from the Public Library Survey completed annually by each state. The survey measured successful retrievals of electronic information, physical circulation, library visits, program attendance, public internet computer use and wifi sessions. The May Justus Memorial Library received a three-star designation and was one of only three libraries in the state of Tennessee to be recognized. The library has a service population

Tullahoma WWII airport hangar gets second life



A World War II-era hangar at the Tullahoma Municipal Airport is getting a new start after being sold for redevelopment by Lynchburg Machine Tool, Inc. The \$1 million renovation will redevelop the hangar to house three new companies with an expansion of Lynchburg Machine Tool's operations. In addition to machining operations, the new owners will offer hangar space for corporate and general aviation aircraft as well as general maintenance for locally-stationed aircraft. Plans are also being developed for an FAA repair station pending federal approval as well as the operations of the Tullahoma Aviation Company flight school.

Atoka officials, employees clean up local community



Elected officials and town employees with the town of Atoka came together to clean up the local community. The group spent an hour collecting trash near the intersection of Faulkner Avenue and Main Street in the town. In addition to dozens of bags of trash, the group managed to collect old tires and pallets that had been discarded on the roadway.

of 2,823 and an annual operating budget of \$16,646.

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN

Construction has begun on two ballfields in Signal Mountain as part of an ongoing project with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Recreational Education Services Division. The town of Signal Mountain received a Local Parks and Recreation Fund Grant to construct new fields on the site as well as under-field drainage, new fencing and backstops, and new bleachers. All electrical wiring for the field will also be moved underground and concrete walkways will be installed. The project will also ensure the fields are ADA compliant.

WARTRACE

The town of Wartrace will now be offering free wifi in the downtown area for residents, businesses, and visitors as the results of upgrades to the town's own telecommunications abilities. Using funds from the federal stimulus payment, the town installed its own server to allow communications and file sharing between different municipal departments as well as to provide backups of computer systems and software. The upgraded technology will also help the town prevent potential cyber attacks. Local retailers are hoping the availability of wifi downtown will encourage patrons to spend more time in the area as well as add to crafting classes and other workshops offered by local businesses.

TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY

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WAUFORD

J. R. Wauford & Company, Consulting Engineers, Inc.

Monterey partners with TTU Center for Rural Innovation to promote area

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Monterey officials and citizens are collaborating with Tennessee Tech students on a new initiative to brand and market the town and its surrounding natural beauty.

Monterey Cultural Administrator Rafferty Cleary said work on the project began not long after he took the position with the town in March 2020 as a way to capitalize on the town's assets.

"I immediately started meeting with folks from the chamber of commerce and the Highlands Economic Partnership, and through these meetings, they mentioned Tennessee Tech's Rural Reimagined program," Cleary said. "I was already familiar with what the program was doing in Jackson County. They got me in touch with the Tennessee Tech Center for Rural Innovation, and the folks from there came up here."

The Tennessee Tech Center for Rural Innovation (TCRI) is a U.S. Economic Development Administration University Center program that provides technical assistance within the tourism, technology, innovation, retail, and agriculture sectors of rural areas. Cleary said, through TRCI, Monterey residents and Tennessee Tech students have come together to create branding and a marketing strategy for the town.

"Part of our strategy was developing a community coalition to help launch the initiative," he said. "I selected some former mayors, business owners, a couple of aldermen, and Monterey citizens. About 15 of us started meeting once a month in August. Monterey needed to come together on who we are and what we have to offer. I don't



The Bee Rock Overlook offers one of the best views of the Upper Cumberland. The town of Monterey recently took ownership of the overlook and its planning improvements to the area to encourage more visitors to this scenic area. The overlook is one of several examples of natural beauty town officials are hoping to promote as part of a new tourism marketing campaign.

think that had really been done before. What do we have, and how can we draw folks in were our main objectives. We had to find out why people wanted to visit Monterey."

Together, the group came up with a list of local assets they hope will not only draw in regional visitors but those from out of state as well.

"We have a lot to offer when it comes to the outdoors," Cleary said. "The city took ownership of the Bee Rock Overlook a little over a year ago. We have been in the process of using grant funds to put restrooms and other things

out there. We also have hundreds of acres at Meadow Creek Park, which is town-owned. There is rock climbing access there and at Bee Rock that are known nationwide but have never really been promoted. There is a nearly 100-acre lake at Meadow Creek Park where we have recently built hiking trails."

Students from Tennessee Tech have designed branding material, conducted research, and helped with marketing strategies on the project. The students, in turn, gain real world experience they can use in future careers. Clearly said

the results students are producing for free would have easily cost the town thousands of dollars had they hired a professional marketing firm instead.

"One of the students is from Uganda, and he has been doing some qualitative and quantitative research based on surveys done by the coalition," Cleary said. "He helped us come up with a vision statement, a mission statement, and a values proposition statement based on responses. I think it's neat because this is a student in grad school who is doing this project to put on a resume and hopefully land

a big job in a few years. The fact that Monterey has the ability to put him on a career path is really neat. We have had tons of other students involved as well. The creation of a new logo for the town is being done by graphic design students at Tech. There are all these different young minds coming together for us."

Most of all, Cleary said the project has brought Monterey residents from all walks of life together to share the common love of their town.

"You have a group of people who all love Monterey, and the really cool thing is seeing the community coming together," he said. "You think people have different views of what Monterey is, but when you put everything together on paper, you see there is one central goal. All these people have come together to make Monterey a better place not just for folks in the local community but also for visitors."

Cleary said the next steps are to take the branding package to the Monterey Board of Mayor and Aldermen to approve and to start implementing strategies and marketing campaigns based on the work done through the Rural Reimagined program.

"The biggest thing we've learned is that we've got a lot to offer when it comes to the outdoors, so we have to be progressive in making those places accessible to the public and get the word out to them," he said. "When you start really doing this, you see Monterey has a lot of potential. We just have to use what we have and do it efficiently. This might be one of the most beneficial things this town has done in many, many years because it's helped us realize our potential."

Farragut signs, seals, delivers warm wishes for health care heroes

FARRAGUT from Page 1 kicked things off on the Friday before Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and by Tuesday, we had about 20 letters already."

The project will carry on through the end of March with themes set up for the following dates:

- Jan. 15-31: Thank you for your service
- Feb. 1-15: Can you feel the love?
- Feb. 16-28: You make a difference every day
- March 1-15: We are proud of you
- March 16-31: True heroes wear scrubs

High levels of stress, fatigue, and "compassion burnout" have been reported among medical workers and emergency personnel who have been in the thick of the pandemic for nearly a year. March 5 will mark the one-year anniversary of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Tennessee.

The goal is to ensure a steady supply of new messages of support coming into the hospital in the next few months, Tindal said, especially as the pandemic comes closer to the one-year mark.

"When we talked to the hospital, they talked about how at the beginning of the pandemic there was a lot of support for frontline workers and events for them, but as the pandemic has gone on that has tapered off," Tindal said. "We wanted to encourage that to start

again. The hospital marketing director will display a fresh supply of letters every two weeks in the break rooms and the lobby to show our support for the workers. We want them to know that people care."

Having a daughter who works in the health care field, Tindal said she has seen the frustrations experienced by those fighting the pandemic on the frontlines.

"It's being going on for nearly a year, and it's easy to throw your hands up in the air," she said. "As a mom, I've seen it from both sides. I have watched my daughter go from a few people in the hospital to being completely overwhelmed and working lots of overtime. She has gone from not being able to hold her niece to now being vaccinating and feeling safer around her family members. It's not just the doctors and nurses either. It's the people cleaning the rooms and making the meals. It takes everyone from the get-go making sure the hospital is still running not just for COVID patients but for our whole community. They are still taking care of regular patients. The hospital has more than 850 staff members, and I hope we collect at least one letter for each staff person at the hospital."

Tindal said she is hoping that both hospital employees and Farragut citizens who contribute to the campaign get something out of the project.

