6,250 subscribers www.TML1.org Volume 74, Number 3 March 2023

We're entering the homestretch - but there's still more work to be done in order to cross the finish line!

If your legislators aren't cosponsors yet, ask them to sign their name onto the Briggs / Garrett bill, SB 462 / HB 1187.

Ask **ALL** legislators to make funding this legislation in the governor's supplemental budget amendment a priority!

Your legislators, business leaders, and citizens need to ask Senate and House Finance chairs, House Speaker Cameron Sexton, Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, and Gov. Bill Lee to fund returning more of the sales tax dollars already being collected locally and provide relief to municipal taxpayers.

We must engage and educate the true beneficiaries of this relief effort, your taxpayers, and ask them to use their voice to contact

# RESTORE KETURN

state leaders. Our state leaders need to hear from the business owners and citizens in your community.

We have numerous materials on our website to help in these efforts, including a newly-developed PowerPoint presentation and script. You can find all the advocacy materials at https://www.tml1. org/state-shared-sales-tax-andsingle-article-cap-campaign

# **UT economists says** in-migration to help Tennessee weather national recession

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Recession woes may not be as bad as first feared on the national level with the state of Tennessee poised to not feel a recession at all, according to the most recent information from local economists.

Larry Kessler, a research associate professor in the Haslam College of Business at the University of Tennessee at the Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research, gave city leaders an update on the state of both the national and Tennessee economies at the 2023 TML Legislative Conference. Kessler said 2022 saw a relatively volatile year with two contractions in the first part of the year and then strong growth in the second part of the year with an overall 2.1% growth for the year.

"Despite this decent second half, there are still fears of a recession, mainly for two reasons," Kessler said. "The first is higher interest rates are leading to reduced investments. That is particularly true if you look in the real estate market. Also, higher prices are leading to reduced consumption as inflation is eroding consumers

purchasing power." Mild contractions in gross domestic product (GDP) can lead to minor recessions, but the economic impacts of bigger issues, like the pandemic, can have larger and more far-reaching impacts. Prior to the pandemic, the country was averaging about 3% GDP growth per year. There was a 30% drop in the first quarter of 2020, but the economy recovered relatively quickly with a 35% growth rate in the third quarter of that year. This was followed by several quarters



Dr. Larry Kessler with UT's Boyd Center for Economic Development discusses the national and Tennessee econ-

of 5-6% growth then several quarters of contractions.

"The U.S. economy recovered really quickly," Kessler said. "Then we were back to pre-pandemic levels by the first quarter of 2021. It really only took about three quarters for the U.S. economy to get economic activity back to pre-pandemic levels. Despite a small slowdown in recent quarters, we have still seen pretty good growth since then. One of the main reasons for the quick and strong economic recovery is personal consumption spending by households on goods and services. About 70% of all economic activity in the U.S. is consumption spending. So, as long as household consumption continues and consumers continue to spend, the economy will grow at See ECON on Page 9

## Return of sales tax revenues to cities focus of TML Legislative Conference



Gov Bill Lee addresses city officials from across the state as part of the 2023 TML Legislative Conference recently held in Nashville.



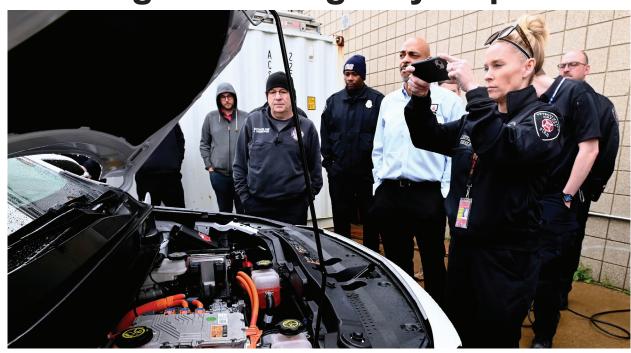
State Sen. Richard Briggs, R-Knoxville, addresses TML members about the status of SB 462 during the legislative conference.



State Rep. Johnny Garrett, R-Goodlettsville, gives an update about the status of the companion HB 1187.

See Pages 5-6 for more conference photos.

## EVs present new but surmountable challenges to emergency responders



A group of firefighters receive training in handling emergencies involving electric vehicles. While electric vehicle related accidents and fires are somewhat different from more traditional vehicles, fire officials said Tennessee emergency responders are equipped to handle these incidents.

## **BEAD** funding to help Tennessee bridge gap in internet infrastructure

By KATE COIL

New federal funding opportunities are on the horizon to help fill donut holes in internet services as well as bring up speeds in underserved area.

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program has already announced \$42.45 billion in funding to be split amongst the U.S. states, territories, and Washington, D.C. Tennessee's specific funding is expected to be made available June 30 based on the funding formula used for similar grants. Tennessee is expected to receive between \$750 million and \$950 million of the total pot of federal funding.

Paige Shapiro, the federal program officer for Tennessee with the U.S. Department of Commerce's

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), said the funding is part of the federal Internet for All Initiative, which will provide a minimum speed of 100 downloads and 20 uploads, though the state of Tennessee could choose to make that threshold hire for the funds it is administering.

Internet service providers apply for grant through state offices similar to how past funds were allocated.

"Like most things with the federal government, this is coming at a pace at which we get the opportunity to plan for it," Shapiro said. "The application for this funding is actually not yet available. We don't know how Tennessee's application is going to look like since it hasn't See BEAD on Page 7

### By KATE COIL

As electric vehicles become more common on roadways, both emergency responders and motorists are asking questions about how fighting EV-related fires or handling EV-related accidents differ from those involving the traditional combustion engine.

Data from the National Traffic Safety Board (NTSB) showed that EVs are involved in fire situations at a lower rate than both their internal combustion engine (ICE) and hybrid counterparts, but the risk of reignition of a fire is higher in an EV and are different than in ICEs. While fuel and wiring are more likely to cause fire issues in gas vehicles, battery issues are the more common cause for fires in EVs and hybrids.

NTSB has issued several safety recommendations for emergency responders when responding to electric vehicle fires where high-voltage lithium-ion batteries are involved in particular. The NTSB has investigated several incidents where fires were caused

by these batteries being involved in high-speed crashes and noted that in these situations, the batteries have the tendency to reignite.

With Tennessee becoming a hub of EV manufacturing, fire officials across the state are already exploring ways to make first responders have the tools and technology they need to address fire-related issues.

Donald Pannell, a fire management consultant with UT-MTAS, said each department develops their own Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) based on the risks in their community and their operational capacity, and while not all departments may have specific SOPs for EV fires, it is easy to develop them.

"Though EVs are still relatively new, though growing at a rapid pace, responses to vehicle fires are not new, and existing SOPs, that may have been primarily based on anticipated responses to ICE vehicles, are often adaptable to a level that can allow their successful application to any type of vehicle fire," Pannell said. "Regardless of

the vehicle powertrain, tactics used in a vehicle fire incident action plan should consider several common components. First, a proper incident size up should be performed to identify the scope of the incident, scene safety needs for first responders and patients/victims, the number and type of vehicles involved, extrication and emergency medical treatment needs, and determine the best tactics based on response capabilities. The tactics that are developed will be based on several factors including the availability of a sustainable water source as EV fires can require much more water than an equivalent ICE vehicle fire. Other factors include the availability of sufficient fire/ emergency medical personnel and apparatus/equipment."

Jason Sparks is the fire program director with the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy (TFACA), which is part of the State Fire Marshal's Office. Sparks said time, water, equipment and resource needs, and knowledge of how EVs operate

See EVS on Page 3

## NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



#### **CLEVELAND**

Formulated Solutions Cleveland, LLC, will invest \$43.6 million to establish manufacturing operations in Cleveland, creating 524 new jobs after its recently acquisition of the 455,000-square-foot former Beiersdorf facility. The company plans to hire 380 new staff members and extend job offers to the substantial majority of the former Beiersdorf employees. The expansion to Tennessee will allow Formulated Solutions to better meet its growing customer demand while also broadening the company's pharmaceutical production. Headquartered in Largo, Fla., Formulated Solutions specializes in the development and manufacturing of aerosols and barrier pressurized packs, tubes, liquids and semi-solids, including over the counter (OTC), medical device and branded prescription drugs. Once operational, the Cleveland facility will serve as the company's second commercial production site and first production location outside of Florida.

#### DUNLAP

Big Valley Brands, LLC, doing business as Big Valley Air, officials announced the company will expand its manufacturing operations in Dunlap, investing \$1.4 million and creating 30 new jobs. Dunlap is located within the Tier 4, At-Risk Sequatchie County. Through the expansion, Big Valley Air will construct a 17,000-square-foot facility at its existing operations on Little Ponderosa Trail in Dunlap. The new plant will house all the company's parachute manufacturing and allow Big Valley Air to increase production and broaden its customer base. Founded in 2021 and headquartered in Dunlap, Big Valley Brands, LLC is a high-performance parachute manufacturer for sport jumpers and militaries throughout the world. Once construction is complete, Big Valley Air will employ roughly 50 employees.

