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Volume 75, Number 1

January 2024



TML Board creates Visioning Committee

Diversified group will make recommendations to best position organization through 2045

During its November 3rd meeting, the TML Board of Directors approved a staff recommendation to create its first-ever Visioning Committee.

The Committee is charged with identifying issues and opportunities that best position TML through 2040. Issues include, but not limited to, organizational governance and representation, mission delivery, programs and services, funding, and intergovernmental relations.

"For almost 85 years, TML has been recognized as 'the voice' of Tennessee's towns and cities, as well as the go-to organization for our state government in addressing the state's grand challenges," said Ron Williams, TML President and Mayor of Farragut. "If we are to maintain, if not strengthen that unique position, we must go to work now and take deliberate steps to ensure that outcome for years to come," Williams added.

"The Committee will engage various TML stakeholders and partners in the upcoming months, and solicit their input on various issues, topics and challenges," said Anthony Haynes, TML's executive director.

The Committee will hold its

first meeting in conjunction with the TML Legislative Conference on March 5, in Nashville. Committee members include:

- Julian McTizic, Mayor, Bolivar – Chair
- Tim Kelly, Mayor, Chattanooga
- Stephanie Walton, Vice Mayor, Red Bank
- David Smoak, City Manager, Farragut,
- Kirk Bednar, City Manager, Brentwood
- Johnny Dodd, Councilman, Jackson
- Kim Foster, City Manager, Paris
- Joe Pitts, Mayor, Clarksville
- Mike Palazzolo, Mayor, Germantown
- Darrell Duncan, Councilman, Kingsport
- Nina Smothers, Mayor, Huntingdon
- Tre Dykes, Mayor, Newport
- Ron Williams, Mayor and TML President, Farragut (Ex Officio)
- Paige Brown, Mayor, Gallatin Bobby King, Mayor Hender-
- son, (TML Past President) Richard Stokes, former HR
- Director, Spring Hill Blake Walley, City Manager,
- Savanah

TDEC: Municipalities can take advantage of new brownfields grant



113th General Assembly back in session



The Tennessee General Assembly convened for the second session of the 113th General Assembly on Tuesday, Jan. 9.

Gov. Bill Lee's proposed expansion of the Education Freedom Scholarships and reform of the Franchise and Excise Tax are likely to be the central components of his budget proposal.

The recent development regarding the state's proposal to avoid a costly lawsuit over Tennessee's Franchise and Excise Tax (F&E) collections, derailed further consideration of almost all non-education proposals in Lee's proposed budget.

The General Assembly also anticipates continuing discussion of legislation considered during the Special Session related to crime, public safety, school safety, as well as address proposals for some criminal justice reforms.

On the local front, TML expects legislation to be introduced that seeks to impose a cap of some form on the local property tax levy. We also know that the Comptroller intends to pursue legislation allowing counties to reduce current reappraisal cycles. In addition, we anticipate the introduction of legislation responding to pressures arising from the continued influx of people relocating to Tennessee. These measures could address growth plans, zoning authority,

annexation, development fees and taxes, and housing.

All of these discussions will occur against the backdrop of the need to arrive at a balanced budget. Leaders of the General Assembly have repeatedly cautioned about the uncertainty of the economy and emerging trends suggesting that growth in state revenues is slowing.

Once again, TML's advocacy's efforts will continue to focus on returning 100% of state sales tax revenues collections not earmarked for education to the municipalities where the revenues are generated.

Involvement from our members will play a significant role in this endeavor. It's important that you continue to urge your legislators to support our efforts.

You can find more information about the League's *Restore, Return, Relief* campaign, as well as information on all of the League's 2024 legislative priorities, by clicking here.

Attend TML Legislative Conference in Nashville

Join us in Nashville for the TML Legislative Conference, slated for March 4-5 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 run from 1p.m. to 4 p.m. with a host of speakers from our state leadership. Our members will also hear from U.S. Congressman John Ross on key happenings taking place in Washington D.C, and UT Professor Larry Kessler will provide data-driven analysis of Tennessee's economy. Attendees are encouraged to attend the House and Senate floor sessions that evening at the Capitol.

Many municipalities across Tennessee are home to blighted properties, such as this one, that have potential for redevelopment under new brownfield grant funds provided through the Tennessee General Assembly. Working with TDEC officials, communities have seen former gas stations, dry cleaners, industrial sites, hospitals, and others returned to tax roles and become new economic engines.

By KATE COIL

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) officials are hoping community leaders take advantage of a new grant program designed to return brownfield sites to tax rolls and community assets.

Applications will open at the end of February for the <u>Brown-field Redevelopment Area Grant</u> (BRAG) program, and TDEC officials are asking city leaders in the meantime to start thinking how they could use these funds in their own communities.

Evan Spann, deputy director of field operations for TDEC, said the definition of a "brownfield site" is broader than many realize. The EPA definition of a brownfield includes both properties that have and potentially have been contaminated.

"You may know a property used to be an x, y, or a z, but you also may have a feeling or general concern about a property. That is the potential presence that this program will let you explore without taking on any liability for that contamination. The shorter definition of a brownfield is any property that has any environmental issue that limits the use of that property. What we want to do at TDEC is to promote the redevelopment of brownfields, firstly to preserve greenfields or undeveloped properties as part of our conservation efforts, address land revitalization, and return these unproductive properties to the tax roles in whatever way best benefits the community. That promotes economic growth in communities."

BRAG Program Opportunities

Past brownfield success stories in Tennessee include the redevelopment of a Smyrna brownfield site into a Nissan automotive plant, the remodeling of a Saltillo former school building into a community storm shelter, and renovating La-Follette's historic post office into a site utilized by local arts and cultural groups. First Horizon Park – home of the Nashville Sounds – is also a former brownfield site.

Other properties have been returned to community use, such as Founders Park in Johnson City, Suttree Landing Park in Knoxville, and portions of the Shelby Farms Greenline in Memphis.

Spann said some things to consider about potential eligible sites are:

- Is the property vacant or not as productive as it could be?
- Are there concerns about contamination (ex. a former gas station, dry cleaners, industrial facility)?
- Is the site blighted?

Spann said the goal of the pro-See **BROWNFIELDS** on Page 3 Representative on Capitol Hill to discuss your community needs.

Registration opens Monday morning, March 4 at 8:30 a.m. with a meet-and-greet coffee break with TML's sponsored programs. Lunch will begin at noon.

The conference program will

Tuesday's agenda will begin with breakfast and a two-hour session on *Social Media and the First Amendment*, provided by Sam Jackson, attorney with Spencer Fane.

For more information or to register for the conference, click here.

Al data providing solutions to retail, business recruitment in small cities

By KATE COIL *TT&C Assistant Editor*

With new uses for artificial intelligence (AI) technology being discovered daily, smaller municipalities in Tennessee are realizing how they can put AI to work to promote and attract retailers.

Both the city of Sweetwater independently and municipal members of the Tennessee Retail Alliance have begun using PlacerAI software as a tool for retail development. The company provides data largely targeted at the retail, civic, hospitality, and finance sectors, to help organizations make better decisions.

Angie Carrier, management and finance program manager with UT-MTAS, said the Tennessee Retail Alliance she heads offers members the opportunity to use PlacerAI data. The alliance also offers training for members on how to use data from the site.

"It is crazy the amount of data it provides," Carrier said. "You can track how many reports were filed by the police for a crime around a specific shopping center. We tracked it to see where people go after a UT Football game, and we found a lot of them go to the Publix at University Commons or to the UT Aquatic Center. It can help cities tell a more informed story on what kind of folks shop there and compare themselves to others to make better arguments."

Jessica Morgan, city recorder for Sweetwater, said city officials first learned about the software at



Shoppers visit small businesses in downtown Sweetwater. Through the use of data provided by AI, Sweetwater officials are better positioned to recruit big box retailers and provide essential information that helps small businesses.

a conference where several communities touted their own use of it. Sweetwater first did a demo of the software and then used \$15,000 of hotel-motel tax money to buy a year subscription to see if it was the right fit for the community.

"There is so much you can do with it that I don't think a city government could possibly use every application," Morgan said. "There is a report you can use for board presentations or one for if you are trying to recruit a particular type of business into a certain part of town. You can see how many people came into a specific geographic *See* **AI** *on Page* 8





BRENTWOOD

FreightWise, LLC, officials announced the company will expand operations at its headquarters in Brentwood, creating 48 new jobs and investing \$2 million. The Centerview Drive location will position FreightWise to expand its customer acquisitions as well as broaden its research and development capabilities. Founded in Brentwood in 2015, FreightWise, LLC is a logistics data company that serves its customers with endto-end transportation management. Through the project, FreightWise will employ nearly 200 people worldwide, with approximately 100 employees in Tennessee.

COLLIERVILLE

The town of Collierville has begun a streetlight conversion that will provide energy-efficient LED fixtures across the community. The changeover will reduce energy and maintenance costs while providing aesthetic and safety enhancements to the community. The town is working with the Shelby Electrical Company, Trace Services, and the Path Company to conduct the installation and conversion. A total of 7,250 lights will be installed.

