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TML, Kentucky League join together to plan for infrastructure needs near new Ford plants

BY CAROLE GRAVES

TML Communications Director

Massive, game changer, historic, and unprecedented growth were among the top descriptions city officials used to define the new Ford EV manufacturing campus slated for construction in West Tennessee and the new Ford SK battery plant to be built in central Kentucky.

Earlier this month, the Tennessee Municipal League hosted a joint meeting with West Tennessee city mayors and members of the Kentucky League of Cities to identify similar issues, problem solve, and determine ways to move forward while building livable communities.

"We hope this meeting will facilitate collaboration not only between the two states and two municipal leagues, but also among our Tennessee mayors," said Dr. Ken Moore, Franklin mayor and TML president.

In Stanton, Ford will invest \$5.6 billion to build a 3,600-acre mega campus called Blue Oval City on the Memphis Regional Megasite. The project will result in the creation of 5,800 jobs on site with up to 27,000 indirect jobs created as a result of the project. The construction jobs are estimated to total more than 30,000 workers with up to 4,000 on site at the height of construction.

In Glendale, Ky., Ford plans to invest \$5.8 billion to build a dedicated battery manufacturing complex with SK Innovation — BlueOvalSK Battery Park — creating more than 5,000 jobs.

Although most agree that this is an historic investment and transformative opportunity for both states, it is also rife with challenges and problems for the small, nearby rural communities.

Among the top concerns from See BLUE OVAL on Page 5

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TML President and Franklin Mayor Dr. Ken Moore applauds Gov. Bill Lee as he addresses TML members at the 2022 TML Legislative Conference in Nashville. TML members had a chance to hear directly from local lawmakers and state leadership about the important issues impacting the every day lives of Tennesseans.

City officials gather for 2022 TML Legislative Conference in Nashville

Economic development, city and state finances, election integrity, pre-emption, ARPA funds and education were among the topics discussed during the 2022 TML Legislative Conference held in Nashville from March 14-15.

Members heard from a variety of speakers on various topics impacting both the state and local governments, including Gov. Bill Lee, Lt. Gov. Randy Mc-Nally, House Speaker Cameron Sexton, Tourism Commissioner Mark Ezell, Deputy Finance Commissioner Eugene Nebuert, Comptroller Jason Mumpower, Secretary of State Tre Hargett, and UT Economist Dr. Bill Fox. State Sen. Richard Briggs, R-Knoxville, gave members an update on his efforts as the sponsor of Senate Bill 2076 to restore the historic sharing relationship between the city and state on sales tax collections, and as the sponsor of SB 149 concerning small cells.

State Sen. Bill Powers, R-Clarksville, and State Rep. Gary Hicks, R-Rogersville, are the sponsors of companion bills SB 2469 and HB 2562 that will allow local governments to receive their local share of the single article cap collections. Powers and Hicks updated the members on the status of the bills and how city officials can help advocate for their approval with other lawmakers.

TML Deputy Director Chad Jenkins updated city officials on other legislative issues currently before the General Assembly covering a variety of topics including

wireless broadband investment, stipends and scholarships for CMFOs, state administration fees, regulation of short-term rental properties, Right-of-Way authority, and the sale of municipal electric

As part of the conference, city officials also had the opportunity to meet with their lawmakers as well as attend both the Senate and House floor sessions at the State Capitol.

Representatives of TML Partnered Programs American Fidelity, Everywhere.care, GovDeals, Peachtree Recovery Services, Reach Alert, Public Entity Partners, and TMBF were also on hand to speak with members about their various programs designed to help Tennessee municipalities.

For more photos, see Pages 6-7

Mayors need funding, data, and cooperation to address homelessness



Cities across the state and country are facing increased pressure to deal with homelessness and related issues in their communities. However, many officials feel stymied by barriers like finances, bureaucracy, and a lack of data to help track issues.

BY KATE COIL

As cities around Tennessee and the country look to address homelessness in their communities, a new survey has indicated that many mayors across the country feel they are often held accountable for addressing homelessness in their cities but have little control over what can actually be done to remedy the situation.

According to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the state of Tennessee reported an estimated 7,256 residents experiencing homelessness on any given day.

A further 19,747 schoolaged children in Tennessee didn't have a consistent home to return to after school, with many living in shelters, hotels, with friends or family, or without shelter at night.

NLC hosted a webinar "Survey Findings on Mayors and Homelessness: Challenges, Opportunities, and Solutions" to discuss issues cities are currently facing surrounding homelessness. NLC President Clarence Anthony said he has noticed that many communities are looking for solutions to housing and homelessness-related issues.

While city leaders are often held responsible for homelessness by constituents, many officials report they actually have little control over solutions to the problem.

"The topic of homelessness and ending homelessness is brought up frequently in my conversations with mayors throughout the nation," Anthony said. " It has been a topic that NLC has been focused on for a number of

years. We have worked on this issue through our research as well as our federal advocacy. Most recently, addressing homelessness has become a platform for the current president of NLC, Vince Williams of Union City, Ga., who has really talked about it."

The webinar focused on the 2021 Menino Survey of Mayors' report on homelessness, which was conducted by Katherine Levine Einstein, an associate professor of political science at Boston University, and Charley E. Willison, an assistant professor of public and ecosystem health at Cornell University.

The survey is part of the Boston University Initiative on Cities and conducted interviews with 126 mayors of cities with populations of 75,000 residents or greater.

"Local policy is incredibly important for addressing homelessness," Einstein said. "Local leaders make decisions on how much housing gets built in where, whether a community's homelessness policy leans more toward punitive policies or harm reduction policies, and how and where homelessness policy gets administered. Yet despite the importance of local governments, we know shockingly little on a systematic basis how local leaders are approaching this challenge."

Einstein said the survey found 73% of mayors interviewed believe they are being held highly accountable for addressing homelessness in their communities.

This sense of responsibility was similar in cities with less expensive housing markets (69%) and those is more expensive See **HOMELESS** on Page 8

CDE Lightband looks toward future of municipal broadband

BY KATE COIL TML Communications Specialist

As internet services become even more essential for school, work, and play, municipal providers like Clarksville's CDE Lightband are leading the way in providing affordable, sustainable services in their communities. Christy Batts, chief broadband officer for CDE Lightband, said a lot has changed since the city of Clarksville began exploring offering internet services more than 15 years ago.

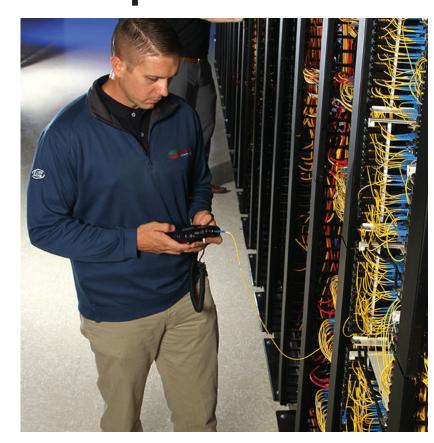
"We started our fiber optic active ethernet network in 2006-2007 to manage our electric grid to do remote meter reading, connections, and disconnections," Batts said. "It was the fastest and easiest way for us to manage our system. Exploring broadband services was also a great way to pay back some of the investment in fiber with additional revenue streams."

In a referendum vote, 73% of Clarksville voters approved the measure to expand the city's offerings into broadband. Batts said the city initially began offering 10 mpbs of service, which at the time was one of the top speeds offered, as well as VoIP and broadcast services.

The emerging utility branded itself CDE Lightband to honor both its partnership with the Clarksville Department of Electricity and to reflect the "light speed" at which it could provide internet services to customers.

"At first it was really hard going toe-to-toe with some of the bigger companies," Batts said. "We didn't have a lot of money set aside for marketing. We in turn had to borrow \$17 million from the electric side to get the equipment needed to distribute services. The first few years we did struggle, but our saturation was growing every year."

Things began to change in 2011 when customer and service growth accelerated. In June 2021,



CDE Lightband has been providing broadband internet services to the city of Clarksville for almost 15 years. Those services have become increasingly more important as local residents utilize internet connections for work, school, and play.

CDE Lightband had earned enough to pay off that \$17 million loan from the electric side of the department

– nearly 17 years before it was due. At present, CDE Lightband offers services from 250 mpbs of internet up to 1 gig residentially and up to 10 gigs for commercial services. The company is the sole supplier of internet to Austin Peay State University, the Clarksville school system, and in most municipal and county government offices within the city

More than 72,000 households and businesses in Clarksville - approximately 30% - have their services through CDE Lightband rather than commercial providers. The fact that citizens can even get municipal broadband also makes prices from

those commercial providers more competitive.