### JONESBOROUGH

The Tennessee Historic Commission recently completed a \$710,000 historic rehabilitation project at the Chester Inn State Historic Site in Jonesborough, a multi-year effort designed to preserve one of the most historic buildings in Tennessee's oldest town. Dating back to 1797, the frontier inn hosted all three of Tennessee's U.S. presidents as well as numerous other dignitaries until it was converted into an apartment building in the late 1940s. The site was acquired by the state in 1989 and restored to its 1880s appearance. Presently, the museum provides exhibits about the state of Franklin, the history of Jonesborough, the history of the inn and its role in Tennessee's frontier, and more.

### LA VERGNE

The La Vergne Fire and Rescue Department has received a new 2/2X ISO rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). The rating is the result of continuing efforts by the fire rescue department to provide the best assistance to residents and visitors in need of emergency services and will go into effect on May 1. La Vergne is one of only 36 departments within the state of Tennessee to have obtained an

ISO 2 rating. La Vergne Fire Chief Ronnie Beasley attributes the lower ISO classification to a change in administrative processes, training, documentation, and gaining a better understanding of available water in the city. Lower ISO ratings can decrease home insurance rates in the community. Residents are encouraged to contact their insurance providers to see if the new ISO rating could decrease their premiums or payments.

#### **LEBANON**

The Webstaurant Store, LLC officials announced the company will invest \$103.9 million to locate new distribution operations in Lebanon's Speedway Industrial Park, creating 225 by expanding into Tennessee. Webstaurant's Lebanon facility will be the company's newest plant and largest investment in automation and infrastructure to date. Once operational, it will utilize automated packing machines and work alongside the company's current distribution operations in Georgia and Kentucky to target increased demand for restaurant, industrial and other office supplies and equipment in the Midwestern U.S. Based in Lancaster, Pa, and founded in 2004, The Webstaurant Store, LLC is one of the largest online restaurant supply companies. Webstaurant specializes in distributing commercial equipment and wholesale supplies around the globe from its operations in Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, Pennsylvania and soon, Tennessee.

#### **MEMPHIS**

MSS Steel Tubes USA LLC officials announced the company will invest \$6 million to locate its first U.S. production facility in Memphis, creating 129 new jobs as it establishes new operations on Outland Road. The Memphis location will position MSS Steel Tubes to better serve its U.S. customer base of solar panel manufacturers by providing a more cost-effective and efficient way to meet and exceed both production and delivery times. MSS Steel Tubes USA LLC is a subsidiary of MSS Steel Tubes SA, which is based in Portugal, with a participation from Metalogalva Group, from Portugal, and Soufer Group, from Brazil. Once MSS Steel Tubes becomes operational in Tennessee, Metalogalva Group will employ more than 1,800 people across its production facilities in four continents.

#### MORRISTOWN

OTICS USA, Inc., will invest \$147 million to expand their manufacturing operations in Morristown, creating 70 new jobs at their U.S. headquarters there. As a supplier for major automotive corporations, OTICS USA will be able to accommodate new business growth and increased fuel pipe production capabilities, which will be made possible through the construction of an additional 55,000 square feet of space at the facility on Interstate View Drive, OTICS USA, Inc. was founded in 2001 as a subsidiary to OTICS Corporation, which is based in Japan. Headquartered in Morristown, OTICS USA manufactures parts for major automotive corporations. The expansion means OTICS USA will employ nearly 450 people across East Tennessee.

#### **NASHVILLE**

The first Latin American consulate general has opened its doors in Tennessee with El Salvador's Ministry of Foreign Affairs inaugurating its 26th U.S. consulate in Nashville. Consul General Marta Maria Orantes will head the office, which will provide diplomatic support to the approximately 18,000 Salvadorians in the region as well as help boost business connections between Tennessee and El Salvador. Nashville could also soon see consulates from Honduras and Guatemala open up to provide diplomatic support to immigrant populations as well as promote business interests between the region and Latin America. Nashville is also home to a Japanese consulate general office and has a consul official from Germany working full time in the city to promote relations between the Southeast and the respective countries.

#### **TULLAHOMA**

MDS Foods, Inc., announced the company will invest \$8.9 million to expand operations at its Tullahoma facility in the Coffee County Joint Industrial Park and will create 75 jobs as MDS Cheese. To increase its manufacturing and distribution capabilities, the company will add roughly 48,000 square feet of cooler space dedicated to the distribution of finished products and approximately 10,000 square feet of space for new cheese production lines. Founded and headquartered in Navarre, Ohio, MDS Foods Inc. has served supermarket delis and restaurants across the U.S. as a manufacturer and supplier of premium cheese for nearly 20 years. With the additional /5 new jobs in Tullahoma, MDS Cheese will employ nearly 200 Tennesseans.

# **Kingsport welcomes bobcat** brothers to Bays Mountain

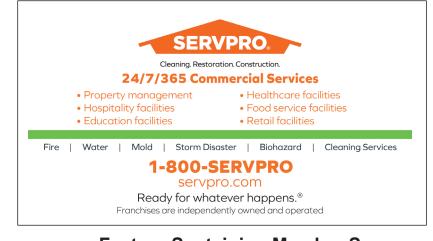


Two new bobcats have arrived at Kingsport's Bays Mountain Park. Brothers Carter and Cash have been relocated to a new, larger enclosure that provides them with newly added interactive toys and plenty of places to lounge around. Carter and Cash have been in quarantine for the past five months while park rangers work to get them accustomed to their new environment. During this time, the park has made a number of improvements to the bobcat habitat to provide both safety and enrichment for the animals. Improvements include interactive toys, tree baffling, fence modifications, the removal of dead trees and new interpretive signs.

# New Tesla supercharger station locates in Mt. Juliet



The city of Mt. Juliet has unveiled its new Tesla Supercharger station at 48 Old Pleasant Grove Road. The first such station in all of Wilson County, the station includes 11 stalls with 250 kW charging capacity. The station is one of more than 40,000 global superchargers installed by the Tesla company and provide vehicles with the power to go more than 300 miles in 15 minutes. The stations can be used by both Tesla vehicles and non-Tesla vehicles with the proper adapters.



## TML is excited to have SERVPRO support the league as a Feature Sustaining Member Sponsor

SERVPRO is proud to be a Tennessee-owned business employing more than 450 teammates at their Gallatin headquarters. SERVPRO moved to Gallatin in 1988 to strategically place its headquarters within 600 miles of 50 percent of the U.S. population. In 2005, the company opened a new 140,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility dedicated to the management of operations, training, blending, and distribution for its 2,000-plus franchises across the U.S. and Canada.

SERVPRO invited TML to tour the Gallatin headquarters. "We were so impressed to learn their rich history, to see their cutting-edge facilities where they continue to invest and push the envelope in the field of cleanup and

restoration, and to witness the high standards they operate under that make them the best," said Anthony Haynes, TML executive director.

In 2019, industry-leading investment firm Blackstone acquired a majority stake in the company while looking for recession-proof opportunities. SERVPRO has posted growth every year in its 50-plus-year history, going back to its inception in 1967.

SERVPRO has been recognized by numerous industry publications and trade groups, including *The Wall Street Journal*, Dun and Bradstreet, and *Forbes Magazine*. *Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500* has consistently named SERVPRO as a Top 10 overall franchise opportunity and No. 1 in the cleanup and restoration catego-

ry every year since 2003.

Given SERVPRO's franchise professionals' close connection to disaster cleanup and restoration, they see firsthand the service and sacrifice made daily by first responders. In an effort to support them, their franchisees regularly give back to local first responder, fire, public safety, and EMS organizations. Since 2018, SERVPRO has been the proud sponsor of the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl, an annual college football bowl game hosted in Dallas. Listening to their concerns, SERVPRO has also partnered with the First Responders Children's Foundation, which provides support to the children and families of first responders who risk their lives in service to our communities.

SERVPRO franchises across

Tennessee are ready to start a relationship with your municipality. In addition to cleanup, restoration, and construction, many SERVPRO franchises offer additional services such as: asbestos removal, trauma and crime scene cleanup, biohazard cleanup, commercial HVAC cleaning, and commercial carpet cleaning. Many franchises also offer free services such as ERPs/EPPs for your properties, estimates for work, and even free continuing education classes for insurance licenses. Contact your local franchise to start your relationship today!

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## EVs present new but surmountable challenges to emergency responders

**EVS** from Page 1 are the biggest things departments need to consider when tackling an EV fire.

"There are some new challenges with EV fires that will affect the fire services response to these types of calls," Sparks said. "From the amount of time units are committed to the emergency, fire stream application, water supplies, additional equipment and resource needs and knowing where the batteries are located on the EV. Time must be committed to this emergency. This is based on the amount of time it takes to extinguish the fire and cool the batteries of the EV. The goal is to cool the batteries to the ambient temperature. Once that has been accomplished, the vehicle should be monitored for 45 minutes to ensure we do not have reignition of the batteries."

Both Sparks and Pannell agree that water is still the best extinguishing agent for EV fires, Sparks said this method still includes some challenges.