"Certainly, at the hospital I hope the workers really feel the community is behind them," she



The idea for the "Signed, Sealed, Delivered - We Care" campaign came when Farragut Tourism Coordinator Karen Tindal was working on the annual Santa letter program the town puts on. She thought local health care workers might also appreciate works of encouragement and appreciation from local residents as the COVID-19 pandemic nears its first-year anniversary. Tindal's goal is to collect 850 unique messages to deliver to the hospital, one for every staff member who works at the Turkey Creek Medical Center in Farragut.

said. "I hope they realize how much we appreciate what they are doing. They are doing their best to keep our community safe and healthy every day. I hope that we can reach out to some of our schools and senior centers, maybe some of those folks who are also isolating and feeling isolated, to see if they can

contribute as well. I think it will mean a lot to people to connect like that during this time."

Tindal said she encourages other cities to consider doing something similar in their own communities to remind local health care workers that their efforts are just as valuable now as they were

a year ago.

"It would be great if other cities replicated this project," she said. "It just takes one person to organize it. It's simple; it's inexpensive. Just reach out to your local hospitals and don't be afraid to do something like this. It's well worth it."

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PEOPLE



Michael Borders has been selected as the new assistant city manager for Kingsport. Borders previously served as city administrator for the town of Pittman Center for more than a year as well as spent more than a year as the town recorder for the town of Unicoi. Borders holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in public administration, both from East Tennessee State University.



Michael Borders

Sid Cox, city recorder and chief financial officer for the city of Kingsport, died Jan. 14, 2021, at the age of 57 due to COVID-19. Cox had a career in city and county government spanning nearly 30 years. He began work with the city of Kingsport in 2010 as a senior accountant and served as accounting supervisor and business manager with the city's community services department. He was promoted to serve as the city's CFO in 2019. Cox also served as finance director of the Sullivan County Sheriff's Department, Sullivan County Health Department, and for the city of Elizabethton. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from East Tennessee State University in 1988. Cox was also a lifetime member of the Carter County Rescue Squad.



Sid Cox

Robert Fisher has been selected as deputy chief of staff for Nashville Mayor John Cooper. Fisher originally joined Cooper's team as senior advisor for education and will continue his role as a senior policy advisor with an emphasis on education. Before joining Mayor John Cooper's team, he was a director for strategy and innovation at Shelby County Schools in Memphis. He is a Rhodes Scholar and holds a master's degree in education and a master's degree in public policy from the University of Oxford in Oxford, England, as well as a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.



Robert Fisher

William "Bill" Forrester, former city councilman for the city of Clarksville, died Friday, Jan. 15, 2021, at the age of 82. Forrester served as the councilman representing Clarksville's Ward 11 from 2007 until 2010. He served on several standing committees during his time on the council, including the charter and code revision committee, where he helped establish the city's ethics code, and gas and water committee. Born in Waverly, Forrester was a veteran of the U.S. Army. He earned a bachelor's degree from Austin Peay State University and became the first person to earn a master's in public health from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. He served as an environmental manager for the state of Tennessee and was supervisor of the Superfund hazardous waste mitigation program for the U.S. Department of Defense.



Bill Forrester

Jim Henry, former top deputy to former Gov. Bill Haslam, has been selected as state director for U.S. Sen. Bill Hagerty's statewide offices. Henry will oversee Hagerty's offices located in Nashville, Chattanooga,



Jim Henry

Cookeville, Jackson, Knoxville, Memphis, and the Tri-Cities area. A Vietnam veteran, Henry's first political office was serving as a city councilman and later mayor of the city of Kingston from 1971 until 1978. In 1980, he was elected to represent Tennessee House District 32. In his first term, he served as chair of the Republican caucus and in 1982 was selected as Minority Leader. After leaving the legislature, Henry became the president and chief executive officer for Omni Visions, Inc, a company serving individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. In 2011, he was tapped by then-Gov. Bill Haslam to serve as first commissioner of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), and then later became the commissioner of the Department of Children's Services in 2013.

Dan Jenkins, former mayor and council member for the city of Portland, died at the age of 80 on Dec. 29, 2020. Jenkins owned and operated Dan's Furniture and Appliance for 37 years and served the city of Portland for 50 years, including time on boards, commissions, and service organizations. He served as mayor of the city from 1997 until 2001 and served twice as a member of the Portland City Council. During his term as mayor, he oversaw the development of the Richland Park Complex, which Jenkins felt was his greatest accomplishment.



Dan Jenkins

Jay Johnson has been selected as the new town manager for the town of Oakland. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Southern Illinois University. After several political internships, Johnson became administrative assistant to the city manager in Largo, Fla., for two years in the 1970s. He served as city manager of Mt. Pleasant from 1979 until 1981, and then chief administrative officer for Collierville for seven years. He served as city manager for Ponca City, Okla., for five years before returning to Tennessee to serve as city administrator for Franklin from 1993 until 2008, and then as city manager of Shelbyville from 2011 until 2017. Johnson has also served in city manager roles in Toccoa, Ga., and Anniston, Ala.



Jay Johnson

Teresa Jones, municipal court judge for Division 1 of the Memphis Municipal Court, died on Jan. 2, 2021, after a battle with cancer. A longtime public servant, Jones was appointed to serve as a city judge in January 2019 and was re-elected to the seat in October. Prior to that, she was the District 2 representative for the Shelby County Board of Education from 2011 to 2019. She also served as a chief city prosecutor, trial attorney, public defender, lawyer, and adjunct professor. Jones holds a bachelor's degree from Lane College and earned her law degree from the University of Memphis' Cecil C. Humphries School of Law in 1986.



Teresa Jones

Charlie McKenzie, councilman representing the city of Cleveland's District 1, died Jan. 12, 2021, following complications from a stroke. He was first elected to serve Cleveland's District 1 in September 2010. McKenzie was a graduate of both the Cleveland



Charlie McKenzie

City School System and Cleveland State Community College. A former police officer and county deputy for more than 40 years, McKenzie also graduated from the Tennessee Law Enforcement Academy in Donelson with honors. In addition to his work in law enforcement, McKenzie retired as a Bradley County school bus driver.

Cathy Osborne has been selected to fill the new position of assistant to the city administrator in the town of Greeneville. Osborne joins Greeneville Town Hall staff on March 1 as she transitions from her current role as director of the Greene County Health Department. In her new role with the town, Osborne will work closely with the town's finance department and all department heads on special projects and grant programs. Prior to joining the Greene County Health Department in 2019, she was director of operations at the Boys and Girls Club of Greeneville and Greene County for 15 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in human services management with a concentration in non-profit administration from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga as well as a master's degree in public health and a master's certificate in health care management from East Tennessee State University.



Cathy Osborne

William "Bill" Phillips, city attorney for Rogersville, died Jan. 20, 2021, after a two-week battle with COVID-19 at the age of 73. A native of Rogersville, he joined the U.S. Army and served in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne. After being honorably discharged, he earned his bachelor's degree in political science and his law degree from the University of Tennessee. He returned to Rogersville to practice law at Phillips and Hale with his father, brother, and cousin. He worked with the firm for 45 years. His son eventually joined the practice. He was selected to serve as city attorney for Rogersville in 1976.



Bill Phillips

Derek Phillips, assistant program coordinator for the Athens Park and Recreation Department, has completed the necessary requirements to become a Certified Park and Recreation Professional through the National Parks and Recreation Department, one of only 110 individuals in the state to obtain such certification. Phillips holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in sports management from Martin Methodist College and a master's degree in recreation and sports management from the University of Tennessee. He has served as the city's assistant program coordinator since March.



Derek Phillips

Dale Phipps has been selected to serve as interim police chief for the Kingsport Police Department following the retirement of former Police Chief David Quillin after 35 years of service. Phipps has nearly 33 years of experience in law enforcement, almost half of which has been spent as deputy chief overseeing administration and operations for the Kingsport Police Department. A graduate of East Tennessee State University, Phipps holds an associate's degree in law enforcement and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He is also a graduate of the FBI



Dale Phipps

Newport mayor meets fan



Newport Mayor Trey Dykes got to meet fan Liam Joynt, 5, and give him a tour of Newport City Hall. After learning about mayors from a cartoon, the preschool student expressed a curiosity in learning more about the job. His parents arranged for Liam to meet both Mayor Dykes and Cocke County Mayor Crystal Ottinger to ask them questions about their jobs. Liam said he had a "fun" experience meeting Mayor Dykes and getting a tour of Newport City Hall. "Personally, I appreciate the fact that our community leaders took the time to visit with my young son," said Liam's father Branden Joynt. "This was a wonderful experience for him. Maybe one day he will want to become a mayor himself."

