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New Year, renewed focus on TML advocacy efforts

Happy 2023! As we usher in the new year - its customary to set resolutions and establish goals for the coming year. The new year also brings a renewed focus and rekindled energies on the tasks that

For Tennessee city officials, it means refocusing our energies on TML's advocacy efforts to return essential revenues to Tennessee municipalities and the citizens we

The return of these shared revenues will greatly benefit Tennessee's towns and cities – particularly the smaller municipalities who know all too well what every available dollar means to their budgets.

It will also provide meaningful tax relief to our citizens by easing the pressure on the local property tax. Every dollar returned to your community helps your city government meet funding demands, provide essential services to your citizens, provide budget flexibility at the local level that support sustainable local growth, and reduce the pressure to increase local tax rates.

This legislative initiative is the League's No. 1 priority for the 2023 legislative session. In order for us to succeed, your support of and engagement in these efforts are essential. Gov. Lee and members of the Tennessee General Assembly need to hear from you about what these essential revenues will mean for your community.

Our proposal is simple and just. For 55 years, the state returned a share of state sales tax



Bobby King Henderson Mayor TML President

collected to benefit city residents. However, in the midst of a severe budget shortfall in 2002, the state altered the sharing relationship between the state and cities and towns by choosing to keep a portion of the state sales taxes collected for itself in order to bring the state budget back in balance.

That was 20 years ago. Today, the state has had nearly a decade of strong economic and fiscal success. Yet, the altered sharing relationship is still in place. There has never been a better time to restore this revenue-sharing relationship.

Contact your legislators today! Urge them to use the millions of over collections the state has accrued each year and share more of the sales tax dollars generated in

The TML staff has developed numerous materials to help you deliver the Restore, Return, Relief message. You can find that information here, tml1.org/stateshared-sales-tax-and-single-article-cap-campaign

113th TN General Assembly convenes; McNally, Sexton re-elected Speakers



Photo by Speaker Sexton's staff

The 113th Tennessee General Assembly was gaveled into session Tuesday, Jan. 10, to swear in legislators and to formally elect leadership positions.

Lt. Gov. Randy McNally was formally re-elected for a fourth term as Speaker of the Senate. McNally has served in that role since 2017. Rep. Cameron Sexton was re-elected to a second full term as Speaker of the House. He has served in the role since August 2019.

In Lt. Gov. McNally's acceptance speech, he touted the fact that the state of Tennessee enjoys "low taxes, low debt and our economy continues to grow as jobs and people flood into our state."

Speaker Sexton spoke of unity and the importance of coming together for the betterment of Tennessee.

"There is nothing wrong with a good and robust debate, said



Members of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly convened Jan. 10 to swear in lawmakers and elect leadership positions in preparation of a new legislative session. Lt. Gov. Randy McNally was formally re-elected as Speaker of the Senate. Rep. Cameron Sexton was re-elected as Speaker of the House.

House Speaker Sexton. "We all have differences because we are **Senate Committees** all unique individuals with different backgrounds and experiences. My wish is for us, is at the end of

Twenty freshmen legislators

were among those members sworn into office - three new senators and 17 new House members. Republicans hold the super majority with 27 of 33 seats in the Senate, and 75 seats in the 99-member House.

the day that we can come together,

and all work for the betterment of

As part of the organizational session, Lt. Gov. McNally and House Speaker Sexton announced committee appointments. To review committee assignments for all of the members of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly, go

Mumpower, Lillard

House Committees

Gov. Bill Lee will take the oath of office for his second term at the inauguration ceremony on Jan. 21 at 11:00 a.m. CT on Legislative Plaza in Nashville. The event is a joint convention of the 113th General Assembly.

The governor's annual State of the State address, when he releases his proposed budget and provides information about his legislative agenda, is scheduled for later this

Lee's administration has previously unveiled some of the proposals, including a major initiative to overhaul the state's highway

Registration Now Open!

Make plans to attend TML 2023 Legislative Conference in Nashville

Join us in Nashville for the TML Legislative Conference, slated for March 13-14 at the DoubleTree by Hilton.

The Legislative Conference is a great opportunity to connect with your fellow municipal officials; hear from our state leaders on key legislation and public policy matters affecting your municipality; and to meet with your Senator and Representative on Capitol Hill to discuss your community needs.

As in the past, TML plans to invite the Lt. Governor, House Speaker, and other relevant state leaders to address our membership and take questions on the most important matters being debated in the General Assembly.

Registration opens Monday morning, March 13 at 8:30 a.m. with a meet-and-greet coffee break with TML's sponsored programs - Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund, Public Entity Partners, and the various TML Partnered Programs. Lunch will begin at noon.

The conference program will run from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. with a host of speakers from our state leadership. Attendees are encouraged to attend the House and Senate floor sessions that evening at the Capi-

Tuesday's agenda will begin with an early breakfast and more presentations before adjourning to attend committee meetings at Cordell Hull.

TENTATIVE AGENDA Monday, March 13

8 -11:30 am Sponsorship Program 8:30 a.m. Registration 12 noon Lunch Speaker Program 1 - 4 p.m. 5 p.m. Floor sessions at the Capitol

Tuesday, March 14

7 a.m. Breakfast Speaker Program 8 - 10 a.m. 10 a.m. Adjourned Attendees are encouraged to attend committee meetings at the Cordell Hall Building.

To register, go to: Register City Officials

Members of the Tennessee of the state's constitutional officers during a joint session of the 113th

General Assembly on Jan. 11. Jason Mumpower was re-elected to his second, two-year term as Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury; David Lillard was re-elected to his seventh, two-year term as State Treasurer. Both were elected by a vote of acclamation. Tre Hargett, Secretary of State, was elected in 2021 and has two more years to serve in a four-year

"I am honored to have the support and confidence of the Tennessee General Assembly in this important role," said Comptroller Mumpower. "We will continue to encourage conservative fiscal management of taxpayer dollars and stay focused on our mission to make government work bet-

Mumpower is responsible for leading the Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury, which comprises of 12 divisions and more than 560 employees, and ensuring the office fulfills its mission to make government work better. He joined the Comptroller's Office in December 2010, serving as former Comptroller Justin P. Wilson's deputy comptroller and chief of staff.

Prior to his service with the Comptroller's Office, Mumpower served in the Tennessee General Assembly as the state representative for Sullivan and Johnson counties. He was first elected to office at age 23. During his 14-year tenure, he held the positions of House Majority Leader and House Minority Leader.

Lillard was re-elected to his seventh, two-year term as state treasurer.

"It is a great honor to be your Treasurer and have this opportunity to improve the per capita income, and the standard and quality of life for Tennesseans throughout our great State" said Treasurer

As Treasurer, Lillard oversees tmore than 270 employees and the



Jason Mumpower Comptroller of the Treasury



David Lillard State Treasurer

department internally manages more than \$55 billion in state and local government funds.

Treasurer Lillard has championed issues of financial literacy and strives to find new ways to improve the financial lives of Tennesseans. Since first elected in 2009, he has worked with the Treasury Department to provide Tennesseans with financial tools needed to lead a better quality of life.

Treasurer Lillard has extensive professional experience in public and private corporate finance transactions, municipal finance, governmental budgeting and related fields.

Both the comptroller and the treasurer serve two-year terms; whereas, the secretary of state serves four-year terms. All are elected to their positions by a joint convention of the House and Senate.

Knoxville co-responder program sees success in public safety, mental health

By KATE COIL TML Communications Specialist

With many police agencies across the country incorporating social workers and psychologists into their departments, the Knoxville Police Department has seen success with the growth of its co-responder program.

The program pairs CIT-trained police officers with behavioral health specialists and is a partnership between the Knoxville Police Department and the Helen Ross McNabb Center. In its first month alone, the pilot program's one officer and behavioral health specialist pair assisted 19 individuals at risk of suicide, conducted 12 welfare checks, and responded to an individual in crisis following a reported shooting.

Phil Keith, interim head of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (TACP), said social workers and mental health professionals were once part of departments back in the



The co-responder program is one of the latest programs implemented jointly by the Helen Ross McNabb Center and Knoxville Police Department in the past decade. Started in 2020, the success of the program has seen it expand to save more lives, reduce incarceration costs, and help KPD better manage and prioritize emergency calls.

1970s when the process of deinstitutionalization led to an increase in those facing mental health issues in the public sphere. Keith said those

mental health and social work positions were slowly phased out due to high cost and other factors.

See KNOXVILLE on Page 7

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



Explore Bristol will build a new visitors' center at the trailhead of the Wes Davis Greenway at the intersection of Volunteer Parkway and Anderson Street. The new, 2,046-square-foot facility will offer information on local attractions and is expected to open sometime in 2023. In addition to offices for Explore Bristol, the center will feature tourism display spaces and a room for small events, meetings, and potential exhibits. Tourism has grown in Bristol and the surrounding area in recent years and officials hope the new center will promote continued growth.

CHATTANOOGA

The city of Chattanooga will add 86 new smart city intersections through funding from Seoul Robotics, a company that powers smart 3D infrastructure solutions. The company will expand its partnership with the Chattanooga Department of Innovation Delivery and Performance, and the Center of Urban Informatics and Progress (CUIP) at UTC, the smart city and urbanization research center in the largest urban Internet of Things deployment of this kind in the nation. The U.S. Department of Transportation has already funded \$4.5 million in the creation of a living laboratory in Chattanooga that provides researchers with unparalleled mapping, tracking, and identification insights into the state of mobility in both Chattanooga and with wider applications for other communities. With the 86 new intersections, there will be more than 100 intersections covered in the downtown testbed including the city's MLK Smart Corridor.

CLEVELAND

The city of Cleveland will be moving its municipal offices two blocks from their present location to a historic hotel in the heart of the city's downtown. City officials approved a lease-to-purchase agreement for the former Cherokee Hotel property and agreed to appropriate \$6.1 million in American Rescue Plan funds and \$2 million in local funds for renovations to outfit the property according to city needs. Presently the location of Roy's Alternators, the hotel has also served as an apartment complex in recent years and has been the focus of redevelopment and renovation efforts for downtown Cleveland. The seven-story Cherokee Hotel was completed in 1927.

ELIZABETHTON

General Machine and Tool Company, Inc., officials announced the company will invest \$3.7 million to expand manufacturing operations at its headquarters in Elizabethton. The expansion follows the company's acquisition by Cinco Research Corporation in February and will result in the creation of 25 new jobs, nearly doubling the facility's workforce. The acquisition will also give General Machine the ability to expand and update its equipment inventory and manufacturing capabilities to reach a larger customer base across the Southeast. Founded and headquartered in Elizabethton, General Machine and Tool is a premier full-service machine part manufacturer and distributor of one-off parts. The company, which primarily serves the Tri-Cities region, has been operating from its Northeast Tennessee facility since 1967.