"The difference is how the water is supplied to the fire," Sparks said. "Like most vehicle fires, we will knock down any visible fire, then we will concentrate our efforts on the vehicles' batteries. The goal here is to apply water directly to the batteries themselves. This is where knowing the location of the vehicle's batteries is important. Also, the amount of water needed to accomplish this task can be a minimum 4,000 gallons and we have had reports of more than 14,000 gallons. The best way to apply the water needed to cool the battery of an EV with a floor pan battery is to lift the vehicle. This exposes the underside closest to the battery and apply the water directly onto the location of the batteries. In some cases, most engine companies may not have the required equipment needed to lift the vehicle safely. This could require the request of additional resources to perform this task. By drilling this down, we find that the effects it will have on the fire service include longer on scene times, large amounts of water and the challenges to provide it along with more resources and equipment."

Most considerations for EV fires occur due to accidents on open roadways, but there are also occasional reports of EV fires taking places in garages in residences or public parking facilities. Pannell said handling an EV fire may require different strategies in more enclosed spaces.

"This is certainly one of the big issues," Pannell said. "If an EV fire is in the open, exposures are often limited. However, a sustainable water supply may not be readily available — think about a vehicle fire on an interstate highway where there are no fire hydrants. If the EV fire is inside a structure, the potential for the fire to extend beyond the area of origin is a real possibility that warrants additional tactical planning and actions. This type of



While most vehicle fires are the results of accidents on the open roadway, officials said EVs can also present unique challenges when the vehicle in question is located in a confined space, such as a parking or residential garage.



New equipment and technology, like this fire nozzle, are already on the market to help fight EV-related fires. However, officials say most departments already have the tools they need to deal with these situations and equipment coming on the market still needs to be tested to prove its efficacy.

incident can quickly change from a vehicle fire response to a structure fire response bringing with it all the complexities of that type of call."

New tools and technologies are already coming on the market aimed at helping firefighters and other emergency responders more effectively deal with EV battery fires. Sparks said the state fire marshal's office is working to keep departments updated on whether or not these new tools will be of more benefit to them than traditional methods.

"At this time, we have found that most all fire departments that are recognized by the state fire marshal's office should have access to the equipment needed to deal with an EV fire, but we are already seeing equipment manufacturers pushing out new tools that could assist in fire extinguishment of EV," he said. "Only time and research will tell if using the new tools will be more effective and safer for responders."

Pannell said departments may

want to decide for themselves if they want to invest in new tools and technology, but they may find the tools they already have can help in these situations.

"Certainly, continued and regular training on policies and with practical scenarios related to these emerging technologies should be conducted," he said. "The typical cache of fire suppression and rescue/extrication tools are needed. Additionally, thermal imaging cameras, fire suppression lines with in-line foam capability, and piercing nozzles have proven useful to fire departments for responses to these incidents. Using a thermal imaging camera can help with an effective 360 size-up. Additionally, other SOPs such as establishing an appropriate command structure, the use of appropriate PPE/SCBA, protecting the work area, stabilizing the vehicle, performing patient care and extrication, and control and clean-up of run-off should be followed."

Education is still the best tool

when it comes for tackling any fire situation.

"Other areas that we have identified for EV response include the infrastructure that supports the charging of the vehicles and vehicle crashes," Sparks said. "This includes both residential and commercial application for charging the vehicles. Our goal is to educate responders to identify the hazards that could be found and how to safely mitigate them. As for vehicle crashes, the research shows that by understanding the anatomy of the vehicle and how to isolate the batteries energy and deenergizing the high voltage components, we can use the same technique in EV as in other vehicles to perform patient rescue."

By understanding the challenges EVs present, Pannell said departments can better ensure the safety of their first responders.

"Another concern that departments should consider when dealing with EV fires related to car wrecks is the risks of electric shock and battery re-ignition that can arise from the stranded energy that remains in a damaged battery and high-voltage system," Pannell said. "A current guiding 'rule' related to incidents involving EVs is to always assume the high-voltage battery and associated components are energized and fully charged. Damaged cells in the battery can experience thermal runaway - uncontrolled increases in temperature and pressure - which can lead to battery reignition. EV fires have a significant chance for reignition hours after extinguishment. Many experts have said reignition should be expected.

At present, all firefighters that meet NFPA 1001 standards are capable of responding to EV fires. As more technology and information emerges, however, both Pannell and Sparks said there may be different or more specialized education focused on this topic. Officials with the Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy are one major resource Tennessee fire departments can rely on for education on this subject. Other resources are available from organizations like the NFPA, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Traffic Safety Administration, and the U.S. Fire Administration among

Additionally, departments can take their knowledge and share it with the public so motorists are better educated themselves on what to do in an EV fire situation.

"The subject of EVs provides another opportunity for fire departments to engage with members of their communities to educate them on risks and related preventative measures to improve fire and life safety within the communities," Pannell said. "The same partners listed above, among others, also provide a variety of public facing educational materials, and many of them are free for fire departments to use as-is or to customize."

# No loan is too large or too small



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

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





# PEOPLE

Brooklyn Sawyers Belk has been named deputy director for professional standards by Knoxville Police Chief



Brooklyn Belk

Paul Noel. Belk most recently served as a law professor at the University of Tennessee, where she obtained her law degree, and is a former federal prosecutor. Prior to teaching at the University of Tennessee, Belk was a partner and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at the Atlanta-based firm of Weinberg Wheeler Hudgins Gunn & Dial. She also served as in-house counsel for a technology company working with law enforcement nationally. She served as a federal prosecutor for the U.S. Department of Justice from 2009 to 2018, including in East and Middle Tennessee. Belk earned her bachelor's degree from Emory and Henry College, a master's degree in art history from East Tennessee State University, and her law degree from the University of Tennessee.

Kelli Bourgeois has been selected as the new city manager of Bristol following longtime City Man-



Kelli Bourgeois

ager Bill Sorah, who announced his intention to retire last year. Bourgeois comes to Bristol from Columbia Height, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis where she served as city manager since 2019 and previously served as the human resources director and assistant city manager from 2014 to 2019. Before that, Bourgeois worked as an assistant city administrator and community development director for the city of Becker, Minn., for 16 years and then as a senior planner with the Southeastern Council of Governments in Minnesota for nearly four years. She holds a bachelor's degree in local and urban affairs from St. Cloud University and a law degree from the Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Kevin Breeding has been selected as the new city manager of Cedar Hill and will continue to serve as city



Kevin Breeding

manager of Orlinda. Breeding has served as the city manager of Orlinda since 2000, and for much of his nearly 23 years with the city has pulled double duty as the director of economic development for the city of Franklin, Ky.'s Main Street Program, a role he began in 1999. Prior to that, he served from 1997 to 2000 as the real estate acquisition manager for the city of Cookeville and as a special projects manager with the Greater Lexington, Ky., Chamber of Commerce from 1995 to 1997. A native of Cookeville, Breeding holds a bachelor's degree in business and public administration from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, as well as a master's of public administration from the University of Kentucky.

Bryan Chandler has been selected as the new chief of police for Dresden. Chandler takes over the role from former chief Chris Crocker,

who recently accepted a position with Tennessee Highway Patrol. Chandler has been serving as



Bryan Chandler

the interim chief for Dresden for the past three months since Crocker's departure. Chandler has been involved with the Dresden DARE program, including serving as the West Tennessee President of the DARE Officer's Association.

**Daugherty** has been selected as the new city manager for the city of Fairview. Daugherty has served



Tom Daugherty

with the city since October 2013 when he was hired as the city recorder, and was quickly promoted to serve as the chief finance officer of the city. He has been serving as the city's interim city manager since November.

Rick Emmett will retire as the downtown coordinator for the city of Knoxville, after a 31-year career with



Rick Emmett

the city. Emmett's last day on the job will be March 31. A native of Middlesboro, Ky., Emmett has an associate's degree from Southeast Community College in Kentucky and worked as a licensed surveyor and coal miner before moving to Knoxville in 1992. Emmett was hired as a technical service administrator in the city's engineering department that year. He has also served the city as an urban growth manager during his tenure with Knoxville.

Don Friddle has been selected as the new chief of the Jackson Fire Department, bringing more than



Don Friddle

35 years of experience to the role. Friddle has been employed as the deputy chief of operations for the department since 2019 and prior to that, served for five years as the fire marshal for Madison County. Friddle also served as the fire marshal for the Jackson Fire Department from 1992 to 2004 and as the coalition coordinator for Safe Kids West TN. He holds numerous fire service and emergency responder certifications. Friddle also used his fire safety knowledge for nearly 10 years as the large account risk control service coordinator for Church Mutual Insurance Company, developing safety and risk management plans.