The network provides savings of more than \$10 million annually in operating costs and provides more than \$5 million annually in income for electrical grid improvements that result in half as many large-scale power outages compared to peer cities. Additionally, access to the network increases home values in Clarksville by 3% or an average of over \$5,000, according to the Fiber to the Home Council. More and more, the broadband services provided by CDE Lightband are becoming as essential to businesses and families as water, electric, and heating services.

"It's very similar to the progress of electricity and cable television ser-See LIGHTBAND on Page 3

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BELLS

Alfresco Pasta Brand, LLC will invest \$3.8 million to expand and relocate its operations from Nashville to Bells, creating 58 new jobs. Alfresco Pasta's expansion and relocation to Northwest Tennessee will support the company's growth and increasing product demand. Located at 278 Evans Road in Bells, the company plans to be operational by the 2nd quarter of 2022. With more than 20 years in the artisan food industry, Alfresco Pasta specializes in handcrafted fresh pasta, sauces, pizza dough and prepared meals. Since its founding in Nashville in 2000, the company has grown its restaurant, hotel and high-end foodservice customer distribution network to include more than 10 warehouses serving 40 states.

BOLIVAR

Wall Innovations, LLC officials announced the company has chosen Bolivar for its U.S. manufacturing and distribution base, relocating these functions from Long Island City, N.Y. As part of its relocation to Bolivar, Wall Innovations will invest \$6.4 million and create 72 new jobs over the next five years. Prior to 2020, Wall Innovations' U.S. manufacturing operations were based in upstate New York, but due to a decline in workforce, production ceased. In an effort to resume manufacturing, Wall Innovations has chosen to construct a new facility at the Bolivar Industrial Park, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. Upon completion, the 18,500-square-foot facility will house Wall Innovations' manufacturing and distribution operations, where the company will specialize in high-end and affordable architectural aluminum systems in continuity with its New York company, Alumil Fabrication, a U.S. subsidiary of Alumil Fabrications S.A.

BRENTWOOD

For the 30th consecutive year, the city of Brentwood's Finance Department has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award presented by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2021, budget. This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting. The award represents a significant achievement by the city finance department and the city manager's office, who both put a tremendous amount of work into the preparation of the annual operating budget along with the six-year Capital Improvements Program. To receive the award, Brentwood published a budget document that met program criteria, including an operations guide, a financial plan, a policy document, and an effective way to share the information with the public.

ELIZABETHTON

The city of Elizabethton has purchased the former headquarters and warehouses of a local construction company for \$1.8 million. The 5.5-acre property includes 10,700 square feet of office space, 10,900 square feet of warehouse space, 11,300 square feet of sheds and storage space, and 120,600 square feet of parking and open space. The city will now begin the process of renovating the facility to house the Elizabeth Water Resources Department, allowing the department to consolidate into a single property rather than be spread across six locations throughout the city. The new facility will be named for longtime employee Willie Holsclaw. The westernmost portion of the property will also be given to the Elizabethton Parks and Recreation Department as it encompasses the Tweetsie Trail. The move is expected to save the Water Resources Department an estimated \$100,000 in driving fuel and man hours every year. It will take about a month to ready the property for move in.

FARRAGUT

The town of Farragut Parks and Recreation Department has announced the long-awaited opening of the third phase of the McFee Park expansion. This new expansion includes public tennis and pickleball courts, a basketball court, additional walking trails, and restrooms. The great lawn remains closed to the public so new sod installed. Previous phases of the park expansion included the opening of a splashpad in 2016. McFee Park

is also home to a playground, lighted walking trails, rain gardens, and two sports fields.

FRANKLIN

Funding began for the first inclusive playground in Franklin, which will be named after the granddaughter of Franklin Vice Mayor Brandy Blanton. Ellie G's Dream world is named for Elliot Grace Castro, who died at the age of 4 in September 2019 after being born with a rare form of dwarfism called Rhizomelic Chondrodysplasia Punctata (RCDP). The concept of the playground was first started in 2015, but the idea further evolved in 2019. The total cost of the project is \$3 million and Friends of Franklin Parks held a safari-themed kick-off party to launch fundraising efforts. The playground will be located on three acres on the future 233-acre Southeast Municipal Complex on Carothers Parkway. Other features of that future park include football fields, walking trails, concessions, accessible restrooms, and a pavilion. So far, \$170,000 has been raised for the playground project. Donations of all amounts for Ellie G's Dream World are still being accepted at www.friendsoffranklinparks.org/ inclusive-playground.

GALLATIN

Gallatin Parks and Recreation is announcing that six new outdoor pickle ball courts at Municipal Park will be completed in the late spring. Similar to tennis, pickle ball is played with an oversized paddle and a baseball-sized whiffle ball on a surface about half the size of a tennis court. Pickle ball has garnered national attention in the past three years as the premier sport for active seniors. Pickle ball started in Gallatin in the Civic Center gym in 2018 with temporary nets and Pickle ball lines on the basketball courts, but quickly expanded to six modified tennis courts at Municipal Park. The six additional outdoor pickle ball courts coming in the spring are also located at Municipal Park and are dedicated to Pickle Ball only. The new construction required resurfacing, repainting lines and installing new nets at a cost of \$60,000. Players will be restricted to daytime hours as the new courts will have no lights. The project is expected to be completed in early late spring.

KINGSPORT

The city of Kingsport recently launched its new website with a reorganized and modern design. aimed at improving the user experience with a cleaner look and more intuitive menus. Kingsport's website (www.kingsporttn.gov) includes information about all city departments and services, the board of mayor and aldermen, incentives for businesses and the latest news and job offerings within the city. The site also provides links to the city's budget and audit, monthly meeting agendas, noteworthy maps and the annual reports of the police, fire and building departments. These improvements were made following a content audit conducted by Six Rivers Media and the city of Kingsport's Communications Department. All of the site's content was reviewed, reorganized and consolidated where needed.

LEBANON

Tritium DCFC Limited (Tritium), a global leader in the electric vehicle (EV) charging industry, announced it will establish its U.S. manufacturing base in Lebanon, creating more than 500 jobs in the next five years and more than doubling its international workforce. Located at 1420 Toshiba Drive, Tritium's Tennessee site will serve as the company's sole U.S. facility for manufacturing modular direct current (DC) fast chargers, including the company's award-winning RTM and new PKM150 models. The facility is expected to house up to six production lines, which will produce 10,000 DC fast charger units per year, with the potential to increase production to approximately 30,000 per year at peak capacity. The company also has operations in Australia, Europe, and Asia. Production at Tritium's Lebanon facility is targeted to begin in the third quarter of 2022 and will help the company expand its global impact to surpass the more than 3.6 million high-power charging sessions across 41 countries.

Columbia wins sports tourism award



The city of Columbia Parks and Recreation is honored to have been awarded the title as a 2021 Champion of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism for the Premier Girls Fastpitch Super Select Championship hosted at Ridley Sports Complex from April 30 - May 2, 2021. This award is presented by Sports Destination Management, the leading publication with the largest circulation of sports event planners and tournament directors in the sports tourism market, and Traveling Teams, the leading provider of travel accommodation services for youth sports teams and event directors. The Premier Girls Fastpitch Super Select Championship brought in over \$1.8 million in total economic impact, with 2,500 rooms booked for overnight stays in Columbia. The tournament drew in approximately 3,500 individuals, while teams traveled from all over the country.

Music Pathways marker honors country star, Hendersonville resident Johnny Cash



Officials with the state of Tennessee, city of Hendersonville, and friends, family, and admirers of country music legend Johnny Cash helped unveil a new Tennessee Music Pathways Marker on Main Street in Hendersonville. The marker was unveiled on the original site of the House of Cash music publishing company on what would have been the singer's 90th birthday. Cash and his wife June Carter Cash also lived in Hendersonville for 35 years and are buried together at Hendersonville Memory Gardens.

nounced the company will expand operations, selecting the Antioch area of Nashville as the location for its fourth U.S. distribution center. The facility will begin operations later this year. As part of the company's expansion to Tennessee, Chick-fil-Awill invest \$16.3 million and create 45 new jobs over the next five years. Chick-fil-A Supply's distribution center in Antioch will work similarly to the company's other operation in Cartersville, Ga., and another opening soon in Mebane, N.C., by ensuring Chick-fil-A restaurants have the food and products needed to serve customers. A wholly owned subsidiary of Chickfil-A, Inc., Chick-fil-A Supply is an innovative distribution service provider focused on understanding and meeting the unique needs of Chick-fil-A restaurants. The business has more than 2,700 locations in 47 states, Washington, D.C., and Canada.