ELIZABETHTON

The city of Elizabethton has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its 2020-21 financial report from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). It is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and this marks the first time the city of Elizabethton has received the honor. Preston Cobb, finance director for the city, said the award showed the stewardship and transparency that his department strives for. Cobb noted that the recognition could not be accomplished by just one person but took work by all departments that make up the city's government infrastructure.

FRANKLIN

In-N-Out Burger officials announced the company's plan to invest \$125.5 million to establish an eastern territory office in Franklin, which represents In-N-Out's first expansion east of Texas. The project will create 277 new jobs in Williamson County. Located off Interstate 65 in Franklin, In-N-Out will begin construction on its 100,000-square-foot office building by late 2024, with construction slated to be complete by 2026. The eastern territory office will house positions that support various business functions, from operations management to HR and IT. In-N-Out is recognized as a company that is committed to treating its associates like family. In addition to the eastern territory office, In-N-Out plans to open future restaurants in the region, beginning with locations in and around Nashville by 2026. Currently, In-N-Out has 385 locations throughout California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Texas, Oregon and Colorado. The Tennessee restaurants will be In-N-Out's first establishments east of Texas. California's first "drive-thru" hamburger stand, In-N-Out was founded in 1948 by Harry and Esther Snyder and is still owned and operated by the Snyder family.

JOHNSON CITY

The Government Finance Officers Association has also recognized the city of Johnson City for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the 21st consecutive year the city of Johnson City has earned this distinction. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. For more information on the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program, visit https:// www.gfoa.org/cafr-award

KINGSPORT

The city of Kingsport is one step closer to the opening of a fouryear dental school downtown through an initiative partnering with the University of Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, and Ballad Health. With few dental schools in the state and the region, the facility would help not only to improve access to dental students but also increase dental health options in the community. Plans are in place for the school to open at a facility located at 111 W. Sevier Ave., near Holston Valley Medical Center, by 2024. The location used to be the office for an orthodontist and is already plumbed for dental procedures. The purchase of the property could cost around \$1 million with an additional \$1-1.3 million in Phase I costs for the project, which city officials are hoping to offset by private donations and grants. Ongoing costs for the facility would be around \$800,000 a year. As part of the program, the dental school would provide services for low-income patients in Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Eastern Kentucky.

LIVINGSTON

Health Verve Food Manufacturing USA, Inc. officials announced the company will invest \$2.2 million to expand its California-based operations and locate new manufacturing operations in Livingston. By establishing its presence in Tennessee, HealthVerve will create 212 new jobs in Livingston. The Livingston facility, which represents the company's first expansion outside of its headquarters in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., will support HealthVerve's overall production, allowing the company to meet and exceed its growing consumer demands for shelf-stable beverages. Founded in 2006, Health Verve Food Manufacturing USA, Inc. is a high-value food manufacturer that specializes in canning processes. In addition to producing and developing innovative functional foods, HealthVerve is committed to research and development to

Springfield breaks ground long-awaited road extension project



Officials with the city of Springfield have broken ground on the long-awaited Batson Parkway extension, which is the second phase of the William A. Batson Parkway project. The extension will connect Highway 41 South near Experiment Station Road to Tom Austin Highway and the Walling Road intersection. This will provide commuters with a bypass of southern Springfield. Work on the project is expected to take 18 months, weather permitting.

Brentwood opens fifth fire station



Brentwood Commissioners, City Manager Kirk Bednar, Brentwood Fire & Rescue Department leaders, design and construction teams, and the community celebrated the official grand opening of the city's Fire Station No. 5 and its new fire apparatus. The new \$8.6 million, 10,000-square-foot station is located on Split Log Road in the fast-growing southeast portion of the city. The new two-bay, two-story fire station will house a single company, or a fire crew of three to four personnel, depending on staffing schedules, and includes a public restroom, water fountain, and water bottle fill station for people using the nearby city trail system. The grand opening ceremony included a hose uncoupling and a push-in for the \$872,995 custom Pierce fire truck to be known as Engine 5.

bring wholesome and nutritional foods to its customers nationwide.

MOUNT PLEASANT

Brazilian Professionals, LLC officials announced the company will invest \$6.1 million to establish new operations in Mount Pleasant. The California-based specialty hair treatment producer and distributor, will create 110 new jobs in Mount Pleasant, more than doubling its U.S. employment. Brazilian Professionals will locate its distribution and haircare production operations in a newly constructed, 50,000-square-foot building in the Cherry Glen Industrial Park, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. The company also plans to increase the space by another 12,000 square feet to accommodate other back-office functions and expanded corporate and headquarters-related operations. Once complete, the Tennessee facility will serve as Brazilian Professionals' primary U.S. distribution site. Founded in 2008, and headquartered in Agoura Hills, Calif., Brazilian Professionals, LLC is an exclusive distributor of Brazilian Blowout and Brazilian Bond Builder. The company manufactures and distributes its specialty haircare products globally to independent beauty distributors, salons and beauty supply companies.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Renovations are underway at the Mountain City Police Department building with in-house work being used to keep costs down. The office will see new flooring, sheetrock, and a fresh coat of paint. The Mountain City Council approved \$4,500 for the project with supplies being purchased at a local closeout store. To save on labor, the department will be utilizing members of the city street department and volunteers from the local jail.

OAK RIDGE

The city of Oak Ridge has been designated as an American World War II Heritage City by the National Parks Service (NPS). The program honors the contributions

Arlington officials cut the ribbon on healthcare facility



Town officials joined representatives of Baptist Memorial Hospital to cut the ribbon on the town's first free-standing emergency department. An adjoined primary care practice and urgent care facility will open next door with an orthopedic practice to come later this year. The facility includes an imaging center. The integration of emergency care, urgent care and primary care under the same roof can also improve patient outcomes with hospital officials calling tertiary facilities like Arlington's "the future of healthcare." The facility will also provide critical healthcare services between Memphis and the Blue Oval City development. Arlington officials have been working with Baptist Hospital to bring a healthcare facility to their community for more than 25 years.

of local towns, cities, counties, and the people whose bravery and sacrifices shaped the U.S. homefront during the war. Only one city in each state can receive this designation. Oak Ridge played a critical role in the war, being created secretly as a key location of the Manhattan Project. The work conducted at Oak Ridge was instrumental to the war effort. According to the NPS, information about the engagement of the citizens of Oak Ridge to marshal resources toward the U.S. World War II home front effort and to commemorating and preserving its legacies will be included on the website and may be included in future AWWIIHC program promotional materials.

SHELBYVILLE

The Middle Tennessee Education

Center in Shelbyville is the new home of Motlow State Community College's Aviation Simulation Lab. The lab houses three Redbird flight simulators, two of which meet FAA-certification. The opening of the lab comes on the heals of Murfreesboro-based Middle Tennessee State University receiving state approval for a \$67 million campus for its aviation and aerospace program at the Shelbyville Municipal Airport, helping the city become an aviation hub. Plans are in the works to sync the Motlow program with the one at MTSU with the goal of training future pilots and bringing more young people into the aviation field. Continuing education is also being offered to existing aviation officials.

Opportunities on horizon for cities to become part of EV charging network

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

State officials delivered an update on Tennessee's electric vehicle infrastructure as well as how municipalities can participate in the building of this network through state and federal programs aimed at developing fast charging stations.

In 2018, Drive Electric TN and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) kickstarted a program that would bring the total number of EVs owned by Tennessee residents to 200,000. With a growing market for EVs and more EVs being made in the state, plans are progressing to build both Tennessee's portion of the federal Fast Charge network as well as plan for more localized EV infrastructure needs.

The purpose of the federal and state fast-charge networks is to ensure that EVs can navigate along the major interstate and highway corridors across the country and state without experiencing range anxiety, or the concern that there will not be enough charging stations in place to complete a trip.

Alexa Voytek, deputy director of programs with TDEC's Office of Energy, described the fast-charge network as a "minimum, viable backbone" to connect motorists and communities. TDEC and TVA identified major corridors across the state, leveraging VW settlement funds and TVA funding to create the Fast Charge TN Network, and are presenting working to bring fast charges to these locations.

"We have a corridor completeness map we use as we developed these stations," Voytek said. "There is just one in Tennessee today located in Martin, which is the first fast-charge location in Tennessee to go online. There are other existing Electrify America DC fast charging stations that meet our criteria. We have just executed all of our contracts for TDEC funded projects, which will soon be underway. We will slowly start to fill in this map."

Andrew Frye, power utilities engineer with TVA, said the Fast Charge TN program is aimed at local power companies who are customers of TVA to install, own, and operate fast chargers along major corridors at least every 50 miles.



Officials with the city of Martin celebrate the opening of the first Fast Charge TN charging station. Other charging stations are in the work across the state to fill in gaps in both the state and federal network for charging electric vehicles.

"To do that, we are cooperating with the municipalities and power cooperatives under TVA," Frye said. "The program reimburses the costs of local power companies up to 80% to install a couple of fast chargers that meet all of the program specifications. Between TVA and TDEC, we have about 50 different sites in the pipeline being worked on. It's a broad-reaching program to get every 50 miles covered. We think it will take an additional 80 locations. There are only 30 publicly available, DC fast-charging sites available now, and we will be adding another 80 of those. Each site will have at least two charging stations but some will have up to four."

Matt Meservy, director of TDOT's Long Range Planning Division, said the agency is also working on the infrastructure of the Tennessee Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (TEVI) plan, which provides a different funding source for similar infrastructure installation.

TDOT will have \$88.33 million over the next five years to build both fast-charging and then secondary network charges. Initially, charging stations must be along the state's six major interstates – 24, 26, 40, 65, 75, and 81 – as well as U.S. Highway 64 and are similar fast-chargers to those being used by the Fast Charge TN project.

"The TEVI program requires us to fill the gaps that are identified on our alternative fuel corridors," Meservy said. "Our priority - and the only way that we can use the additional funding through the TEVI plan-is to fill these gaps first. That is our priority at this moment. Our biggest hurdle will be to cover U.S. 64 because at the moment there aren't any stations located there. We cannot move forward with additional funding and the phase two approach until we have satisfied all these gap requirements."

While building out the fastcharge remains the primary focus, planning is already being done toward bringing EV charging capacity to secondary markets. Leftover federal funds from the TEVI program could be used to do this once the initial fast-charge network is done.

"As part of a phase two approach, there has been discussion about using these funds for workforce development to make sure we can train some of our Tennessee residents to be actively part of the EV infrastructure and its adoption," Meservy said.

Municipalities may consider different types of charging stations depending on how long and for what purpose they want visitors to come to their community. While some communities may be a good fit for the fast-charge network, others might prefer slower chargers that encourage users to spend more time in the community.

