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Support Our Partners!

So much has changed over TML's 85-year history, but one thing remains – Tennessee's cities are better for our partners. TML enjoys a number of wonderful sponsors of our conferences, organizational mission and educational efforts. There are three organizations, however, I wish to give special recognition.

The first is the University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS). In 1949, TML leaders recognized there was a great need for research-based answers to the growing challenges. TML lobbied the General Assembly to create this great organization at the state's land-grant university, to provide Tennessee's cities with needed technical assistance upon request. Today, the organization remains the only one of its kind in the nation.

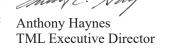
In 1979, TML leaders recognized the time had come to help cities obtain more affordable insurance coverage. Many cities were not happy with the high premiums and terms of private carriers. The TML Risk Management Pool, now Public Entity Partners

(PEP), was created to provide cities with an affordable alternative to the private market. Today, PEP insures almost 500 entities and approximately \$15 billion in public assets.

Once again in 1985, TML leaders saw an opportunity to help cities gain more affordable access to needed capital for operations and projects. The Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) was created and to date has saved cities and taxpayers almost \$750,000,000 in interest payments and often, better terms through its family of private lenders.

These fine organizations were established for you! If they did not exist, cities would pay for technical assistance and be subject to the wills of private insurers and lenders. Thanks to our partners, assistance is free, and the private market has to "sharpen its pencil" to compete.

Our partners support TML and your city. Please support our partners!



Nominations call set for April 1 for TML Achievement Awards

Each year the Tennessee Municipal League honors cities throughout the state for overall excellence, specific outstanding programs, improvement or department accomplishments.

The awards program gives cities and towns the recognition they deserve for superior and innovative efforts in local government.

Any Tennessee city who is a member of the Tennessee Municipal League is eligible to submit an award nomination.

The awards committee comprised of municipal elected officials, past award recipients, TML board members and MTAS consultants will review the nominations and select the final award winners. Winners will be notified prior to the Annual Awards Breakfast which coincides with the TML Annual Conference.

The League will disseminate a call for nominations the first week of April that will include a digital nomination form. Nominations will close on Friday, May 2.

TML Award Categories

- 1. Excellence in Economic and Community Development
- 2. Excellence in Energy Efficiency and Conservation
- 3. Excellence in Fire Service
- 4. Excellence in Parks and Recreation

- 5. Excellence in overall Municipal Governance
- 6. Excellence in Police Service7. Innovation Award
- 8. Small Town Progress

Criteria

- The award honors a municipality which has developed unique and creative programs that have increased the efficiency and effectiveness of local government.
- The project or department's accomplishments have made a significant impact on their city and its residents.
- The nomination is of an original project or program which has been successfully implemented and may serve as a model for other communities.
- The nomination should include a brief abstract that explains how the program has resulted in increased efficiency in the administration of local government, improved delivery of services to citizens, and/or cost savings to the city.
- The municipality must be a member of the Tennessee Municipal League and participates in and is supportive of TML and its mission.
- The recipient must attend and register for the TML Annual Conference.

City officials gather for TML Conference



By KATE COIL TT&C Assistant Editor

Municipal officials from across Tennessee gathered in Nashville on March 3-4 to hear from a variety of lawmakers, state officials, and issue experts at the TML Legislative Conference. Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell welcomed officials to the city and encouraged them to both take advantage of the opportunity to connect with their lawmakers and spend some time exploring Music City. O'Connell also recognized the importance of See TML on Page 9

See more pictures from the TML Legislative Conference on Pages 5-6

Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly wins second term

Tim Kelly will remain mayor of Chattanooga with two council races headed to run-offs and voters approving residency changes for city employees.

Kelly defeated challenger Chris Long with 85% of the vote. Kelly received 17,356 votes to Long's 2,750.