National Academy. Prior to beginning his career in law enforcement, Phipps served four years in the U.S. Air Force Security Police.

Charles Rust, former mayor and commissioner for the town of Adams, died Jan. 8, 2021, at the age of 88. Rust served the town of Adams as a commissioner from 1963 until 1989, and then as mayor of the town from 1987 until 1989. Born in New Tazewell, he was one of the last graduates of the Bell School in 1949 and went on to attend Austin Peay State University, Purdue University, and Western Kentucky University. He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy and served five years at the end of the Korean War. He retired from the Todd County, Ky., Board of Education after a more than 40-year career as a classroom teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent of schools.



Charles Rust

John Schroer, former commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Transportation and former mayor of Franklin, has been selected to fill the alderman seat on the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen created by the death of Alderwoman At-Large Pearl Bransford. Schroer will hold the seat until a special election can be called in October, but has said he will not run for the seat. Schroer served as mayor of Franklin from 2007 until 2011, when he stepped down to serve as TDOT commissioner. He retired from TDOT in 2018. He also spent a total of 18 years serving on the Franklin Special School District board and the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen.



John Schroer

Jim Tracy has been appointed as a senior advisor to the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance. Tracy most recently served as the state director for USDA Rural Development in Tennessee.

Prior to that, Tracy represented Tennessee's Senate District 16 from 2005 until 2013, and then District 14 from 2013 until 2017. He also served as president pro tempore of the Tennessee State Senate as well as assistant floor leader of the Senate Republican Caucus. Tracy has also served on the Bedford County Board of Education. He graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a bachelor's degree in agriculture education and operated his own insurance firm for more than 20 years.



Jim Tracy

Bill Trivett has been appointed to fill the vacant District 2 seat on the Mt. Juliet City Commission following the election of James Maness to serve as the city's mayor. Trivett will serve out the remainder of Maness' term, which ends in 2022. Trivett is presently employed as an operations, compliance, and environmental manager for real estate firm JLL. He also serves as president of the Hickory Hill's Homeowner's Association. He has lived in Mt. Juliet since 2013.



Bill Trivett

Carolyn Voiles has been selected by the White Pine City Council to fill the vacant seat left by the election of Fred Taylor as mayor. Voiles will finish the two-years left on the council term. Voiles also previously served on the White Pine City Council. Voiles is the office manager and chief of staff for Jefferson County Mayor Mark Potts, a role she has served in for 12 years. Voiles also functions as a liaison between various departments and agencies on behalf of the county mayor's office.



Carolyn Voiles

STATE BRIEFS

Tennessee is the fifth best state to drive in and the top state for low cost of ownership and maintenance of vehicles nationwide, according to a new survey conducted by financial planning website Wallet Hub. The state ranked 21 out of 50 in access to vehicles and maintenance, 26 out of 50 in terms of traffic and roadway infrastructure, and 41 out of 50 in terms of road safety. The survey took into account factors such as gas prices, car insurance premiums, rush-hour traffic and congestion, amount of precipitation, average commute by car, traffic fatality rates, car theft rates, bridge and road quality, and driving laws.

Every county in Tennessee saw an increase in unemployment in December 2020, according to new data from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD). Only six of the state's 95 counties had an unemployment rate of less than 5% in December with the majority of counties – 88 in total – having rates greater than or equal to 5%. Lake County reported the state's highest unemployment rate at 10.6%. Statewide, unemployment increased in December. The preliminary, seasonally adjusted rate for December came in at 6.4%, an increase of 1.2% from November's revised rate of 5.2%. Nationally, unemployment held steady between November and December at 6.7%.

Tennessee recorded its highest number of boating deaths in nearly 40 years in 2020. The Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA) annual report found that a total of 32 boating-related deaths were reporting in the state in 2020, the highest number in 37 years. In 2019, the state enjoyed a record-low number of eight boating-related deaths. TWRA officials said the high number of fatalities in 2020 may be linked to an increase in boat traffic on the state's lakes and waterways last year as many Tennesseans took to the water for recreation to maintain social distancing during the pandemic. Alcohol is also a large factor in the

high fatality rate with alcohol being a factor in nearly a third of 2020 boating fatalities. In addition to deaths, TWRA also reported there were 82 people seriously injured by boating incidents and 82 additional property damage incidents related to boating in 2020.

Tennesseans pay the fifth highest cost – both financial and personal – per smoker in the nation, according to a new analysis conducted by financial planning website WalletHub. The state of Tennessee loses \$1,760,744 each year due to costs related to smoking, an average of \$36,682 per year per smoker. The average smoker in Tennessee spends \$1,967 per year on cigarettes, roughly \$94,433 over a lifetime, and loses \$10,093 in income a year, or \$484,453 over a lifetime, because of smoking. Additionally, the average Tennessee smoker spends \$2,646 more per year on healthcare issues – averaging out to \$118,257 over a lifetime – and loses \$21,933 per year in financial opportunities that could have been available with money otherwise spent on smoking.

A brood of 17-year cicadas are set to make their reappearance in Tennessee this year, according to information from the University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture. The 17-year cicada brood – last seen in 2004 – are expected to make their emergence this year, especially in the East and Middle Tennessee regions but throughout Tennessee and in neighboring states including Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky. The insects typically emerge in May for four to six weeks. While cicadas typically do not harm agricultural crops, they are known to eat ornamental plants. Coming years are also projected to see the reappearance of several different cicada broods across the state. Nearly all of Middle Tennessee will see the return of 13-year cicadas in 2024 while a second brood of 17-year cicadas will be seen in 71 of the state's counties in 2025. In 2028, another brood of 13-year cicadas will emerge largely in West Tennessee.

TACIR report shows state needs \$58.6B in infrastructure work

Tennessee needs at least \$58.6 billion worth of public infrastructure improvements during the five-year period of July 2019 to June 2024—a \$3.8 billion (6.9%) increase from the year before—according to a new report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR).

Of the \$3.8 billion increase in infrastructure needs reported in this year's inventory, almost \$3 billion (80.1%) is attributable to increases in the estimated cost for transportation and utilities, followed by general government (16.1%). Infrastructure needs for transportation and utilities, which increased for the fifth year in a row, increased this year by \$3 billion mainly because of new road and sidewalk projects.

The \$608 million increase in needed improvements for general government infrastructure also contributed to the overall increase in the total estimated cost of the inventory. Most of this increase is from the \$586 million increase in needed improvements at public buildings, while the need for improvements at other facilities increased \$22 million. The state government was responsible for more than \$615 million in new projects, and approximately \$252 million is needed for renovations at state buildings in Nashville.

The estimated cost was also up in two categories—recreation and culture (\$113 million) and health, safety and welfare (\$86 million). Reported needs decreased in two categories: education (\$42 million) and economic development, down \$14 million compared to last year.

Information about funding for public infrastructure needs reported by officials indicates that 65.1% of the funds required to meet those needs was not available at the time the inventory was conducted, relatively unchanged from last

year's 67%.

Excluding improvements needed at existing schools and those drawn from capital budget requests submitted by state agencies, neither of which includes funding information, only \$15.5 billion in funding is available for the remaining \$44.3 billion in needs.

Total estimated costs for current infrastructure needs fall into six general categories:

- Transportation and Utilities: \$32.8 billion
- Education: \$14.2 billion
- Health, Safety, and Welfare: \$7.7 billion
- Recreation and Culture: \$2.2 billion
- General Government: \$1.5 billion
- Economic Development: \$286 million

For each county, the report includes one-page summaries, which list the estimated cost for all types of needed infrastructure in each county by stage of development, highlight the top three types of infrastructure improvements needed in each county based on the total estimated cost, and provide comparisons of the infrastructure needed at public school systems to student enrollment.