"Fit the application to the charging station," Frye said. "If you want people to be in an area longer, like in a park or a downtown area, maybe look at a level two station rather than a fast-charging one. If you want people to briefly get off the interstate to visit a gas station or restaurant, then you are looking at the fast chargers."

There are three levels of charges with the first being 110 volt-chargers that are already the standard outlet for most homes with no modifications needed to charge electric vehicles. While plugging a vehicle into a standard house outlet may not completely charge a vehicle overnight, Frye said those who travel less than 50 miles in a day might find they can use this basic form of charging with

no issues.

The level two or 240 volt chargers take several hours to charge and can be installed in homes or businesses with slight modifications. While home appliances like dryers and stoves often use outlets of this nature, many choose to have an electric install a specific 240-volt outlet into their garage for charging purposes. Many chargers or outlets for this nature are also available at hotels, shopping malls, or businesses. These chargers can cost anything from a couple thousand dollars for a home install to around \$10,000 for a business or public location.

Level three or fast chargers that can charge a vehicle fully in between 30 minutes to a few hours. The most expensive type of charger, these facilities are most often installed at major interstate interchanges where users can get a meal or briefly rest while charging their vehicle for a long trip.

There are also incentives from both the public and private sector available to help manage install costs. Voytek said the federal government plans to soon make \$2.5 billion available in two separate grant programs aimed at building vehicle charging infrastructure.

"One is community charging focused, and so local governments could apply directly for that to install community charging," she said. "The other program is still corridor focused, but also includes other alternative fuels like natural gas and propane. We expect to see that program very soon. Under the Volkswagen settlement, we also set aside a tiny amount of funding that can go toward EV charging infrastructure outside of the Fast Charging network. We have contemplated two secondary network programs that we will probably be released in 2023. One of those will be focused on multi-family housing and the other will be focused on rural destination charging."

Voytek said local officials may want to talk to their local energy company to see if they would consider offering rebates or incentives to encourage the installation of charging infrastructure both commercially and developers as well as the adoption of EVs.

There are certain tax credits available for commercial and residential charging stations and some auto manufacturers or dealerships offer rebates for installing charging stations, especially through charging companies they partner with. GM has even launched a program encouraging local GM dealerships to install 10 charging stations at locations throughout their own communities to encourage EV purchases.

Voytek said as more municipalities begin electrifying their fleets it may also encourage the addition of charging stations at municipal properties or within the community.

"We work a lot with local governments throughout the state who are starting to evaluate these options and look at the different vehicle types that are out there," she said. "That could be light duty vehicles or even all-electric vans or delivery options. There is a lot out there for governments to start evaluating for their own needs as well."

To better educate themselves and their communities about electric vehicles and upcoming EV-related opportunities, Voytek said leaders should reach out to Drive Electric TN and see if they have a local chapter of the group or want to start one in their community.

ORNL research paving way for EV changeover

By KATE COIL

As four major auto comelectric vehicles across the state, Tennessee is also producing significant research and development on how the changeover to EVs will change American infrastructure, impact the power grid, and change the trucking and logistics industries.

Oak Ridge National Laboratories (ORNL) has long been on the forefront of many life-changing scientific developments, and its researchers continue to play a major role in helping define how EVs and related infrastructure are changing not just the country but the world.

Burak Ozpineci, section head of ORNL's vehicle and mobility systems research section, serves both as a joint faculty member of the University of Tennessee's Bredesen Center and as one of the researchers addressing the questions and challenges posed by the increase in electric vehicles on the marketplace.

One of the most recent research projects undertaken by the staff at ORNL centers around how to charge electric semitrucks to further encourage the transition from diesel to electric power in the long-haul trucking and logistics industries. ORNL researches designed architecture, software and control strategies for a futuristic EV truck stop that can draw megawatts of power and reduce carbon emissions through the use of solar arrays and batteries.

Ozpineci said charging a semi-truck requires both a different connector and more power than a basic vehicle, like a sedan or electric pickup. Where an electric car or pickup may utilize a charger that produces anywhere from 7 to 350 kilowatts, the chargers needed to power a long-distance-traveling semitruck require around 1 megawatt of power.

"As the power level goes up, it is harder to get that power," Ozpineci said. "You have to



ORNL researchers demonstrate wireless electric charging technology on a UPS van. The research is just part of how ORNL is working to tackle challenges posed by the increase in electric vehicles on the marketplace.

find where you can get that power to see where you can install these charging stations. Most truck stops don't have this power, so new power would have to be brought into these stops. Trucks usually drive around 500 miles a day. When they come to a truck stop, they want to stay overnight, or they have a partner so they can continue to drive. A megawatt charger would still take several hours to charge the truck. Drivers could stay overnight, but you wouldn't have two drivers and continue to drive like when you gas up and go. That could be a challenge."

While the charging time would work for single drivers, Ozpineci said ORNL is also looking at how trucker teams could still use multiple drivers to meet deadlines. One suggestion is switching out batteries in the vehicle at truck stops to have a continued charge.

Another project ORNL has looked into is roadways that charge vehicles continuously through wireless charging with roads operating similarly to the wireless charging pads many use on their smart phones and other devices.

"We started working on this in 2008, and status-wise, we have demonstrated 120-kilowattcharging through a six-inch gap," he said. "We are sending power through air for this. You have a transmitter coil in the ground and a receiver coil in the vehicle, then you send the power

through the ground. Now, we have projects that offer up to 300-kilowatt charging. We are sending 30 houses worth of power through six inches of air, nothing but air. I've been working on this for a long time, but to see it is still like magic."

The challenge is making dynamic wireless charging that suites the needs of all vehicles.

"Say you wanted to drive from Nashville to Florida, you wouldn't have to stop because we give you enough energy. We aren't trying to charge your battery from zero to 100; we are just trying to give you enough energy that your battery charge stays the same. We have talked about that for passenger vehicles. We can do something similar for big trucks, but you need something that works for passenger vehicles and trucks because trucks need more power."

Ozpineci said researchers are discussing ways to meet this challenge by using smaller batteries on big trucks as well as extending the range for these trucks. Dynamic wireless charging also has the advantage of helping with the power grid needs and eliminating range anxiety.

"We have to make sure there is more generation; that is for sure," he said. "We also have to make sure we utilize our energy efficiently. For example, we have a project right now called Smart Charge Management. You don't have to charge your vehicle every day. With wireless charging, you don't have to

your garage at low power, and it is always connected to the grid. It detects the time where charging isn't going to be a problem for a grid and charges it then." Battery life for EVs and what

plug your car in. You bring it into

happens to those batteries after they start to lose their charge is another issue being researched. Studies have shown that continually charging batteries from empty to full actually drains the life of the battery.

"Any time you are cycling the battery, you are using some of the life," he said. "With EVs, there will be a lot more batteries available. I am hoping in the near future the prices will come down on these batteries, and we can use them in our houses. These back-up batteries are the same as you see in vehicles. Secondary batteries could also be used. If we have millions of EVs going around, after eight to 10 years their mile range goes down. Drivers may want to get a new battery for the EV, but the old batteries still have use. They could be adapted for use in the home. Recycling is going to be important for everything."

Other research around EVs taking place at ORNL include reducing the size of electric drive components while maintain the same level of power, increasing wireless charging speeds and efficiency, and improving drive components for semi-trucks.

While much of this research is being done in Tennessee, Ozpineci said he would like to see more of it being applied in the state through partnerships with the government and other entities.

"When the governor visited here, I told him the same thing," he said. "We are developing these technologies here, but we are going to Detroit to implement them. Why not implement them here and demonstrate them together. We could have world firsts on actual roads in Tennessee. I think would also give the people of Tennessee some pride, and help convince them to look at EVs. EVs aren't scary; they're actually a lot of



PEOPLE

Richard A. Bowling, former mayor of Bluff City, died only five months after resigning his office for



Richard Bowling

health reasons. Bowling died Dec. 9, 2022 at the age of 79 after years of complications from COPD caused by exposure to asbestos. Bowling had served on the Bluff City Board of Mayor and Aldermen since 2012 and had been appointed mayor in January 2022 after the death of longtime mayor Irene Wells. He served as the town's mayor until the end of July, when his health forced him to resign from the board. A lifetime member of the Bluff City Volunteer Fire Department, Bowling also served in the U.S. Army and worked at the Carter County Sheriff's Office, Raytheon Technologies, Sperry Univac, and the James H. Quillen VA Medical

John Corak has been appointed to the vacant seat on the Decherd Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The seat was



John Corak

vacated by the resignation of former Mayor Michael Gillespie in August. Corak has served on the Decherd Planning Commission and is presently employed as a Social Security claims specialist at the U.S. Social Security Office in Tullahoma.

Richard Donnell has been selected to fill the unexpired term left vacant by Jackson District 3 Councilman Ernest



Richard Donnell

Brooks II, who left the position in November to serve as associate deputy district attorney for the Shelby County District Attorney General's Office in Memphis. Donnell is presently employed as an advisor to the president and vice president of institutional advancement for Lane College in Jackson. An attorney, Donnell was recently awarded the Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for his work. He serves as project coordinator of the college's Second Chance Pell program, which offers college-credit courses to inmates at the Northwest Correctional Complex. Donnell is also the host of two Jackson-based radio programs. He holds his law degree from the University of Florida and a bachelor's degree in political science and government from Lambuth University.

Steve Everett has been selected as the new mayor of Soddy-Daisy by his fellow members of the Soddy-Dai-



Steve Everett

sy City Commission with former Soddy-Daisy Fire Chief Jim Coleman being selected as vice mayor. Everett was elected to a four-year term on the commission in 2020. Everett previously served as an officer for the Soddy-Daisy Police Department in the early 1990 through the early 2000s. His father, Doug Everett, was the city's police chief for 15 years.





Norman Livingston Kerr

vention strategy. Kerr's work in Chattanooga will include analyzing violence in the city, assessing what existing programs can address these issues, where gaps exist, and helping leaders better understand the root causes of violence to work toward solutions. The founder of Trajectory Changing Solutions, Kerr's work as a global violence reduction professional includes spending two years as assistant deputy mayor for public safety in Chicago. Kerr also worked for an organization called UCAN from 2012 to 2019, where he led efforts to address violence in several Chicago neighborhoods. He also spent 14 years with Cure Violence, previously known as Ceasefire. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Illinois State University and a master's degree in clinical social work from the University of Chicago.

Derick Mann has been appointed to a seat on the Tullahoma Board of Mayor and Aldermen vacated by former Alder-



Derick Mann

woman Robin Dunn. Mann has two decades of experience as a small business owner in the Tullahoma community as well as a family history in the construction of both residential and commercial property in the area. He is a former member of the Highland Rim Kiwanis and as a former board member of the Macon Manor Home Owner's Association.