NASHVILLE

Iron Galaxy Studios, LLC officials will invest \$950,000 to establish a new video game development studio in Nashville. As part of the company's expansion, Iron Galaxy will create 108 new tech jobs over the next five years. Iron Galaxy's Nashville game development studio, the company's third in the country, will allow it to attract and pull new talent from the city's rapidly growing tech community and create a stronger recruiting base for its existing offices in Chicago and Orlando. Iron Galaxy's expansion to Tennessee comes at a time when the tech industry is seeing substantial growth in the Nashville region. CBRE recently ranked Nashville No. 1 for tech job growth over the last five years in its 2021 Scoring Tech Talent report, an annual analysis focusing on highly skilled tech workers in the U.S. Founded in 2008, Iron Galaxy is the second largest independent video game developer with more than 60 shipped titles, over 10 platforms and approximately 20 partners. The company employs more than 250 people in Illinois and Florida.

NASHVILLE Chick-fil-A Supply officials an- Skate park opens in Dickson



A new skatepark has opened in downtown Dickson with a grand opening ceremony planed for March. Housed behind the Dickson Fire Department Station No. 1, the park is already drawing skaters from around the community. The skate park is one of a number of park improvements moving forward in Dickson including a new splash pad, playground, and dog park at the city's Henslee Park.

OAK RIDGE

Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation (USNC) officials announced the company will establish new manufacturing operations in Oak Ridge, investing \$17 million in its Pilot Fuel Manufacturing (PFM) facility and create 31 new jobs over the next five years. Located in the East Tennessee Technology Park, the Oak Ridge pilot facility will specialize in manufacturing the company's Fully Ceramic Microencapsulated (FCM®) nuclear fuel and refractory ceramic (silicon carbide) materials. The facility will be in close proximity to Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and the U.S. Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration's Y-12 National Security Complex, allowing USNC to leverage the region's highly skilled workforce, which is trained to work on nuclear fuel solutions. Privately funded, American-owned and controlled, USNC is headquartered in Seattle, Wash., and is a global leader in the deployment of micro reactors and a strong vertical integrator of nuclear power technologies. Today, the company employs more than 150 people across its operations in Cana-

da, France, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the U.S.

PORTLAND

Macy's, Inc., has announced the company will expand its existing distribution facility in Portland, creating approximately 50 new jobs. The project aims to enhance overall performance through partnership with a world class automation vendor while also building a system with top tier scalability. Through this investment, Macy's Portland fulfillment center will roll out new processes to increase its capacity and productivity as well as be in a position for future investment and business growth. Macy's, Inc. strives to be the preferred employer through an unwavering commitment to all colleagues and their well-being. The company offers fulfilling career opportunities, competitive pay, bilingual work environment, merchandise discount, flexible scheduling and access to a new debt-free education program for part-time and full-time colleagues.

Jackson to build community spirit, remove blight through Love Your Block program

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

The city of Jackson has joined a cohort of more than 50 cities across the country selected to participate in a federal program aimed to reduce blight and start positive community change on the neighborhood level.

Jackson is one of eight cities that was recently chosen to participate in the newest round of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Johns Hopkins University Cities of Service Love Your Block grant program. The city received \$100,000 over two years and the aid of an AmeriCorps Vista member to offer technical assistance to fight blight and improve community connections.

Jackson Mayor Scott Conger said one important aspect of the program is that it gives residents buy-in to positive change happening in their community.

"We believe that this project will empower our residents to make positive changes in their neighborhood and co-create attractive public spaces," Conger said.

The program is being spearheaded by Jackson native and Love Your Block Fellow Jameson Colbert and AmeriCorps Vista member Abby Palmer. Colbert said the pair have been working since September when the Love Your Block funds were awarded, but the city of Jackson had been searching for a way to build community spirit well before then.

"In various community engagement sessions over the past two years, residents have continually expressed their desperation for less blight and litter throughout Jackson, particularly in the target redevelopment areas of East Jackson, Midtown, and Downtown," Colbert said. "Residents in these neighborhoods have also expressed ongoing concern for healthier food options and safe places to gather and recreate. Civic pride is strong in Jackson, though it remains a frustration for residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods who desire investments and improvements, but lack the resources to make significant change."

A recent study by the Urban Institute found that Love Your Block both helped cities fight blight by supporting resident-led projects, and also formed recipro-



and city hall that helped spur citizens and city hall that helped spur citizen-centered innovations in policy and practice. The report built on an earlier Urban Institute report finding that the connections forged between city leaders and citizens at the neighborhood level can be one of the most important catalysts for collective action by neighborhood residents. This connection between city officials and citizens boosts the social capital exercised by citizens who plan and implement Love Your Block projects and strengthens social cohesion.

"This is the community where we have chosen to work, eat, play, shop, raise families, and call home," Palmer said. "This is our opportunity to start creating what we want to see. Jackson is growing. By volunteering you get to decide what that looks like. By engaging the community to learn about the initiatives of the program, we hope residents begin talking with their neighbors and planning how to make their neighborhood beautiful. Through Love Your Block, we hope to enhance those conversations by providing applicable steps and resources to activate community-driven projects that will create shared spaces for the entire neighborhood to enjoy, and in turn, strengthen and improve relationships between residents."

Palmer and Colbert's roles will be helping to facilitate that community buy-in through community meetings, identifying potential projects, helping city officials find ways to use municipal assets to benefit the program, and bringing different community groups into the project.

"We look to achieve this by getting in our communities, starting our conversation with the community leaders, and working with community groups to create projects that are achievable, sus-



Above: One of the goals of the Love Your Block program is to create momentum and support systems for the city that will be sustained long after the program itself is complete.

Right: Colbert and Palmer hold one of the series of meetings in the community that are helping determine the direction of the Love Your Block program in Jackson

tainable, and promote civic pride," Colbert said. "Initially, we want to focus where our needs are greatest. We've identified East Jackson as the first of our underserved areas in which we'll direct our attention due to its higher concentration of blighted and vacant properties."

Palmer said building relationships in the community is a major part of the program's goals.

"We hope to connect residents with resources, services, and programs offered through the city and area organizations," she said. "Additionally, we hope to strengthen the relationships between community members and community leaders by facilitating connections through project and volunteering activities. We believe it important to see the city providing support and supplemental work to build stronger relationships between city services and residents to promote further collaborative projects tack-



ling future needs."

Another objective of the program is to create a positive force in the community that will continue long after the grant program itself is over.

"The Love Your Block grant program will help create more positive momentum in Jackson by providing residents with the agency to dream, develop, and create the changes they want to see in their own communities, and by strengthening relationships between the community and city officials and representatives so that community members feel comfortable reaching out for support," Colbert said.

Colbert said his goal for his city is to show that the bonds of

community are stronger than any problem Jackson may encounter.

"I love our community. Jackson just like other communities has our issues," he said. "However, I have experienced a community of love, kindness, and unity that I desire everyone to experience."

While a native of Chattanooga, Palmer said her experiences in Jackson have shown her the strong bonds within the city.

"What I love about Jackson is the genuine care residents and officials have to see the city thrive and become a better place for everyone to live," she said. "Neighbors help neighbors in Jackson, and that kind of support will create stronger communities for everyone."

CDE Lightband looks toward future of municipal broadband

LIGHTBAND from Page 1

vices," Batts said. "There are always early adopters who want to be the first ones to have the nice, newest, coolest things. The single biggest thing that has changed the perception of internet as a utility has been the pandemic. You have more and more people working from home, most of whom who have not returned to the office. Companies are finding out that they can have people work from home with a smaller office footprint. Small business owners are finding they need that flexibility to work from anywhere. From a residential aspect, it is needed for educational pursuits and managing our households. Everything in our house is 'smart' from a smart vacuum to a smart washer and dryer. Those things have become true necessity for customers and how they operate. In turn, that makes internet reliability and connectability even more important to them."

Being a major provider of internet services to local educational institutions ranging from elementary schools to universities, Batts said CDE Lightband has seen firsthand how important internet access has become for students of all ages.