DAYTON

BaltimoreAircoilCompany(BAC) officials announced the company will invest \$16.5 million to expand manufacturing operations at its Manufacturers Road location in Dayton. BAC will create 63 new jobs at the project, bringing its current head count to more than 150. The expansion is in direct response to BAC's recent growth of its dry coil and adiabatic cooling equipment businesses and will comprise significant infrastructure improvements, which include facility and site improvements, coil manufacturing equipment, material handling equipment and craneage. Headquartered in Jessup, Md., with employees and facilities around the world, Baltimore Aircoil Company is a global leader in the HVAC, industrial and refrigeration industries. The company manufactures and designs commercial and industrial cooling equipment from its locations in the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa and Australia.

KNOXVILLE

officials said the economic impact of the festival is on par with holiday spending in the Christmas shopping season. Bonnaroo pays or reimburses the city, county, and the state for all additional resources needed to support the event.

MCKENZIE

Haven Steel Products, Inc. officials announced the company will invest \$6.5 million to expand its manufacturing operations in McKenzie. The expansion will create 19 new jobs, expanding the company's total headcount in McKenzie to more than 80 employees. Haven Steel will update its existing Tennessee facility to include three new furnaces, a cutting mill and a powder coat system to accommodate its growing customer demand and expand its overall client base. Founded in 1968 and headquartered in Haven, Kan., Haven Steel Products, Inc., fabricates and heat treats steel for the agricultural, construction and trailer industries. Today, the company operates two facilities Tennessee and Kansas.

MORRISON

Unitech North America, LLC officials announced the company will invest \$30 million to locate its first U.S. facility in Morrison. In phase one of the project, Unitech will create 75 new jobs with plans to grow through future expansions. The location will specialize in the production of thermal adhesives and battery compression pads for electric vehicle battery manufacturers across the Southeast as well as industrial adhesives and sealers for its automotive customers. Unitech North America, LLC is a subsidiary of Unitech Co., Ltd., which is headquartered in Ansan, South Korea, and is a leading manufacturer of adhesives and sealants. The expansion to Tennessee represents Unitech's first location in the U.S. and will join the company's other operations in Europe and Asia.

MT. PLEASANT

Xxentria Technology officials announced the company will invest \$45 million to establish its first U.S. metal composite production facility in Mt. Pleasant. Xxentria will create 85 new jobs at the Cherry Glen Industrial Park, a Select Tennessee Certified Site, in Mt. Pleasant. Based in Taiwan, Xxentria Technology Materials Company, Ltd., is a leading manufacturer of metal composite material. The Tennessee location will serve the automotive industry with the composite panels used to manufacture truck and trailer bodies. Xxentria's expansion to Tennessee results from years of research to locate a manufacturing facility in closer proximity to Xxentria's U.S. customer base. The Mt. Pleasant plant will house equipment capable of two lines for lamination and one line for fabrication.

New GSMP Welcome Center opens in Townsend



The newest Welcome Center for Great Smoky Mountains National Park has been opened in Townsend. The Great Smoky Mountains Association opened the Great Smokies Welcome Center at 7929 East Lamar Alexander Parkway, which will be a key site for visitors accessing the national park through Townsend, which is close to areas like Cades Cove. The center will provide information about the park and sell souvenirs, parking tags, and other park items. The facility had been the Great Smoky Mountains and Blount Partnership's visitor center since 1992, but has since become too small for both organizations to use. The organizations moved to a facility across the road, opening up their former location for use as a visitors center.

Johnson City officials hold push-in ceremonies for two new fire engines



Johnson City firefighters and city leaders participate in a push-in ceremony for Engine 3 at Station 3 on E. Main Street, one of two push-in ceremonies held recently for new fire department equipment.

Custom Foods of America Inc. (CFA) officials announced the company will invest more than \$51 million to expand its manufacturing and distribution operations in Knoxville. CFA will create 249 new jobs at its Pleasant Ridge, which will bring its total headcount in the region to approximately 500 people. The expansion will increase CFA's production and distribution capabilities by adding nearly 200,000 square feet of new space for manufacturing, storage, staging and shipping. Founded in 1982, Custom Foods of America Inc. is a Tennessee-based manufacturer and supplier of food products such as soups, side dishes, appetizers and sauces. Today, the company serves its customers in the restaurant and convenience store industries from its sole location in Knoxville

LEBANON

NewBasis, LLC, officials announced the company will invest \$16.3 million to establish its first operations in Tennessee at the Alligood Industrial Park in Lebanon. The company will create 249 new jobs at its first location outside of its headquarters in California. The Lebanon location will directly support increased customer demand on the East Coast. Founded more than 80 years ago, NewBasis, LLC is a leading manufacturer of fiberglass and polymer concrete below-ground enclosures and utility pads. Today, NewBasis serves a variety of utility, municipal, and telecom customers.

MANCHESTER

The Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Manchester generated \$339.8 million in regional economic impact, according to festival officers. The festival's economic impact includes bringing in \$5.1 million in tax revenue to the region and creating 4 ,163 full-time jobs. More than \$105.5 million in labor incomes were paid to regional employees as a result of the festival. Local economic development

NASHVILLE

Nashville's New Year's Eve event, Nashville's Big Bash, drew in a record 215,000 people, 46% of whom were out-of-town visitors. Of those visitors, 42% were from the Southeast, 25% from the Midwest, 17% from the West, and 13% from the Northeast. Three-fourths of visitors (76%) said the celebration was the top reason they chose to come to the city with hotels being the top choice for accommodation at 71% followed by home rentals at 20%. The event generated \$38 million in director visitor spending in 2022, and officials with the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation (NCVC) are expecting an increase in spending resulting from the 2023 event.

NASHVILLE

Technology Lab officials announced the company will invest \$1.8 million to expand their Nashville headquarters. The company will create 71 new jobs at the company's headquarters on Cleveland Avenue. The additional staff of engineers and technicians will assist Technology Lab with its recent growth and better serve the company's tech customers nationwide. Headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, Technology Lab is a managed services provider for educational institutions. The company services K-12 schools across the U.S. from its locations in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Another push-in ceremony was held to welcome Engine 4 at Station 4 on W. Main Street. The new engines arrived in November and required an extensive process to install essential equipment before they could be used. The engines were obtained through a Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Volkswagen Diesel Settlement grant with a city match. The total cost for both engines was \$1,018,094.

Construction progresses on new downtown Clarksville parking garage



Construction is progressing on the new eight-deck downtown parking garage in Clarksville at First and Commerce Streets. The garage is on track to open later this summer if there are no major weather delays. The new garage will be next to the existing Cumberland Plaza Park Garage and the two garage es will connect at the Commerce and Second Street levels. A pedestrian bridge will also extend from the Second Street level of the garage to Franklin Street, next to the Performing Arts Center. The new garage will offer 587 parking spaces and replaces two parking lots in the same area.

TN Downtowns program accepting applications

Tennessee Economic and Development Department (TN-ECD) is accepting applications for the ninth round of the Tennessee Downtowns program.

Communities seeking assistance to revitalize their downtown commercial districts are invited to apply for the program before the Feb. 29 deadline. Tennessee Downtowns is an affiliated program of Tennessee Main Street designed to help communities embark on a comprehensive revitalization effort for their downtown. The two-year program includes technical assistance in the Main Street approach and a \$15,000 grant for a downtown project.

Since 2011, 78 Tennessee com-

munities have participated in the program and 14 have become nationally accredited Main Street America communities.

Letters of intent will be required as part of the application process and need to be submitted by Jan. 31.

For more information and to apply, v<u>isit here.</u>

Fire departments' support of firefighter training is critical

BY STEVEN CROSS MTAS Fire Management Consultant

Firefighters hold a position of great public trust in communities across Tennessee. Serving as a firefighter is a complex occupation with high consequences for others and oneself.

Every evolution, technique, or task must be practiced to a level of competency that leads to a zero-fail outcome. As a resident or a visitor in the state, you trust that if you report an emergency through the 911 emergency reporting system, competent firefighters and other first responders will respond to the location and remedy the emergency quickly and professionally.

No one can meet this level of expectation and competency without consistent and routine training and drills.

You may ask, "What type and how much training are required to be a firefighter in Tennessee?" This question is often asked of MTAS consultants as we serve across our state. The answer to this question is always, "It Depends."

It depends on what county the fire department is in and the jurisdiction it serves. It depends on whether the municipality has adopted the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. It depends on whether the municipality follows the Insurance Service Office (ISO) requirements to earn full training credit. It depends on the level of service and level of risk tolerance the elected officials have identified for the municipality.

The Tennessee General Assembly answered the question of minimum firefighter training in Tennessee in 2009 by passing T.C.A. § 4-24-112. This law requires fire-



Consistent and routine training and drills are essential to prepare firefighters for responses to emergency situations.

fighters to participate in 16 hours of initial firefighter training before responding to an emergency incident.

Then, within 36 months of becoming a firefighter, they must participate in an additional 64 hours of firefighter training and 16 hours of live-burn training. The law does not have a provision for any routine and consistent required training or drills.

Legislators then added many population-based exemptions to the minimum identified state training based on the county's 2000 or subsequent U.S. Census.

This equated to legislators immediately exempting fire departments in 31 of 95 Tennessee counties from training requirements, including Benton, Bradley, Cannon, Claiborne, Clay, Cumberland, Decatur, Fentress, Giles, Grainger, Hancock, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Johnson, Lake, Lawrence, Lewis, Loudon, Macon, Meigs, Morgan, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Polk, Scott, Smith, Trousdale, Unicoi, and Union counties.