Benton Mc-Donough has been hired as the director of nightlife for the city of Nashville, a new position created to handle



Benton McDonough

nightlife-related issues including trash, noise, lighting, and safety. Also known as a night mayor, the position is part of municipal staffs in numerous cities with large nightlife scenes, including Atlanta; Amsterdam; Manchester, U.K.; Philadelphia; Prague; and Washington, D.C. Prior to being selected for the position, McDonough served as the executive director of the city's Beer Board for the past five years. An attorney, McDonough served as the state registrar and director of the office of vital records for the Tennessee Department of Health and as assistant general counsel for the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance. He also worked on the campaign for former Gov. Phil Bredesen as well as with the Advance Initiative by Bredesen. He holds a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University and a law degree from the Nashville School of Law.

Jeff Middleton has been selected as the new police chief for the city of Lexington following the retirement of



Jeff Middleton

longtime Chief Roger Loftin. Mid-

Rhett Pratt joins TML government relations team

Rhett Pratt will join the Tennessee Municipal League's government relations team later this month in January

He will be taking the position previously held by Denise Paige.

Pratt has spent a decade working in and with members of the Tennessee General Assembly, including his present role as a legislative budget specialist in the Office of Legislative Budget Analysis.

He previously served as the committee research analyst for the Senate State and Local Government Committee under chairmen Sen. Steve Dickerson and later Sen. Richard Briggs. He also served as a

legislative assistant to former state Sen. Dickerson and interned in the Tennessee Secretary of State's

Pratt holds a bachelor's degree in political science, graduating Magna Cum Laude, and a master's in public policy and administration both from the University of Tennessee Knoxville. He was also selected as a 2022 participant in the Council of State Governments South Staff Academy for Government Excellence.

"We welcome Rhett to our team and I know our membership will enjoy working with him," said Anthony Haynes, TML executive



Rhett Pratt

Martin honored for 30 years of service to Columbia



The Columbia City Council presents outgoing Vice Mayor Dr. Christa Martin with a plaque honoring her 30 years on the city council. The longest-serving member of the council, Martin has also been honored by the renaming of the Fairview Park Community Center as the Dr. Christa Secrest Martin Community Center. The park and its community center have been near and dear to Martin throughout her years of service. From left to right, Ward 2 Councilwoman Debbie Wiles, Ward 4 Councilman Kenny Marshall, Mayor Chaz Molder, Martin, and Ward 3 Councilman Tony Greene.

dleton began his law enforcement career in 1991 in Henderson County, serving as a patrol officer, first line supervisor, and supervisor of criminal investigations as well as with the Lexington and Henderson County Narcotic Unit. In his role as assistant chief of the Lexington Police Department, his duties have included grant writing, serving as training coordinator, and serving as commander of the department's special operations.

Robert Rhee has been appointed the new CEO of Blue-Oval SK, the name of the joint venture be-



Robert Rhee

tween Ford Motor Company and SK Innovation in Tennessee and Kentucky. Rhee has been the head of SK's production division since December 2021 and has been with the company since 2019. Before that, Rhee previously served as a vice president with Samsung for more than 30 years, including two years as the head of its battery tech center in Germany and 30 with the company in South Korea. Rhee holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Pusan National University and a doctorate in mathematics from the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology.

Allison Spears has been elected to the position on the Brentwood Board of Mayor and Aldermen left vacant



Allison Spears

by the death of longtime Alderwoman Regina Smithson. Spears won a special election on Jan. 12, 2023, for the position, defeating fellow challenger Devin McClendon with 2,315 votes to his 1,929. Spears

Bristol Police Department welcomes new K-9 team



Bristol Police Department K-9 Officer Eric Keller has been joined by K-9 Stash, a Belgian Malinois trained in narcotics detection and patrol work. Keller is a U.S. Air Force veteran who trained as a K-9 handler during his military career and joined Bristol PD six years ago. He was named the city's fourth K9 officer earlier this year. Stash was born in Holland and trained in the U.S. in Ohio. The team is certified through the North American Police Work Dog Association (NAPWDA) to detect methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine, and to conduct specialized patrol work including article searches and criminal apprehensions.

will serve out the remainder of Smithson's unexpired term, which ends in May 2025. A Gallatin native, Spears holds a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Richmond in Virginia. After college, she worked for Andersen Consulting in Washington, D.C., before moving back to the Nashville area to work for Cardinal Health then publishing company Thomas Nelson. Her family moved to Brentwood in 2009.

B o b b y Wood, who served in the Tennesse State House for 28 years, died at his home in the Harrison community



Bobby Wood

of Hamilton County, on Jan. 12, 2023, at the age of 87. Wood was first elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives in 1976 and retired from the office in 2004. He was also well known for operating the Carriage Hill Insurance firm alongside Hamilton County Property Assessor Bill Bennett. A fiscal conservative who earned respect on both sides of the aisle as the "conscience of the House," Wood served for many years on the House Finance, Ways and Means Committee, the Joint Fiscal Review Committee and was Chairman of a Joint Committee that examined the discipline code in the state's K-12 education system.

AUF()R

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TN Senate convenes for opening day of 113th General Assembly



Sen. Page Walley, left, and Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, right.



The Tennessee Highway Patrol Honor Guard presents the colors during the opening session.



Newly-elected senators in odd numbered districts were sworn into office. Pictured are Sen. Bo Watson, background, and Sen. Paul Bailey, right foreground, as Sen. Janice Bowling, left, looks on.



Senators are led in prayer as part of the opening session of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly. Pictured L to R are Sen. Becky Duncan Massey, Sen. Ed Jackson, Sen.Brent Taylor, and Sen. Joey Hensley.



Photo by Nicole Hester / The Tennessean Sen. Ken Yager, Republican Caucus Chairman

Sen. Rusty Crowe, left, is sworn into office.





Sen. Jeff Yarbro, left, and freshman Sen. Charlane Oliver,



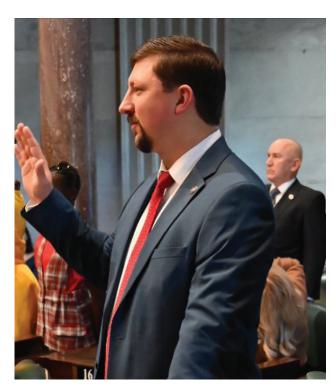
right, are sworn into office as their children look on.



Photo by Erik Schelzig / Tennessee Journal



Sen. Jack Johnson, Republican Leader, is sworn into office



Above: Freshman Sen. Adam Lowe is sworn into office.

Far left: Sen. Bill Powers, standing, in a joint session to elect Tennessee's constitutional officers

At left: Senator Raumesh Akbari, Democratic Leader

TN House convenes for opening day of 113th General Assembly



House Speaker Cameron Sexton gavels the House into session for the 113th Tennessee General Assembly.



The House chamber on opening day.



Rep. Jeremy Faison, left, and Sen. Ken Yager, right, both are caucus chairmen of their respective legislative bodies.



Rep. William Lamberth, Republican Leader



Rep. Ryan Williams

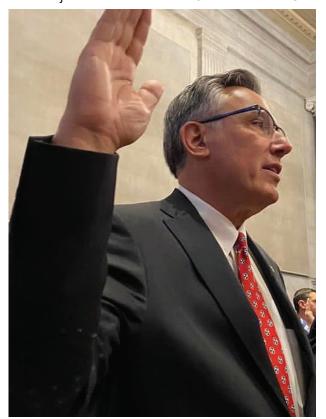


Tennessee Treasurer David Lillard, left, and Tennessee Comptroller Jason Mumpower, right, were re-elected by vote of acclamation before a joint session of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly.



From L to R: Freshman Rep. Caleb Hemmer, Pastor Clay Freshman Rep. Elaine Davis Stauffer, and Rep. Bob Freeman





Rep. Greg Vital is sworn into office.



Freshman Rep. Ronnie Glynn, left, with Rep. Chris Hurt, right



Rep. Clark Boyd

Photo by Erik Schelzig / Tennessee Journal

McMinnville HOME creates community-based approach to tackle homelessness

By KATE COILTML Communications Specialist

City and police officials, civic organization, churches, and other volunteers in McMinnville have come together to find workable solutions to homelessness issues in their community, including a transitional tiny home community and connecting citizens to employment and mental health services.

The Homeless of McMinnville Effort (HOME) program began as a personal ministry of McMinnville Police Lt. Bill Davis and his wife when Davis was off the clock. The couple offered food at least once a week to the community. Around that time, McMinnville PD also started its CIT program.

The head of the crisis-intervention team for McMinnville PD, Davis began to notice that many of the homeless individuals he and his wife worked to feed each Thursday were going through the same crisis situations he had been trained to handle with CIT.

Davis began connecting with other members of the McMinnville community who wanted to help. His wife was working with Adam Rush, a local pastor, who was interested in providing shower services to members of the homeless population once a week.

"My son had been on the Appalachian Trail," Davis said. "He was talking about how he would feel degraded when he went into town because he'd been out on the trail a week or a week and a half and hadn't shower. After making it to a town, he'd be starving to death. He'd walk into a restaurant with a pocket full of money and would be told to leave because he smelled bad or that they didn't want him in there. Many of the folks we deal with haven't showered in longer than that."

Tina Higgins and Sheila Fann became part of the group after Higgins witnessed a CIT call at a local business. Together, Davis, his wife, Rush, Higgins, and Fann founded HOME to start providing services to the homelessness community. The program grew from twice a week feedings and showers toward a goal of long-term solutions toward the issues many homeless individuals face, including housing, unemployment, and a need for mental health care.

As more people became involved and more resources were cultivated, the program began offering more services. Local civic organizations, places of business, the Upper Cumberland Development District, local mental and health care organizations, and even members of the McMinnville Board of Mayor and Aldermen began working with the program or making donations to help the effort.

"We never anticipated this kind of turn out," Davis said. "The whole community has just come out. We are also starting a women's shelter. We've been accused of giving handouts, but I say I'm one of the hardest fellows around. I want to help people, but I'm not an enabler."

McMinnville Police Chief Nichole Mosley also supported Davis' involvement in the effort, both as part of the department's CIT department and as community outreach. Unfortunately, Davis said many members of the homeless community are themselves victims of crimes like abuse, attacks, and theft but feel they can't report crimes against them. Davis said it is important for MPD to be involved in this program because officers are on the frontline of the issue

"Officers have been helping homeless folks and those who have been displaced since I began this 32 years ago," Davis said. "We put people up in hotels, we raise money, and we feed them pizzas. It's not something that we advertise or put on the news up until recently. We are the ones who see these folks, and there is not much more crisis a person will ever have than wondering where they will lay down, where they are getting their next meal, and whether they will be able to get a full night's sleep without being harassed by somebody. Officers are on the frontline and when you tell someone they have to go, it's awesome to have an option for them. HOME is here to help when it's the middle of the night, it's freezing cold, and you need a place to go."