Jay Johnson, town manager for the town of Oakland, will retire from his position on June 30 after a 50-year career in city administration. Johnson has been the town manager of Oakland since 2020. Before coming to Oakland, Johnson has served in numerous city management roles in Tennessee and elsewhere, including six years with the city of Shel-

## Franklin Fire Department welcomes new recruits



The Franklin Fire Department welcomed four new firefighters into its ranks during a graduation ceremony. Tanner Augello, Matthew Cheatham, Austin Patterson, and Hunter Tenpenny graduated from the department's 18-week Recruit Academy. From left to right, front row: Firefighters Hunter Tenpenny, Austin Patterson, Tanner Augello, and Matthew Cheatham. Middle row: Capt. David Kolak, Battalion Chief Ben Marler, and Lt. Jeremy Martin. Back row: Assistant Fire Chief Greg Baltimore, and Fire Chief Glenn Johnson.

## Johnson City Police announces promotions



From left to right: Johnson City Police Lt. Jim Tallmadge, Capt. Mike Adams, Sgt. Mike Dunn, Lt. Mark Hollis, Interim Chief Billy Church, and City Manager Cathy Ball. Tallmadge, Adams, and Dunn were also recently promoted to their current ranks following a promotional process that consists of a written test, job-specific written exercises, and an assessment and interview. Tallmadge is the longest-serving veteran of the department with 26 years followed by Dunn with 23, Adams with 22, and Hollis with 21.

byville, 15 with the city of Franklin, seven as the chief administrative officer of Collierville, and two years with Mt.



Jay Johnson

Pleasant. Johnson has also served city management roles in Toccoa, Ga.; Anniston, Ala.; and Ponca City, Okla.; to name a few. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Southern Illinois University, is an accredited Tennessee city recorder, and has management credentials from ICMA.

Will Mullins has been selected as the new fire chief and code enforcement officer for the city of Church Hill.



Will Mullins

He will also work to eventually take over duties as the city's building inspector as well. Mullins has 25 years' experience in law enforcement and 26 years' experience in firefighting, starting his fire service career with the Stanley Valley Volunteer Fire Department when he was 16. Mullins is only the fourth fire chief in the 39-year history of the Church Hill Fire Department.

Ron Oestreich has been selected as the new director of parks and recreation for the town of Farragut following



Ron Oestreich

the retirement of longtime director Sue Stuhl in January. Oestreich comes to Farragut from Bolingbrook, Ill., where he served in their park district for 27 years, most recently as its executive director since 2012. Oestreich joined the Bolingbrook Parks District in 1996 when he was hired as the first full-time aquatic supervisor for the village's aquatic center. He then served as the superintendent of revenue facilities from 2000 to 2012. He holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University. Oestreich spent time in Tennessee growing up and has family who lives in the East Tennessee area.

Danny Smith has been selected as the new police chief of Greenfield. Smith has been with the city for 30 years and has spent 29 of those years as the city's assistant police chief.

## MTAS announces hiring of two new finance consultants

The University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (UT-MTAS) has announced the hiring of two new team members serving as municipal finance training specialists.

Kari Bates will be based in the Knoxville office and most recently served as the city recorder for the city of Rocky Top for six years.

Prior to her work with the city of Rocky Top, Bates was a fiscal compliance officer for the Anderson County government for more than two years as well as served as an executive assistant and assistant deputy with the Anderson County Election Commission.

Bates holds a bachelor's degree from UT Knoxville and is a certified municipal finance officer (CMFO) as well as a certified public manager.

Loretta Garner will be based in the Nashville office and most recently served as the finance director and city recorder for the city of Mt. Pleasant since 2015.

Prior to that, she was a CPA in the private sector, both as a self-employed accountant and with the firm Putman and Hancock. She was also employed as a controller for Allied Crawford Steel in Nashville. Garner also spent nearly five years as the director of financial management for Giles County.

Garner holds a bachelor's



Kari Bates



Loretta Garner

degree in accounting from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. She is a certified public accountant (CPA) and holds a CMFO designation.

Smith has been serving as interim police chief since the retirement of former Chief Joey Radford in January.



**Danny Smith** 

Smith holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Bethel University.

Lisa Teel, a police officer with the town of Collierville, has retired after 30 years with the Collierville Police



Lisa Teel

Department. Teel began her career in 1993 as a dispatcher for CPD and then became a police officer two years later. She has served as a field training officer, crime scene investigator, and crisis negotiator. Since 2018, she has served as the school

resource officer at Collierville High School where she was recently honored with "Teal for Teel" day, allowing students to show their support and recognition of her efforts on their behalf. The school also presented her with a rocking chair to help in her retirement.

Tim Ward, chief of the Greeneville Police Department, will retire after a 33year career. Ward's last Tim Ward day will be

April 1. Steve Spano will serve as interim chief until a permanent replacement can be found. Ward began his career with the Greeneville Police Department in 1990 and worked his way up through the ranks including serving as an administrative captain, patrol captain, detective lieutenant, SWAT and Special Response Team commander, narcotics agent, and patrol officer. Ward was selected as the police chief for Greeneville in 2018.



## Tennessee Municipal League holds 2023 Legislative Conference



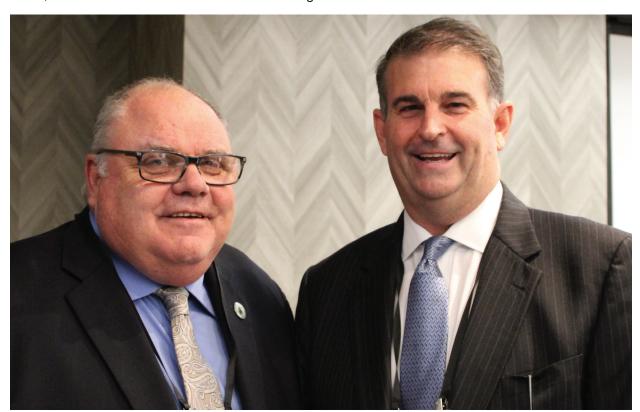
Above: Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee addresses the conference.



From left to right, Bolivar's Councilmembers Carolyn Spinks, Suzanne Rhea, City Clerk/Recorder Carri Rhea, and Melvin Golden attend TML's 2023 Legislative Conference.



TML Executive Director Anthony Haynes with U.S. Sen. Mark Green, R-Tenn., who addressed conference attendees with an update from Washington D.C.



TML President and Henderson Mayor Bobby King, left, and TML District 6 Director and Lawrenceburg Mayor Blake Lay, right.



From left to right, Atoka Alderman Chris Schaeffer Jr., Henderson Alderwoman Donna From left to right, Tullahoma Aldermen Bobbie Wilson, Jenny Amacher, and Derick Butler, and Henderson's Joy Simmons.



Mann.



TN Comptroller Jason Mumpower presents at the conference.



From left to right, Germantown Mayor Mike Palazzolo, Vice Mayor Mary Anne Gibson, Clarksville Councilwoman Karen Reynolds, and Germantown Alderman Scott Sanders.



Alcoa Vice Mayor Tracey Cooper, left, and Mayor Tanya Martin, right.



Left to right, Trenton Alderwoman Kim Holt, McKenzie Mayor Ryan Griffin, and Trenton Alderwoman Cece Jones.



Red Bank Vice Mayor and TML District 3 Director Stefanie Dalton, left, and Collegedale Councilmember Katie Lamb, right.

## Tennessee Municipal League holds 2023 Legislative Conference



From left to right, Bolivar Mayor Julian McTizic, Jackson Councilman Johnny Dodd, Spring Hill Alderman Will Pomeroy, and Medina Mayor Vance Coleman.



Deputy Gov. and TDOT Commissioner Butch Eley gives an update on the proposed Transportation Modernization Act.



TBI Deputy Director Brad Nealon gives a presentation on some of the state's most pressing public safety issues.



From left to right, Lakesite City Manager Kirsten Ert, Commissioner Valerie Boddy, Lori Howell, and Mayor David Howell



From left to right, Oakland Alderwoman Debbie Hummel, Alderman Jeff Fisher, Savannah Assistant City Manager Blake Walley, and Vice Mayor Adrian Wiggins



Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, R-Oak Ridge, addresses TML members at the 2023 Legislative Conference.





Bob Shutt, right.

**Left**: From left to right, Paris Commissioner Sam Tharpe, Vice Mayor Vickey Roberts, Mayor Kathy Ray, and City Manager and TCMA President Kim Foster.



Kingsport City Manager Chris McCartt, left, and Greeneville Mayor Cal Doty.



Left to right, Shelbyville City Manager Scott Collins, Clinton City Manager Roger Houck, and Senior Staff Administrator William Riggs.



Jefferson City Manager James Gallup, left, and Nolensville Town Manager Victor Lay, right.

## Homebuilders highlight how municipal leaders can address housing issues

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

As home prices skyrocket across the country, Tennessee homebuilders want to educate government officials on the issues they face to keep new homes affordable, especially as the state expects an influx of new residents to meet growing industry needs.

With an estimated 5,800 people expected to be employed at Blue Oval City alone – not counting the estimated 21,300 employees automotive suppliers and other support services will bring to both the region and across the state of Tennessee - West Tennessee is expected to see an explosion in population. The challenges of meeting the residential needs that these new jobs will create as well as the realities homebuilders face in the present market was the topic of a recent Blue Oval Community Impact meeting hosted by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD).