The subsequent 2010 U.S. census exempted fire departments in Bledsoe, Cheatham, and Marion counties. Most recently, the subsequent 2020 U.S. census exempted fire departments in Haywood County. Fire departments in 35 of Tennessee's 95 counties are exempted from the minimum training requirements specified in the law.

The number of exempted counties is expected to rise after each U.S. census. It is important to note that fire departments located or serving in exempted counties are not prohibited from training, just not required by the state to be trained.

State legislators made a way to allow counties and municipalities to opt in or remove themselves from being exempted from the minimum firefighter training requirements. Suppose an entity wants to be removed from the exemption.

In that case, the elected body will need to introduce an ordinance or resolution, whichever is needed in the jurisdiction, and the elected body pass it with 2/3rds majority vote.

A copy of this passed legislation should then be sent to the State Fire Marshal's Office for recording in their records. This action establishes a proactive legacy of placing significant importance on firefighter training for each legislator.

Two laws affect fire departments that do not have any exemptions. T.C.A. § 55-8-194, Required Training for Emergency Vehicle Drivers, commonly known as the Vanessa K. Free Emergency Services Training Act, requires anyone operating an emergency vehicle to complete at least two hours of training and pass a comprehensive emergency vehicle exam annually.

The training and exam must cover vehicle operation, applicable laws, and response to the actions of non-emergency vehicles. T.C.A. § 68-102-108, Assistants to the Commissioner of Commerce and Insurance, identifies who serves as the assistant to the commissioner and specifies the required training for such role.

The fire chief in a municipality with a fire department, the fire chief of a private fire company serving in a municipality, every county-wide fire chief or county fire chief with an approved response district, or the mayor of an incorporated place with no fire department, fire marshal, or private fire company must complete 16 hours of training provided by the fire academy within one year of taking such office. The law does not have a provision for any routine and consistent required training or drills.

The Insurance Service Office's model for initial and annual firefighter training is a model fire chiefs should consider as a template when developing and planning their department's firefighter training program.

The training program should minimally consist of an initial 240 hours of training for each new recruit firefighter (not certified) earning a Firefighter II state certification, 60 hours of apparatus driver operator training for new drivers earning state certification, and initial fire officer training earning state certification for new officers.

Then, annually complete 192 hours of company training and 18 hours of drills at a facility, 6 hours of hazardous materials training. In addition, officers complete 12 hours of specialized officer training, and apparatus operators complete 12 hours of specialized apparatus operator training.

The fire department and fire chief's support of firefighter training is critical. In the state law, NFPA standards, and ISO requirements, there is no distinction between career and volunteer firefighters regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities developed through training and education to serve in this occupation of high consequences.

If MTAS consultants can serve your community, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you should have questions or comments regarding this article, please contact me at <u>steven.cross@</u> tennessee.edu or 931.981.3593.

TDEC: Municipalities can take advantage of new brownfields grant

BROWNFIELDS, from Page 1 gram is to transition brownfield sites from blight to opportunity by addressing public safety concerns, increasing property values, serving as a catalyst for economic development, preserve existing infrastructure, and preserve green space.

The legislature recently approved \$5 million in recurring grant funds for the new Brownfield Area Grant (BRAG) program with individual grants capped at \$500,000 annually per eligible entity. These entities include cities, counties, grant requires access to the property but not ownership of the property. The remediation grant does require that the entity receiving the grant owns the property. The grant period for the BRAG grants is expected to open in late February 2024 with targeted execution of the grant contracts in August 2024.

VOAP Grant Oppor-



Brownfields Webinars

Brag grant webinars will be held Feb. 1 at 9:30 a.m. (CST) and Feb. 7 at 2 p.m. (CST). Officials from TDEC's Division of Remediation will discuss eligibility and ways to make strong proposals for the grants.AQ&Asession will follow. Registration for the webinar <u>is available here</u>. A link to sign up for brownfield grant alerts can be found here. After the webinars, TDEC will conduct application workshops to walk through the process March 19 and March 20.

development districts, and development boards.

"We think these grants will complement grants already offered by ECD, such as their site development grants, and the EPA's brownfield grants they offer annually," Spann said. "We are going break these grant offerings into three types. The first and maybe easiest is a \$20,000, 12-month contract period to do a windshield survey of your community and then return to us a list of sites you think are brownfields and could be further investigated under the next type of grant. The second is the investigation grant where we provide funding for that Phase I environmental site assessment or a Phase II environmental site assessment to really go and ask question about a property. The third type of grant is the remediation grant, which would be to remediate the piece of property."

Spann said the investigation

tunities

Another program, the state's Voluntary Oversight and Assistant Program (VOAP), allows owners or prospective purchases of contaminated properties to work proactively with TDEC to improve the site. Spann said TDEC works with property owners to address liability issues through the brownfield voluntary

agreement and then coordinate actions on the site to ensure its fit for the next use.

"That is one of the prime offerings that the grant program will offer funding for," he said. "We want them to work with us to take ownership of these properties and turn them into a benefit to the community. We provide outcome-based evaluation of environmental data. We try to work

Founders Park in Johnson City is one example of a brownfield success story. Once the site of a dry cleaners, gas station, warehouse, bulk petroleum storage facility, and tire retreading facility, the frequent flooding in the area prompted city officials to first address drainage issues and then develop the site into a new community park. Adjacent to the farmers' market, the park is now a popular space for local events and festivals.

within the timeline of the project and get agreement from regulatory staff that the investigation has been thorough, complete, and appropriate for the site. We want to help property owners with understanding and addressing federal and state liability issues for contamination."

At the end of the process, owners are issued a "no further action" notice that provides all interested parties proof that the site is mitigated and liability for the site doesn't follow through to successive owners. Spann said TDEC cautions communities against acquiring blighted property before doing their due diligence and encourages them to instead refer property owners to the program.

"Brownfield properties can present a significant amount of risk," he said. "What the VOAP does is help communities and property owners address the regulatory risk, financial risk, and any human exposure risk at any contaminated properties.

VOAP properties are eligible for certain tax credits pending approval from the Department of Revenue, Department of Finance and Administration, and Department of Economic and Community Development.

For more information,or contact Amy MacKown at <u>amy.mackown@</u> <u>tn.gov</u> with any questions or visit access <u>TDEC's website</u>

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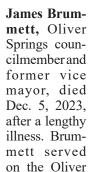


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PEOPLE



James Brummett

Springs City Council representing Ward 6 for more than a decade and served as vice mayor during his tenure on the board. He was also elected in 2006 to the Roane County Commission, where he served as chairman for three terms.

Lynn Carmack has retired after 25 years of servicetothetown of Collierville. Carmack spent most of her time in Collierville as town



Lynn Carmack

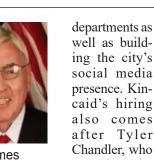
clerk but started as a police records clerk in 1985. She held that position for a decade before becoming an administrative secretary in the town's administration department in 1995 then town clerk in 1998 after being encouraged by then-Town Administrator James Lewellen to earn the necessary certifications. Carmack is also a member of the Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR). She holds a master municipal clerk designation and received the Distinguished Service Award from TAMCAR twice during her career. She also served as presient and vice president of TAMCAR.

Dave Cross has been selected as the new electric director for the city of Oak Ridge. Cross previously served with the Plateau Elec-



Dave Cross

tric Cooperative for 37 years, retiring from that position in September. For the last 15 of those years, he was CEO of the coop and also served in roles including chief financial officer and director of finance and accounting. He has also served on the boards of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA) Board of Directors. Cross holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Tennessee Technological University.



social media presence. Kincaid's hiring also comes after Tyler Chandler, who served as the

Sami Kincaid

Mt. Juliet Police Department's spokesperson, was promoted to deputy chief. Kincaid is a Mt. Juliet native who served as a sports media personality, covering high school and SEC football.



role Jan. 16, when Chief Maurice Shults retires. Lamb presently serves as a deputy chief of the department. He has been with the Newport Police Department for 25 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from East Tennessee State University.

Mike Mains

has been selected as the director of parks and recreation for the city of Bristol. Mains comes to Bristol from Elizabethton,

where he has served as parks and recreation director, director of the Elizabethton Parks and Recreation Center, and with the Elizabethton/ Carter County Boys and Girls Club. He has served in the parks and recreation field since 1999 and is a four-time Appalachian League Executive of the Year for his work with the Elizabethton Twins. He was inducted in the Appalachian League Hall of Fame in 2020 and holds a bachelor's degree in recreation ad-

David Smith has been selected as the new director of the Clarksville Street Department. Smith has worked





Left to Right: Maj. Eric Dougherty, Deputy Chief Scott Jenkins, Sgt. Adam Lunceford, Sgt. Mark Williams, Sgt. Justin Henard, Sgt. Will Saulsbury, Sgt. Brandon Carr, Sgt. Jeff Jenkins, Chief Billy Church and Maj. Scotty Carrier at the police promotion ceremony in Johnson City



Left to Right) Maj. Eric Dougherty, David Arendse, Eugene Diaz, III, Matt Hoyt, Jacob Rice, Chief Billy Church, Terry Atkinson, Jacob Colvin, Shawn Jordan, Dennis Skowronski, Maj. Scotty Carrier and City Manager Cathy Ball at the swearing-in ceremony.