Through his CIT connections, Davis has been able to connect many members of the homeless community who are struggling with mental health issues to local resources they didn't even know existed.

"About a year into this, we started a CIT task force with the department, the sheriff's office, the DA's office, and the various mental health facilities," Davis said. "We started getting those resources together and found out if HOME can put them up in a hotel for three to five days there is money for them to get assistance if they have mental health issues. They can help them get a job, and there are peer support groups they have. A lot of these individuals have mental issues and have families who are exhausted from taking care of them. These people have fallen through the cracks or don't have insurance. They then end up homeless. Another myth is that if you lock people up the justice system will get them mental health care. That causes major problems because they not only have mental health issues, they're homeless, and now they've got court fines and feeds."

Davis said many of those individuals he has worked with don't want to be homeless, but lack the resources and support they need.

"Our vision was to see those who want to work and want to get better to have that chance," he said. "It costs a lot to get an apartment or to get started. The cost is so much, and it's even higher since COVID. You really need first month, last month, and security deposit to get an apartment, and that can come to \$3,000. You can't get that if you're homeless, even if you're working."

Work with the HOME program has also given Davis the data he needs to dispel many misconceptions about homelessness in his community and smaller communities at large.

"We keep data because I knew it might come up in city council," he said. "About 87% of the people we serve are Warren County natives or have lived here most of their lives. Since the inception in 2020, we have served more than 700 people. Most of the homeless population in a rural community don't want to be seen or live in a vehicle. You can have a vehicle and be homeless. We have a lot of especially women and children who live in a vehicle and go unnoticed. We had a young lady with two children in middle school. She has her work schedule around their school schedule, but up until we opened our women's shelter, she had spent a year homeless. There are also a lot of people who are couch jumpers and just going from one place to another."

While many members of McMinnville's homeless population would like to hold down jobs, stigma and prejudices often keep them from the employment they need to start changing their lives.

"Ifyoudon't have an address and don't have a phone, it pretty much stops when you're trying to get a job," Davis said. "I have gone to businesses and explained to them that I have people who are homeless and want to work.



Prosperity Point is a community of soon-to-be eight tiny homes that serve as transitional housing for McMinnville's homeless population. Those who meet certain qualifications can live in the homes for six months while they save up the around \$3,000 the average McMinnville resident needs for first month's rent, last month's rent, and security deposits in order to secure housing.



An interior look at one of the transitional tiny homes at Prosperity Point. Each home has to meet bare minimum state occupancy requirements, which means an individual unit can cost between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

Some have drug issues, some don't; some have been to jail, some have not; and some have mental health issues, and some don't. With that, most of them don't have an address. I tell them if you can get ahold of me, I can get ahold of them and set up an interview."

A lack of transportation is another obstacle to holding down a job with many unwilling to hire those who don't have a vehicle. Davis said HOME provides a van service that helps those with employment get to and from work on time so this is no longer and obstacle.

Davis said the organization contacted a young man who was living in a swampy area behind the city's Walmart. The young man had no roof over his head and no personal vehicle, but was hitching a ride with a local bus to his job every day where he hadn't been late or missed a day of work in eight months. However, the young man's family had control of his bank account and debit card. HOME was able to help the young man gain back control of his own finances and find transitional housing.

The group gave out tents, blankets, hand warmers, and provided shelters in cold and extreme weather. However, HOME soon found that putting up the homeless population

in hotels as well as providing temporary shelters like tents was not cost effective. The decision came to switch to a model where hotel stays are provided to families while a more workable solution could be found for single men and women wanting to work their way out of homelessness.

This led to the creation of the Prosperity Point tiny home community, a transitional housing community that allows those who have lived in Warren County and are employed for at least a year to live in a tiny home rent-free for six months while they save up the money they need to get into an apartment.

"I found a piece of property that I thought belonged to the city, but wasn't sure," Davis said. "I talked to City Administrator Nolan Ming and told him if the city owned the property that I wanted it and what I wanted it for. With no hesitation, he looked up and saw that it belonged to the city. He said he was behind me 100%. We took it to the board, and it received a unanimous vote."

Once again, the churches, businesses, and civic organizations of McMinnville began donating their funds, supplies, and time to construct the homes. Each house costs between \$10,000 and \$12,000 based on the first prototype house that meets

basic state requirements. The 6.25-acre property now belongs to HOME and will have eight tiny homes completed by the end of January.

In the eight months since Prosperity Point has opened, there have been three individuals who graduated from the program and two who are nearing completion of the program. Davis said it is easy for homeless individuals to feel forgotten or abandoned by society at large. HOME works to give them hope

"If you can't see the future, you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel," he said. "Providing a home for no cost so long as they abide by our rules allows them to see that light. A lot of the homeless people we talked to were on the verge of suicide. We had one gentleman who had lived in the woods for nearly 10 years, unseen and just forgotten. Several years ago, he had an injury, couldn't work, filed for disability and was turned down. He then went through a serious depression. We were able to get him into a mental health program that aided him in getting his disability. He now is off the street and is working to get his ministerial license. He works at the group home we sent him to. He's now the one leading people. People have to see the light."

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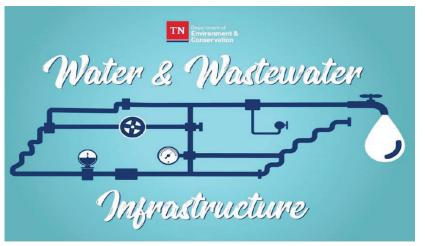
TDEC announces 23 cities to share in 24 ARP grants toatling \$125.9M

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) announced 23 cities will share in 24 grants totaling more than \$125.9 million from the state's American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund, part of which TDEC is administering in the form of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure

Bluff City, Brentwood, Byrdstown, Columbia, Cookeville, Elizabethton, Gatlinburg, Harriman, Jonesborough, Kingsport, Lebanon, Manchester, Martin, McMinnville, Metro Nashville, Newbern, Oak Hill, Obion, Rogersville, Springfield, and Surgoinsville were all recipients of grants.

In addition to its individual grant, Elizabethton will also be partnering in a collaborative grant with Carter County while Wartburg will partner with Morgan County for a grant project. A grant for the city of Harriman will also benefit the nearby town of Oakdale. Carroll County also received grant funding from the project.

Bluff City will utilize \$747,874 in grant funds for critical needs identified at the local water treatment plant including include the installation of a systems control and data acquisition system, an automated raw water bypass, and new turbidi-



Brentwood will receive \$2,201,675 for a drinking water infrastructure improvement project to address infrastructure, water loss reduction, and plans for the replacement of lead service lines for drinking water systems.

Byrdstown has received \$3,365,267 to be leveraged with SRF, USDA, and Appalachian Regional Commission funds to complete a drinking water and wastewater project to add a sedimentation basin and backwash lagoon for water treatment as well as sewer system improvements.

The city of Columbia will use \$4,819,505 for three wastewater projects addressing the renovation of

a wastewater treatment plant and replacing old sewer lines as well as the replacement of a sewage pumping station in the Duck River. Cookeville will receive \$5,341,691 for a collaborative project with Putnam County that will leverage SRF funds for a water treatment expansion project.

The city of Elizabethton will utilize \$2,431,279 to complete the second phase of its water meter installation project that will reduce unexpected losses. In conjunction with Elizabethton and several other utility districts in the area, Carter County received \$7,478,770 to support 21 drinking water projects in

Gatlinburg will use \$403,670 funds to improve the city's water treatment and distribution system and its wastewater collection system through water loss and leak detection services, GIS mapping updates, and a facility assessment.

Harriman will utilize \$3,191,759 through a collaborative project with the town of Oakdale and Roane and Morgan Counties to

develop an asset management plan, eliminate excess water loss, and update aging equipment. Jonesborough will replace approximately 13,000 system meters with new automatic meters through its \$1,005,596

Kingsport will apply \$6,955,642 to three projects addressing water loss reduction, infiltration and inflow reduction, modernization of equipment, and stormwater master planning.Lebanon will utilize \$3,979,492 to address three critical needs including drinking water treatment plant age, wastewater treatment plant age, and excessive infiltration and inflow.

The \$1,647,819 grant for **Man**chester will help develop an asset management plan and conduct modernization of the water system. **Martin** will fund six drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater projects with \$3,066,446, including the development of an asset management plan and replacing aging or outdated infrastructure.

McMinnville will leverage \$2,515,822 with SRF funds to conduct a large-scale project replacing the current filter building and laboratory and upgrading the existing settling basins, chemical storage building, and pumps and piping at the raw water intake.

Nashville will use \$63,418,244 to facilitate a planning, design, and construction wastewater system project.

Newbern received \$1,426,282 for the development of an asset management plan and modernization of lines in three projects. A grant of \$738,569 will go to Oak Hill for the developing of a stormwater master

plan and construction costs associated with the plan.

Obion will leverage \$702,241 with SRF and CDBG funds to replace critical, aging infrastructure. Rogersville's \$1,864,744 grant will be leveraged with SRF funds to replacing aging sanitary sewer infrastructure and upgrade waterlines.

Springfield will use \$2,479,962 to address critical capacity needs as the city's wastewater treatment plant. Surgoinsville will utilize \$826,137 for two wastewater extension and modernization projects and the creation of an asset management plan.

In conjunction with Wartburg, Morgan county will use \$5,084,639 for addressing critical wastewater and drinking water needs as well as an asset management plan in four local utility districts. Carroll County also received \$260,869.

The grants announced follow the announcement of 18 grants totaling \$72,496,030 from the ARP fund in August and October, bringing the total awarded by TDEC year-to-date to \$198,450,037. The grants announced today include two collaborative grants and 22 non-collaborative grants to execute drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure planning, design, and construction projects.

Tennessee received \$3.725 billion from the ARP, and the state's Financial Stimulus Accountability Group dedicated \$1.35 billion of those funds to TDEC to support water projects in communities throughout Tennessee. Of the \$1.35 billion, approximately \$1 billion was designated for non-competitive formula-based grants offered to counties and eligible cities.

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Tennessee has received \$6 million in federal grants to plan for the expansion of access to high-speed internet networks. The funding is part of a \$6 billion investment by the White House with the goal of connecting all Americans to broadband networks. Of the \$6 million being received by the state of Tennessee, \$4.9 million will go toward the development of a five-year plan identifying the state's broadband access, affordability, equity, and needs; research and data collection; publications and communications support, and providing technical assistance through workshops and events. The remaining \$1.1 million will be used on various activities including but not limited to the development of a statewide digital equity plan, consulting work, community and stakeholder engagement, and report distribution.