The three incumbent councilmembers – Chair and District 1 Member Chip Henderson, Vice Chair and District 2 Member Jenny Hill, and Raquetta Dotley – retained their seats. Henderson defeated challenger James "Skip" Burnette 1,947 to 724 while Hill and Dotley ran unopposed.

Newcomer Cody Harvey also ran unopposed for the District 4 seat and was elected. The seat was previously held by Darrin Ledford.

District 5 incumbent Isiah "Ike" Hester lost to newcomer Dennis Clark in a field of four candidates. Clark led the vote tally with 1,576 followed by Hester with 871, Samantha Reid-Hawkins with 191, and Cory Hall with 103.

Councilmember Jenni Berz, who was appointed to fill the district vacated by the death of her mother Carol Berz, will face Christian Siler in a run-off election to determine the results of the District 6 race. Berz led the vote count with 936 followed by Siler with 322. They defeated challengers Jennifer Gregory with 314, Mark Holland with 289, and Robert C. Wilson with 99.

Incumbent Marvene Noel of District 8 will also face a run-off



Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly thanks his supporters after winning re-election.

election against Anna Golladay. Noel led the vote count with 702 followed by Golladay with 313, Kelvin Scott with 271, and Doll Sandridge with 155.

For District 3, newcomer Jeff Davis defeated challenger Tom Marshall after Councilmember Ken Smith did not seek re-election since being elected to the Hamilton County Commission. Davis earned 1,365 votes to Marshall's 1,216.

Ron Elliott, a former city employee, won the District 9 seat after incumbent Demetrus Coonrod decided to not seek re-election. Elliott led the vote count with 1,778 followed by Letechia Ellis with 528 and Evlina Iren Kertay with 194. Chattanoogansalso voted 13,411

Chattanoogans also voted 13,411 for to 6,323 against lifting a requirement that all city employees live in Tennessee. The city's police and fire departments as well as Mayor Tim Kelly backed the proposal, which would allow the hiring of police and fire officials who live just over the state line in Georgia.

The previous rule allowed hiring someone who lived outside the city of Chattanooga limits so long as they lived in Tennessee, meaning someone who lived hours away in another part of the state could be hired but someone living minutes away in North Georgia could not.

Historic downtown Clinton furniture store renovated into affordable housing

By KATE COIL

A historic building in downtown Clinton has reopened with 39 affordable housing units, part of larger redevelopment efforts in the area.

The renovation of the Daugherty Lofts is one of several rehabilitation and historic preservation projects being undertaken in downtown Clinton. Katherine Birkbeck is executive director of Historic Downtown Clinton, which is Clinton's Main Street organization.

"We work to revitalize the downtown area and preserve the history of it," she said. "Those two things work together always. We had a downtown improvement grant that allowed us to restore the storefronts of five other downtown buildings. All of these buildings have stories to tell from as far back as 100 years ago. The preservation of these building allows those stories to continue instead of being completely wiped out."

The Daugherty Lofts story began in 1938 with the building of the Daugherty Furniture Co. An estimated 89,000 pounds of rock was quarried from the New River, a tributary of the Bit South Fork of the Cumberland, in Morgan County to build the next structure. These rocks were then brought to Clinton via the locally famous oxen team of Charley



The new Daugherty Lofts began life as the Daugherty Furniture Co. at a time when the city of Clinton's population was exploding. The building has now been renovated into affordable apartments as part of overall revitalization efforts.

and Ball to be used in the building's construction.

"Every historic building has those kinds of story chiseled into the details," Birkbeck said. "Preserving these structures to tell things like the story of Charley and Ball is something that gets everyone to appreciate this part of our community. No one builds structures like this anymore."

The five-story retail store that

opened for business in 1942 amid the economic boom in Clinton's downtown created by the opening of a new secret government facility just across Melton Hill Lake in Oak Ridge. J.R. Daughtery's new Clinton furniture store opened around the same time that an influx of 75,000 new residents came to the city, buoyed by the research taking place just 10 miles to the south of *See* CLINTON *on Page 5*

TNCPE, MTAS partner to help cities earn Baldrige performance designation

BY KATE COIL TT&C Assistant Editor

In 2019, the city of Germantown became the first municipality in Tennessee and one of only five municipalities in the country to receive the coveted Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Program designation.