Kanette Keough, executive director of West Tennessee Homebuilders' Association, said they expect an influx of residents to the area within a 30-minute drive of the Blue Oval facility.

"We understand that nearly a million people live within a 45-minute drive of the Blue Oval site, which is great for Ford. They know they will have a workforce the day they open the doors. People will be willing to make that drive for the higher wages they are paying. But what we also know is that over time, people want to live closer to their job site. The national average people travel to their jobs is 27 minutes. That means a lot of the counties in West Tennessee that have been losing population in the last few decades are going to start to see an increase. The question we all ask, though, is where are these families going to live?"

There are challenges to meeting the need created by the Blue Oval development as well as the housing needs in Tennessee overall. Some of these issues in particular include builder confidence, shrinking markets, increased interest rates, material costs, supply-chain issues, workforce shortages, government regulation, and a lack of infrastructure for building.

"Builder confidence is down since 2022, and that's the first decline since 2011," Keough said. "There are a lot of reasons for that. A lot of this is being driven by increase in interest rates and the supply chain issues that have dragged on for more than two years. For instance, people will get an estimate on lighting package for their house. Two years later - when those lights finally arrive – the cost may be up 33%."

One of the reason builder confidence is down is due to the health of the housing market, which is defined by how many buyers can afford to participate in the market. Unhealthy markets have a limited number of buyers who can afford to purchase homes in that area.

The current median home price in Tennessee is just under \$391,000, meaning that the average Tennessean needs to earn \$89,349

to qualify to purchase a home. This means approximately 72% of Tennesseans cannot afford to buy a home in the state, and homebuilders are less likely to build homes in rural areas because there is more of a risk associated with that market.

"Builders are much more likely to create that supply if there is that demand," she said. "The demand shrinks every time more and more people are forced out of the market because of economics. It's really hard to build a house for \$390,000 in today's economy. The figures are a little less in urban areas like Jackson and Memphis, because the market is there. If 72% of Tennessean households cannot afford this median-priced house on average, but in Jackson and Memphis that number is closer to 21% and 26%, that means the number of people who cannot afford a home in a rural area is higher."

Interest rates have created a challenge for many potential buyers with a national average interest rate for mortgages around 7%. The fact that prices of construction materials have also increased 35% since January 2020 mean that homebuilders are facing tighter than ever profit margins to buy materials and provide labor while still producing a product that is not out of the reach of the average

"Every time you add \$1000 to the price of a home, it knocks 3,343 Tennessee households out of the market for that house," Keough said. "There are a lot of ways a \$1,000 gets added to that price. Most homebuilders in our association have reduced their profit margins to keep building houses. Although some costs have started to level off like lumber, other things are starting to increase. You add to that the time that it takes to get these materials, and time is money. The workforce shortage is scary. You have to realize that about 75% of everyone in our industry is set to retire sometime in the next five years, and for every five people that retire there is only one to replace them. Right now, there is a problem because it's making it more expensive. Subcontractors can command higher fees for their services."

Keough said there is more evidence that a healthy mix of different home types builds a healthier community, and that trends indicate more homebuyers want to live in mixed-use communities.

"A lot of it is what price point communities are looking for," Keough said. "Every time we sit down with someone and ask how they want things to look in their community, they want \$2-3 million homes, because they're thinking about the property tax revenue, but again you have to think about supply and demand. You will see that starter homes are still holding their value. They're encouraging young families to move into the area and renovate them."

Doug Swink, CEO of home building and realty company Renaissance Development, agreed stating that "A lot of these modern mixed-used developments have homes that are at a more affordable price point and will also allow your teachers, firefighters, and police officers to be able to live and work



With 5,800 new employees at Blue Oval City and an estimated 21,300 employees of additional support industries coming across the state of Tennessee, community leaders have the chance to address - housing concerns such as affordability and directing growth. The rising cost of building a new home influenced by factors such as material costs, supply chain issues, permitting, and interest rates - means that many Tennesseans are being priced out of the market. Nearly three-quarters of Tennesseans don't earn enough to qualify for the income needed to purchase a home, with that percentage higher in rural areas where there is less new housing stock.



To keep a healthy housing market and because of homebuyer trends, homebuilders suggest communities look into more mixed-use developments such as the traditional downtown with shops on the first floor and housing on the second. Mixed-use developments can also include a variety of commercial, public, and residential properties at different price points to ensure all facets of the community can find a home they can afford.

"In a healthy community, not all homes look the same," said Charles Schneider, CEO of the Home Builders Association of Tennessee. "There needs to be a mix of apartments, a mix of townhomes or single-family attached homes. At some places you will need entry-level subdivisions and, in some areas, you will have more executive housing. All these can be mixed together on one site."

At present, Keogh said government regulations in Tennessee account for 23.8% of the final price of a new single-family home in the state, which is lower than other states like California but still a concern for homebuilders wanting to make an affordable product and get a return on their investment.

Swink said sewer and water are two of the biggest issues West Tennessee developers face, and many developers are looking at decentralized sewer systems.

"Each community and each development within that community can pull together and use these systems to treat their own wastewater," Swink said. "The technology is there to do this on a small basis so it's scalable. Instead of having to spend \$30-\$40 million to build a treatment plant to serve 2 million gallons a day, it allows the community to grow as the community is growing. The best thing is the environmental aspect of it. Since these new technologies are on a smaller scale it is easier to treat This technology has been utilized for 40 years in other surrounding states, but it's newer to Tennessee, who has been very reluctant to accept some of this technology."

Swink suggested communities may also want to work together to meet the coming housing demand. Some communities may be in a situation where they have infrastructure ready for development while others may need to get to work to put that infrastructure in place.

By figuring out who is ready for what, communities can direct the initial demand for homeownership into those communities that can easily provide it while other communities build out in preparation for coming waves of demand.

Swink also suggested consulting with local developers about how to meet regional needs together.

"We need to focus on those cities that are best suited to accepting that growth instead of spreading resources out and the process taking a longer period. If all the cities are working together, you can look at a 10-year program to determine when and where infrastructure will come into place, what kind of housing is needed, and does that community allow that type of housing. Planning is a big key to this, a and if communities work together with one another, there is a formula we can follow to accept growth responsibly rather than competing with each other."

To find solutions to housing needs, Keough suggested community leaders sit down with the homebuilders who operate in their area to find out what specific challenges they face and educate themselves on the ways these challenges can be met. The Home **Builders Association of Tennessee** also has free resources and tool kits available for communities.

## BEAD funding to help Tennessee bridge gap in internet infrastructure

BEAD from Page 1

been approved, but you can go back and look at previous applications through the state broadband office to see the types of things they will be looking for. The application will probably be available by the end of this year or early next year because state's have six months after the allocations are made to get their suite of application materials together and approved."

There are still ways municipalities can help give their local service providers an edge in receiving grant funds.

"Municipalities can make sure they are talking with any internet service providers in their area about places that don't have an internet option or have limited options," Shapiro said. "The state broadband office in the past has focused on rural areas that didn't have any internet options, trying to get that build out first. This funding can be used to close the rural gap, but it can also be used for anyone with less than a 120 speed. This is for that population who hasn't been served in the past because they had basic DSL for email or to stream a video or call. This funding actually allows for anyone who

is underserved to be eligible for

BEAD funding.'

While previous funding has focused mostly on the most rural communities or areas without any service, Shapiro said the goal of this program is to help those who have the bare minimum service as well as more urban and suburban communities that have been left out

of funding opportunities in the past. "This isn't about rural or urban but who is unserved and underserved. Any speed less than 25/3 is considered unserved," Shapiro said. "The underserved population is those who have a little better than 25/3, DSL, or copper but less than that 120. If there is funding leftover, NTIA is hoping states will choose to serve anchor institutions like libraries, hospitals, schools, or anywhere the greater community could really benefit from having an internet service with gig speed."

The way internet usage has changed, especially in the wake of the pandemic, means that affordable, high-speed internet connections are more valuable than ever. From video chatting with family members across the country or even the world to virtually attending local council meetings to ac-

ademic achievement for students, internet service has become a vital part of how we live, work, and play.

"There are a lot of reasons why we want to close this gap," Shapiro said. "It is truly making sure everyone has the tools to pursue the opportunities they want and to live a meaningful and fulling life. Broadband is just as important as electricity and water to live a fulfilling life. Telemedicine can really help close the rural gap and transportation gap, especially education, working from home, starting a business, participating in professional development opportunities, and education so you can get a higher paying job and get certified to advance in your career. There is also a connection to the greater community. Some people aren't able to go out due to barriers.'

Shapiro said there is other funding also on the horizon that can help bridge the internet gap. The goal of the Digital Equity Program is to ensure fiber connection to those who don't have the digital skills or face barriers to setting up the internet or smart devices in their home. This grant will be aimed at non-profits or organizations like



The upcoming BEAD funding is just one source of federal money that is aiming to bridge the gap in internet service. The goal of the fund is to help increase service for those who only have the bare minimum as well as bridge gaps in suburban and urban areas that have not received previous funding rounds aimed more at rural connectivity. Other funds could go to community institutions like libraries, hospitals, and schools.

libraries.