Prior to the pandemic, the organization was offering 1 gig of point-to-point connection and 10 gigs for front office use of all schools in their coverage area. When virtual schooling became a necessity, they were able to up that to 20 gigs in the front office for distribution to classrooms within a few hours to make sure both in-person and virtual students were being served.

"Going into the next school year, they thought they were going to need to double even that," Batts said. "Over the summer, we changed out all of those point-to-point connections from 1 gig to 10 gigs and 40 gigs into the front offices."

CDE Lightband also takes a hands-on approach to education, giving students and teachers opportunities to learn about utility services.

"We have externships for a lot of

the teachers," Batts said. "We have teachers who come in over the summer to learn about electricity, energy generation for science coursework, or focus on wireless connectivity and how that works. They learn like students learn. We give them assignments and projects that they turn into a lesson plan later on. One group came in and did an externship on what are the barriers to a clear wifi signals. We also have a demo trailer that goes to schools that shows them a mini version of Clarksville with power and fiber lines. We show them how the power is distributed and what happens if that service is disrupted. It's always a hit with the children."

Having municipal services can also be a tool for growing local business and entrepreneurship.

"Within the city limits we have had tremendous business and housing growth," Batts said. "We have seen in most cases that there is an energy in the market and the market itself fosters growth and development. We are glad to be part of that."

Perhaps one of the most rewarding things CDE Lightband can do for its community is connect Clarks-villians who are also active duty members of the military with their families in unique ways, all made possible by modern technology.

"We have families with multiple deployments throughout the world," Batts said. "They can keep in contact through Facetime, Skype, and other ways. It's huge to keep soldiers and family members connected. We actually have a Little League group here in town who even mounted live cameras at their ballpark and are streaming Little League games so parents who are faraway can use broadband to watch their kids play ball. It has an impact in a community where so many parents are gone for months at a time. It's important to keep families connected today."

"We've worked with Silicon Ranch to put in a solar farm in our community in the next two to three years," Batts said. "We work closely with a lot of residential customers who are starting to explore solar opportunities for their own homes and give them the support they need to make the right choices. We do a great deal of education with our customers about smart thermostats and smart home services so they can participate in the management of their usage."

Because of its success with broadband, Batts said CDE Lightband has been able to also make investments that benefit the community's electric infrastructure.

"When we did that leap of faith to invest in the fiber network, we did it with the electric grid in mind and how it could benefit that aspect," she said. "The broadband division actually leases fiber access from the electric division. Through those lease agreements and loan payments, our electric utility has been able to build three substations, an \$8 million new construction expansion of our main campus and numerous other projects from the lease of the fiber rather than going to the bond market."





PEOPLE

Andy Berke, former mayor of Chattanooga, has been announced as a new special representative for broadband



Andy Berke

with the National Telecommunications and Intelligence Administration. Under Berke's leadership, Chattanooga established several digital equity programs, including Tech Goes Home, which offers technology training, skills, and access to families. At the end of his term, Berke led a partnership to provide high speed broadband at no cost to every family with a child on free or reduced lunch, making Chattanooga the first community in the country with such a benefit. A native of Chattanooga, Berke served for five years in the Tennessee State Senate before becoming Chattanooga's mayor. Berke holds a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of Chicago Law School.

Anthony Byrd will resign his seat as a member of the Chattanooga City Council as he has been appointed to serve as



Anthony Byrd

Chattanooga city court clerk. Byrd was re-elected to a second four-year term last year, but left his seat after being appointed to the court clerk position by Mayor Tim Kelly. An interim council member will be appointed to his seat until the August general election. Byrd previously served for 27 years as a criminal court clerk in Hamilton County sessions court before leaving the office to run for city council.

Robin Chance has been hired as they new recycling coordinator for the city of Jackson. Before coming to the city,



Robin Chance

Chance served as the chair of Keep Jackson Beautiful. She also has experience in sales, marketing, and logistics from previous positions in the private sector. Chance holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and teaching from Murray State University and an associate's degree in general studies from Shawnee Community College. In addition to her work with Keep Jackson Beautiful, she has also served as a volunteer with the Jackson-Madison County Humane Society.

April Curlin has been selected as the new human resources director for the city of Brentwood. Curlin spent more than a



April Curlin

decade as a human resources director in government and non-profit industries including most recently at FiftyForward of Nashville. She also served as the director of human resources with the Tennessee Community Services Agency in Union City. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Tennessee at Martin and a master's degree in public administration from Murray State University. Curlin is also a senior certified professional in human resources.

Andrew Ellard has been selectedasthe new assistant city administrator for Morristown. He comes to Morristown from Hatties-



Andrew Ellard

burg, Miss., where he has served as the director of urban development since 2017. Ellard had previously worked for the city of Hattiesburg in the department of federal and state programs, administering a variety of grant-funded program and serving as the interim department director for two of five years. He also worked in operations management roles for the Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development. From 2014 to 2017, he served as the city manager of Eagleville. Ellard holds a bachelor's degree in public affairs management from Indiana University and a master's in administration from Central Michigan University.

K. Gardner Hammond, former mayor of Kingsport, died on Feb. 16, 2022, at the age of 87. Hammond was first elected as an



K. Gardner Hammond

alderman for Kingsport in 1973. He eventually became vice mayor and was then elected mayor by his peers. In 1979, he became the first popularly-elected mayor in city history. A native of Kingsport, Hammond graduated from Dobyns-Bennett High School in 1953, serving as honorary student mayor his senior year. After graduating from Vanderbilt University with a degree in arts and sciences in 1957, he attended the Darden School at the University of Virginia where he earned a master's in business administration in 1959. He returned to Kingsport where he served as the chief financial officer of the Kingsport Foundry and Manufacturing Corporation for more than 40 years.

Butch Helton, director of special events for the city of Pigeon Forge, has retired after more than 20 years of service to the



Butch Helton

community. Helton has been with the city's events department since 2000, working his way up from an events coordinator to events manager before becoming the director of the department in 2010. During his time with the city, Helton has been the force behind numerous beloved local events including the city's annual Veterans' Day celebration, Patriot Festival, Wilderness Wildlife Week, and more. His leadership has also led to the city winning numerous national and international tourism and event awards.

Ronnie Kelly, water quality control director for the city of Cookeville, has announced his retirement on June 24,



Ronnie Kelly

2022. Kelly has been with the city of Cookeville for more than 40 years, beginning his employment in 1979 as a city engineer. Kelly advanced to the position of environmental engineer in 1983 and was named director of the water quality control department in 1983. During his tenure, he has overseen the implementation of numerous million-dollar projects.

Celeste Murphy has been selected as the first black woman to head the Chattanooga Police Department. Murphy will



Celeste Murphy

take over from former Chattanooga Police Chief David Roddy, who is retiring after 26 years with the department and four as chief. Murphy comes to Chattanooga from the Atlanta Police Department where she served for more than 20 years in roles including patrol officer, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain. In 2016, she achieved the rank of major and was selected to lead the department's Office of Professional Standards, which serves as its internal affairs unit.

Kevin Owens has been hired as the new city administrator for the city of Fayetteville. Before coming to work for Fayette-



Kevin Owens

ville, Owens was a longtime employee of the city of Birmingham where he served as chief administrative officer, administrative analyst, and

Collierville PD honored for shooting response



Collierville Police Chief Dale Lane accepts the "Bridging the Gap" Award from U.S. Rep. David Kustoff at the Collierville Chamber of Commerce's Annual Excellence in Business Awards on behalf of the Collierville Police Department. The award is an exclusive achievement designed to honor an admirable organization that went above and beyond to serve its community. Thee police department was chosen as this year's recipient for the bravery of officers during the Sept. 23, 2021, tragedy at a local Kroger.

administrative assistant among other roles for 20 years under four mayoral administrations before retiring. He has worked as a community development specialist, economic development coordinator and finance administrator. Owens will begin his duties with Fayetteville in March.

Merritt Piper has been selected as the new special event and program coordinator for the Farragut Parks and Recreation



Merritt Piper

Department. Piper comes to the town after serving as an extension assistant with the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. She previously served for nine months as a park assistant and intern with the town of Farragut. Piper holds a bachelor's degree in child and family studies from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Bob Sanders has been appointed vice mayor of Pegram following the death of late Vice Mayor and Alderman Rankine



Bob Sanders

Roth in January. Sanders presently serves as on the town's planning commission and will serve the remainder of Roth's term set to end in August. Randy Howington, Jr. has also been appointed to fill Roth's vacant alderman seat.