Now, the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) and University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (UT-MTAS) are teaming up to help other local government entities follow in Germantown's footsteps. The program will help municipalities complete their own Baldrige Award applications through peer-to-peer support, project management planning, and advice from officials with TNCPE, MTAS, and Germantown.

Established in 1987, the program is the highest formal recognition of performance excellence for both public and private entities in the country and is administered through both the

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and U.S. Department of Commerce. The program is named for late U.S. Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige.

Heather Schoch, president and CEO of TNCPE, said her organization has worked with numerous organizations throughout the state who want to work their way through the Baldrige program—whether or not they submit their application.

"Some use us more as training, coaching, and consulting, but we are taking the opportunity in 2025 to get as many cities involved as possible so they can come through as a cohort," Schoch said. "We are offering our Level One to any city that wants to do it at our member rate, and the city of Germantown is going to provide their award-winning application as a starting point for other cities. We will also offer webinars between the three organizations: TNCPE, MTAS, and Germantown. Our goal is not a trophy; our goal is that each organization See BALDRIGE on Page 3

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



CHATTANOOGA

West Star Aviation, LLC, officials announced the company will expand manufacturing at its Chattanooga operations. Through the project, West Star Aviation will create 200 new jobs and invest nearly \$32 million. The company specializes in airframe repair and maintenance, engine repair and maintenance, major modifications, avionics installation and repair, interior refurbishment, paint, parts, surplus avionics sales, window repair and accessory services. West Star Aviation has been operating in Chattanooga for the last decade and this announcement marks the company's third expansion in Tennessee.

COVINGTON

Charms, LLC, officials today the company will expand operations at its Covington location. As part of the expansion, Charms will invest \$97.7 million and create 62 new jobs to expand its manufacturing plant and distribution center. Charms, established in 1912, is the manufacturer of Blow Pops and has been manufacturing candy in Covington since 1973. The company was acquired by Tootsie Roll Industries in 1988. Upon completion of the project, Charms will employ nearly 500 people in Covington.

FRANKLIN

The Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen has voted name the new 233 acre Southeast Municipal Complex and Robinson Lake area "The Pearlene M. Bransford Complex" after the former alderman who passed away in 2020. Pearlene "Pearl" Bransford was a resident of Franklin for more than 35 years and a public servant for most of that time. She served the city as an at-large alderman from 2007 until her death in 2020, in addition to serving on numerous boards in both the city and Williamson County. Bransford also championed historic preservation, especially Franklin's traditionally Black neighborhoods. The newly named Pearlene M. Bransford

Complex will feature an inclusive playground, football and lacrosse fields, a Clean Water Facility, an educational walking trail along the Harpeth River and other amenities.

GALLATIN

Free wifi is now available in downtown Gallatin as part of a partnership between the city of Gallatin, Meta's Gallatin Data Center, and the Gallatin Area Chamber of Commerce. The initiative enhances connectivity for residents, businesses, and visitors, reinforcing Gallatin's commitment to innovation and accessibility and was kicked off with a familv-fun scavenger hunt downtown, encouraging visitors to explore downtown. A key feature of this project includes the installation of an outdoor interactive information kiosk outside the Chamber. The kiosk will serve as a digital guide, helping users locate shops around the square, take self-guided walking tours, and discover the city's rich historic sites. The Connect-Gallatin.com initiative is made possible by a generous \$140,000 grant from Meta.