The full report is available on TACIR's web site at <https://www.tn.gov/tacir/infrastructure/infrastructure-reports/-building-tennessee-s-tomorrow-2019-2024.html>

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

What type of training is required for TN firefighters

FIRE from Page 1

up to certification.

Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) § 4-24-112 sets the minimum training standard for Tennessee, but that same law exempts 34 counties (Benton, Bledsoe, Bradley, Cannon, Cheatham, Claiborne, Clay, Cumberland, Decatur, Fentress, Giles, Grainger, Hancock, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Johnson, Lake, Lawrence, Lewis, Loudon, Macon, Meigs, Morgan, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Polk, Rhea, Scott, Smith, Trousdale, Unicoi, Union), or 35.79% of the state, from the minimum training requirements.

There is no requirement for firefighters in those 34 counties to obtain any firefighter training at all. It must be pointed out that even though compliance with the minimum training law is not required in those counties, compliance is not prohibited, either. All cities, counties, and fire departments are free to provide as much training as they desire. It is also possible for an exempt city or county to opt-out of the exemption and require compliance with the law. An example of a resolution to do just that may be found on the MTAS website at <http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/knowledgebase/sneedville-fire-resolution-minimum-training-standards-firefighters>.

The second level is compliance with the state's minimum training law, which applies to both volunteer and paid firefighters. The minimum training law was passed in 2009 and codified as TCA § 4-24-112. All firefighters (except for a few exceptions listed in the law) who are not in one of the thirty-four exempt counties are required by state law to meet the minimum training standard.

The minimum training standard requires that a newly hired or appointed firefighter complete a 16-hour introductory class before responding to a fire. After completing the introductory class, the firefighter has 36 months from their hire or appointment date to complete a 64-hour basic firefighting classroom course and a 16-hour live burn course. Altogether, the law requires a total of 96 hours of training. Once the firefighter has completed this training, they comply with state law, and no further training is required by state law. Compliance with TCA § 4-24-112 does not confer any type of certification.

The third level is certification. Certification is the confirmation by an independent party that the firefighter has demonstrated comprehensive knowledge and skill of the given subject by passing written and practical examinations based on national standards on the subject. The Tennessee Commission on Firefighting Personnel Standards and Education (the Commission), created by TCA § 4-24-101, is responsible for the certification of volunteer and paid firefighters in the State of Tennessee. The Commission is also accredited by two outside agencies: the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), and the National Board of Professional Qualifications (ProBoard). To become certified, a candidate must pass written and practical exams administered and proctored by a Commission field representative. These exams are based on consensus standards promulgated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

In Tennessee, the highest level of certification for a firefighter is Fire Fighter-II. To become certified as a Fire Fighter-II by the Commission, the candidate must complete and must successfully pass written and practical exams for the following:

1. Provide local certification that the candidate has successfully completed the 96 hours of minimum training required by TCA § 4-24-112
2. Hazardous Materials Awareness (HMA) per NFPA 1072
3. Hazardous Materials Operations (HMO) per NFPA 1072
4. Written examination for Fire Fighter I (FF-I) per NFPA 1001, 2013 edition
5. Practical Exam for Fire Fighter I (FF-I) per NFPA 1001, 2013 edition
6. Written examination for Fire Fighter II (FF-II) per NFPA 1001, 2013 edition
7. Practical Exam for Fire Fighter II (FF-II) per NFPA 1001, 2013 edition

To help firefighters become Fire Fighter-II certified, the Tennessee Fire and Codes Enforcement Acad-



The Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy (TFACA) in Bell Buckle offers a wide variety of courses that prepare both new recruits and officers for everything from basic drills to HazMat situations.

emy (TFACA) offers a 10-week, 400-hour, Fire Fighter I/II recruit course (course ID F100) at the fire academy in Bell Buckle that prepares recruits to take and pass the commission exams for Fire Fighter-I and Fire Fighter-II. The course fee is \$567.00. Lodging and meals are separate and are available at the academy. Here is the link to information on the course: <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/commerce/tfaca/fire-program/general-fire-service/f100.html>

Tennessee Fire Service and Code Enforcement Academy
2161 Unionville-Deason Road
Bell Buckle, Tennessee 37020
1.800.747.8868
(931)294-4111
faca.info@state.tn.us

Within this framework, each fire department usually sets their own minimum standards for hiring and training. Some departments may require that a person have some level of training or certification before they are hired, while others may require that a given level of training or certification is obtained within an appropriate timeframe after the person is hired.

Other training required of anyone in Tennessee who drives an emergency vehicle in an official capacity includes at least two hours of training, with an exam, in the operation of an emergency vehicle in emergency and non-emergency situations. This is required by TCA § 55-8-194, more commonly known as the Vanessa K. Free Emergency Services Training Act.

Newly appointed fire chiefs are required by TCA § 68-102-108(c) to complete the sixteen-hour fire chief orientation course presented by the fire academy within one year of their date of appointment. The 16-hour, tuition free, class covers fire incident reporting, fire cause determination, legal requirements for fire chiefs, basic management skills, fire service agencies and associations, and fire service requirements in the state of Tennessee.

Simply because training is not required does not mean that firefighters do not need training, and there are guidelines local government and fire departments can use when establishing a fire department training program. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) outlines in the FSRs the different types of fire department training ISO looks for when evaluating a community's level of fire protection. ISO does not differentiate between volunteer, combination, and paid fire departments: the listed hours apply equally.

TYPES OF TRAINING

Drills. Drills are practical, hands-on training and must occur at a fire department training facility. Examples of drill training include raising ladders, advancing hose lines, search and rescue drills in smoke conditions, and fighting live fires. A training facility is used solely for firefighter training and contains three components: a live fire training structure with a smoke room; a drill tower at least three stories in height; and an open area at least two acres in size. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every person who responds to structure fires, including chiefs and other officers, needs 16 hours of drill training annually.

Company training. Company training is usually classroom training and can include practical

drills at locations other than the fire department training facility. Examples of company training include classes on firefighting tactics, on fire prevention, and site visits to local occupancies for the purpose of pre-fire planning. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every person who responds to structure fires, including chiefs and other officers, needs 192 hours of company training annually.

Officer training. Officer training is usually classroom training on any topic found in NFPA Standards 1021, 1521, and 1561. Examples of officer training include classes on firefighting tactics, fireground operations, fire department safety practices, and incident command. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every fire officer needs 12 hours of officer training annually.

New driver training. Driver training for new drivers occurs in the classroom, at the pump panel, and behind the wheel. Examples of driver training include classes on hydraulics, calculating pump pressures, operating fire apparatus, and driving fire apparatus. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every newly appointed or promoted driver needs 60 hours of driver training within their first year of appointment or promotion.

Driver training. Driver training for existing drivers occurs in the classroom, at the pump panel, and behind the wheel. Examples of driver training include classes on hydraulics, calculating pump pressures, operating fire apparatus, and driving fire apparatus. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every existing driver needs 12 hours of driver training annually.

Hazardous materials. Hazardous materials training usually occurs in the classroom and can include practical training evolutions. Examples of hazardous materials training include classes on chemicals and their classification, determining isolation zones, and decontamination of people exposed to hazardous materials. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every firefighter, including chiefs and other officers, needs 6 hours of hazardous materials training annually.

Recruit training. The last item in the ISO training section is recruit training. For the maximum training credit ISO awards, every recruit firefighter needs 240 hours of training per NFPA Standard 1001, or certification as a Fire Fighter-II. The training hours or certification must be achieved within 12 months of being hired or appointed as a firefighter.

The real answer to the question about what training firefighters are required to have is that it doesn't matter about how much training firefighters are required to have: what matters is how much they should have. Training is the backbone of any fire department, whether one is a volunteer or a paid firefighter.

To be good at the job that can kill you requires ongoing training and the practical application of skills in a training environment. Training promotes teamwork, and builds pride and confidence in one's abilities, which enables better performance on the fire scene. Firefighters who respond without the proper training put themselves, other firefighters, and the public at risk. It is incumbent of every fire chief, and on elected officials, to provide the best training program for their fire department, because their community deserves nothing less.



CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertising: \$9.25 per column inch. No charge to TML members. Send advertising to: Carole Graves: cgraves@TML1.org.

ACCOUNTANT, SENIOR

HENDERSONVILLE. This position is responsible for assisting with the day-to-day operations of the finance department. This position is under the general supervision of the finance director and assistant director and is responsible for the direct supervision over the accounts payable division and, in the absence of the director and assistant director, assists by serving as department manager. Bachelor's degree in accounting or related field including or supplemented by a minimum of 12 semester hours in accounting. CPA or CMFO preferred. At least two years of experience in professional accounting. Previous governmental accounting and supervisory experience desired. Strong proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite programs. Ability to be bonded. Annual Salary: \$63,289 or DOQ To apply go to www.hvilletn.org and visit the 'Job Openings' page and read through the information. Open until the position is filled. EOE.

BUILDING INSPECTORS (2)

MT. JULIET. The city of Mt. Juliet is seeking candidates for two building inspectors. The two full-time positions require experience with certifications from International Code Council (ICC) for residential and commercial building. Pay range/ \$18.25 top out in 3 years \$26.35. Excellent benefits and pension. Selected candidates will be required to complete pre-employment testing as deemed necessary for position. Valid TN driver license required. Detailed job description and requirements are available online. Applications must be filed electronically and are available online at the city's website, www.mtjuliet-tn.gov. Open until filled. The city of Mt. Juliet reserves the right to stop accepting applications at any time. For questions, regarding the electronic application process, please call (615) 754-2552. EOE/Drug-free Workplace.

CHIEF BUILDING INSPECTOR

PIPERTON. The city of Piperton has an opening for a full-time chief building inspector. Duties will include residential and commercial construction inspections (building, plumbing, and mechanical), plan review, responding to public requests for service and resident's concerns, enforcing city ordinances, and assisting the building official as necessary. At least one ICC commercial certification is required. Remaining ICC commercial certifications must be obtained and maintained within one year (building, plumbing, and mechanical inspector) of hire. Must have five years code enforcement/inspection experience, including two years supervisory experience. Valid driver's license is required. Background check will be conducted. Salary is commensurate with experience. Medical and retirement benefit package is provided. Applications may be obtained at the Piperton Administrative Office at 3725 Hwy 196 Suite B, or at www.pipertontn.com/jobs. Return application and resume to tjohnson@pipertontn.com. EOE

CITY ENGINEER.

SPRING HILL. The city seeks to hire a city engineer. This is a skilled, fulltime exempt position under the supervision of the infrastructure director or the city administrator. Performs administrative/technical functions to ensure that infrastructure proposed through development plans meets city regulations and to provide general engineering support to the public works department, and other departments. Duties include providing technical expertise in areas of construction problems, floodplain and drainage issues; overseeing new development work; reviewing sewer and water system capacity in conjunction with the system managers; setting bond amounts to ensure city protection from developers' defaults; performing site inspections and estimating project costs; project management; and providing information to the public. Supervises and directs the work of the associate engineer and utility inspectors. Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related field required, with five to seven years of experience as a professional engineer knowledgeable in general construction, water and sewer system construction, stormwater drainage, roadway construction, estimating, and development plans review; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Valid Tennessee license as a professional engineer required. Applications/resumes submitted online at: www.springhilltn.org/Job.aspx. Questions to staylor@springhilltn.org. EOE.

DEPUTY CLERK / MUNICIPAL CODES OFFICER

WARTRACE. The town of Wartrace is seeking to hire a deputy clerk/ municipal codes officer to help manage day-to-day administrative operations. This position is a full-time training position for succession planning. Responsible for scheduling, advertising, and support of meetings and public hearings, and maintain records of same for safekeeping. Additional responsibilities include writing resolutions and ordinances, grant management, oversee all aspects of municipal codes inspections, train for and get licensed to perform building inspections, permit issuance within three years of employment, train in the management of the annual budget, banking services, financial obligations, debt obligations, annual audit, tax preparation (1099s), cross-train with town clerk, and all other responsibilities, as assigned. College degree preferred, but not required depending on experience. Finalist must pass a background check and drug test prior to employment. Work hours are typically Monday through Friday, 7:30 am. - 4:00 p.m., but will vary several days each month for meetings. Employment applications available online at www.townofwartrace.com, mail resume to Town of Wartrace, P.O. Box 158, Wartrace, TN 37183, or email to admin@townofwartrace.com.

ENGINEER - DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SPECIALIST

BRENTWOOD. The city engineer - development projects specialist is responsible for ensuring new developments, both residential and commercial comply with city standards and commonly accepted industry practices

of municipal engineering. The city engineer is the primary technical liaison to the planning department and the planning commission during the review and approval process for re-zonings, site plans, subdivisions, and other public and private projects. Duties and responsibilities include ensuring that plans submitted comply with city code regarding areas such as site grading, floodplain management, roadway design, site drainage, roadway signage and lighting, and construction. The city engineer reports to the director of engineering working with a high degree of independence. The job requires a PE license and strong civil engineering technical skills as well as good interpersonal skills. The city engineer interacts daily with internal staff, engineers, builders, developers, residents, elected officials and government agencies. For a complete job description and to apply please visit the city of Brentwood web site here, <https://www.brentwoodtn.gov/departments/human-resources/current-job-openings>.

FIREMAN/EMT ADVANCED

SOMERVILLE. The Town of Somerville is accepting applications for a full-time position in our Fire Department. The applicant must be EMT-Advanced Certified. Special consideration will be given to individuals who have Firefighter experience and can operate firefighting vehicles and equipment. If you are interested in applying for this position, come to Somerville Town Hall, 13085 N. Main Street, Somerville, TN 38068, to fill out an application by Feb. 26, 2021. Interviews will be held the following week. Full-time position. Pay: \$39,000.00 - \$40,000.00 per year. EOE / Drug-free workplace.

PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

FAYETTEVILLE. The city of Fayetteville, TN, is seeking a visionary parks and recreation director with proven experience in building long-lasting partnerships and producing innovative services, programs, and events for all ages. This is a unique, department director position that requires someone who can be bold when crafting successful solutions while being innovative, creative, and collaborative. The city is looking for a unique and enthusiastic individual to serve as not only director but also as advocate and teammate. The city has an excellent group of experienced department leaders and a strong support team that will work in conjunction with this position to help produce results and reach goals. This position requires someone with a heart for public service and a sincere passion for community programming, sports, parks, and recreation services. The ideal candidate understands their role in a public environment and has the ability to work closely with the board of mayor and aldermen, city administrator, parks and recreation standing committee, local organizations, employees, donors, volunteers, and the general public. The city's parks and recreation director must have a tenacious spirit with the capacity to listen and empathize. They must have the ability to see the "big picture" while successfully managing day-to-day details. Other key attributes include strong verbal and written communication skills, open-mindedness, and the aptitude to make tough decisions while considering all viewpoints. This leader must be able to merge seamlessly with a variety of teams and effectively serve as a liaison between the city government

and the public. Applications and job descriptions may be picked up at the City of Fayetteville Municipal Building, 110 Elk Ave S. Fayetteville, TN 37334 or online at www.fayettevilletn.com. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Initial review of the applications will occur on Feb. 23, 2021. EOE

PLANNING & BUILDING CODES INSPECTOR.

FAYETTEVILLE. The city of Fayetteville is accepting applications for the position of planning and building codes inspector. The position will be a full-time, FLSA non-exempt position with City paid and Employee elected benefit options. Application and job description may be picked up at the city of Fayetteville Municipal Building, 110 Elk Ave S. Fayetteville, TN 37334 or online at www.fayettevilletn.com. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. EOE.