David Shepard is retiring after four decades of public service, including 15 years as the city street department director



David Shepard

for the city of Clarksville. Shepard's last day is April 27. He began his career with the city of Clarksville in 1978 as a part-time street department employee. He worked his way up through several positions including interim director in 2004 before being appointed director in 2007. During his tenure, he has served under five city mayors, overseen cleanup following an F-3 tornado hitting the city in January 1999 and flooding in May 2010, and notable city projects like Transportation 2020+.

Ron Street, police chief of Jonesborough, has announced his decision to retire effective April 30. Street has served as



Jonesborough's police chief since 2016. He previously served as Johnson City's chief of police before retiring from that position in 2003 and then eight years as a chief deputy for the Carter County Sheriff's Office. Street has more than 43 years of service in law enforcement.

Randy Trivette has been named the new assistant city manager for Johnson City. Trivette has served as Johnson City's first facilitiates management director since 2018 and before that spent nine years as

Town Manager James Lewellen named local Chamber's 'Person of the Year'



Retiring Collierville Town Administrator James Lewellen was honored at the Collierville Chamber of Commerce's 2021 Excellence in Business Awards as the chamber's "Person of the Year" for his service to the community. Lewellen has been with the town of Collierville since 1995, and he will retire in July after 26 years of service. Lewellen was given a standing ovation. He credited the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and town staff who have worked alongside him for the accomplishments the town has made over the past few decades.

Eley appointed deputy governor

Butch Eley has been appointed as deputy to the governor by Gov. Bill Lee. Eley will continue to serve in his current role as Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration and as a member of the governor's cabinet.

Eley previously served as Chief Operating Officer in the Governor's office from January 2019 to May 2020, where he led the state's first four-year strategic planning process. In his subsequent appointment as Commissioner of Finance and Administration, he has developed multiple state budgets and works closely with legislative leaders of the Financial Stimulus Accountability Group (FSAG) to oversee and allocate the influx of federal relief funds provided to Tennessee over the past two years.

Prior to joining the Lee Administration, Eley was a founder and CEO of Infrastructure Corporation of America (ICA). Headquartered



Butch Eley

in Nashville, ICA was one of the nation's leading infrastructure asset maintenance management companies with comprehensive asset management contracts throughout the country.

Eley earned his bachelor's degree and MBA at Belmont Uni-

the town recorder for the town of Erwin. Trivette spent nearly five years as director of facilities construction and as chief



Randy Trivette

financial officer of Free Will Baptist Ministries in Greeneville. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration, management, and operations from Milligan College.

Sarah Van-Wormer has been hired as the new information technology director for the city of Brentwood. She comes to Brentwood



VanWormer

from Battle Creek, Mich., where she spent more than 20 years in the city's information technology department and supported 34 city departments. VanWormer holds a bachelor's degree in geography and environment systems from the University of Maryland and a master's degree from the University of Phoenix.

James Webb, police chief for the city of Loudon, has announced his retirement after 18 years as



James Webb

chief and a 40-year career in law enforcement. A native of Loudon, Webb began his career with the Oliver Springs Police Department in 1982, working as a dispatcher, records clerk, jailer, and patrol officer. He joined the Loudon County Sheriff's Department later that same year as a night shift patrol officer. He came to the city of Loudon Police Department in 1988 and has since served as a patrol officer, sergeant, training officer, SWAT Team commander, and criminal investigator before being promoted to chief in 2004. Webb holds a degree in political science technology from Roane State Community College. He also served as East Tennessee Vice President of the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Officers Association.

TML, Kentucky League join together to plan communities near new Ford plants

BLUEOVAL from Page 1 both Tennessee and Kentucky city officials are how to prepare for the unprecedented growth in terms of infrastructure, housing, and the development of rural unincorporated

"Taxpayers shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the infrastructure costs," said Brownsville Mayor Bill Rawls. "How do we fill in the gap?'

"We've been talking about wastewater infrastructure needs in Tipton County for years - long before the Ford plant," said Jeff Huffman, Tipton County mayor and board member of the MegaSite Authority. "It is the number one infrastructure need and basic element of whether or not a municipality is going to grow."

As part of Tennessee's commitment to Ford, the state will spend \$138 million for water and wastewater treatment facilities to serve the needs of the Blue Oval campus

Mark Herbison, president and CEO of HTL Advantage, a three-county economic development coalition serving Haywood, Tipton, and Lauderdale (HTL) counties, explained that the Memphis Regional Megasite became certified in 2006 and has courted many suitors but has not been able to secure a permanent tenant until now. Three different administrations, beginning with Bredesen to Haslam and now Lee have made capital improvements along the way, totaling some \$175 million, but lack of investments in key infrastructure needs has always been a problem in securing a major

"We've been trying to sell the site for numerous years," said Herbison. "The infrastructure has always been an issue — specifically, the sewer. And it's still an issue for everyone outside the site."

To address the water and sewer issue, the current infrastructure plan includes constructing a water processing plant and digging large wells into the county's underground aquifers to be able to furnish 7 million gallons of water per day.

The new wastewater treatment plant will be able to handle 5.1 million gallons and will include laying a sewer pipeline that runs from the site to the Mississippi River for disposal of the wastewater effluent. The pipeline stretches over 35 miles of Tipton County and required more than 200 easements from property owners. The plan, however, does not allow for nearby communities to tap onto the water and wastewater facilities.

Herbison said that the state will also spend \$200 million to construct a new interchange at mile marker 39 on Interstate 40 and a connector route that will become part of State Route 222.

To house the estimated nearly 33,000 temporary construction workers who will work on the Ford plant, Herbison said a recent housing study that spans a 50-mile radius from Memphis to Jackson has identified some 35,000 residential spaces consisting of apartments,



McKenzie Mayor Jill Holland, Franklin Mayor and TML President Ken Moore, and Covington Mayor Justin Hanson







Above: Brownsville Mayor Bill Rawls Top right: Somerville Mayor Ronnie Neil, KLC Executive Director J.D. Chaney, and Somerville Alderman Mike French At Right: Mark Herbison, HTL Advantage President

Airbnb's, RVs parks and others sources of short-term housing.

Other areas of concern included:

- Addressing the needs related to population growth
- Supply industries and their
- ripple effect Additional schools

Those who attended the TML

- Kentucky League meeting expressed their desire to continue to meet and felt the meeting was both informative and beneficial.

"Our time is valuable," said Mayor Rawls. "And this meeting was the most productive Blue Oval meeting I have attended so far."



Kentucky League Executive Director J.D. Chaney and TML Executive Director Anthony Haynes



SWTDD Executive Director Joe Barker, LTDD Executive Director Mike Burress, and Henderson Mayor Bobby King





No loan is too large or too small



The Town of Livingston has used TMBF programs 14 times since 1996. Most recently, the town closed a \$4,558,635 water and sewer refunding bond issue. By refunding the outstanding bonds, the town saved approximately \$538,000 over the term of the bond. Seated left to right: Linda Mooningham, TMBF Marketing Director and Legal Coordinator, Livingston Mayor Curtis Hayes, and Town Clerk Phyllis Looper.

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



The City of Medina closed on a \$500,000 note issued for street paving. It was the first time the city has used any of the TMBF programs. Seated left to right: City Recorder Kim Gilley and Medina Mayor Vance Coleman. Standing: Tommy Green, TMBF Marketing Representative.



2022 TML Legislative Conference in Nashville, March 14-15



Tennessee Speaker of the House Cameron Sexton addresses TML members at the Legislative Conference.



From left to right, Rossville Alderwoman Sondra Webb, Mayor Judy Watters, and Alderwoman Sherrie Rinebart





Above: Arlington Mayor Mike Wissman, left, and Germantown Mayor Mike Palazzolo, right.

Left: From left to right, Gallatin Mayor and TML 3rd Vice President Paige Brown, Franklin Alderwoman Ann Petersen, and Jim Petersen of Franklin.



Morristown Councilwoman and TML Past President Kay Senter, left, and Three Way Vice Mayor and TML At-Large Director Mary Ann Tremblay.



From left to right, Shelbyville Mayor and TML Past President Wallace Cartwright, Collegedale Mayor and District 3 Director Katie Lamb, and Springfield Mayor and District 5 Director Ann Schneider.