Gov. Bill Lee appointed co-chair of ARC

Gov. Bill Lee has been elected by his fellow Appalachian governors to serve as the 2024 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) states' co-chair. As part of ARC's unique federal-state partnership structure, the states' co-chair works collaboratively with the ARC federal co-chair and fellow Appalachian state governors to invest in economic and community growth across the region's 423 counties in 13 states. In addition to advancing ARC investments across the region, the states' co-chair also hosts ARC's annual conference.

Gov. Lee will serve as ARC's 71st states' co-chair and the first from Tennessee since 2016, making him the seventh Tennessean since 1965 to hold the position.

"Governors are reminding the



Gov. Bill Lee

nation that community investment and economic development move America forward, and I'm honored to serve alongside Federal Co-Chair Gayle Manchin as the State's Co-Chair for the Appalachian Regional Commission," said Gov. Lee. "Together, we will continue investing in projects that expand opportunity, security and freedom for all."

In FY 2023, ARC invested over \$322 million in 701 projects throughout the region, which attracted an additional \$3.13 billion in private investments. The projects ARC funded in FY 2023 are projected to create or retain over 50,000 jobs, and provide training to nearly 50,000 students, workers, and leaders for new opportunities in emerging sectors across the Appalachian region. In addition, a new evaluation of ARC's business development projects between 2017-2021 found that ARC investments created over 14,500 jobs and 1,944 new businesses during that timeframe.

Two longtime city managers announce retirements

Two longtime city managers have retired after a combined 82 years of public service.

Mark Johnson has retired as the city manager of Alcoa after 25 years of service to the city and 50 years in government. He is the second-longest serving city manager in Alcoa's history, after its very first city manager was hired in 1919.

Prior to his retirement, John

for our residents and visitors. We are growing by leaps and bounds in the best way, and I can't believe that I was able to be a part of that growth. I know that my successor into this position, Bruce Applegate and the department heads will do a great job. I'm not worried about what's to come for the city of Alcoa, I'm just happy that I was there



ministration from Wingate College.



Mark Hill, city manager of Forest Hills, has earned the Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO) designation. Hill has served as



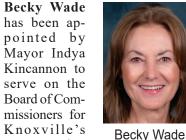
city manager for Forest Hills since September 2021. Candidates must successfully complete a series of 11 courses within a 2-year period relative to various municipal financial management topics. Currently there are approximately 400 officially certified municipal finance officers in the state.

Sami Kincaid has been named the new public information officer for the city of Mt. Juliet and will serve alongside Communications Director Justin Beasley. Kincaid will help with communications for the city's police, fire, and other



for the city of David Smith Clarksville for

18 years, including in leadership positions in the parking commission, project management, and building and codes before joining the street department. Smith holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from Austin Peay University.



DevelopmentCorporation(KCDC). Wade retired as the director of Housing and Neighborhood Development for the city of Knoxville in 2022. She previously worked for 31 years at KCDC. The Board of Commissioners oversees programs provided by the agency, including affordable housing administration and redevelopment.

Two Tennessee fire officials graduate from FEMA program

Two Tennessee fire officials have graduated from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Executive Fire Officer certification program, making them among less than 80 individuals in the state to hold the certification.

Nolensville Fire Assistant Chief Matthew Lupo and Hendersonville Fire Chief Scotty Bush both attended the last class in the 2-year certification program last month to earn the designation.

The FEMA Executive Fire Officer certification program is highly competitive and requires a tremendous amount of commitment and hard work. It represents high level leadership skills, a vast understanding for the fire service and a commitment to learning the



Scotty Bush Matthew Lupo

skills needed to strengthen an organization and community.

The program consists of 5 classes, taken over a 2- year period where students travel to the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Since the program was formed in 1990, there have only been 76 individuals in the state of Tennessee to complete this certification and less than 5,000 in the United States.

son was the 55th recipient of the International County/City Manager Association's (ICMA) Award for Career Excellence, which he accepted in Austin, Texas, in October.

A native of Indiana, Johnson graduated from Murray State University in Kentucky with a business and accounting degree as well as serving as a certified public accountant (CPA). He began his career in government in Paris as finance director and then city manager.

"My time at the city of Alcoa has been nothing short of fulfilling," Johnson said. "The last 24 years have flown by, and I couldn't be more thankful for the experiences and memories I have made at the city of Alcoa. I've seen projects years in the making come to fruition. I've seen the current leadership team grow together and accomplish goals. I've been a part of an organization with hard workers who are dedicated to making this city better. I might have overseen many projects, but they couldn't have been finished without the employees in our city. I've been lucky to experience the camaraderie and be a part of bringing our employees together, so they know how important their roles are. I've been told that I'm a "quiet leader," and I believe that to be true. I want the successes of the city of Alcoa to reflect the many people behind each project. It's never been just a one-man job."

Former Alcoa City Manager C.L. Overman encouraged Johnson to apply for his position when he left, and Johnson was chosen as Alcoa's new city manager. During his tenure, Alcoa's population has grown by 17% and Johnson has been lauded by staff and commissioners for how he has managed the city's growth while also inspiring a sense of community and continued learning among city staff to best meet the city's needs.

Johnson oversaw the development of Springbrook Farm-a large mixed-commercial and residential



Mark Johson



Kathy Dillon

plot serving as the city's downtown on the former ALCOA West Plant site - as well as business growth and the construction of the Alcoa Highway Pedestrian Bridge.

Deputy City Manager Bruce Applegate has been selected as Alcoa's new city manager.

"You won't find another place like the city of Alcoa," Johnson said. "It's a growing city with that small town feel that's hard to come by. We've had many unique opportunities to grow this area in a way that is sustainable and reliant

to see some of it happen. Besides, I may be retired, but I'm not going anywhere. Well, expect maybe to the beach."

Kathy Dillon has also retired as city manager of Union City, a position she has served in for 16 years. Dillon has a total of 32 years in government service.

"Working for Union City was the job of a lifetime for me," Dillon said. "It was the best people to work for and with. I learned a great deal, and had great people to help teach me along the way. There were just so many great people I got to meet. I am so honored I got to work there."

A native of Michigan, Dillon began working for Union City when she moved to Tennessee in 2003. She first served as the city's clerk and finance director before becoming first the interim and then full-time city manager in 2007. Dillon holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Bethel University and was among the first class of Certified Municipal Finance Officers (CMFOs) through the state of Tennessee in 2010.

Prior to her arrival in Tennessee, Dillon has been working in local government since 1991 and had first served as city manager of South Fulton in 2003.

Johnny McTurner has been selected as the next city manager for Union City.



Board of Commissioners for Knoxville's Community

STATE BRIEFS

Tennessee's November 2023 unemployment rate held steady at 3.5%, up from 3.3% in October but unchanged from the same time in 2022. The state's seasonally adjusted Labor Force Participation Rate remained steady at 59.4%, estimates show the number of Tennesseans not working increased by slightly more than 5,000 individuals. The healthcare and social assistance sector saw the most year-to-year growth. The professional, scientific, and technical services sector added the next highest number of jobs and was followed by the local government sector. A complete analysis of Tennessee's November 2023 unemployment data is available here.

The Tennessee Department of **Tourist Development unveiled** its official 2024 Tennessee Vacation Guide, inviting travelers worldwide to experience the state's vibrant culture through the eyes of locals. The guide is available now as a free printed guide or e-guide at TNvacation. com or any of the state's 16 Welcome Centers. This year's guide is a treasure trove of insider tips and itineraries curated from those who call Tennessee home. The 150-plus page magazine, produced by Franklin-based Journal Communications, Inc., captures Tennessee's scenic beauty, rich culture, diverse offerings and warm hospitality.

Charlotte was the top baby name for girls and Liam was the most popular name for boys in 2023, according to data recently released by the Tennessee Department of Health. Charlotte overtook Olivia, which had been the most common name for girls for three consecutive years. Liam remained the most popular boys name for a second year. The top ten girls' names in order were Charlotte, Olivia, Amelia, Emma, Ava, Evelyn, Harper, Isabella, Eleanor, and Elizabeth while the top ten for boys was Liam, Oliver, James, William, Noah, Elijah, Henry, John, Waylon, and Hudson.

Tennessee will become the first state in the nation to address the use of AI in the music industry. Gov. Bill Lee announced the Ensuring Likeness Voice and Image Security (ELVIS) Act, a bill updating Tennessee's Protection of Personal Rights law to include protections for songwriters, performers, and music industry professionals' voice from the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI). Tennessee's music industry supports more than 61,617 jobs across the state, contributes \$5.8 billion to our GDP, and fills over 4,500 music venues. While Tennessee's existing law protects name, image and likeness, it doesn't specifically address new, personalized generative AI cloning models and services that enable human impersonation and allow users to make unauthorized fake works in the image and voice of others. Artists and musicians at all levels are facing exploitation and the theft of their integrity, identity, and humanity. This threatens the future of Tennessee's creators, the jobs that they support across the state and country, and the bonds between fans and their favorite bands. The ELVIS Act would be the first legislation of its kind in the nation to build upon existing state rule protecting against the unauthorized use of someone's likeness by adding "voice" to the realm it protects.

Federal transportation grants awarded to ten Tennessee cities

Several Tennessee municipalities were awarded funds as part of the more than \$14 billion in federal funds set aside for roadway safety by the federal government.

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced the grant as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All grants in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In Tennessee, 10 municipalities and four county the city of Knoxville will receive \$8 million for a pedestrian and cyclist safety project. The city of Nashville received a federal grant totaling more than \$13 million to make improvements along Nolensville Pike.