The state of Tennessee will outline a digital opportunity plan to make sure stakeholders historically left out due to previous barriers learn what they need to be successful when they have high-quality internet to their home.

To learn more about the BEAD program, visit this link.

For more about the Internet for All Initiative, <u>visit this link</u>.

# TACIR: TN needs \$62.9B in public infrastructure

Tennessee needs at least \$62.9 billion worth of public infrastructure improvements by 2026 – an increase of \$1.2 billion or 2% from last year – according to a new report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR).

This marks the seventh year in a row that infrastructure needs increased for transportation and utilities, which continues to be the largest category in the inventory. Transportation and utilities needs are estimated by TACIR at \$35.2 billion, a \$750 million increase from last year, and comprises 56.1% of the overall inventor.

The cost of existing road projects sits at \$1.1 billion while new road projects will cost \$405, offset by \$752 million in completed road projects. The largest increase in transportation needs for an individual project is the \$155 million Concourse A at Nashville International Airport while the largest new transportation project is the airport's Concourse D, costing \$245 million.

Another major contributor to the overall increase in infrastructure needs for the state include the \$669 million for Health, Safety, and Welfare infrastructure. Most of this \$305 million increase is from the \$373 million in needed improvements for water and wastewater.

General government expenditures saw the third biggest increase in needs (\$83 million) followed by \$15 million in recreation and culture. Reported needs only decreased in two categories: education (\$259 million) and economic

development (\$37 million).

Information about funding for public infrastructure needs reported by officials indicates that 67.8% of the funds required to meet those needs was not available at the time the inventory was conducted—this was relatively unchanged from last year's 67.5%. Excluding improvements needed at existing schools and those drawn from capital budget requests submitted by state agencies—neither of which includes funding information—only \$15.4 billion in funding is available for the remaining \$47.6 billion in needs.

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

- Transportation and Utilities:
- \$35.2 billion
   Education: \$14.8 billion
- Health, Safety, and Welfare:
- \$8.9 billion
  Recreation and Culture: \$2.3 billion
- General Government: \$1.3 billion
- Economic Development: \$246 million

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

The full report is available on <u>TACIR's web site.</u>

## State February revenues \$88.3M above estimates

Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson announced that February tax revenues exceeded budgeted estimates. February revenues totaled \$1.3 billion, which is \$88.3 million more than the state received in February 2022 and \$128.4 million more than the budgeted estimate.

The growth rate for February was 7.11%.

"February's positive revenue gains are primarily due to strong sales tax growth," Bryson said. "Sales tax revenues, reflecting consumer spending from January, recorded the largest monthly growth to date in the current fiscal year. Conversely, corporate tax receipts and privilege tax revenues were strikingly lower compared to last February, while all other revenues combined grew 5.4 %.

"As we proceed through the remainder of the fiscal year, we will continue to cautiously monitor our revenue and expenditure patterns to ensure fiscal balance."

On an accrual basis, February is the seventh month in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

General fund revenues exceeded the budgeted estimates in the amount of \$98.9 million while the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were \$29.5 million

more than the estimates.

Sales tax revenues were \$138.9 million more than the estimate for February and 11.83 % more than February 2022. For seven months, revenues are \$868.9 million higher than estimated. The year-to-date growth rate for seven months was 9.14 %.

Franchise and excise tax revenues combined were \$11.5 million less than the February budgeted estimate. For seven months, revenues are \$383.2 million more than the estimate and the year-to-date growth rate is 13.27 %.

Gasoline and motor fuel revenues for February decreased by 0.79 % compared to February 2022 and were \$1.2 million less than the February budgeted estimate of \$98.3 million. For seven months, revenues are less than estimates by \$7.8 million.

Motor vehicle registration revenues were \$4.6 million more than the February estimate, and on a year-to-date basis they are \$24.3 million more than estimates.

Tobacco taxes were nearly even with the February budgeted estimate of \$16.6 million. For seven months, tobacco tax revenues are \$6.9 million less than the budgeted estimate.

Privilege taxes were \$12.9 million less than the February es-

timate. Year-to-date, privilege tax revenues are \$38.9 million less than estimated and growth is negative 19.99%.

Business taxes were \$0.2 million more than the February estimate. For seven months, revenues are \$15.7 million more than the budgeted estimate.

Mixed drink, or liquor-by-thedrink, taxes were \$5.4 million more than the February estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, revenues are \$37.6 million more than the budgeted estimate.

All other tax receipts were more than estimates by a net of \$4.9 million.

Year-to-date revenues for seven months were \$1.3 billion more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund recorded \$1.2 billion in revenues more than estimates, and the four other funds totaled \$121.6 million more than year-to-date estimates.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2022-2023 are based upon the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation from Nov. 23, 2021 and adopted by the second session of the 112th General Assembly in April 2022. These estimates are available on the state's website at <a href="https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/finance/fa/fa-budget-information/fa-budget-rev.html">https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/finance/fa/fa-budget-information/fa-budget-rev.html</a>.

# State awards nearly \$9M to help reinvest in historic buildings in 16 municipalities

Nearly \$9 million in Tennessee Historic Development Grants will be going to preserving 31 historic landmarks in 16 municipalities across the state of Tennessee.

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) announced the recipients of \$8.7 million in Tennessee Historic Development Grants, including historic homes, churches, commercial structures, education sites, and public spaces.

The program is approved by the Tennessee General Assembly to renovate and preserve historic buildings by encouraging communities and private developers to invest in historic buildings, allowing those structures to again contribute to the local economy. The \$8.7 million in state funding is expected to help leverage more than \$18 million in private investment.

Built in 1916 to educate the first children of the **Alcoa** company, the Vose School in Alcoa will be renovated using a \$300,000 grant. The 1872 commercial structure at 20 North Washington Avenue in **Brownsville** will be renovated through a \$198,000 grant.

In **Chattanooga**, four projects were awarded funds. Preserve Chattanooga received \$24,000 for work at the Terminal Station, also known as the Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel, built in 1909. The former Chattanooga Bank Building will be renovated with a \$300,000 grant to turn the 10-story building constructed in the 1920s into a hotel. The Tivoli Theatre Foundation was also awarded \$300,000 to renovate the circa 1888 Trigg-Smart Building.

In Columbia, the War Memorial Building will be renovated through a \$300,000 grant to Maury County. Originally Columbia's post office when it was built in 1907, the structure was turned into a memorial for Maury County soldiers in the 1940s. A private citizen and former student who received \$400,000 for the rehabilitation of the Kimsey Junior College building in Ducktown, which was built in 1932. The building is being used as an event center with other plans for the future.

Three projects in **Franklin** were awarded funds. The American Heritage Society of Williamson County will receive \$192,092 to rehabilitate the historic Merrill-Williams House, which will serve as a heritage site, museum, and public learning center. Five Points Properties has also received \$112,500 to renovate the White Building, 1923-structure at the Five Points Intersection. The Heritage Foundation of Williamson County also received



Known as the "town that temperance built," the city of Harriman's identity has long been tied to that of its iconic Temperance Hall, built in 1891 - the same year as the city's founding.

\$300,000 to rehabilitate the historic Winstead House, an 1870s structure now part of the O'More College of Design.

The circa-1925 building at 129 South Main Street in **Green-eville** will be renovated through a \$320,000 grant to a private individual. The city of **Harriman** will receive \$300,000 to rehabilitate its historic Temperance Building, a site that not only preserves the history of the city's founding but is also an iconic symbol of Harriman itself. In **Jellico**, Appalachian Health services received \$496,316 to rehabilitate the Union Bank building, which includes three historic storefronts in the Jellico Commercial Historic District.

Two **Johnson City** projects were awarded funds. The JC Radio and TV Service building in Johnson City will be renovated with a \$280,521 grant. Johnson City Opportunity Properties will be renovating the two-story, two-part brick commercial structure from 1925 located at 128-30 Spring Street. A grant of \$108,015 was also awarded to renovate the J.W. Hunter Building, a former general store dating to 1886.

In **Martin**, the J.F. Parker Building, a former hardware store built in 1897, will be renovated by Woodfire Pizza Kitchen using a \$219,800 grant.

Four projects were awarded grants in **Memphis**. The Memphis Overland Building, one of the first auto dealerships in the city built in 1916, will be renovated by the Chestnut Cycle Shop using a \$300,000 grant. One of three black-owned institutes of learning in the city, the Griggs Business and Practical Arts College was founded in 1916 and

will be renovated with a \$300,000 grant. The American Snuff Factory Warehouse, dating from 1912 when it anchored the city's "snuff district," will also be renovated with a \$300,00 grant as will the Continental Cement Company Building.