From left to right, Jackson Mayor Scott Conger, Medina Mayor and TML Director At-Large Vance Coleman, Milan Alderwoman Tammy Wade, Jackson Councilman Johnny Dodd, and Henderson Mayor and TML First Vice President Bobby King.

2022 TML Legislative Conference in Nashville, March 14-15



From left to right, Tullahoma City Manager Jennifer Moody, Tullahoma Alderwoman Rupa Blackwell, and Assistant to the City Manager Jordan Wilkins.



Lt. Gov. Randy McNally addresses city officials during the 2022 Legislative Conference in Nashville.



From left to right, Goodlettsville City Manager Tim Ellis, UT Vice President of Public Service Dr. Herb Byrd III, and Oak Ridge City Manager and TML Director At-Large Mark Watson.



From left to right, Collierville Assistant Town Administrator Adam Hamric, Farragut Town Administrator David Smoak, and Collierville Town Administrator James Lewellen.



From left to right, Manchester Mayor Marilyn Howard, Finance Director/CMFO Bridget Anderson, Executive Administrative Assistant Sage Keele, and City Attorney Gerald Ewell.



Elizabethton City Manager Daniel Estes, left, and Kingsport City Manager Chris McCartt, right.



East Ridge City Manager Chris Dorsey, left, and Vice Mayor Mike Chauncey, right.



Left to right, Red Bank Commissioner Pete Phillips, Commissioner Ruth Jeno, and City Manager Martin Granum.

Join us in Gatlinburg for the 82nd Annual TML Conference and Expo Aug. 13-16, 2022

STATE

The state of Tennessee collected \$39.3 million in taxes from sports betting in 2021, according to new data from PlayTenn. October 2021 was the highest month for bets being placed since sports betting began in November 2020 with the state seeing \$375.3 million in sports bets placed. November 2021 is the second-highest month with December 2021 coming in as the third-highest month. More than \$2.7 billion bets total were placed in Tennessee in 2021 with taxes paid on \$239.9 million in gross revenue. Sportsbooks made \$240 million in revenue from Tennessee. Sports betting has increased 88.9% since the same time last year, according to the Tennessee Education Lottery's Sports Wagering Advisory Council. Events like the Tennessee Titans' playoff push and the Memphis Grizzlies' season have contributed to these increases.

Tennesseans achieved a remarkable milestone in the fourth quarter of 2021, 10 years of uninterrupted year-over-year growth in quarterly new business filings. The Tennessee Quarterly Business and Economic Indicators report issued by Secretary of State Tre Hargett's office shows that 75,300 businesses filed over the past year and 17,117 entities filed in the fourth quarter of 2021. New business filings in the fourth quarter of 2021 grew 22.2% from the fourth quarter filings in 2020, marking six consecutive quarters of double-digit growth. It is also noteworthy that year-over-year growth in new filings among Tennessee's other 91 counties advanced by a robust 72.7%, an optimistic sign for statewide shared success. Tennessee's December unemployment rate of 3.8% declined from the prior month, the prior year, and from its pandemic high of 15.8%. It remains just below the national rate of 3.9%. Employment in Tennessee

grew by 14,500 jobs in December from the prior month, and total non-farm employment is nearing pre-pandemic peak levels.

The Tennessee Department of **Environment and Conservation** (TDEC), in support of Tenn-Green Land Conservancy and the Open Space Institute, announced the acquisition of 358 acres in Rhea County known as Piney River Bluffs to expand the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park. Piney River Bluffs is less than two miles from Spring City and is a high-priority acquisition for the linear state park. The acquisition completes the protection of an 11-mile trail section through Piney River Gorge, among the most remote experiences on the Cumberland Trail. The acquisition also finalizes the Cumberland Trail connection to Soak Creek State Scenic River, to fully join 30 additional miles of the trail network in Rhea and Cumberland counties. With the acquisition, the Cumberland Trail extends nearly 300 miles through 11 counties.

Tennessee recorded a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January 2022 is 3.5%, which is 0.1% lower than the revised December 2021 rate of 3.6%. January is the latest month the rate has decreased, or remained steady, since April 2020. The This is the lowest the state's unemployment rate has been since November 2019. In a year-to-year comparison, Tennessee's statewide unemployment rate dropped by 1.7%. Tennessee employers created 3,000 more nonfarm jobs between December and January. Nationally, January's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly to 4%, up 0.1% from December's revised rate. The 2022 rate is 2.4% lower than it was one year ago.

State February revenues \$111.7M higher than originally estimated

Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Butch Eley announced that Tennessee tax revenues exceeded budgeted estimates in

February revenues totaled \$1.2 billion, which is \$111.7 million more than the state received in February 2021 and \$212 million more than the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for February was

"Sales tax revenues, reflecting January's taxable consumer activity, outperformed our budgeted revenue estimate increasing the state's positive revenue balance for the year," Eley said. "We continue to experience increasing tax revenues tied to rising consumer prices and real estate transactions. Additionally, corporate tax revenues, or franchise and excise tax receipts, surpassed budgeted expectations while all other taxes taken together

revealed minor growth. "With a large year-to-date revenue balance, we have confidence that the state should finish the 2021-2022 fiscal year above our established revenue estimates. However, we remain concerned that mounting inflation and rising fuel costs will restrain future consumer spending. Therefore, we will continue to closely monitor economic conditions and our monthly tax receipts through the remainder year."

On an accrual basis, February is the seventh month in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

General fund revenues exceeded the budgeted estimates in the amount of \$210.3 million while the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were \$1.7 million more than the estimates.

Sales tax revenues were \$163.5 million more than the estimate for February and 9.98% more than February 2021. For seven months, revenues are \$1.3 billion higher than estimated. The year-to-date growth rate for seven months was 16.95%.

Franchise and excise tax revenues combined were \$35 million more than the budgeted estimate in February and the growth rate compared to February 2021 was 33.13%. For seven months, revenues are \$714.2 million more than the estimate and the year-to-date growth rate is 35.66%.

Gasoline and motor fuel rev-

enues for February increased by 4.89% compared to February 2021

and were \$5.3 million more than

the February budgeted estimate of

\$92.5 million. For seven months,

revenues are more than estimates

by \$33.7 million. Motor vehicle registration revenues were \$7 million less than the February estimate, and on a yearto-date basis they are \$2.1 million

more than estimates. Tobacco taxes were \$3.3 million less than the February budgeted estimate of \$17.7 million. For seven months, they are \$3.8 million

less than the budgeted estimate. Privilege taxes were \$14.4 million more than the February estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, August through February, revenues are \$103.5 million more than the estimate.

Business taxes were \$1.6 million more than the February estimate. For seven months, revenues are \$4.3 million more than the budgeted estimate.

Hall income tax revenues for the month were \$0.4 million more than the budgeted estimate. On a year-to-date basis, income tax revenues are \$3.9 million more than the estimate.

Mixed drink, or liquor-by-thedrink, taxes were \$3.5 million more than the February estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, revenues are \$27.1 million more than the budgeted estimate.

All other tax receipts were less than estimates by a net of \$1.4

Year-to-date revenues for six months were \$2.15 billion more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund recorded \$2.02 billion in revenues more than estimates, and the four other funds totaled \$126.7 million more than year-todate estimates.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2021-2022 are based on the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation of November 24, 2020 and adopted by the first session of the 112th General Assembly in April 2021. Also incorporated in the estimates are any changes in revenue enacted during the 2021 session of the General Assembly. These estimates are available on the state's website at https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/ finance/fa/fa-budget-information/ fa-budget-rev.html.

Mayors face lack of finances, cooperation, data, when addressing homelessness

HOMELESS from Page 1 housing markets (79%).

However, Einstein said few of those same mayors (19%) felt they have control over addressing homelessness issues with mayors in the northeast reporting the most pessimistic feelings on the issue. An estimated 29% of mayors in the southern U.S. reporting feeling they have "a fair amount of influence" over local homelessness issues.

"Mayors worry that they are held accountable for these really visible and important public policies, but they feel like they don't' have the tools to address these challenges," Einstein said. "I feel this is a struggle many local leaders face. They do have a lot of tools at their disposal, but they face a lot of limitations. They face limited funding, restrictions from state and federal governments, and uncooperative relationships with surrounding local governments."

Willison said homelessness is a unique issue because historically cities have not been the primarily policy makers in the response to homelessness.