Tennessee is the ninth-fastest growing state in the nation. The state of Tennessee saw a 5% increase in population in the past five years, above the average 2.8% average change in population seen nationwide. Tennessee saw its population rise by 329,208 in2021 to 6,975,218 with the vast majority of those moving into the state coming from Florida. The Clarksville area was the small metro area with the ninth most gain in population while the Greater Nashville area was major metro area with the fifth large increase in population. The top five states for population increases were Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Montana, and Washington.

Tennessee has ranked 44 out of 51 in the America's Health Rankings 2022 report from United Healthcare's ranking of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Tennes-

see's biggest health weaknesses were its high premature death rate, high prevalence of residents with multiple chronic conditions, high violent crime rate, adverse childhood experiences for residents, and high rate of cigarette smoking. Tennessee saw a 44% increase in drug overdose deaths in the past year as well as a 31% increase in residents who report experiencing frequent mental distress. However, Tennessee's healthcare strengths included a low-income inequality, a high rate of high school graduation and less racial disparity in those graduation rates, a high supply of primary care providers, and a low prevalence of excess drinking. The access to high-speed internet in the state also improved 12%, which allows for more telehealth options for residents.

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) has approved three new Select Tennessee certified sites in Hartsville. Lafayette, and Morristown. The sites join more than 70 sites across the state that have received the certification. The three new sites are the Macon-Lafayette Industrial Park in Lafayette, the PowerCom Industrial Center in Hartsville, and the East Tennessee Progress Center's Lot 12 in Morristown. The Select Tennessee Certified Sites program has helped communities prepare industrial sites for private investment and job creation since 2012. The program sets rigorous standards to give companies detailed and reliable information during the site selection process. To learn more about the Select Tennessee Certified Sites program, visit tnecd.com/sites/certified-sites/ apply-now/.

State announces 10 new site development grants

Seven municipalities are among the recipients of approximately \$3.1 million in new Site Development Grants from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

The grants are designed to help communities invest in infrastructure and engineering improvements to land economic development projects and achieve Select Tennessee site certification.

"When we provide rural communities with the tools needed to attract new jobs and investment to our state, more Tennesseans have opportunities to thrive," said Gov. Bill Lee. "I thank our General Assembly members for their partnership in funding 10 additional site development grants and look forward to seeing the economic growth and prosperity that will result from these projects."

The Site Development Grant program, part of the Rural Economic Opportunity Act, works in tandem with TNECD's Select Tennessee program. Since 2016, TNECD has awarded 143 Site Development Grants across the state, totaling more than \$56 million in assistance to local communities and generating nearly 5,600 new jobs for Tennesseans.

"Congratulations to the communities receiving funding through the latest round of the Site Development Grant program," said TN-ECD Commissioner McWhorter. "Having an inventory of shovel-ready industrial sites is an essential component of the recruiting process, and we stand ready to support these communities as they

Location **Purpose** Benton County Industrial \$100,000 Due diligence studies at Board Smith Property \$92,872 Due diligence at the Bolivar Hardeman County Industrial Park Industrial Board of \$399,150 Property purchase at Crockett County Friendship Industrial, **Bivens Site** Property grading and \$1 million Lincoln County preparation at the **Burlington Site** McKenzie Industrial \$417,525 Property grading and **Development Board** preparation at McKenzie Airport Industrial Park \$29,640 Industrial Development Due diligence studies at Elam Industrial Site Board of McMinnville-Warren County \$647,015 Access road construc-Paris-Henry County tion, extend water, and sewer utilities at Paris-Industrial Committee Henry County Industrial Park Tusculum-\$100,000 Due diligence studies at Greeneville-Greene County Greene Valley **Development Center** Industrial **Development Board** \$95,594 Due diligence studies at Wayne County Wayne County Industrial Park Greenfield-Weakley County \$248,400 Property purchase at Greenfield Pentecost Economic **Development Board** Site

invest in their infrastructure and advance towards achieving Select Tennessee site certification."

Applications were reviewed by an advisory committee made up of TNECD, Austin Consulting, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and Tennessee Department of Transportation. Each application was supported by the community's senator and representatives in the Tennessee General Assembly.

Tennessee December state monthly revenues \$2M above estimates

Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson announced today that revenues for December were higher than expected and exceeded the monthly revenues from the previous year.

State revenues for December were \$2 billion or \$217.2 million more than the budgeted estimate with growth of 4.96% from December 2021.

"December total tax collections represent the lowest monthly revenue growth for the current fiscal year to date," Bryson said. "Sales tax receipts, reflecting November retail sales activity, moderated significantly and correspond to the slowest rate of gain since September 2020 when it was 1.56%."

Bryson offered reassurances about the slow sales tax growth.

"While concerning, November's modest sales tax growth was anticipated because of accelerated sales activity during this same time last year when supply chain disruptions altered

purchasing behavior," he said. "State corporate taxes, or franchise and excise taxes, made moderate gains for the month, but negative growth from tobacco taxes and privilege taxes

diminished total tax proceeds. All other taxes combined were nearly flat compared to December 2021, but they exceeded our monthly budget estimates. It is fully expected that revenue growth will continue to moderate over the foreseeable future, however we must be cognizant that one month does not make a trend. As such, we will continue to closely monitor our revenues and expenditures throughout the remainder of this fiscal year."

On an accrual basis, December is the fifth month in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

General fund revenues were more than the budgeted estimates in the amount of \$198.9 million and the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were \$18.3

Department of Finance & Administration the December estimate and on a year-to-date

million more than the estimates.

Sales tax revenues were \$118.8 million more than the estimate for December. The December growth rate was 5.64%. For the first five months of this fiscal year, revenues are \$598.5 million higher than estimated, and the year-to-date growth rate is 9.53%.

Franchise and excise taxes combined were \$91.7 million more than the December budgeted estimate. Year-to-date revenues exceed estimates in the amount of \$316.2 million, or 13.04% more than the same period last year.

Gasoline and motor fuel revenues increased by 0.93% compared to last December and were \$2 million more than the budgeted estimate of \$104.5 million. For five months revenues are \$3.3 million less than estimates.

Motor vehicle registration revenues were \$3.2 million more than the December estimate basis they are \$15.6

million more than estimates.

Tobacco tax revenues were \$4.9 million less than the budgeted estimate of \$20.3 million. For five months revenues are \$5.4 million less than estimated.

Privilege tax revenues were \$4.8 million less than the budgeted estimate of \$39.4 million. Year- to-date revenues for five months are \$16.9 million less than the budgeted estimate.

Business tax revenues were \$0.5 million more than the December estimate and \$13.5 million more than estimates on a year-to-date basis.

Mixed drink, or liquor-bythe-drink, taxes were \$5.6 million more than the December estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, revenues are \$26 million more than estimates.

All other taxes combined for December were \$5.1 million more than estimated.

Year-to-date revenues for five months were \$959.9 billion more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund recorded \$882.8 billion in revenues more than estimates, and the four other funds recorded \$77.1 million more than estimates. Year-to-date growth for the first five months is 8.20%.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2022-2023 are based upon the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation from November 23, 2021 and adopted by the second session of the 112th General Assembly in April 2022. Also incorporated in the estimates are any changes in revenue enacted during the 2022 session of the

General Assembly. These estimates are available on the state's website at https:// www.tn.gov/content/tn/finance/ fa/fa-budget-information/fa-budget-rev.html.

Knoxville co-responder program sees success in public safety, mental health

to get a behavioral specialist who can

assess them in real-time with direct

contacts to different resources, can

help schedule appointments, and

make sure they are following up on

their appointments. There is a more

of a safety net. Before, an officer

would take someone to the hospital

and go to the next call. In the co-re-

sponder program, the behavioral

health specialist takes charge of the

gram is to "meet people where they

are and get them on the road where

the most is the real success of this

program," he said. "It added another

tool for us as a department. There

were limited options for our patrol

officers to deal with this before. I

think a really important thing to

Erland said the goal of the pro-

"Helping people who need help

scene once it's secure.

they need to be."

KNOXVILLE from Page 1

"I think we've learned from that first experiment, but there is a fundamental issue around mental health," he said. "If you look at society, law enforcement is the last stop on the conveyor belt. When all other institutions $\mathbf{\hat{f}ail}-\mathbf{and}$ mental health is a prime example where we have had systematic failure the responsibility gets put on law enforcement. It's unfair that the two largest mental health facilities in the U.S. are the Cook County Detention Center and the L.A. County Jail. That as an indictment of our society. When we deinstitutionalized, the problems didn't go away; they just shifted."

However, the work done in the past has provided a path forward for dealing with issues today, including mental health issues brought on by long-term substance addiction.

"I think there is a lot of hope that there is some defined process for working with these professionals. I'm a big believer in innovation, and what we have been doing the past 20 years has failed miserably," Keith said. "We shouldn't oppose this change just because we don't know it. Part of the failure coming out of the 1970s was that we didn't train the officers and the social workers together to set expectations. You have to educate the social workers to know the officers' limitations. The social worker's goal is prevention and intervention, so they need to know how to not expand the liability of that officer. There need to be defined rules of engagement. We are doing a better job of that."

Launched in 2020, the Knox-ville Police Department co-responder program was approved by the Knoxville City Council as a way to address both mental health issues as well as tackle call volume. Candace Allen, the McNabb Center's senior director of Intensive Adult Mental Health Services, said the program allows immediate intervention for people in crisis and is one of many programs the McNabb center has worked with KPD on in the past decade.

"We have always been interested in decriminalizing mental illness and addiction," she said. "We have a lot of programs geared toward doing that, especially in the jails. We have a lot of diversion treatment centers where law enforcement can bring people, we have mobile crisis, and behavioral health centers. We have always been looking for gaps in the continuum. We also know the sooner we can get to someone in crisis the better. It's a behavioral health first responder."

Officer Scott Erland, Knoxville Police Department communications manager, said the success of the initial pilot has led to the city council approving the program's expansion in July 2021. At present, there are four co-responder teams with hopes that the program can expand even further.

"All of our officers receive substantial crisis-intervention and de-escalation training, but there is another program here that is a countywide, additional 40-hour



Leann Human-Hilliard, left, and Candace Allen, right, both of the McNabb Center address the Knoxville City Council to discuss the co-responder program. The overwhelming success of the program in its first pilot year prompted the city council to fund three additional co-responder teams. Officials are hopeful the program could grow even further in the future.

training," he said. "It was really important to have co-responder officers who has had more in-depth training on the signs and symptoms of mental health and substance abuse issues as well as more of the scenario-based training around active listening, de-escalation, and understanding how to relate to people who are in some sort of crisis."

Allen said police officers are often on the frontlines of mental health crisis.

"They will tell you they are seeing more and more untreated mental illness and addiction," she said. "Those issues have skyrocketed, but officers aren't trained to look at it through a mental health lens. We are able to provide that. They are our partners."