Six projects will receive funds in Morristown. The J.W. Arnold Building, a former dry goods store in Morristown, will be rehabilitated through a \$400,000 grant. Another \$400,000 grant will be given to rehabilitate the J.W. Arnold Building, a four-story, circa 1907 commercial building at 103 West Main Street, while \$129,340 will be used to renovate the circa-1902 commercial structure at 177 West Main Street. The former J.G. McCroy five and dime store in Morristown will receive a \$400,000 grant. Another \$400,000 will go to renovate the Sheeley Piano Building into lofts while \$300,000 was awarded for renovations to the Tulip Street Church.

The Somerville and Young's Barn in **Paris** will be renovated through a \$400,000 grant. In **Rogersville**, a private individual has received \$200,000 to renovate the Presbyterian Church Parsonage. The structure was built in 1838 and served as a parsonage until it was turned into an apartment building in the 1940s.

Historic Rugby, Inc., will receive \$168,000 for work on the Uffington House, the home of the community's matriarch built in 1881. The town of **Somerville** is also receiving \$300,000 to renovate the former Walers Grocery, circa 1870, now the Somerville-Fayette County Gallery of Art and History.

For more information on the grant program, visit this link.

# STATE BRIEFS Approximately 45% of Tonno

Approximately 45% of Tennessee's hospitals are at the risk of closure for financial reasons, according to a report commissioned by the Tennessee Hospital Association. Labor shortages, high labor costs, and the increased cost of providing care exceeding reimbursement from Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial payers were the major contributors to financial concerns, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. While the number of patients being hospitalized is below pre-pandemic numbers those who are hospitalized are on average sicker and requiring longer hospital stays. Nearly 60% of Tennessee hospitals lost money from their operations in 2022 with an average statewide profit margin of –2.9%. The national profit margin was 0.4%.

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) honored the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) with the prestigious Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development at its 2023 Winter Policy Forum in Washington, D.C. TDLWD received the award Project Reentry, Employment, and Adult Education Program (Project REAP). The goal of the statewide initiative is to curb recidivism through education and workforce development programs for those currently incarcerated in county jails and create a new pipeline of qualified workers for Tennessee employers. Project REAP puts specially designed tablets into Tennessee's county jails that provide incarcerated individuals the opportunity to complete the required adult education coursework in preparation for the HiSET high school equivalency exam, career training, certification reentry preparation, resume building, job search support, mental health services, and substance abuse wellness, as well as life skills, educational games, and TED Talks.

Three Tennessee airports will receive funds from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) from a pot of nearly \$1 billion in grants being shared among 99 airports across the country as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The Memphis International Airport (MEM) will receive \$14 million for the modernization of the landslide terminal by reconfiguring circulation and ticket counters, installing ticket technology, and a fire suppression system as well as expanding the passenger security screen area, replacing window glazing, and upgrading mechanical, electrical, and plumb-

ing systems. The Charles W. Baker Airport in Millington will receive \$1 million to construct a new general aviation terminal building that will include ADA building standards and energy efficient features. Nashville International Airport (BNA) will receive \$7 million to fund the terminal access roadway improvements project that will reconfigure the airport's access roadway. The project will lengthen and widen the road, enhance safety, and improve wayfinding signage. Last year, the same fund provided grants to the Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (CHA) and the Crossville Memorial Airport (CSV).

Tennessee's January unemployment rate remained unchanged from the previous three months at 3.5%, according to new data from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDL-WD). The state had also recorded the same unemployment rate the previous year in January 2022. During the month, the state's workforce increased by 21,800 jobs with the professional and business services sector leading job growth followed by leisure and hospitality and finally the mining, logging, and construction sector. Tennessee employers have added a total of 123,200 jobs in the 12-month period ending in January 2023. Across the nation, unemployment in January dropped by 0.1 of a percentage point to 3.4%. One year ago, the rate for the United States came in at 4%.

Nearly one-third of Tennesseans plan on taking a spring break trip between March and early April, according to information collected by AAA. The organization said more families are planning trips this year than last year despite inflation. The average gas prices are down nearly a dollar from this time last year, which may be contributing to why many families are deciding to take spring vacations. Most Tennesseans are considering trips to beaches in Florida or Alabama as well as cruises.

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## UT economists says migration will help Tennessee weather national recession

**ECON** from Page 1

least at somewhat of a positive pace."

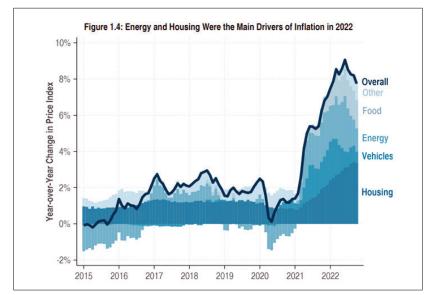
Higher prices have slowed this spending in recent quarters, though prices have come down since a peak in June 2022. As the economy opened back up following the pandemic, an increase in consumer demand was compounded by the fact that supply chain issues and business closures had created a lack of supply, which resulted in rising prices. The war in Ukraine as well as a surge in travel demand in the summer of 2022 also contributed to a spike in oil prices. Kessler said this created a "perfect storm" for inflation.

While inflation has slowed down, this has not been as quickly as the Federal Reserve would like. Kessler said the goal is between 2-3% inflation while the current rate is closer to 5-6%. Elevated housing prices are one of the reasons this rate has not yet come down, partially because housing prices take a longer time to adjust as it takes longer to replenish the supply. By increasing interest rates, the Federal Reserve hopes to stabilize the demand by encouraging consumers to save rather than spend until the supply is built back up. This is one of the reasons there is a fear of a recession.

"Higher interest rates are leading to a very sharp reduction in real estate investment," Kessler said. "When people talk about a recession, they are talking about a recession driven by a decrease in investment, particularly in real estate investment. Following the pandemic, the Federal Reserve reduced interest rates to zero and we saw this massive spike in real estate investment. In the first quarter after the pandemic, real estate investment shot up by 77%."

Kessler said Tennessee was able to recover from the pandemic much more quickly than the nation because the state was on better footing overall before the pandemic. The state has also seen pretty strong growth since the pandemic, not reporting any GDP contracts in 2022. Tennessee is also expected to weather a predicted recession in the national future.

"The big reason for that is the strong rate of in-migration," Kessler said. "That has led to a boost in economic activity,



Energy and food prices are typically the most volatile in the market, but it is the combination of energy and housing prices that are driving current recession concerns.

a boost in our labor market, and a boost to consumption spending across the state. Population growth in the nation and Tennessee has slowed dramatically over the past three decades... We have seen a massive spike in net-migration in Tennessee in the last year with about 90,000 new Tennesseans in 2022. That is actually the highest rate of net-migration we have seen. That means more people working in Tennessee and consuming in Tennessee, which is a boost to the economy. That is the main reason why we feel if the nation as a recession Tennessee will happen to avoid it.'

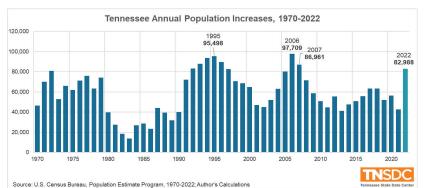
Population trends are expected to have a general impact on the national and state economy as more Americans hit retirement age and fewer new births replace the aging population. As a result, states like Tennessee that are able to attract prime workforce age residents those between the ages of 25 and 54 – will fare better economically than the nation overall.

The number of workers in Tennessee has rebounded to 100,000 more workers than there were in the state pre-pandemic, but there

are also more job openings than there were prior to the pandemic, meaning the state is still seeing a labor force shortage. The unemployment rate has recovered from the pandemic and remains around 3.5% as the demand for employees makes it easier for Tennesseans to find employment.

Kessler said the reason there is still a gap between unemployment numbers and labor force needs is because during the pandemic a good chunk of the labor force either retired early or previously dual-income households decided they managed better as single-income households with one parent staying home. The labor force is down by 2.2% points, a trend seen both nationally and on the state level.

Tennessee has seen a rise in franchise and excise as well as sales tax revenues as more people spend following the pandemic. A massive boost to taxes also came as changes to how online sales taxes are collected accounts for some of the jump. Adjusting for inflation, Tennessee is seeing a 2% increase in sales tax collections, which is back to pre-pandemic trend levels.



While deaths continue to outpace births on both the state and national level, in-migration to Tennessee is helping meet workforce demand and stimulate the state's economy.

## NATIONAL BRIEFS

American employers added 311,000 jobs in February, fewer than January's huge gains but substantial enough to raise interest rates aggressively to fight inflation. The national unemployment rate rose to 3.6% from a 53-year low of 3.4% as more Americans began searching for work, though not all found jobs. The report shows the national job

market is fundamentally healthy

with many employers eager to

hire. A stronger job market typically leads to businesses raising pay and passing higher labor costs on to customers. The bulk of hiring took place in service industries, though cuts were seen in manufacturing and technology related jobs.

Less than half of Americans do their taxes themselves with 53% preferring to employ CPAs or bookkeepers to do the work for them. The survey conducted by

OnePoll for SurePayroll also found that while 47% of Americans file taxes on their own, 48% say they would prefer to use a service like a CPA or bookkeeper to do it for them. A total of 73% of respondents felt that they would maximize their return by having a professional complete it. Americans tend to delay preparing their taxes until the end with only around 39% having started filing in February, 28% by March, and 41% waiting until April.