PLANNING DIRECTOR

SPRING HILL. The city seeks a skilled, full time planning director under the direct supervision of the city administrator. (S)he will perform technical planning work involving the research, review, analysis and coordination of annexation, zoning text and map amendments, subdivisions and planned developments, site plans and community-based planning. Develops, updates and distributes population statistics and demographic information, and assists with Census-related matters; presents findings and recommendations to staff, planning commission, board of mayor and aldermen, board of zoning appeals, various committees and commissions, and the public. Supervises the work of the associate planner and planning assistant. Requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in urban planning or closely related field. A master's degree in planning or related field preferred. Membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners or ability to obtain certification within one year preferred. Five to seven year of increasingly responsible experience in urban or community planning required, preferably in urbanized county or municipal government. Generally, three years of experience in a supervisory capacity. Applications/resumes submitted online at: www.springhilltn.org/Job.aspx. Questions to staylor@springhilltn.org. EOE.

POLICE OFFICER

SOMERVILLE. The Somerville Police Department will be accepting applications for CERTIFIED ONLY Police Officer candidates for current openings. Eligible applicants must be certified as a police officer by the Tennessee Police Officer Standards and Training Commission (P.O.S.T.), be at least 21 years of age, possess a valid driver's license, have a high school diploma/GED a U.S. citizen, have no felony convictions and be able to successfully pass psychological, physical, and polygraph exams as well as a drug screen. Officers who are P.O.S.T. certified through another state and can be certified in Tennessee by an abbreviated class at the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy will be considered. One-year experience preferred. The schedule is a 14 day a month rotating shift with nights and weekend work required. The employee would be off every other weekend, under normal schedule conditions. Starting salary is based upon experience

(\$40,000.00 to \$42,000 per year). State retirement TCRS with match by the town of Somerville. An optional retirement plan is also available with matching funds. Excellent medical benefits for employee and family. After first full year of employment you may be eligible for college tuition reimbursement for a degree program relating to the field of law. Somerville Town Hall, 13085 N. Main Street, Somerville, TN 38068. EOE / Drug-free workplace.

PUBLIC WORKS SUPERINTENDENT

GALLATIN. The city of Gallatin is seeking qualified applicants for the open position of superintendent of public works to plan, direct, manage, and oversee the activities, projects, and operations of the public works department including environmental services (sanitation and stormwater), facilities and vehicle maintenance, recycling collection, and street maintenance and construction. Gallatin Public Works provides excellent environmental services, facility and vehicle maintenance, and street and construction maintenance at competitive rates, and in a safe, environmentally clean and efficient manner. This position supports a department of approximately 70 employees. Minimum qualifications include bachelor's degree in civil engineering or closely related field with a minimum of 10 years recent work experience of an increasingly responsible nature in the public works management, construction, or related field; or an equivalent combination of education, experience, and training. Master's degree and P.E. preferred. Must have five years of supervisory experience. Must have a valid driver's license. To apply, please submit an online application, cover letter, and resume at the City of Gallatin website: <https://cogselfserve.gallatin-tn.gov/MSS/employmentopportunities/default.aspx> Current starting pay: \$ 89,134.86 with excellent benefits. Open until position is filled. EOE / drug-free workplace.

UTILITY AND PUBLIC WORKS SUPERINTENDENT

WARTRACE. The town of Wartrace is accepting applications for a utility and public works Superintendent to supervise the overall operations of Wartrace Waterworks and Sewer Systems and public works duties. Responsible for proper operation, maintenance, reporting, collection, treatment, distribution and/or disposal of water and wastewater. Maintenance of city fleet, equipment, streets, storm water drains, city-owned buildings, and parks. Supervises three employees. Prefer four or more years of experience and State of Tennessee Grade 1 Water Distribution, Grade 1 Wastewater Treatment and Grade 1 Wastewater Collection Certifications. Valid Tennessee driver's license and valid Tennessee CDL or ability to obtain within 6 months. All licenses will be verified. Experience with Telemetry and SCADA Systems, administrative and supervisory skills, experience with operation of heavy equipment: Backhoe, Skid Loader, etc. Knowledge of safety requirements and precautions. Finalist must pass a background check and drug test prior to employment. Work hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 am. - 4:00 p.m. (subject to change). Some overtime required (on call hours), some weekends. Employment applications available online at www.townofwartrace.com or mail resume to Town of Wartrace, P.O. Box 158, Wartrace, TN 37183.

No loan is too large or too small



The City of Milan recently closed on a \$1.5 million fixed rate loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) issued to finance electric system improvements. Seated L to R: Jason Griggs, Superintendent of Public Utilities; Milan Mayor B.W. Beasley; and Autumn Stewart, City Recorder. Standing is Tommy Green, TMBF Marketing Representative.



The City of McKenzie has used the TMBF programs since 1987. McKenzie recently closed on three refunding issues in order to lower the rate of interest on the debt. The General Obligation Refunding Bond is in the amount of \$2,648,995 and was placed with a local bank in McKenzie. From L to R Jennifer Waldrup, City Recorder; McKenzie Mayor Jill Holland; and Tommy Green, TMBF Marketing Representative.

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A 2021 Cybersecurity Checklist: How do you rate your city?

CHECKLIST from Page 1**8. Encryption**

Encryption of backup data, emails, files, and other important information ensures that unauthorized users cannot read this data if they steal or hack into it.

9. Secure connection for remote employees

If someone remotely accesses your organization's data, you need a VPN or secure browser to make sure the connection does not expose you to cyberattacks. This is especially important when employees use a poorly secured wi-fi connection (such as public wi-fi) or a home network that's not secured properly.

10. Secured wi-fi access points

Many cyberattackers take advantage of an organization's unsecured wi-fi access points to enter your network. Wireless routers need proper setup and configuration to ensure they are secure.

11. Secured website

Whether cybercriminals deface websites or hack into them as a way into your network, they are an easy target. It's important to use a trusted hosting provider and secure services (such as online payments).

12. Physical security

Often overlooked in a cybersecurity strategy, physical security is important—including everything from properly escorting guests to locking rooms containing servers and computers.

13. Employee training

Despite the best cybersecurity defenses, an employee tricked by a phishing email or malicious website can allow a virus into your network. Periodic employee training helps teach them how to detect and

avoid common cyber threats.

14. IT asset inventory

An IT asset inventory is important to cybersecurity. If you don't know how many servers and computers you have, and where they are, then how do you know they are secure and out of unauthorized hands?

Advanced Items

Once your security foundation is established, the following items begin to enhance your strategy.

15. Intrusion detection and prevention

As a more advanced form of basic monitoring and alerting, intrusion detection and prevention tools work with your firewall to detect and prevent attacks related to specific vulnerabilities—often automatically stopping such attacks.

16. Security scanning

Regular security scans of your systems help identify vulnerabilities and holes that you can then fix.

17. Enterprise-grade email

Enterprise-grade email offers much better security than consumer-grade email, which is not recommended for organizations. IT professionals can also better manage and secure your enterprise-grade email.

18. Malware and content filtering

Special tools can detect and filter out malware while also placing restrictions on what internet content employees can access. This helps prevent them from downloading malicious files and software.

19. Dark Web monitoring

The Dark Web allows for anonymous browsing with specialized software. Many use the Dark Web for illicit and illegal activity. IT professionals can monitor the Dark Web in case account credentials (such as administrative passwords) or stolen customer information appears on the black market.

20. Policies

Setting information security policies will help you enforce cybersecurity across your organization. Policies include:

- General controls: Your organi-

zation needs policies for contract / vendor management, network security, wireless network security, physical access security, logical access security (which includes user authentication), and disaster recovery / business continuity.

- Application controls: These policies help you with data processing along with security, configuration, and contingency planning related to applications.

- Decommissioning and disposing of data and equipment: Deleting data sometimes doesn't mean it's really deleted, and equipment thrown away may still have data on it. You need policies that detail how you decommission and dispose of your equipment and the data on it.

- Employee screening and background checks: This policy may seem unrelated to cybersecurity, but strong employee screening and background checks lessen the chance of hiring a criminal or disgruntled employee who will attack your organization from the inside.

- Social media: A social media platform offers cyberattackers administrative credentials and the potential to embarrass your organization, similar to defacing your website. Creating a social media policy around access and use will help lessen this type of cyberattack.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Once your foundation and advanced strategy are in place, there are several steps you can take to make sure that your cybersecurity remains strong into the future.

21. Modernized and upgraded software

Newer software is more secure than aging software, which vendors sometimes no longer support. It's important to keep your operating systems and applications modern and upgraded.