The largest volume of calls relates to those who are having suicidal thoughts or ideation, but the co-responder teams also deal with issues like addiction, dementia, hallucinations, and other mental health issues. Once the officer has secured the scene, the officer and behavioral health specialist will work to establish a rapport with the person in need to best determine what services are needed.

Erland said the program allows for follow-up with patients even after the call is ended. While beforehand officers might drop a person off at a hospital or mental health facility and never hear from them again, he said the co-responder model helps ensure that people get the care they need.

"Officers always want to help, but they have limited options," he said. "An officer who is by his or herself answering a call and dealing with someone who is sadly in the throes of some serious mental crisis has limited options. We don't want to take that person to jail. We do have the behavioral health urgent care center here or you can take them to the hospital. The difference is this addresses a gap in those services. They are able

emphasize about the co-responder program is that in the more than two years it has been running, the co-responder program has not had one use of force. They are doing a great job getting out there, whether it be de-escalating situations that are tense or building rapport with individuals and getting them the services they need."

The biggest accomplishment of

The biggest accomplishment of the program is the number of Knoxvillians it has saved.

"I know several people who we got to that I don't think would have been saved if it wasn't for this unit and them responded the way they did," Allen said. "It keeps people alive. There is a trickle-down effect, too. If we can get to someone that doesn't have a mental health home or needs treatment, we can help set up those appointments and get them into treatment. We are able to start the ball rolling and keep in contact with them. Without that interaction with the co-response team, those people wouldn't have an avenue to get better. If they aren't getting better, they get worse."

Beyond saving lives, the program also saves costs in term of incarceration. Many times, arrests of those dealing with mental health issues wind up creating a vicious cycle of arrest and re-arrest where the core issues are not dealt with.

"Our jail systems have often times become an inpatient psychiatric unit, and they should not be," Allen said. "That is one of the reasons we have really strived to create places for law enforcement to drop people off and don't take them to jail when they don't need to be there. Anytime we can provide an avenue to not arrest someone because they have mental issues and illness, we need to do that."

The program also saves time and helps better manage the call volume that comes into KPD. One of the longest calls a co-responder team handled took several hours, resulting in a potential bridge jumper coming down and receiving help.

"The co-responder team has more time to deal with calls," Erland said. "They spend an average of an hour on these calls, sometimes more or sometimes less. A patrol officer who is not assigned to the co-responder team doesn't have that same kind of time where they are dedicated to these calls. I think it's been a huge benefit in terms of call management because the co-responder team has the time to deal with these calls in the way they need to be dealt with. It takes a little bit of a load off of the patrol officers not on the team."

Allen encouraged other departments and cities to look into creating a similar program.

"Your mission as law enforcement is public safety," she said. "We have data to prove we have increased both public and individual safety. We are taking care of vulnerable citizens in a different way. There is a lot to talk about how you implement these programs, and how you have law enforcement and civilians working together. It's a recipe that needs to be discussed. These units free up the rest of your force. I encourage anyone to reach out to us, KPD, and the Knoxville City Council."

Erland said the co-responder program fills an important gap and helps the Knoxville Police Department uphold its mission of helping the community.

"Find a strong community partner," he said. "We found one in the McNabb Center. Give it a go. This is one of the main issues that law enforcement is facing is people battling substance abuse and other mental health crises. What we have seen is this has certainly filled a gap in services we can offer and were offering. We started small, we have grown, and we would like to see the program to continue to grow. If they save one life, then they've made a difference. I think a lot of jurisdictions could benefit from it, and I think the department benefits from it in a lot of different ways."



A group of 25 law enforcement officers, first responders, and medical staff graduated from Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training on Dec. 9, 2022. This graduating class included staff from The University of Tennessee Police Department, Knoxville Police Department, Knox County Sheriff's Office, University of Tennessee Medical Center, Knoxville Fire Department, Lenoir City Police Department, VA Police and American Medical Response (AMR). The training connects officers with mental health professionals and other community agencies to create a team that can provide support when a challenging situation occurs.

No loan is too large or too small



Oliver Springs closed a \$260,000 note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to purchase police cruisers for the town's police department. The town has used the Bond Fund program five times starting in July 2015. Seated L to R are: Joe VanHook, Town Recorder, and Omer Cox, Oliver Springs Mayor. Standing L to R are: Steve Queener, TMBF Marketing Representative, and Thomas McCormick, Town Manager.





The City of Ripley recently closed two notes with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund. One note was issued for \$1.3 million for LED street lighting; a second note was issued for \$800,000 to be used for street paving. The city has used TMBF programs 33 times since May 1997 through November 2022 for a total of \$17,582,000. Pictured are Ripley Mayor Craig Fitzhugh, City Recorder Donna Buckner; and Tommy Green, TMBF Marketing Representative.

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Boyd Center: Tennessee to fair better than nation in mild recession

Although a mild recession might be on the horizon for the U.S., a new report released by the Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville shows Tennessee's

outlook is a little sunnier. In the U.S., inflation-adjusted gross domestic product (real GDP) is expected to shrink by 2% in the first quarter of 2023 and by an additional 0.4% in the second quarter before recovering in the second half of the year.

High interest rates, supply chain pressures, geopolitical instability and high inflation all contribute to the possibility of a recession. Overall, U.S. real GDP is expected to fall by 0.2% in 2023.

"We are more optimistic for the Tennessee economy as more people have moved to the state in recent years, which has provided a boost to economic growth," said Larry Kessler, research associate professor at the Boyd Center and project director for the 2023 Economic Report to the Governor of the State of Tennessee.

Tennessee's real GDP is forecast to grow by 2.4% in 2022 before slowing to just 0.7% growth in 2023. Tennessee's strong labor market is another reason the state is less likely to experience a recession—as of October 2022, there are roughly 108,000 more workers on Tennessee payrolls than there were before the pandemic, in February 2020.

However, slower economic growth in Tennessee will impact the labor market, and job growth is projected to slow from a very strong 3.9% in 2022 to only 1% in 2023. This is still more favorable than the

national outlook, which projects no growth in U.S. payrolls over the next year.

"We are fortunate as a state to befacing historic levels of economic growth while also maintaining low levels of unemployment, and I am confident that Tennessee's business climate will continue to attract companies that are seeking a state with fiscal stability," said Stuart McWhorter, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. "Our pipeline is strong as we head into 2023, and Tennessee remains committed to recruiting, training and retaining a robust workforce to meet future employment needs."

The state's better employment outlook is driven by gains in manufacturing as well as continued strength in the state's service sectors. In addition, the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will bring more funding to develop state-led infrastructure and construction projects.

While higher interest rates may slow real estate development, large construction projects on the horizon — such as the development of the Ford electric vehicle complex in West Tennessee and the expansion of the FedEx hub in Memphis — will provide boosts to state construction payrolls.

Over the long term, however, retirements, an aging population and declining birth rates will constrain employment growth in Tennessee over the next decade. Prepandemic employment growth averaged 2% annually, but over the next decade yearly growth is expected to slow to just 1.2%. This in turn will slow Tennessee's real GDP growth from a prepandemic average of 2.4% a year to just 2.1% annually between 2022 and 2032.

This year's report examines population characteristics related to workforce quality, such as education and health. Tennessee consistently ranks poorly on health-related outcomes that affect the labor force and long-term economic growth.

As examples, the rates of adult smoking (19.5%), obesity (35.6%) and infant mortality (6.2 deaths per 1,000 live births) in Tennessee are all higher than the national average (15.5%, 31.9% and 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively). Tennesseans have a higher prevalence of serious health ailments such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke than their national counterparts.

Education data provides a brighter picture. As of 2021, Tennessee has a higher percentage of its adult population with a high school diploma or higher (89.7%) than the U.S. as a whole (89.4%). This is the first time that Tennessee's high school attainment rate among those 25 and older has exceeded the national average.

The final chapter of this year's report focuses on advanced manufacturing in Tennessee. In 2021, the manufacturing sector accounted for over \$55 billion of the state's GDP, and manufacturers have become increasingly reliant on robotics, automation and other forms of advanced manufacturing.

The report ranks all U.S. states on their advanced manufacturing industries. Tennessee ranks in the top 10 overall, largely due to its strong motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts manufacturing in-

Since 1975, the Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research, housed within UT's Haslam College of Business, has provided Tennessee's governor with an annual economic report that includes an in-depth analysis of state and national trends and forecasts.

TENNESSEE **FESTIVALS**

Jan. 24-28: Memphis

International Blues Challenge The International Blues Challenge represents the worldwide search for blues bands and solo/duo blues performers ready for the international stage, yet just needing that extra big break. The world's largest gathering of blues musicians will take place on Beale Street, with more than 20 clubs hosting the challengers and fans. In addition to featuring these final rounds of the prestigious blues music competition, the IBC event week will offer seminars, showcases, master classes, film screenings, networking events, book signings, and receptions for blues societies, fans, and professionals. For more info, visit this link.

Jan. 26-28: Townsend

Smoky Mountain Snow Down This winter heritage festival celebrates the history, natural beauty and cultural traditions of Townsend, Cades Cove and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For more info, <u>visit this link</u>.

Feb. 10-12: Jonesborough Jonesborough Chocolate Fest

Take a stroll through Downtown Jonesborough and pick up delicious chocolate treats in celebration of Jonesborough's Chocolate Fest. There will be chocolate stops dotted throughout downtown provided by Jonesborough small businesses, each serving something unique and special but of course, chocolate-themed. Attendees will discover endless options— everything from barks, fudges, chocolate-covered strawberries and so much more. One ticket equals one chocolate treat. At check-in attendees will receive a bag to carry chocolates in, chocolate tasting tickets, and a list of chocolate stops. Throughout the three-day festival attendees can also enjoy a variety of activities and entertainment.. For more info, click here.

Feb. 12: Johnson City

Tipton-Haynes House Maple Syrup Festival and Pancake Breakfast Watch as officials with the Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site in Johnson City gather sap from the property's historic maple trees then boil it down to make sweet maple syrup. While maple syrup-making will take place all day, visitors can also get a taste of it at the annual pancake breakfast held from 8-11 a.m. that morning. For more info, visit this link.