SELMER

ABB Electrification (ABB) officials announced today the company will expand its operations in Selmer, investing \$76 million and creating 50 new jobs. As part of the project, the company will construct a new 300,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at the Selmer/ McNairy Industrial Park, which received a TNECD Site Development Grant in 2022 and 2024. ABB Electrification produces essential electrical distribution equipment for large-scale industrial and technology-driven facilities, including data centers, factories and high-rise residential and office spaces where consistent, high-quality power is critical. Upon completion of this project, ABB will employ more than 1,200 Tennesseans at its five operations in Selmer, Portland, Athens, Memphis and Mount

Cookeville unveils on new gateway signage



Officials with the city of Cookville recently celebrated the unveiling of two gateway monument signs, strategically placed at South Willow Avenue and South Jefferson Avenue to welcome visitors entering the city from Interstate 40. This project, a collaborative effort between the city of Cookeville and Tennessee Tech University, was undertaken to honor the university's importance to the Cookeville community. The two monument signs were designed to make a positive first impression on Cookeville's visitors and to serve as way finders for the university campus. City officials also worked closely with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to ensure the project met all necessary regulations and received approval for its implementation.

Columbia commemorates local Medal of Honor recipient with wreath laying



Officials with the city of Columbia, military representatives, community, and family members gathered to honor what would have been the 80th birthday of local Medal of Honor recipient John Harlan Willis at the bridge into downtown named in his honor. Officials held a wreath-laying ceremony at the John Harlan Willis Bridge Memorial to honor the Columbia native, vowing to continue preserving his legacy in the city. Willis enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1940. Serving with the 3rd Battalion, 27th Marines on Iwo Jima on Feb. 19, 1945, Willis was wounded by shrapnel while serving aiding fallen Marines as a company platoon corpsman. Ordered to retreat to the aid tent, he refused and continued to resume assistance, treating a wounded Marine. When the enemy began throwing hand grenades at the location, Willis caught and returned eight back to the enemy. The ninth exploded in his hand. For his bravery, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Willis' 80th birthday would have been Feb. 28, 2025.

TNCPE, MTAS partner to help other cities earn Baldrige success

BALDRIGE, *from Page 1* improves the results they actually care about."

MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris said the program can help provide cities with measurable results to their strategic planning efforts.

MTAS, as an agency, has been involved with TNCPE since 2010," Norris said. "We support continuous improvement for ourselves and for our customers. If you don't know where you are going, then you'll never get there. Having a plan, doing what you've planned, figuring out what worked well and what didn't, and then acting again with enhanced data are key components of successful organizations. Services that cities provide are measurable, and striving to improve what you deliver to your constituents leads to better governance, faster service delivery, and cost savings to your residents and business community. Please consider joining us in the journey to excellence."

MTAS itself has been working with TNCPE through the Baldrige framework to improve the organi-



MTAS recently earned the Interest Award from the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) as part of the organization's commitment to continuous improvement. Municipalities across Tennessee can also participate in the process through TNCPE.

zation

While TNCPE has helped a lot of private industry achieve success with the program, Schoch said the Baldrige framework can benefit government entities just as much as it benefits private industry.

"The Level One process is really organized around who are your

customers and citizens, what do they want, and what are the strategic objectives for the next couple of years," she said. "We mainly focus on what is important and where your city wants to go. This is usually accomplished in about six months. After that, they will know enough to decide if they want to move forward on a Baldrige Application on levels two, three, and four. Many times, they also identify a gap they need to fill before they move forward with that process, which is still a win for us. We know putting all the minds around the table and getting them to agree on what to do can be difficult. you."

The program helped Germantown make several improvements that made it a municipality that other cities and organizations can benchmark against.

"Because of their Baldrige Award, Germantown is one of the only cities in the country that has a AAA bond rating from both Moody's and Standard & Poor's," she said. "At the time they won, they had a net promoter score of 71, which is almost unheard of and something you can benchmark against organizations like Apple and Southwest. They have one of the highest cardiac event survival rates in the U.S. because of a project they did on moving ambulances around. They have a police response time of about two minutes and have 100% of their 911 calls answered in 10 seconds or less."