22. Modernized and upgraded hardware

The same reasoning applies to hardware—keep it modern and upgraded. Old, aging hardware contains

more security vulnerabilities than newer hardware.

23. Incident response planning

Developing a plan detailing how you respond to a cyberattack will help you react to an incident with "muscle memory"—rather like a fire drill. Your team will know exactly what to do.

24. Network segmentation

You may decide to segment and separate certain parts of your network from other parts. This way, for example, if ransomware were to infect one department's servers, the virus would not be able to infect another department.

25. Mobile strategy

Many employees may access your organization's data through their smartphones, tablets, and laptops. If so, you need a mobile security strategy—whether it's issuing work-only devices to employees or providing secure access to sensitive and confidential data if they use a personal device.

26. Compliance strategy

Depending on the laws and regulations you must follow, security and compliance often go hand in hand. Developing a compliance strategy will require you to stay on top of security measures related to data breach notification, data privacy, and other important areas.

27. Cyber liability insurance

Improving your security foundation will help you lower cyber liability insurance premiums. If you don't have cyber liability insurance, it's a good idea to acquire some—as it will help offset the expensive costs of a cyberattack's aftermath.

28. Periodic security assessments

Security and technology change rapidly. Assessing your organization's security periodically (such as annually) will uncover new gaps and vulnerabilities, allowing you to stay ahead of a cyberattack.

VC3 offers cybersecurity, website design, custom application development, and business intelligence services. Visit www.vc3.com

NATIONAL BRIEFS



U.S. retail sales declined again in December as renewed measures aimed at curbing the COVID-19 pandemic led to reduced spending at restaurants and retail stores. The U.S. Department of Commerce reported retail sales dropped 0.7% in December following the 1.4% decrease reported in November. The report came on the heels of a job report showing that the U.S. economy had shed jobs in December for the first time in eight months with further losses predicted in January after unemployment applications surged in the first week of the year. Growth estimates for the fourth quarter are around a 5% annualized rate, largely reflecting an inventory build. The economy grew at a 33.4% rate in the third quarter after contracting at a 31.4% pace in

the April-June quarter, the deepest since the government started keeping records in 1947.

Half of U.S. hotel rooms are projected to remain empty in 2021, according to an economic forecast recently released by the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA). The organization's "State of the Hotel Industry 2021" outlining the forecasted state of the industry in 2021 and into the immediate future. The report found the industry was down 4 million jobs in 2020 when compared with 2019. While some 200,000 jobs are expected to be filled this year, overall, the accommodations sector faces an 18.9% unemployment rate, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Business travel, which comprises the largest source of hotel revenue, remains nearly nonexistent, but it is expected to begin a slow return in the second half of 2021. Leisure travel is expected to return first,

with consumers optimistic about national distribution of a vaccine and with that an ability to travel again in 2021.

The ability to work from home may prompt some Americans to stay in the workforce longer. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1 in 5 adults aged 65 or older are remaining on the job—nearly double the amount doing so 40 years ago. During the pandemic, many older employees have found that working from home cuts out commutes, allows for a more comfortable environment, and helps avoid office politics. As a result, older employees have found it easier to keep working and bolster their retirement savings. Americans who are now 65 are expected to live 20 years longer, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, yet only half are on track to have the retirement savings that will last that long by the time they turn 60, according to the Federal Reserve.

COMING UP

Feb. 24, 2021

Partnering for Success Webinar

1:30-2:30 P.M. CST

'Being a Diversity and Inclusion Change Agent' presented by The Diversity Training Group. To register, visit www.PEPartners.org.

March 3-7, 2012

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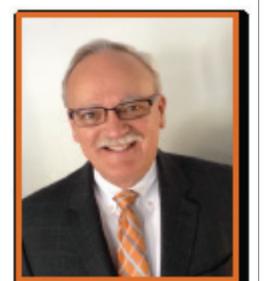
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Ed Stewart, ChFC, CLU, CFPA
Financial Advisor

Mumpower touts fiscal conservatism, communication as key

BY KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Recently elected as Tennessee's 35th Comptroller of the Treasury, Jason Mumpower fully embraces the mission of his office: to make government work better.

A native and lifelong resident of Bristol, Mumpower graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics and business administration from King College – now King University. In June 2013, he graduated from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executives in State and Local Government program.

He has worked both as a registered real estate appraiser at Rogersville-based NWP Real Estate Appraisals and at the public relations and marketing firm Corporate Image, Inc., owned by State Rep. Jon Lundberg, R-Bristol.

Mumpower was first elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives for District 3 in 1997, serving in the State House for 14 years. He was elected House Majority Leader in 2006 and also served as House Minority Leader. He also served as a member of the health and human resources; government operations; and finance, ways, and means committees, as well as Republican Caucus Assistant Leader.

He then joined the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury's Office in December 2010 as deputy comptroller under former Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. After retiring from the position, Wilson offered his "wholehearted endorsement" that Mumpower be selected as his successor to the position.

"Jason is the right person to lead our committed effort to provide independent audits, objective research, and most of all, conservative fiscal management," Wilson wrote in a letter to the Tennessee State Legislature. "I know he cares deeply about our state and the Comptroller's Office."

Mumpower is an Eagle Scout and is active in many community organizations and projects, including the Rotary Club of Bristol, TN/VA, and the chambers of commerce in Kingsport, Bristol, and Johnson County. He currently serves as a member of King University's Board of Trustees. In his spare time, Mumpower is an avid comic book collector and says he has more than 35,000 issues in his comic library.

He is married to Alicia Mumpower, and they are the proud parents of one son, Max.

TT&C: What first interested you in politics? Was there a particular cause that drew you to run for political office?

JM: I was born and raised in Bristol and still live there. I grew up in a family that wasn't particularly active in politics, but I knew there were certain values we believed in. We were active in our community and in local organizations like the Boy Scouts and our church. I went to college at King College – now King University – and that was where I had my first real experience with politics. It was August 1992 when a lady from my church asked if I would help hand out election flyers for a guy I had never met, who was running for an office I had never heard of. I went as a favor to her and handed out flyers in the parking lot of an elementary school.

It turned out, the name of the man running for office was Ron Ramsey, who was running for state senator. November came around, and the same lady called on me again to hand out some more flyers. I did, and when he won, I went to his house and met him for the first time. I ended up serving as his unofficial campaign manager for his 1994 re-election campaign and served on the 1994 Sundquist for Governor campaign. I graduated in May 1995, and got a job at King College.

Then in May 1996, our long-term U.S. Rep. Jimmy Quillen announced he was retiring from Congress, and just about everyone who held office in Northeast Tennessee ran for his seat. I then decided to run for the state representative seat that had been held by Richard Venables. I was 22 when I ran for and won the four-way primary with 32% of the vote. I turned 23 and then won the general election.

I was pleased to be able to serve the people for 14 years. I got married while I was in the House. I met my wife Alicia in Nashville in the halls of the Legislature. I was working as a young state representative, and she was working for another state representative. We were married in 2001 and will be celebrating our 20-year anniversary this year. In May 2012, we adopted our son Max. I decided to retire from the House in 2010, and had the opportunity to come work for the comptroller's office.

TT&C: You enjoyed a close relationship with your predecessor, former Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. What would be the most important things you learned from him?

JM: I have loved Justin P. Wilson since I first met him. He has been a friend, mentor, and a shining example of integrity. I am honored to have served as his deputy comptroller, and I am still seeking his advice as he is now our comptroller emeritus. Justin is an extraordinarily generous person in terms of his intellect, with his spirit, and how he treats those around him. I think that's what people like most about him. I have benefited from that generosity of spirit and have learned so much from him about caring for people. He likes to introduce himself as our "beloved comptroller" or now our "beloved comptroller emeritus." I'm going to introduce myself as the "hoping to be beloved comptroller."

TT&C: The state of Tennessee has one of the highest bond ratings of any state in the nation. How do we continue to maintain that rating amid the current economic climate?