Franklin, Morgan, Scott, and Williamson counties also received funds for planing and multimodal safety projects. The funding helps commu-

TDEC announces 28 municipalities to share in state ARP fund grants

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) announced 28 cities will share in 49 grants totaling \$191.2 million awarded from the state's American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund.

Of the 49 total grants, 14 are part of regionalization projects, eight for water reuse, and 27 for water resource protections.

Regionalization projects will provide cooperative support across water and wastewater systems to improve the sustainability, affordability, and/or reliability of systems. Grants awarded included more than \$8.1 million for Atoka, \$8.17 million for the city of Crossville, \$19 million for the city of Gallatin, more than \$10.7 million for the city of Harriman, more than \$15.95 million for the city of Lexington, \$997,500 for Mountain City, more than \$3.37 for Norris, and \$11.4 million for Pigeon Forge.

Grants were also awarded in this category to water and utility authorities in Blount, Dickson, Knox, Maury, Warren, and Wilson counties. Municipalities that will not directly receive funds but will benefit from the regional projects include Alexandria, Brighton, Clinton, Charlotte, Crab Orchard, Gatlinburg, Hartsville, Lenoir City, Munford, Portland, Sardis, Scotts Hill, Spencer, Thompson's station, Westmoreland, and White Bluff.

Water reuse projects will reclaim water from a variety of sources then treat and reuse it for beneficial purposes. Reuse grants awarded included \$4.25 million to Chattanooga, \$425,000 to Clarks-



Franklin's new state-of-the-art water reclaimation facility is helping research water reuse best practices for cities across Tennessee.

ville, \$2.47 million to Cleveland, \$5.6 million to Franklin, more than \$2.39 million to Spring Hill, and \$4 million to Thompson's Station. Additional grants were given to Wilson County and the Ocoee Utility District in Bradley and Polk counties.

Resource protection projects will either improve water infrastructure resilience to extreme weather events, improve the management of stormwater to improve water quality, and/or restore natural landscape features such as streams or wetlands. The additional strategic project will address regional wastewater needs.

Winners of these grants included more than \$1.78 million to Chattanooga, more than \$3.98 million to Cookeville, \$665,000 to Cookeville, \$665,000 to Dyersburg, \$875,425 to Erwin, more than \$2 million to Farragut, more than \$1.36 million to Huntingdon, more than \$3.38 million to Johnson City, \$4.75 million to Knoxville, two grants of \$503,500 each to McMinnville, \$4.75 million to Memphis, more than \$1.17 million to Monterey, \$4.25 million to Portland, \$1.9 million to Selmer, more than \$1.09 million to Sevierville, and \$800,000 to Spring Hill, and \$340,328 to Sweetwater.

Knox County and the Tennessee Wildlife Federation also received individual grants while multiple grants were awarded to the Cumberland River Compact; Memphis Light, Gas, and Water; and the West Tennessee River Basin Authority.

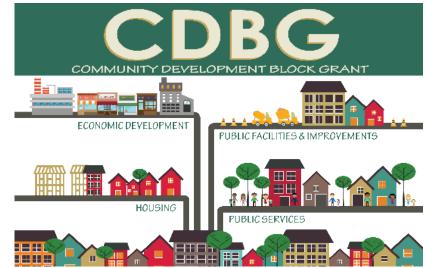
For more details on individual projects, visit here.

CDBG funds awarded to 59 cities

Tennessee officials announced 59 municipalities will share in the \$36.6 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding recently awarded to 78 municipalities and counties throughout the state.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee and Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Stuart C. McWhorter recently accepted the federal funding, which will assist communities with infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitations and health and safety initiatives.

Municipalities receiving funds for parks and recreation projects include Baileyton, Caryville, Crossville, Dunlap, Dyer, Elizabethton, Hollow Rock, Jasper, Martin, Maynardville, Minor Hill, Mountain City, New Market, Rogersville, Sharon, and Vonore. The municipalities of Brownsville, Collinwood, Cornersville, Crab Orchard, Dover, Estill Springs, Greeneville, Lobelville, Lynnville, Shelbyville, St. Joseph, Tiptonville, Unicoi, Waynesboro, and White Bluff received funds for street and sidewalk improvements



Gainesboro, Gallaway, Henning, Linden, Livingston, Madison-

the Department of Economic and Community Development. Funds are available for water and sewer improvements, housing rehabilitation, health and safety projects and other improvements to enhance the quality of life in Tennessee's rural communities. In addition to traditional community improvement and safety projects, funding was also made available for community development projects, such as sidewalk and walking trail improvements, street paving and community centers.

governments were recipients of grants.

Athens, Dickson, Franklin, Jackson, Lebanon, Milan, Mt. Juliet, and Murfreesboro all received grants to develop transportation plans. Athens received \$84,000, Dickson \$240,000, Franklin \$192,000, Jackson \$240,000, Lebanon \$240,000, Milan \$60,000, Mt. Juliet \$328,000, and Murfreesboro \$288,000.

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization also received \$24,000 for transportation planning while nities address roadway safety through a comprehensive approach that uses all types of interventions, which aligns with DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy. These funds will help tackle the preventable crisis of deaths on the nation's roads through safer people, roads, and vehicles, appropriate vehicle speeds, and improved post-crash care. This first-of-its-kind program was created by the infrastructure law and is a part of the more than \$14 billion in the law dedicated to roadway safety.

Municipalities receiving funds for water and wastewater infrastructure projects include Bell Buckle, Centerville, Copperhill, ville, Maury City, McMinnville, Monterey, Mt. Pleasant, Spencer, Trenton, Trezevant, and Wartrace,

The municipalities of Ardmore, Coalmont, Ethridge, Etowah, Henderson, Kimball, Lexington, Monteagle, Rives, and Westmoreland received funds for public safety and emergency services projects.

The allocation of CDBG funds is based on priorities set through the public meeting process at the local community level. The CDBG program is funded through HUD and administered in Tennessee by

To see a complete, detailed list of all awardees and their specific projects, <u>visit this link.</u>

TDOT announces 10-year infrastructure plan

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) revealed its first-ever proposed 10-year fiscally-constrained project plan, with the goal of better communicating with citizens and communities of the long-term investment strategy for infrastructure in Tennessee.

The \$15 billion fiscally constrained plan includes both the annual TDOT work program budget of approximately \$1.2 billion for 10 years plus the \$3 billion State General Fund appropriation provided in the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA), proposed by Governor Lee, and passed by the General Assembly earlier this year.

There are 93 site-specific capacity-type projects in the plan, 46 of which are funded fully or in part by the \$3 billion. For the first time, TDOT has identified the funding necessary to complete all projects in the plan, ensuring "what gets started, gets finished."

"As families and businesses continue moving to Tennessee in record numbers, our transportation assets must be ready to serve our citizens and visitors," said Gov. Bill Lee. "I am proud of TDOT for their leadership in creating this 10-year project plan to guide investments in rural and urban communities that will modernize our transportation systems."

This first-ever 10-year fiscally



TDOT recently released its new 10-year project plan.

constrained project plan is supported by a new data-driven prioritization process that allows for a more objective review of infrastructure projects across Tennessee. The plan is a road map that will be reevaluated annually to consider the changing needs of our people, economy and infrastructure. It permits a long-term investment strategy that will infor TDOT's annual budget proposal to the General Assembly for consideration.

Fifty-five percent of the \$15 billion is identified for construction projects reflected on the 10-year project plan list, with the remaining 45% budgeted for programs that TDOT allocates annually based on

need. These programs include, but are not limited to, resurfacing and bridge repair.

Further, it is important to note that TDOT will allocate an additional approximately \$6 billion in state and federal funds over the next 10 years (nearly \$600 million annually) in partnership with airports, transit agencies, counties, cities, and other entities to address multimodal access, mobility, and safety.

This 10-year fiscally constrained plan focuses efforts on what can be effectively delivered by TDOT within conservatively projected available revenue. Three important aspects were considered in the development of this plan and the prioritization process by which it was created: performance, delivery and cost. The result is a pipeline of projects that are urgent, feasible, actionable, and funded within the next decade.

"TDOT is proud to establish this fiscally responsible infrastructure investment program for the state of Tennessee," said Deputy Governor & TDOT Commissioner Butch Eley. "This plan focuses efforts on what can be effectively delivered by TDOT within available revenue, further opening the communication with local communities on what is feasible. We know the outstanding need for infrastructure projects across Tennessee is at least over \$30 billion, however, this long-term plan is a solid step toward providing a safer and more reliable transportation network for generations to come."

The plan leverages TMA revenues against traditional federal and state funding to maximize the number and type of investments that can be delivered over a 10-year period. It delivers TDOT's current 3-Year Plan as a priority and accelerates IM-PROVE Act projects. Additionally, the plan provides important funding for collaboration with local communities, such as Statewide Partnership Program (SPP) projects, and investments in sidewalks and bikeways through grants and other initiatives.

TDOT's 10-Year fiscally con-

strained project plan includes Tennessee's first potential Choice Lanes to serve motorists in some of the most congested urban areas of Tennessee.

Choice Lanes will establish options for motorists in urban areas to experience more reliable travel times through frequently congested corridors. Tennessee's Choice Lanes will be new, additional lanes that benefit all Tennesseans, by reducing overall traffic in existing general purpose lanes, offering enhanced transit options as multimodal facilities, and improving air quality.