Cities seeking more information about the process and the Baldrige Awards can contact TNCPE and schedule a free informational session to learn more.

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www.PEPartners.org 800.624.9698



TML, TMBF celebrate new partnership with FirstBank

By KATE COIL TT&C Assistant Editor

Tennessee-based FirstBank has become the newest TML sponsor and the latest bank to join the family of lenders offering benefits to municipalities through the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF).

Founded in 1909, FirstBank is the third largest Tennessee-based bank with its headquarters in Nashville. Wade Morrell, president and CEO of the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund, said the partnership with FirstBank is a win for Tennessee cities.

"By adding FirstBank to its list of approved lenders, the TMBF is enhancing its ability to meet the growing needs of Tennessee's municipalities," Morrell said. "FirstBank, a community-focused financial institution with a strong presence throughout the state, brings a wealth of experience in municipal lending to the table. With a commitment to supporting local governments and fostering economic growth, FirstBank is a natural fit for the TMBF. The partnership reinforces TMBF's dedication to fostering growth and prosperity throughout the state."

FirstBank has more than 75 full-service branches across Tennessee, South Central Kentucky, Alabama and North Georgia, and a national mortgage business with offices across the Southeast.

The bank serves five of the major metropolitan markets in Tennessee and, with approximately \$12.6 billion in total assets, has the resources to provide a comprehensive variety of financial services and products.

Joe Walker, senior vice president for commercial banking with FirstBank, said the partnerships with TML and TMBF help First-Bank further its own mission.

"At FirstBank, our mission is 'Helping people build a better future," Walker said. "Partnering with the Tennessee Municipal League and the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund is a natural extension of our mission as FirstBank strives to improve the quality of life for those who live in the communities we serve."

Walker said FirstBank works to be an active part of the municipalities they serve.

"We strive to invest in our communities," he said. "As an almost 120-year-old Tennessee headquartered bank with more than 60 offices throughout the state we are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of our fellow Tennesseans and be able to provide solutions that help the many cities and towns in Tennessee flourish.

"Since 1906, we've been bringing our customers and communities closer to their dreams by building a genuinely local brand of banking. FirstBank has a long history of being involved in the cities and towns throughout Tennessee. The opportunity to be a banking resource to the local governments in the communities we serve brings our vision of being the best community bank in Tennessee full circle."

While FirstBank has grown into a major financial institution, Walker said maintaining trust and value on the local level is imperative. "FirstBank is proud to be a full-service community bank," Walker said. "Community



Tennessee-based FirstBank has become TML's newest sponsor and the latest bank to join the family of lenders serving Tennessee municipalities through the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund.

banking remains the cornerstone of FirstBank's operations as we've expanded throughout the state and southeast region. Over the almost 120 years we have called Tennessee home; we have matured as a bank and can offer our customers a sophisticated array of banking services.

"We are able to provide lending and treasury management solutions to all municipalities in Tennessee, but we've never lost sight of the fact that being a trusted member of the local communities we operate in is what has made us successful."

Morrell said FirstBank is helping to add value to the important services TMBF provides.

"As the TMBF loan program



continues to evolve, the addition of First-Bank is just the latest example of how we are adapting to meet the needs of Tennessee's local governments," Morrell said. "By offering more lenders

and more competitive financing options, TMBF is positioning itself as an even more valuable



resource for municipalities looking to secure the funding necessary for long-term growth and success."

Historic downtown Clinton furniture store renovated into affordable housing

CLINTON, from Page 1

Clinton's Main Street. The third and fourth floors of the building served as apartments for scientists and workers at Oak Ridge once the facility had run out of on-site residences.

When it was finished, the building was tied with the Magnet Mills as the largest building in downtown Clinton. The first floor sold furniture, appliances, hardware, flooring, and other household items until its closure in 1985. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010.