"When we think of funding and staffing and even whose is responsible for who is responsible for designing and delivering responses to homelessness across the country, the primary policy actors are continuums of care," Willison said. "These are expert bodies of mainly non-governmental actors who are organized. From our research, we found 70% of continuums of care are not a part of local government or don't have relationships with their city governments. What this produces and what is highlighted in this survey is a fragmentation across policy spaces."

Communities face numerous barriers to addressing homelessness. The top barriers to addressing homelessness as identified by mayors included limited funding, public opposition to new housing and shelters, and a lack of coordination between the government and social service agencies. Half of mayors or more listed these as barriers they commonly face with limited funding being cited by more than 60% of mayors.

The local non-profit community was described by the majority of mayors as the biggest influence on local homelessness policy followed by continuums of care, police, or those at risk of homelessness themselves.

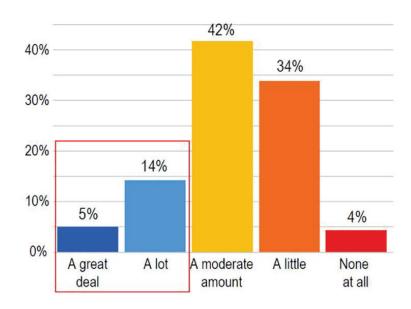
Other groups of influence include public housing authorities, public health departments, neighborhood groups, the court system, hospitals, small businesses, and educational institutions.

When asked if they had city staff dedicated to addressing homelessness issues, 28% did not. More than a third (38%) said they had some staff in a social services department while 22% said their staff was in the police department. Einstein said that relying on police to provide social services is not always the best solution to addressing homelessness.

"So far our preliminary results suggest that even cities that have very strong harm-reduction



Funding remains the biggest challenge to address homelessness followed by public opposition and a lack of coordination between agencies. Sometimes, having a city staff person who helps work as a coordinator for these agencies can help mitigate problems of cooperation, but nearly a third of cities reported not having even one employee serving in such a role.



While city leaders are often held responsible for homelessness by constituents, many officials report they actually have little control over solutions to the problem. The local non-profit community, county or state governments, and continuum of care organizations are thought by many mayors to have more control over the issue, though there are still manys steps city officials can take to address homelesness in teh community and make sure available services are coordinated in a meaningful way.

policies and don't want to engage in punitive processes when it comes to homelessness find that when police become involved it devolves into a more punitive interaction," Einstein said. "This has been found by a lot of research. This is not to denigrate police officers; this is just not what they were signed up to do. They were not designed to be a social service agency. Not having staff in social service or housing departments that are oriented around homelessness is going to make it very hard for cities to implement policies that address serious challenges."

One of the issues many communities are facing is a lack of access to data about homelessness in their community. Approximately 10% said they had no data with 8% of that total saying only county-level data is provided. Of those interviewed 38% report receiving annual data, 35% monthly data, and 3% daily data. Counties, surrounding local governments, and nonprofits were the top three sources for homelessness data.

Because accurate data is not always readily available, it can be hard to address homelessness challenges and set clear measurement standards for determining success in homelessness

reduction. Einstein said 42% of mayors defined "success" in homelessness policy as housing (42%) or coordinating better services (16%).

Einstein said she also thinks some mayors responses to the questions about determining success may be impacted by not wanting their desire to reduce homelessness to be misconstrued as eliminating homeless encampments or taking down visible signs of homelessness without affecting real change.

"It was surprising to us that only a minority of mayors defined success in terms of homelessness reduction," Einstein said. "I think a lot of mayors have never really thought of what a broader homelessness policy would look like. I think this is reflective of the fact they have relatively few staff dedicated to addressing homelessness, and when they do have those staff, they are scattered across departments and don't have coordination. I think more cities would benefit from more coordinated homelessness policy that is oriented around one set of goals."

For more resources connected to this issue, visit https:// www.nlc.org/resource/from-theevent-survey-findings-on-mayors-homelessness/

DRA to invest \$1.7M in West Tenn

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) will invest more than \$1.7 million to help West Tennessee communities and residents, which will be matched by \$4.7 million and attract an additional \$12 million in leveraged private investment.

The five new investment projects will improve water and sewer systems, support business development, and support job training in communities across West Tennessee. These projects are expected to create or retain 638 jobs and train 65 individuals.

"Born and raised along the Mississippi River, I know firsthand how vital the Delta Regional Authority's ability to bolster community revitalization and economic prosperity within the Delta and Alabama Black Belt is," said DRA Alternate Federal Co-Chairwoman Leslie Durham. "By strategically investing federal dollars into physical and human infrastructure, DRA helps alleviate the critical needs of the region in order to improve quality of life for our residents and foster future growth. I want to thank Governor Lee and the Tennessee Congressional Delegation for their continued partnership as we work to level the playing field for our citizens."

The city of Henderson will receive a DRA investment of \$200,000 and a total investment of \$216,562 to extend city water lines and add three fire hydrants to provide much needed fire protection to businesses and residents of the

west side of Highway 45. The Huntingdon Industrial Development Board will receive a DRA investment of \$175,000 and an additional capital investment of \$7 million to construct two stormwater basins to accommodate additional roadwork and parking at the new Hydro-Gear factory. This investment is projected to create 375 jobs and retain one job.

The city of Lexington will receive \$300,000 from the DRA and \$1.594 million to construct two stormwater basins to accommodate additional roadwork and parking at the new Hydro-Gear factory. This investment is projected to create 375 jobs and retain one job. The Lexington Industrial Development Board will also receive \$815,869 with an additional capital invest-

ment of \$5 million funds to construct a 55,200-square-foot building expansion for a new company to produce heat transfer products. This investment is projected to create 120 jobs.

The Binghampton Development Corporation in Memphis will also use \$250,000 in DRA funds and a total investment of \$2.4 million to install a fire sprinkler system into an 82,000-square-foot warehouse that will be used to launch a job training program to prepare residents for careers in the logistics industry. This investment is projected to train 25 individuals.

Funding for these projects is provided by the States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP), which provides direct investment into community-based and regional projects to support basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, workforce training and education, and small businesses development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. DRA coordinates directly with the Governor's office and local development districts in the state for program funding implementation.

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TN Fire Chiefs Assn.

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ARP State and Local Recovery Funds final rule confirms that cities may use funds for IT services, cybersecurity, and websites

BY KEVIN HOWARTH

VC3 Marketing & Communications Manager

On Jan. 6, 2022, the Department of the Treasury published the Final Rule for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funds) portion of the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

The Final Rule made it much easier for municipalities to use Recovery Funds for "government services," loosely defined as "services traditionally provided by recipient governments [...] unless Treasury has stated otherwise,' and expressly including "modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software, and protection of critical infrastructure."

The Rule allows cities and towns to spend Recovery Funds for "government services" up to the amount of pandemic-related revenue loss and lets cities choose a "standard" amount of pandemic-related revenue loss of up to \$10 million.

Because most cities will receive less than \$10 million in Recovery Funds, they have significant discretion to spend the funds on anything that meets the broad definition of "government services" as long as they meet general guidelines for use of federal funds.

(Expenditures must be necessary, reasonable, allocable, consistent with a city's expenditure policies, consistently treated, determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and adequately documented.)

Reporting and documentation requirements are streamlined for these "government services" expenditures.

The Treasury uses a specific phrase, "presumption of revenue loss due to the pandemic," to indicate that it's assumed that municipalities lost revenue during the pandemic.

Recovery Funds are assumed to replenish that lost revenue. By broadly applying to "government services," the allowed uses for the Recovery Funds do not need to tie directly to a COVID impact.

Municipalities Can Use Recovery Funds for Cybersecurity, IT Services, and Municipal

The good news is that municipalities can use Recovery Funds to pay for:

Cybersecurity management, monitoring, alerting, and detection

Cybersecurity tools and training

Data backup and disaster recovery solutions and storage

maintenance, and support IT monitoring, maintenance,

Data backup monitoring,

and support

Website design and maintenance services

Once in a Generation Opportunity to Modernize IT and **Enhance Cybersecurity**

As you consider the best ways to use Recovery Funds, think of this once-in-a-generation funding as an opportunity to:

Modernize your information technology

Ensure you have the best protections in place against ransomware and cyberattacks

Create a municipal website to help residents access your services remotely

Any expenses must be obligated by Dec. 31, 2024 and expended by Dec. 31, 2026.