TDOT's Choice Lanes will leverage Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) authorized by the TMA, freeing up state funds to support projects in rural Tennessee. TDOT will be recommending to the General Assembly and the Transportation Modernization Board that the first Choice Lanes project in Tennessee be on I-24 between Nashville and Murfreesboro. Other potential future locations include I-65 between Nashville and I-840, Moccasin Bend in Chattanooga, and I-40 from the I-40/I-75 junction to State Route 158 west of downtown Knoxville.

For more information about the 10-Year fiscally constrained project plan, Choice Lanes, and the inaugural Transportation Modernization Board and its newly named members, visit <u>in.gov/tdot/build-with-us</u>.

DOJ releases new guidelines on policies, practices for specialized policing units

By KATE COIL *TT&C Assistant Editor*

The Department of Justice has issued a 72-page guide for state and local law enforcement agencies regarding practices and policies for specialized units, following a review of such units after one was involved in the death of Memphis resident Tyre Nichols.

The report was published on the one-year anniversary of Nichols' death from injuries sustained during a beating in a traffic stop initiated by five former members of Memphis' Street Crimes Operation to Restore Peace in Our Neighborhoods (SCORPION) Unit. The unit – which was created in November 2021 to focus on crime suppression, auto theft, and gang activity in "crime hotspots" – was disbanded weeks after Nichols' death on Jan. 10, 2023.

Titled "Considerations for Specialized Units: A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Ensure Appropriateness, Effectiveness, and Accountability," the report was commissioned as part of the DOJ's review – along with the city of Memphis and Memphis Police Department – of the unit's actions.

Guidelines from the report include how to conduct the four

Considerations for Specialized Units

A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Ensure Appropriateness, Effectiveness, and Accountability



main stages of creating and operating specialized police units – formation, personnel selection and supervision, management and accountability, and community engagement. The guide also provides solutions for choosing suitable personnel and supervisors, developing performance metrics, risk-reducing policies, and best practices for getting the community to support and feedback on issues specialized units are created to address.

Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta said the report is to be used by police departments "as they assess the appropriateness of the use of specialized units, and where units are deemed appropriate, ensure the necessary management and oversight of such units to advance effective and just policing practices."

"After the tragic death of Tyre Nichols and public scrutiny of the SCORPION unit, we made it a priority

at the Justice Department to develop a practical resource for law enforcement and community leaders assessing the use of specialized units in police agencies," Gupta said. "We hope that police chiefs, mayors and community stakeholders will use the guide when considering whether a specialized unit should be formed to focus on a particular problem, and if formed, how to ensure proper transparency, oversight, accountability and evaluation of such units."

The guidelines, published by the DOJ's <u>Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services</u> (<u>COPS</u>), were created after a series of forums held in conjunction with the <u>National Policing Institute</u> (<u>NPI</u>). COPS Director Hugh T. Clements, Jr., said the report called for input from law enforcement agencies and organizations, civil rights organizations, and community-advocacy groups

"This guide is based on input from representatives from law enforcement, the community, academic institutions and advocacy organizations across the country," Clements said. "I feel confident this guide will help both law enforcement and the communities they serve to demonstrate and uphold the principles of effective, constitutional policing."

Clements said the report focuses on how to balance the needs for the expertise of specialized police units while still maintaining oversight and adherence to standards and practices for law enforcement.

"Some specialized units handle dangerous problems that pose serious potential and actual harm to communities, and their members do so at considerable personal risk," Clements said. "Often, they work with a great degree of autonomy— and while that can be important to the tactical security of their mission, there have been too many occasions when specialized units have strayed from the primary mission of law enforcement. When this happens, it harms individuals, communities, and the trust between departments and those they have promised to protect and serve."

NPI President Jim Birch said that, like other organizations, law enforcement agencies must ensure that the "tool fits the job to be effective" and that the independent way in which specialized units operate may also require them to undergo more scrutiny and supervision that protects both the community and officers themselves.

"While prescriptive guidance is challenging to give at the national level and deference should be given to local community needs and conditions, the guidance offered here is based on the diverse input of many individuals and what we know from research and evaluation," Birch said. "Our hope is that both agency and community leaders can benefit from this report and the guidance it offers in an effort to support effective, fair, and constitutional policing."

TDEC announces updates on ARP grant funding opportunities

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) has announced new information regarding the State Water Infrastructure Grants (SWIG) program, which is administering American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding opportunities.

Phase I of the grant funding program focuses on non-competitive, formula-based grants while Phase II focuses on competitive grants and state strategic projects. TDEC shared important information on funding strategies for both phases.

PHASE I

TDEC was enormously successful in obligating the non-competitive grants throughout 2023. Under this program, TDEC awarded 337 grants, representing all 95 counties and 267 cities across the state, that totaled approximately \$996 million in funding.

These grants encompass a staggering 1,119 projects: 605 focused on drinking water, 399 on wastewater, and 115 on stormwater. As grantees continue navigate through the non-competitive program, we want to ensure all parties are aware of the requirements to receive reimbursements, get approval for deliverables, and close-out completed projects. The ARP non-competitive grants are reimbursement for costs incurred for all projects.



The funding breakdown by project type of ARP funds awarded as part of the State Water Infrastructure Grant (SWIG) program so far.

- All projects must provide procurement documentation for review and approval prior to submitting a grant reimbursement request; this includes grant administration costs.
- Deliverable dates proposed by grantees during the application phase can be updated

TDEC has developed a number of resources to assist grantees with procurement, reimbursement, and project reporting.

Implementation Guide: The Implementation Guide details contract, state, and federal requirements for grantees to ensure compliance when executing projects using non -competitive grant funding. Grantees should also review this guidance for information on grantee monitoring and risk assessments the state will conduct for each awardee. **GMS User Guide**: The GMS User Guide includes submittal guidance and step-by-step instructions on procurement, reimbursement, deliverables,

and site inspections as well as links to additional implementation resources.

Quick Reference Guides: The quick reference guides outline requirements, prerequisites, documents needed, and resources for contracts, reimbursements, deliverabeen made on Phase II of our funding strategy. Phase II allocates \$269 million toward state-initiated strategic projects that seek to support water system needs throughout the state and assist in funding projects that address state priorities.

TDEC is excited to announce the awarding of 49 competitive grants totaling \$191.2 million for regionalization, water reuse, and resource protection.

Of the 49 competitive grants announced, 14 are for regionalization, eight for water reuse, and 27 for resource protection.

Counties and cities, water utility districts, water utility authorities, and for-profit water infrastructure systems – if in partnership with one of the eligible entities as the lead grant applicant – were eligible to apply.

To read more about the awarded grants and entities, please review the latest press release. For more information about Phase II of TDEC's funding strategy, please review the <u>State Strategic</u> Projects Framework. TDEC recommends that all grantees and partners executing projects review all available resources. TDEC and the supporting EY Team remains available to assist grantees and their partners. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns to tdec.arp@tn.gov.

and modified for all required deliverables through GMS.

- Grantees should request site inspections through GMS once a construction project starts.
- Grantees should not request project changes in approved contracts. Doing so will cause delays in project completion and will most likely result in a denial for project changes.

bles, and preliminary engineering reports. These include the <u>Contract Conditions</u> <u>Quick Reference Guide</u>, the <u>Deliverables Quick Reference Guide</u>, the<u>PER Quick</u> <u>Reference Guide</u>, and the<u>Reimbursement Quick Reference Guide</u>

PHASE II

Tremendous progress has also

No loan is too large or too small



The Town of Dresden closed a \$6 million loan through the TMBF fixed rate loan program. The loan will be used to finance the construction and equipping of a new municipal complex to replace the building that was destroyed by the December 2021 tornado. The lender is Security Bank and Trust Company. Pictured are Dresden Mayor Mark Maddox, TMBF Marketing Representative Justin Hanson and City Recorder Jennifer Branscum.



The City of Tullahoma has used the TMBF loan programs 24 times since November 1986. The most recent closing was a \$7.5 million loan through TMBF's fixed rate loan program. The proceeds will be used to finance various projects for the city over the three-year draw period. The lender was First Farmers and Merchants Bank in Columbia. Pictured are (seated) Mayor Ray Knowis and City Recorder Lori Ashley. Standing are Finance Director Susan Wilson, TMBF Marketing Representative Kevin Krushenski, and Interim City Manager and Fire Chief Ken Peason.



See us for your special projects needs (615) 255-1561

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How to push local issues to the top of the Presidential agenda

sion-making table. Cities, towns

and villages across America will

play a critical role in the 2024

presidential election. I believe that

that, in and of itself, gets us a seat

Sander: More than 200 million

Americans live in cities. And those

are Democrats, those are Republi-

cans, those are independents. We

represent the largest slice of the

population if we start dividing by

dealing with the states - because

there are just 50 of them — is easy,

but it doesn't get the job done.

What we've proven is that the di-

rect-to-us relationships are really

valuable. You saw that with pan-

demic funding, the way that local

governments can act quickly. Also,

a lot of local intelligence makes a

huge difference in how the federal

government is able to achieve its

Governing: Looking back at

2020, what did NLC learn from

Sander: Every time we do this,

it's a little different because the

election dynamics are different.