Feb. 25: Oak Ridge

Oak Ridge International Festival The Children's Museum of Oak Ridge hosts this family-friendly festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event features a variety of fun and interactive activities taht showcase various cultures from across the world, including musical and dance performances, art, food, and more. For more info, visit this link.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

The U.S. unemployment rate fell to 3.5% in December even as the Federal Reserve raised interest rates to the highest level in 15 years. The unemployment rate was at its lowest since 1969 and was lower than predicted by economists. In total, the country added 4.5 million jobs in 2022, an average monthly increase of 375,000. Nonfarm payrolls were also at 223,000, above economic estimates, though average hourly earnings only increased by 0.3% between December and November and 4.6% between 2021 and 2022. both below economic expectations. The labor force participation rate was up slightly at 62.3%, though still 1% below the rate prior to the pandemic. The leisure and hospitality, health care, construction, and

Consumer prices fell in December, boosting economists' hopes that the worst of recent inflation is behind the U.S. The

social assistance sectors saw the

largest growth.

annual inflation rate fell from 7.1% in November to 6.5% in December with prices falling 0.1% in December from the same percentage gained in November. The U.S. has experienced six straight months of receding annual price growth with food and energy prices rising 5.7% over the past year. However, shelter prices continued to rise 0.8% between December and November.

Despite continued inflation and a possible recession, the majority of Americans said they expect they will be spending the same amount in 2023 that the did in 2022 on items like home goods, clothing, and electronics. A survey conducted by the Harris Poll for DailyPay and Dollar Tree found that 67% of Americans expect to spend the same this year as last year, though 44% said they would be prioritizing bargains and sales more than they had in the previous year. About three in four Americans also plan to do the same or more in-store shopping this year. The top items Americans said they would make in-store purchases for included furniture (81%), home

goods (69%), apparel (65%), sporting goods (65%), and electronics

More Americans are postponing medical care payments due to rising costs. A new Gallup poll found that a record-breaking 38% of Americans said they have put off scheduled medical payments due to cost, a 12% increase from the past two years. Previously, the high of Americans putting of medical payments was 33% in both 2014 and 2019. A further 27% of respondents said they had delayed treatment for someone in their family that was considered very or somewhat serious. Of low-income respondents, 34% said they had postponed care or treatment for a serious or very serious condition while 29% of middle-income respondents reported the same. Those age 18 to 49 were most likely to postpone medical treatment at 35% followed by 25% of those between the age of 50 to 65 and 13% of those 65 or older. Male respondents (32%) were also more likely to postpone care due to cost than female respondents (20%).



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NOAA offering resources, expertise to build disaster resilient communities

By KATE COIL

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is interested in connecting with and providing resources to local governments to help with climate resiliency and natural disaster planning.

Partnering with the U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA held a webinar on Extreme Weather and Climate Preparedness with a focus on how NOAA resources and information can help communities build their own Impact-Based Decision Support Services (IDSS).

Dr. Rick Spinrad, undersecretary of commerce for NOAA, said the agency plays a major role in the lives of Americans when they check the weather for the day, plan an outing on the water, or use GPS services.

"We like for folks to think about NOAA about in terms of science, service, and stewardship," he said. "We focus on everything from the surface of the sun to the bottom of the ocean, and span the nation to touch each of the communities you represent every second of every day. We play a critical role in the lives of Americans in terms of lives, livelihoods, and lifestyles... Our mission as we address challenges such as excessive and unprecedented heatwaves, more extended drought, more severe storms, rising sea levels, and flooding is what makes us more committed to creating what we call a climate ready nation."

Billion-dollar disasters – natural disaster events where the recovery cost is at least a billion or higher – are at their highest rate in American history. Spinrad said 2020 was a record-breaking year with 22 billion-dollar disasters followed by 20 in 2021.

With 15 billion-dollar disasters before October in 2022, the year is on track to make it into the top five years for disaster costs in American history. Since the 1980s, Spinrad said the amount of time America goes between billion-dollar disasters has dropped from 82 days to just 18 days.

"Remember, this is economic impact," Spinrad said. "The information here is as much about how we want to build resilient communities as it is how weather and climate are behaving. When it's in your community, it only takes one billion-dollar disaster to disrupt and devastate everything."

Because of this, Spinrad said NOAA wants to improve impact-based decision support services (IDSS), which is the sharing of information and engagement with private and public partners to "get critical information in the hands of decision-makers so they can make decisions ahead of, during, and following extreme events."

Ken Graham, assistant director for weather services and director of the National Weather Service, said NOAA officials are often deployed to emergency management centers for the purpose of providing IDSS.

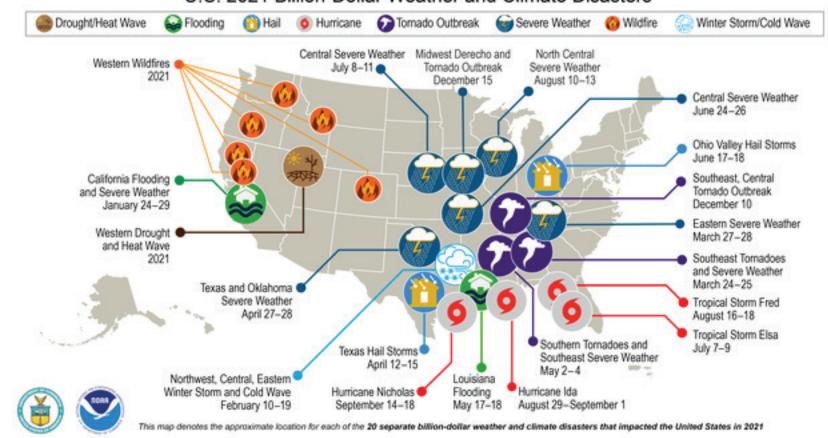
"So often in these cases, we have NOAA employees like meteorologists and hydrologists employed to local emergency management centers, helping with those tough decisions like when to evacuate, where you place resources, what shelters to open," Graham said. "Really tough decisions are made during these events, and IDSS is all about being there to provide the science to those impacts and provide the risk assessment needed to make those tough decisions in the heat of the battle."

While most know about the IDSS services provided by the National Weather Service, Spinrad said NOAA is actually behind a wide variety of support services that can help decision makers do what is best for their communities beyond natural disaster events like floods and tornadoes.

Spinrad said NOAA provides a wide variety of information and resources to help with everything from helping elderly and disadvantaged communities during heat waves to helping farmers with drought management and providing GIS data to determining if events like outdoor concerts, festivals, and fairs can go ahead despite weather forecasts.

"Our decision-support services include getting people and

U.S. 2021 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters



The past three years have each set records for the amount of natural disasters costing a billion dollars are more in economic impact. The highest-number of these disasters occurred in 2020 followed by 2021. NOAA officials said as of October 2022 had already made it into the top five most expensive years on recorded.



In 2021, a devastating flood killed 20 people in Waverly, making it the most deadly natural disaster in the city's history. With an increase in weather-related disasters including floods, tornadoes, heat waves, hurricanes, and others, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is hoping to work hand-in-hand with local governments to provide the resources and information they nee to protect their communities before, during, and after such events.

places the things they need to understand their vulnerability," he said. "We provide emergency response support for things like responding to oil spills. Our research work provides a very broad range of support that provides a fundamental basis and contributes to directly improving these decision-support services. It has helped us build things like heat.gov, which is the premiere source for heat and health information aimed at reducing the health, economic, and infrastructure impacts of extreme heat. Our climate resistance toolkit is one of

the new products we are building that helps people find the tools they need to make climate-based decisions."

In the past NOAA has tried to offer a one-size-fits-all approach to the services it provides, but Spinrad said the agency has realized that not all communities are in a position to take advantage of its services.

"Each community is unique with respect to its intrinsic vulnerabilities to things like weather, water, and climate hazards. We are going forward with what we call an equitable services paradigm where we explicitly account for the unique nature of each community and build into our outreach, product development, and education efforts the time of integrated and impact-based support services I have mentioned. So much of this depends on doing this in a co-development manner where we work with communities from the get-go."

NOAA is working with social and behavioral scientists to look at social vulnerability and what makes communities and residents less likely to be prepared for hazardous weather, less likely to respond to hazardous weather, and

NOAA Resources

- For more information on the National Climate Resilence Fund visit here.
- For more info on what NOAA can provide your community, <u>click</u>
- For more info on the U.S. Climate Resilence Toolkit, click here.
- To learn more about NOAA's heat and drought programs, <u>visit</u> <u>here.</u>
- To see weather and climate resources for your area, visit here.

signed for grants for planning on how to be more resilient and even undertaking shovel-ready projects to build more climate-ready communities," Spinrad. "We just announced the most recent round of these grants where we had 90 grants totaling almost a quarter-of-a-billion dollars."

For making communities more resilient, Spinradalsorecommends community leaders visit climate.gov to see what programs are available via the Climate Ready Nation project and other issues, which brings together the resources

of NOAA, NASA, the EPA, and the National Science Foundation to provide communities with resources.

"Climate.gov provides onestop shopping," he said. "It answers questions like what is the project for the drought where you live, what is the formal definition of a drought, or what is the U.S. Department of Agriculture doing to address the drought. There are also decision-support tools there to make sure these are all connected. It provides what I call environmental intelligence. It provides people with the information they need to make a decision. Portals like climate.gov provide those tools."

Another goal for NOAA is building trust with community leaders to help with tough decisions and resiliency plans for communities.

"These relationships don't happen during the event; they happen years ahead of time," Graham said. "They happen during the exercises and really trying to practice and test things out to build relationships before the next event. You don't want to meet someone during that disaster. We are there during the event and after the event during the process of recovery and search and rescue. The relationship is continual in these communities."

Spinrad said community buy-in is necessary to NOAA's mission, both to provide daily services like forecasts and to build a nation that is more resilient against disaster events.

"We can't do this alone," Spinrad said. "This work is much too big and much too diverse for any single sector, organization or agency. As we continue to develop our decision-support services, we are going to rely on our partnerships across all sectors to accomplish the mission of keeping communities prepared for and responsive to extreme weather, water, and climate events. Think about your community's vulnerability when it comes to extreme events, then reach out to your local NOAA office to see what kind of information and services we can provide to help your community become more resilient."



The remains of a home in Samburg following a deadly tornado outbreak across five states that killed 89 people during the evening of Dec. 10 through the early morning of Dec. 11, 2022. Five people died in Tennessee during the outbreak, including at least one person in Samburg and a father and son on a hunting trip in nearby Tiptonville. Additionally, several buildings in downtown Samburg were also damaged.

slower to recover from disaster events. One of the goals of this program is to provide education where residents underestimate their risk for things like flooding.

"Over the last three years, we have had some big social science projects and that data is coming in as we speak," Graham said. "The big challenge, in my opinion, is that risk perception. I've said so many times in my career during a natural disaster -- if you are asked to evacuate do so. The reality is many people can't. It goes back to social equity. So many people can't afford to or there is the comparison to the last one that didn't happen. There is also situation where people didn't understand the forecast or don't speak English. There are people who aren't able to leave because of their health."

NOAA also works with other federal agencies, like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to also provide funding to communities looking to build their resiliency. Spinrad said there are even more resources available now as part of recent federal legislation.

"There is a program called the National Climate Resilience Fund, which is specifically de-