JM: We are very fortunate to be one among 15 states that have a AAA bond rating as a direct financial result of decisions made by our General Assembly. It is important to have good conservative mindset that adheres to common-sense financial management. Having a strong rainy day fund is tantamount to making sure our financial situation is strong. You have to make sure that you use recurring dollars only for recurring expenses and not on non-recurring expenses. Not borrowing for operating expenses is also something that keeps us strong. One of the great things about Tennessee is that we borrow very little and have our debt service built into our budget.

TT&C: What do you anticipate will be the biggest priorities for this year's state budget and why?

JM: We still have to be very careful and be very conservative in our budget. We have been fortunate that we were able to make a very large deposit in the rainy day fund at the end of the last fiscal year. We have to continue to grow and maintain our rainy day fund. We've been fortunate to have good revenue collections in Tennessee despite the pandemic. However, we have to understand there is still a lot of stimulus money in the economy. We have to be prepared for a downturn in the future. I would say in this coming year, we need to continue to build a very conservative budget. The one reason we have been able to make it through this pandemic as strong as we have is our fiscal conservatism. That has yielded results this year and will continue to in years to come.

TT&C: What have been some of the biggest concerns expressed to your office as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic impacting municipal budgets, and how do municipal officials address these concerns?

JM: First off, let me say that cities that have saved and prepared for a rainy day are the ones we see that are doing so well. It is good policy for cities and counties to have in a rainy day fund about 16% of their budget or what would equal two months of their expenses. One thing we have done in this past year is started a new division in the comptroller's office called the division of local government finance to help cities and counties with their local budgets. Cities and counties have had to do what anyone, any family has done, which is take a look at their expenses.

Fortunately, cities were able to take advantage of an extraordinary, one-time grant from the state of Tennessee to use for anything they needed. That is something the governor and the legislature passed last year and was helpful to our cities and counties. We also had the local CARES Act money. On top of that extra money, I have watched carefully the collected revenues and have seen that sales taxes are up in nearly every city and county across the state. People have been getting that stimulus money and spending it.

We take the fiscal health of municipalities very seriously. We talk with mayors and city council people every day to help them with their budgets. What I want them to know is our division of local government finance is here for them every day in any way, for anything. There is no question to big or no question too small. Always give us a call.

TT&C: With another budget season right around the corner, what advice do you have for municipalities who are looking ahead to the next fiscal year while still trying to make smart financial decisions amid the pandemic?

JM: Be prepared, and by being prepared, I mean do some forecasting. Think about things in a long-term way. Continue to be conservative. We see some positive trends with this virus, and we think we're headed toward an end, but let's continue to be conservative for a little while longer and not get ahead of ourselves. Look at what is required for you to do and meet those requirements before anything else. Just as important as looking at what is required is looking at things that are not required. Look at your needs, and you can look at your wants after that. Every city has a financial analyst assigned to it in our office. Call us and consult with your financial analyst.

TT&C: What do you think are the biggest financial or economic issues local governments are facing, both in the short-term and long-term? How do we work to solve those issues?

JM: I think one thing we always need to be prepared for is natural growth. We have seen in national surveys that Tennessee is the No. 1 state in the nation for relocation. Growth is great, but growth increases expenses. You have to keep up with that growth, whether its sewer and water, infrastructure, roads, or mainte-



Comptroller Jason Mumpower, center, is sworn in as the state of Tennessee's 35th Comptroller of the Treasurer flanked by his predecessor and Comptroller Emeritus Justin P. Wilson, left, and his wife Alicia and son Max, right. Mumpower was elected to the position in January 2021. Prior to that, he had served as deputy comptroller for a decade.



Jason Mumpower
Comptroller of the Treasury

"The state is strong, but we can only be as strong as the sum of our parts. Our cities are so important to this state. They are economic engines in all corners of our state. We want all cities to be successful."

nance. You have to keep up with those basic things it takes to make a city run every day. You have to make sure you are budgeting for long-term expenses. You have to make sure you are funding your OPEB and pension funds. Those have to be properly and actuarially funded. The reason people choose to live in a city first is because of the services that are offered. Cities have to be able to fund those basic services.

TT&C: Tennessee's CMFO program is nearly 15 years old. Do you think this program has been a success? What benefits has Tennessee derived from it?

JM: I don't think that program has just been a success; I think it has been an extraordinary success. I want to shout from the rooftops about it. This program is one we want to continue to grow, and we want people to continue to participate in it. It has benefited every community where there is a CMFO in making sure budgets are prepared, drafted, and functioning properly. It has reduced the number of audit findings in municipalities, and we can measure this. MTAS has studied and measured that. The comptroller's office is proud to see any time audit findings are corrected or any time there are fewer audit findings. What the CMFO program does more than anything is it makes government work better, and the motto of the comptroller's office is "making government work better."

TT&C: What do you feel are the primary goals of government audits? How can municipalities work with your office to achieve these goals?

JM: First off, the goal of an audit is to look and see if there is anything in a local government that is not going right or if there is any deficiency. My opinion is that an audit is a tool that local governments can use for improvement. We all need that. An audit is an objective document where someone else comes in and lays eyes on your operation. They produce a tool for you to take, learn from, and make improvements. The citizens of your municipality are the ones who benefit from things being done correctly. To the extent you can take that tool and use it to better your operations, the better off you are going to be.

I think the worst kind of finding in an audit is a repeat finding. What that means is that the local government hasn't used that tool to fix things. Where we really begin to be concerned is when we see repeat findings in audit after audit. We don't want to see where somebody

has been advised something is wrong and they don't care or don't take the initiative to fix it.

TT&C: The local government audit division also operates the COT CyberAware program. Why is it essential that municipalities are more proactive in cyber security than ever?

JM: We have our COT CyberAware program because often times municipalities don't have a dedicated IT staff, particularly a lot of our smaller municipalities. I cannot underscore how important cybersecurity is. When we go to New York to have our bond rating scored every year, one of the first questions the bond rating agencies ask us is about the cybersecurity of our state. You see so many bad actors out there who try to prey on the state of Tennessee and the comptroller's office. There are ransomware attacks out there. We have phishing attacks and malware attacks every day. We all know this. The reason for the COT CyberAware program is because very simple training can help prevent these cyber attacks. We are glad to be able to help local governments of any size with this cyber awareness training. We want them to be cyber secure. We are reaching out every day to local governments to help with this. Any local government that has concerns about their cybersecurity should give us a call.

TT&C: Your office frequently interacts with local government officials. How would you describe your relationships with municipal officials? What are your goals for continuing to build those relationships?

JM: The comptroller's office is inherently a regulator. We are set up in structure to be that way, and we are powered by the General Assembly to be that way. But just because we are a regulator doesn't mean we have to be adversarial. I am proud and cherish the fact that we have great relationships with municipalities. We have a good working relationship with the Tennessee Municipal League. We have a good working relationship with mayors and city officials across the state. Many local officials around this state from Mountain City to Memphis have my cell phone number and text me or call me personally on the weekend when they have a question. One thing we have tried to do over the past decade is make sure that local government officials know when they have a question or have something they want to do and are not sure about it, to give us a call.

As Comptroller Emeritus Justin P. Wilson has often said and as I will continue to say: "It is always better to call the comptroller before the comptroller calls you." We want to have a very positive, very open, and very close working relationship with local governments. The state is strong, but we can only be as strong as the sum of our parts. Our cities are so important to this state. They are economic engines in all corners of our state. We want all cities to be successful. We are not afraid or ashamed to exert our regulatory authority, but what we want to do before we get there is help. We want to ease the burden of being a regulator by first being a helper. If we can all work at that together, I think we can all achieve better outcomes.

TT&C: What can municipal officials do to aid the comptroller's office and its employees in their mission?

JM: Communicate. As I said, each city has a financial analyst assigned to their city. The finance director or the mayor in those cities should already know who that person is. Stay in touch with them. Cities are audited by an independent CPA who contracts with our office. Stay in contact with your auditor. If you would like to be, stay in touch with our audit staff in our office. But more than anything, if you have a question just call us. We are happy to come visit your community if you want us to do that. I have personally been to communities across the state, big and small. We appreciate the great work cities do, and we are here for them.