[What matters are] who we can

talk to in a campaign, and where

those people end up when the

administration is formed. Those

relationships end up being really

critical. Sometimes presidential

campaigns will actually pick up

our issues and say, "Yeah, we're

for that." That's a bonus from our

perspective. The really important

thing is how we interact with that

new administration. We want to be

sure we have a good relationship

with them, that they understand

our issues, that we understand their

priorities and that we have people

who have met each other and can

Broome: NLC believes that no

matter who holds the highest office

in the nation, that person should

be committed to regular commu-

nication with local officials, plac-

ing leaders with local experience

throughout their administration.

communicate with each other.

aims in partnering with us.

the work of its task force?

For the federal government,

some sort of regional criteria.

at the table.

Some things about the 2024 presidential race are already predictable. The candidates will talk about the economy, international affairs and their plans for the next four years. What typically gets less attention, however, are the issues that matter to cities.

To fill that gap, the National League of Cities has created a 2024 presidential election task force, an effort to bring local issues to the forefront of the presidential campaign. The task force is co-chaired by David Sander, the mayor-elect of Rancho Cordova, Calif., and Mayor Sharon Weston Broome of Baton Rouge, La. The two also serve, respectively, as NLC's president and first vice president.

Governing spoke with them about what they hope to achieve. The discussion has been edited for length and clarity.

Governing: Why and how did the National League of Cities develop this task force?

David Sander: This is something we have done every presidential election cycle. This is my third time on it. It allows us to talk about things that are important to cities and allows us to try to establish relationships with the candidates - relationships that don't only last for the campaign, but that last into the administration, regardless of who is elected. And we hope that the next president will appoint some people with city backgrounds to deal with those issues that are most important to us.

Governing: What are the challenges that local government have usually faced when it comes to getting that seat at the federal table?

Sharon Weston Broome: We're fortunate to have federal advocacy groups as part of the fabric of NLC. But with this task force, our priority, as you said, is to ensure that local government has a seat at the federal deci-

> the year. After stripping out more volatile food and fuel prices, a inflation climbed 3.9% through the year, down from 4% and marking the first time the index has dropped below 4% since May 2021. While inflation remains faster than usual with month-to-month increases largely based on gas prices, the consumer price index continues to make progress back toward a normal pace of around 2%. While most goods and services are seeing their prices cooling, housing, rental costs, and vehicle insurance are continuing to climb steeply.

ing major disruptions to how local amenities are delivered and economies function. Researchers from the University of Chicago used U.S. Census Data to predict changing populations based on different scenarios and found that 43% of American cities could depopulate with most of the population loss occurring in the North and Midwest when compared to the South and West. Urbanization and housing density are the primary indicator of whether a city is expected to grow or shrink with lower-income cities more likely to see shrinking populations. Other issues such as climate change, legislation, and international immigration could also contribute to the change. As population shrinks, so will the tax base, leading to a potential crisis for some cities.

TENNESSEE **FESTIVALS**

Jan. 19-21: Pigeon Forge

Smoky Mountain Elvis Festival In support of St. Jude's, this three-day festival features six shows and EPE-sanctioned impersonators.

Jan. 20: Oak Ridge

International Festival

The Children's Museum of Oak Ridge hosts this family-friendly event that features a variety of world cultures through performances, food, crafts, art, and more. There are plenty of children's activities for all ages.

Feb 11: 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.

Feb. 11: Johnson City Maple Syrup Festival

The Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site invites guests to come watch traditional maple syrup gathering and making while enjoying a traditional pancake breakfast. Maple sap will be cooked down all day, so come on out and join us at any time.

Feb. 24: Townsend

Tennessee Winter Beer Fest

Breweries from across Tennessee will gather at Company Distilling in Townsend. Learn more about craft breweries in East Tennessee and beyond. All proceeds from the festival go to support the Blounty County Children's Advocacy Center.

March 1-2: Etowah

Cousin Jack Tullock Memorial **Bluegrass Festival**

Hosted by the Etowah Arts Commission, the Cousin Jake Memorial Bluegrass Festival, established in 1994, is an annual event that celebrates bluegrass music and honors the late Jake Tullock who notably performed with Flatt & Scruggs, Cas Walker, and the Midday Merery-Go Round Radio Show.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

The U.S. labor market added 216,000 jobs in December, showing continued resiliency



They should be working with

us to ensure that the federal govern-

ment works well for cities, towns and villages. We believe that most

folks on the federal level know

that cities are already hard at work

tackling challenging issues, but

we want to partner with the new

administration to develop their

platforms and to work together on

Governing: How will this task

force collect and convey the needs

and values of local government to

Broome: As you look at the task

force members, you see that we

have a really broad representation

from across American cities. And

because we are so diverse on this

task force, undoubtedly we're

going to receive information that

is representative of the areas that

many of our members come from.

But we are very data driven. We've

already talked about surveying

our membership to get additional

information and about specific

Governing: How are you going

to get not just the presidential

candidates but journalists, the

media and the public interested?

Broome: Communication, at every

point, is going to be essential as we

move forward with this task force

and our goals. We do have infra-

structure already in place, with our

task force members. But in addition

to that, this is not our first rodeo.

We have been very strong when

it comes to our advocacy groups.

So, we do have conduits, we have

people that we communicate with

on a regular basis, from not only

the election task force to our board

members, but to our general mem-

they will certainly be part of our

communication network, espe-

cially our task force members, in

reaching out to local journalists. I

feel very confident that we do have

the infrastructure in place where

we can accelerate and elevate

communication about what we are

doing with the task force.

At the end of the day, I believe

bership.

agenda items.

the presidential candidates?

the same issues we're all facing.

and signs of a strengthening economy. The number exceeded economists' expectations and marks the 36th straight month of job gains. The U.S. economy added a total of 2.7 million jobs in 2023, smaller than the previous two years since the pandemic but impressive when compared to the previous decade. The unemployment rate for December remained unchanged at 3.7% with hourly wages rising 0.4% from the previous month and 4.1% from the same time in 2022.

Inflation ticked higher in December but showed signs of moderation with U.S. consumer prices rising 3.4% through

Researchers predict nearly half of the 30,000 cities in the U.S. will face depopulation in the next 80 years. A study published in the journal Nature Cities found that populations will continue to shift between now and 2100, likely driv-

March 2-3: Pigeon Forge Chuck Wagon Cook-off

Pigeon Froge invites western lifestyle enthusiasts, foodies, and those in search of a hearty meal to the annual Chuck Wagon Cook-off Weekend. This three-day event includes a dinner concert, cowboy church, and cooking competition at Clabough's Campground.



For more than 30 years, Voya in partnership with the Tennessee Municipal League has provided retirement plan services to municipal employees all across the great state of Tennessee.

Competitive Retirement Plan Services for Tennessee's Towns & Cities



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Ed Stewart, ChFC, CLU, CF **Financial Advisor**

AI data providing solutions to retail, business recruitment in small cities

Analyze

AI from Page 1

area on this day between these two days or how many people came into the city limits for the entire calendar year. It's so versatile. You can use it for traffic lights, timers, and upgrading that technology or knowing which streets need to be paved sooner."

HOW IT WORKS

PlacerAI pulls data from smart phones including demographic information like age, income range, zip code, and others. An algorithm is used to account for the fact that not everyone has a smart phone, including children and older model phone users. These calculations are verified by an in-person spot counter. On average, PlacerAI's algorithm calculations are within 95% accuracy of what the spot counter sees on the ground.

"They can track people from a specific area, all over the country, and even outside the country," Carrier said. "It helps be informed and to know that maybe you need to advertise on a broader perspective for some of our festivals."

Before the data is handed over to the customer, PlacerAI ensures that the privacy of those they have collected data from is kept private.

"They scrub data for privacy reasons, and we never see that side of it," Morgan said. "We never see names or home addresses. What we will see is that we had 25 visitors come from Blue Ridge, Ga., to Sweetwater. It gives basic demographic information. If we run a visitor report on the town for the whole year, it will tell us 10% of them where white males in a certain age group. It will know income information, and anything your smart phone can track it. I cannot identify who these people are."

INCOMING VISITORS

For Sweetwater, some of the most important reports dealt with who was coming into town for festivals and where these visitors were coming from so marketing officials could better target advertising.

"We tracked how many people attended our festivals and also how many people just came in for the day of the festival," Morgan said. "Maybe these people didn't come to attend the festival. We found that 0.5% of people who come to Sweetwaters stop at the Buc-Cee's in Georgia before they come to Sweetwater while 0.5% of the people who leave Sweetwater stop at the Buc-Cee's in Richmond, Ky. It sounds like a miniscule amount, but what that's telling us is important. It's telling us that there is a measurable chunk of our visitors are people traveling north-to-south on Interstate 75. That means if we wanted to do a billboard, we need to advertise on that road." By providing this valuable data, Morgan said the city and local chambers can also provide added value to their business community. Morgan said the data was able to help a Sweetwater business owner who was debating moving their business to a new local downtown. "There were numerous reasons why they wanted to move locations, but the rent was almost double downtown what they were already paying," she said. "I could show them the traffic counts of the number of visitors they had walk through the door at their current location versus what it would be at their new location. The change would take the walk-in traffic from 54,000 a year to 250,000. For their type of business, that traffic mattered, and it enabled them to have the data they needed to pull the trigger on relocating."

Observe Human Movement

Privacy-safe foot traffic data from tens of millions of mobile devices forms an aggregated view of US commercial activity.

Every Location Machine learning accurately describes

and regions.

human movement throughout the U.S., from specific POIs to chains, markets, and markets.