Despite a Final Rule effective date of April 1, 2022, you can start using Recovery Funds now, as long as you take actions and use funds in a manner consistent with the Final Rule.

If you have been putting off important cybersecurity, IT assessments, and IT projects due to budget constraints, now is the time to move forward.

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

TENNESSEE **FESTIVALS**

March 31-April 3: Columbia Mule Day

Mule Day is an annual celebration of all things related to mules. In addition to mules, traditional Appalachian food, music, dancing, and crafts are featured. For more info, visit https://muleday.com/

April 1-2: Lawrenceburg

Tennessee Music and Food Fest Lawrenceburg Rotary Park hosts food, music, monster trucks, and more at this annual festival. For more info, visit https://www.lawrenceburgtnrotary.org/music.php

April 2: Cookeville

Window on the World International Festival

Take part in WOW, an international festival at Tennessee Tech University, celebrating cultural diversity and global harmony with food, performers, and cultural displays. For more info, visit https://visitcookevilletn. com/window-world-international-festival.

April 10: Nolensville

22nd Annual Buttercup Festival This free, family-oriented event features food trucks, artisans, kids activities, music, a pagenat and more. For more info, visit https:// www.facebook.com/historicnolensvillebuttercupfestival.

April 16: Fayetteville Slawburger Festival

Come to historic downtown Fayetteville to try a unique southern tradition: the slawburger. For more info, visit http://slawburgerfestival.com/

April 22-24: Erwin

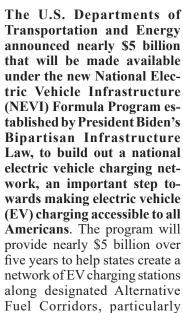
The springtime gathering for whitewater enthusiasts featuring kayak and onewheel races, outdoors enthusiasts and more. For more info, visit https://www.facebook.com/Nolifest

April 23-30: Paris

69th Annual World's Biggest Fish

Come out to Paris to enjoy carnival rides, a fishing rodeo, and all the fried catfish you can eat. For more info, visit https://www.facebook. com/WorldsBiggestFishFry.

NATIONAL BRIEFS



along the Interstate Highway

System. The total amount available to states in Fiscal Year 2022 under the NEVI Formula Program is \$615 million. States must submit an EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan before they can access these funds. A second, competitive grant program designed to further increase EV charging access in locations throughout the country, including in rural and underserved communities, will be announced later this year.

Approximately three-fourths of those who began working from home during the pandemic will remain doing so, impacting the finances of cities that are banking on commuters to help their coffers. Two recent studies found

100% remote after the pandemic as were before the pandemic and more than a third of employees count on having at least one at home workday a week. The persisting loss of commuters will hit municipalities that rely on these employees for revenue — from sales tax on their lunches to tax on wages earned in the city and parking fees, according to separate research by the Pew Charitable Trusts. While working from home seems to be a permanent part of work across all sectors, research found that more highly educated employees were more likely to be in positions allowing them more time working from home.

that twice as many workers will be

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



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

Erin keeps local heritage alive with annual Irish Day celebrations

By KATE COIL TML Communications Specialist

Erin may be 3,873 miles away from Ireland on a map, but the Irish spirit is alive and well in this Tennessee city.

This year, Erin will celebrate it's 60th Annual Wearin' of the Green Irish Day Parade and Arts & Crafts Festival, which includes a parade, arts and crafts festival, banquet, and many more festivities intended to connect the modern-day residents of Erin with the city's Irish immigrant past.

What is now the city of Erin began in the 1860s as a few stores and a railroad camp for Irish immigrants building the Memphis, Clarksville and Louisville Railroad (MC&L). The railroad was finished two days before the outbreak of the Civil War, but the workers remained. They named their new settlement Erin and by 1863 it was being featured on federal Civil War Maps as containing a depot, hotel, and roundhouse.

Angie Nielson, city recorder for Erin, said local legend details why the workers chose to stay in Erin out of anywhere else along the railroad line they built.

'Erin was first settled by Irish Railroad workers in the 1860s," she said. "The clear creek, the wooded hills, and the fog hovering over the valley of the West Fork of Wells Creek, reminded the Irish of the 'Auld Sod.' Shouts of 'Erin Go Braugh' (Ireland Forever) could be heard from the Irish work camp at the end of the work day."

While trains no longer run through Erin, the old railroad has become part of the Betsy Ligon Park and Walking Trail and Railroad Memorial Pavilion honoring those original town founders. In the 1960s, Erin also began another tradition to honor its history and Irish heritage: the annual Irish Day Parade.

Local physician Oaklus S. Luton first proposed the idea with support from the Erin Board of Mayor and Alderman as well as local civic clubs, schools, and businesses. The first parade featured Tennessee First Lady and Erin native Lucille Clement serving as the parade's grand marshal. In 1966, the tradition was started of naming a "Lord High Mayor" for the parade to honor a local person who has shown dedication to the community.

"The coveted Lord High Mayor is chosen for the year - this honor is recognition for community service and is voted on by the civic originations," Nielson said. "Emerald Awards are also given by each organization to a person that goes above and beyond the general public may not realize."

Other traditions have also been a continual part of the celebration.

"There are always beauty pageants, an Irish banquet, musical events, food and craft vendors, a carnival, and usually a Demolition Derby," Nielson said. "This year the demolition derby is rescheduled for May 7 due to a conflicting derby scheduled in Kentucky with a much larger purse."

Honoring the military is another import-

ant aspect of the festivities.

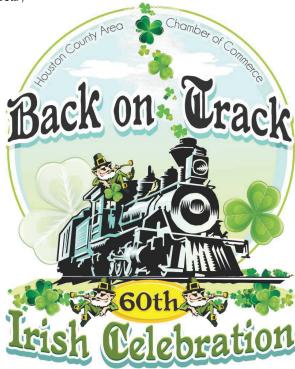
"Fort Campbell is one of the main focuses of the parade," Nielson said. "The Fort Campbell Honor Guard along with their band have participated for many years. Fort Campbell will also provide military equipment for show."

While the COVID-19 pandemic put a damper on celebrations in the past two years, this year's theme - Back on Track - reflects Erin's goals for the future.

"In 2020 the celebration was canceled for the first time," Nielson said. "In 2021, the celebration was moved to May. This year, 2022, we are getting Back on Track, to the way things have been since that every first



The band of Houston County High School, located in Erin, has been a feature of the parade since it began. This photo shows the band participating in the 1964 parade.



Combining the area's railroad legacy and COVID-19 recovery, this year's theme "Back on Track" focuses on Erin's return to normal post-pandemic.

celebration in 1963."

The popularity of the Irish Day celebrations is a major draw, sometimes bringing in 25,000 people to the city with a population of just under 2,000. Since 1997, a group of people from Galway, Ireland have made the trek to Erin to celebrate. A correspondence was struck up between the group and the city with several local citizens visiting them in Galway. The Galway group has returned multiple times to visit Erin as well.

No matter where they come from, Nielson said everyone in Erin is "a wee bit Irish" because of this longstanding tradition.

"This is a 60-year tradition; it is part of our heritage," she said. "This year will be presenting our small county being somewhat back to normal, if that is possible. This is who we are. We are the Irish, whether you were born here or not. We are 'Big Green' at the schools, our mascot is a leprechaun. The letterhead and logo for the city of Erin contains a shamrock."



The Houston County High School mascot is the Fighting Irish in tribute to the area's Irish heritage. While not everyone who lives in Erin today can claim ancestry from those original Irish railroad workers, the Irish identity creates a sense of community and culture in the city still



This float was part of the 55th Annual Irish Day Parade held in 2016. The parade had to be canceled in 2020 and was postponed to later in the year in 2021. The 60th parade, held on March 19 2022, will be the first time Erin has hosted an Irish Day parade and celebration the weekend of St. Patrick's Day since before the pandemic.



A group of "Little Leprechauns" attend a parade in the 1970s. Youngsters from Erin are often encouraged to dress up like leprechauns and participate in the parade - whether handing out candy or shooting visitors with water pistols.



While the parade is often the highlight of the celebration, the Irish Day festivities brings the community together for a number of events. Local civic organizations give out Emerald Awards to citizens who have shown service during the year. There is also plenty of food - including an Irish banquet - as well as beauty pageants, a carnival, a demolition derby, music, auctions, and even most recently a bass fishing tournament. Thousands of visitors come out each year, some even from Ireland itself.