## **FESTIVALS**

March 24-25: Linden

15th Annual Blooming Arts Festival Linden's signature annual event, the Blooming Arts Festival sees hundreds of creative arts and crafts vendors from a variety of mediums come to the historic Main Street Linden to showcase their work. The event also includes a full schedule of live music, food, a Kids Zone, and activities for the whole family. Learn more here.

## March 27 - April 2: Columbia

Mule Day

Begun in the 1840s, Mule Day is a celebration of all things related to mules and their contribution to agriculture, attracting more than 200,000 people to Columbia. The event highlights include the Mule Day Parade, contest for Mule Day Queen, annual mule pull, mule shows, vendors, food, and more. Learn more <u>here.</u>

#### March 30-April 1: Johnson City Johnson City Jazz Festival

This three-day festival brings jazz musicians from around the world to East Tennessee for a celebration of the artform. Held at the Carnegie Hotel, the event features a variety of jazz styles including fusion, big band, Latin, and more. Learn more here.

#### March 31-April 1: Atoka Atoka BBQ Festival

Nancy Lane Park will host this event sanctioned by the Memphis Barbecue Network. In addition to the main event. visitors can enjoy the kid's cook-off, corn hole tournament, mayor's pie challenge, kids' fun zone, grilled cheese challenge, and vendors. Learn more here.

#### **April 1: Cleveland**

Hot Slaw and Arts Y'all

Celebrating the local culinary creation of hot slaw, this festival brings together the arts and cuisine to downtown Cleveland. The festival features live music, artist exhibits, pop-up street performances, family games, contests, food vendors, and a chance to try Cleveland's secret sauce: hot slaw. For more info, click here.

#### **April 1: Decherd**

Decherd Potato Festival Downtown Decherd will host a parade,

bands, seed swap, kids' zone, recipe contest, food trucks, silent auctions, and tons of vendors in honor of how agriculture and the potato in particular helped build Decherd as a community. This event features plenty of potato recipes and includes a potato soup and potato salad cook-off. Learn more

#### April 4, 14, & 28: Goodlettsville Goodlettsville Heritage Days

Three days in April will be held to celebrate Goodlettsville Heritage Days, a much-loved local event that allows guests to see, feel, and touch different historical trade skills. Learn more here.

### April 14-16: Erwin

10th Annual NoliFest

Erwin and the Nolichucky River are at the center of this festival of whitewater, including plenty of outdoor activities and fun, including demos, yoga, vendors, gear, kayaking, paddling, and more. Learn more here.

### **April 16: Nolensville**

23rd Annual Buttercup Festival Celebrate spring in bloom and downtown Nolensville, too, with this festival. The event includes more than 100 vendors offering art, crafts, food, and more as well as musical entertainment. Learn more here.



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

## CLG program helps cities with historic asset preservation, planning

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

From a Revolutionary War mustering ground to a tavern that hosted the state's first migrants to battles in the Civil War and for civil rights, Tennessee's municipalities contain some of the most important historic landmarks in local, state, and national history

One way municipalities can help preserve their historic assets is through participation in the U.S. National Park Service's (NPS) Certified Local Government (CLG) program, established in 1980 with the goal of helping local governments, state preservation offices, and the NPS partner together to provide resources local governments can use for historic zoning programs, renovation and rehabilitation of historic sites, and playing an active role in preserving the history that makes their community unique.

Tennessee's CLG program was developed by the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) in 1984 and since then, 50 local governments have joined, including 47 municipalities and three county governments.

Holly Barnett, deputy state historic preservation officer and assistant director for federal programs with the Tennessee Historical Commission, said "The program is a way to recognize communities that have made an investment in preservation through establishing a historic zoning program.

"It's a federal, state, and local partnership, and any local entities can take part in the program so long as they have a historic zoning commission," she continued. "Requirements are minimal other than that, and we believe the rewards are much greater. Basically, a CLG community needs to have a contact person for the program, participate in training offered by our offices a few times a year, and there is an annual review that just asks a few questions about their program. The CLG reviews any National Register of Historic Places nominations before it comes to the state review board."

Even without participation in the CLG program, Barnett said a historical commission can be a boon for any city.

"It's really the ultimate preservation policy tool to be able to preserve buildings," she said. "There are two main tools local governments can use to preserve buildings. The first is recognition and listing of historic resources, which just gets the word out about the structure. The second is public policy and design tools that can actually save and protect historic resources. Everything is decided on the local level, because the designation the NPS or our office manages are purely



Founded in 1779, Jonesborough has the distinction of being Tennessee's oldest town – largely because it was founded 17 years before Tennessee existed. The oldest building in the city is the Chester Inn in the city's commercial district, which was built in 1797 to cater to the migrants to the new state of Tennessee.

honorary. It doesn't offer any protection or restrictions."

It can be a misconception that the only structures deemed "historic" are those that date back a hundred years or more. At present, buildings that qualify for the National Register of Historic Places have to be at least 50 years old — meaning structures built in or before 1973. However, Barnett other factors can play into whether a building is historic.

"Our perception of what is historic changes over time," she said. "It definitely does have to have a type of significance to be on the National Register, such as representing a specific architectural style or be an important part of your community. One thing about CLGs is they maintain a survey of their communities every 10 years, and our office believes this is a valuable tool to know what you have, document what you have, and know why it's important. It's also extremely important for smaller communities, especially those around bigger cities that experiencing growth. This is a way to be as proactive as possible to have a clear understanding of the assets you have and why they should be preserved, especially as development comes in "

Barnett said historical preservation is an important economic tool for many communities.

"This is a way local governments can create the ideal environment for their citizens through revitalization, tax incentives, reducing sprawl, and other issues," she said. "There is potential for tourism development. A lot of small communities are investing in having these annual festivals that draw people in, and by preserving historic character you are creating a destination. Historic zoning is protecting that individuality and it's not limiting the use or the investment in anyway. It guides the investment in a way that preserves it for the entire community."

There are numerous credits, grants, and other financial benefits to participation in the CGL program.

"Buildings with commercial status can take advantage of historic tax credits through the recent historic redevelopment grant program with TNECD, which will have its third round in the spring" Barnett said. "This is a great resource that is focused on development and rural smaller communities. Communities that are in the CLG program get emphasis and priority for the federal historic grant program. We have a mandate to distribute to at least 10% of the funds we receive from the federal historic preservation fund to our CLGs. You also get access into trainings and contacts with our staff through our monthly newsletters. If you have issues that come up, our staff can be there to assist."

Barnett said it is never too late for communities to start preserving their historic assets.

"Historical sites are a non-renewable resource; Once they are lost, they are gone," Barnett said. "We have excellent examples of communities who have invested the time and effort into preservation and have seen the results of that investment. Historical preservation is a win-win. If you haven't looked into historic zoning or the CLG program, it's not too late. The things that are historic are constantly changing and evolving. There is always time to invest in your community."

For more information on the CLG program, <u>visit here.</u>

## **CLG Cities by Year**

**1985** – Clarksville, Greeneville, Jackson, Nashville, Knoxville, Covington, and Memphis

1989 – Chattanooga

1990 - Kingsport, Franklin, Collierville

1991 - Martin, Sparta,

1993 – Gainesboro

**1996** – Jonesborough, Harriman, and Gallatin

1998 – Shelbyville

**1999** – Johnson City, Rogersville

**2000** – Bolivar

**2001** – Columbia

2002 - Cookeville, Bartlett

2003 - Murfreesboro, Dandridge

2004 - McMinnville, Hohenwald

**2009** – Brownsville, La Grange

2012 – McKenzie

**2015** – Jefferson City, Cleveland, Savannah, and Paris

**2017** – Lynchburg, Lawrenceburg, Lebanon, Manchester, and Athens,

2018 – Bell Buckle

2019 - Elizabethton

**2020** – Sevierville

**2021** – Cumberland Gap, Jellico, and Sweetwater

2022 - Mount Pleasant



Built as an opera house in 1877, Craigmiles Hall in Cleveland is one of many residential, commercial, public, and religious sites in town associated with the prominent Craigmiles family. One of the family's former residences, Craigmiles Hall, and the historic St. Luke's Episcopal Church where the family worshiped are all important historic landmarks in the city.



The newest CLG city in Tennessee, Mount Pleasant joined the program in 2022, but the city has a history going back to the 1820s. One of the oldest buildings in town is the building at 205 North Main Street, known as both the Breckenridge Hatter's Shop and the Gibson-Hughes House. Built in 1824, the same year Mount Pleasant was incorporated, the building is both one of the oldest homes and oldest commercial structures in town.



One of the most iconic sites in Martin, the Varsity Theatre served as the premiere movie house in all of Weakley County when it was built in 1949. The name "Varsity" was chosen to honor the University of Tennessee at Martin – then still known as the University of Tennessee Junior College in Martin.