Visitation data is enhanced with Placer Marketplace 3rd party datasets that further describe businesses, consumers,

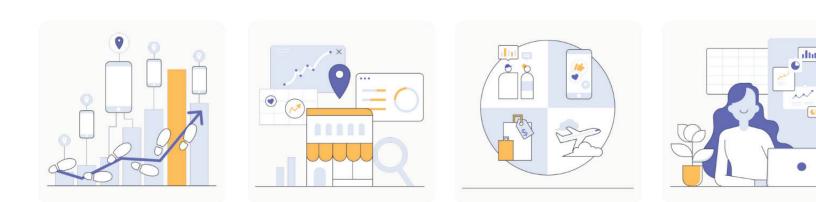
with 360° Data

Enhance

Robust, statistically significant insights into how people and places interact are presented via an intuitive UI, data feeds, or the Placer API.

Generate

Actionable Insights



While collecting important information from smart phones, PlacerAl also works to ensure the privacy of those who that data was collected from. The company will report non-specific demographic information, such as ages, salary ranges, and what cities or zip codes visitors to an area are coming from. Based on the zipcodes that were coming into Sweetwater, city officials were able to see that they should focus more advertising on interstates rather than local highways.

nessee, the Southeast, or the country to see differences.

Retail leakage - the phenomenon where residents leave their own community to visit a specific retail destination in another city - can also be tracked through PlacerAI.

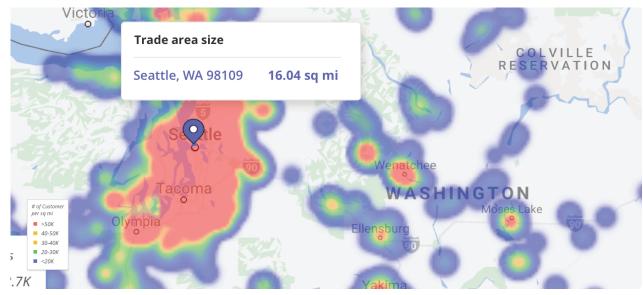
"The leakage reports are so awesome in that you can see where people who live within your city are going to purchase certain things," Carrier said. "In turn, you can see how much money is going out of your city on certain types of retail. You then take that data and combine it with a peer analysis report - of what stores cities your size and your median income have – and then use that information to recruit those stores. If you make an intentional approach to a certain kind of retailer you have a better chance of success."

How retail recruitment works has changed in recent years.

"It used to be you would get a Walmart and certain retailers just followed Walmart," Carrier said. "You would have shopping centers will all the same chain retailers. They don't do that anymore; they don't just trust Walmart. They do their own analysis and it's not a given any more that you are going to get all these stores with one big box."

As a result, Carrier said data like that provided by PlacerAi helps city leaders know both with retailers they are likely to have success with and have data to back up their pitches.

"You must be intentional with your approach to certain retailers and know their threshold," she said. "You can watch your city grow and once



This heat map created from AI data shows where consumers are going to spend their money in the state of Washington. Darker colored areas have less consumers while red and yellow areas have the most consumers. Similar maps and charts help users both visualize data and use it to better tell the story of their community.



Conduct Post-Event Analysis

Show how your event performed relative to average days of the week, and measure visitation performance - down to the hour!



Length of Stay 80 Minutes



Peak Time 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM



Income \$65,000

1. Median Household Income

Morgan said the data can also show why it makes sense for Sweetwater to invest money in its downtown and events.

"It shows why we are putting money into tourism and Main Street through the economic impact that is happening," she said. "Yes, we can show them sales tax numbers, but no one would dream that Sweetwater had more than 3 million visitors, someone who puts their cell phone down at night in another town, in a year or that we have, on an average Thursday, 8,000 people who go through a specific intersection downtown. Having these concrete numbers makes it much more legitimate."

RETAIL LEAKAGE

Carrier said one of the most common reports retail alliance members seek are those on peer analysis. This data shows what retail options a city of a similar size and make up have that another does not. Carrier said cities can compare themselves to similar municipalities across Ten-

you reach that threshold reach out to them. This type of software helps you look at your data and know when you're ready to approach a retailer. I have seen retailers run from people at conferences because a small town without even a Burger King is trying to get a Target. A business won't come to a community that doesn't meet thresholds for traffic, median income, etc. Your citizens may want a certain business, but it doesn't work that way."

BUSINESS RETENTION

In addition to recruiting new business, Carrier said cities can use the data they receive to help existing small businesses.

"For existing businesses, you can do psychographics that can give them the makeup of their consumers, what they look for, what they are interested in, and where they spend most of their incomes," she said. "Existing businesses can look at that and say maybe I need a different store front to attract customers. It could help businesses that people visit together connect and come up with ideas together. Every business owner I've shared data with has loved it because they love to get to know the consumer. Small businesses can't generate reports on their own either."

Morgan said one of the trends Sweetwater discovered was that visitors to the local hospital often stopped at a local coffee shop as part of the trip. Data showed that visitors from multiple counties and communities were coming to the hospital.

The data helped local restaurants and coffee shops better target those AI data can also be used to show the success of events and festivals, providing information about what type of people attended the event, where they came from, how much time they spent at the event, and if they visited anywhere else in the community after or before the event took place.

coming into the community for medical visits with menus for food they can either get delivered or stop for on the way in and out of the community. Morgan said some of the most surprising data was that the hospital was in the top ten places visited in Sweetwater.

"We also use a report that shows where people came from and then where they went after they left Sweetwater. We are an interstate city, and it helps our businesses know when to be open. A lot of our businesses were closed on Mondays, but we have been encouraging them to open on Mondays because there seems to be a lot of traffic in town on Mondays. It is helping businesses determine what hours are best for them."

Morgan said economic development officials can sometimes get a sense of whether business is up or down, but the data gives them concrete evidence to share with city leaders, taxpayers, and local business owners. Morgan said showing trends such as visitor demographics and lengths of stay at a local Main Street meeting garnered more reaction from business owners than any other report she has given.

"People don't trust just hearing that you're a great place to do business; they need to see that in action," she said. "This is one way we've been able to do that. No one else had given them this before. It helps with entrepreneurship development and gives us a reason to create a relationship with a brand-new entrepreneur. It helps them determine how to establish their store hours. It can help them choose the best location. Most of our businesses are small and have limited resources; they are never going to be able to afford data like this on their own. This is a great service we can help provide for them. It also fosters relationships and gives us accuracy."

THE AI SHIFT

As the way retail recruitment changes, AI can help level the playing field for cities and give them ever-important data for their business community.

"In the past it was about handshakes, who you knew and knowing the right person whether it was a developer or real estate reps," Carrier said. "Everything in retail really focused on relationships. The data was there, but it wasn't at everyone's fingertips. Because AI is so accessible, we can use that data to make the right approach to developers and companies. What isn't going to change is having those relationships. Cities can just be more strategic with data in those approaches. It will make cities smarter if they learn how to use the data. They aren't wasting time on people who aren't going to respond; they can spend their time selling their city to the people who care and be more educated and focused.

Carrier said the Tennessee Retail Alliance is working to make this data easier to afford for cities, especially smaller ones, who cannot afford the size-based price tag on the software. She said cities with a population of under 2000 can join the alliance for \$2,000 to not only receive generated reports other associated trainings and other benefits in a changing world of retail recruitment.

For Sweetwater, PlacerAI has been worth the investment, but Morgan said she would encourage other communities to do a demo of it to see if it is a right fit for them. Going in to purchase the software with other cities, county governments, or local CVBs and chambers may also make it more affordable.

"I don't think we will ever get rid of it now," Morgan said. "I don't think we will ever have a year without it, because it gives us such insight. Occasionally, we will have someone call to ask a question, and I can go pull the PlacerAI data to answer that question. Being a small town, we know our businesses owners. I can reach out to them with the data and help encourage them based on the data. It can really make a difference to them. Especially if you have a person who likes data, it's probably more beneficial to small cities than big cities. It's little cities who don't have anyone harvesting their data or paying attention to them."



113th Tennessee General Assembly back in session



Sen. Ferrell Haile filing in at the speaker podium in Lt. Gov. Randy McNally's absence. (Photo by: John Partipilo, *Tennessee Lookout*)



Rep. Harold Love, Rep. G.A. Hardaway, and Sen. Charlane Oliver



House Speaker Cameron Sexton gavels in the second session of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly.



Rep. Patsy Hazlewood, Rep. Dan Howell and Rep. David Hawk during the opening floor session in the House. (Photo by: Erik Schelzig, *The Tennessee Journal*)



Sen. Art Swann announced from the Senate floor his plans for retirement after serving a total of 16



years in the Tennessee Legislature.



Gov. Bill Lee meets with members of the Farragut High School Choir, who he invited to perform the national anthem before the opening of the Tennessee Senate.



Pictured with Sen Page Walley (second from right) is championship fiddler and Hardin County native Wayne Jerrolds. He regaled the Tennessee Senate singing and playing two songs accompanied by his sister Freeda Ashe (right) and his daughter Paula Jerrolds (left).

House Leader William Lamberth speaking on the House floor. (Photo by: Erik Schelzig, *The Tennessee Journal*)



Senate Leader Jack Johnson (back right) making announcements on the Senate floor.



Germantown Mayor Mike Palazzolo with Rep. Ron Gant.