Birkbeck said seeing the historic building be renovated into an apartment building echoes its original history providing affordable apartments in downtown Clinton.

"A lot of downtowns went through urban renewal changes, and I don't know that all of those changes were good," she said. "Having apartments where people can live there only helps that goal. The developers made some really unique apartments, so every resident has light and windows. It gives them that historic feel in a newly renovated building. The developer also restored the Daugherty Furniture sign on the building, that still gives homage to the building and what it was. It's also important to move things forward. When somebody buys a building, we don't tell them what to do. I really appreciate the people who can buy a building and still pay homage to what it was in the past."

Daugherty Lofts was financed, in part, with \$9.1 million in federal low-income housing tax credits and \$1.4 million in historic tax credits syndicated by Hunt Capital Partners. Legacy Bank & Trust provided \$10.6 million in construction financing and \$2.1 million in permanent financing. Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development provided \$300,000 in grant funding. River and Valley Department provided a \$650,000 soft seller note.

"It's been a long road starting in 2020 when we won the tax credits just as COVID was getting started," said Kent Leach, founder of Hickory Creek Capital Partners, the general partner of the development. "We've faced every adversity you could think ofrising construction costs, rising interest rates, material shortages, longer lead times, just to name a few. But seeing these doors open and people moving into their new homes, it makes me realize we've done a really good thing here. Not only have we given an old building new life, we're making these really unique living spaces available at an affordable rent. It really makes it



worth all the adversity we've gone through."

The apartment homes are

equipped with central air conditioning, ceiling fans, and coat and walk-in closets, as well as in-unit appliances such as a refrigerator, microwave, and dishwasher. Spacious amenities include a community room, a computer lab, central laundry, a lounge area, and

elevators. One lucky person will be leasing an apartment that still has the original vault from when the building was first opened.



mix of one, two, and three-bed-

ton has to offer.

There are a

room loft-style

apartment homes

in the building priced for workforce

families earning between 50-60%

of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Daugherty building represents

a testament to innovate housing

solutions, which protects the

structure's historical legacy while

offering new housing options for

families who need an affordable

place to live," said Hunt Capital

Partners chief operating officer

renovation brings more interest

into all the things downtown Clin-

Birkbeck said she hopes the

Amy Dickerson.

"The adaptive reuse of the

"As we try to grow our downtown and diversify what is downtown, in terms of making people want to be downtown more often, it's convenient for people to be already living there," she said. "I grew up in Clinton and love Clinton with all my heart, but I have minimal memories of being in my downtown as a kid growing up. I don't want that to be the case for future generations. I want them to be proud of the history and the stories that were laid here a hundred years ago and continue to tell those stories. That will depend on what we do, like making downtown more walkable."

Having residences downtown is also a boon for the business community.

"I think it is important to get back to the downtown being accessible not just for shopping but also for community," she said. "We have a lot of events in our downtown area, we have our merchants, and it's all about getting our community out and together. My hope is this will create economic development and growth for our small businesses in our downtown area. What people love about a downtown is that there are unique shops you can't find anywhere else. I hope more and more people can find the unique things we offer in our downtown. That can benefit not just the economic development of our downtown but our city and our state."



Above: A kitchen in one of the new apartments. Developers renovated the building to ensure every unit could take advantage of natural light from the building's windows, sometimes stacking rooms on each other in what is known as a railroad style.

Left: One of the decisions developers made was to restore the historic Daugherty Furniture sign, a local landmark in downtown Clinton. The revitalized sign both pays homage to the building's history and gives it a unique detail that sets it apart.

VAUF()R

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



PEOPLE

Curtis Brinkley, fire marshal with the La Vergne Police Department, has received his chief fire officer designation through the Center for



Curtis Brinkley

Public Safety Excellence. Those who receive the designation must show evidence of professional development in both their career and in continuing education, professional contributions and recognitions, and community involvement, among others. Brinkley is one of only 50 individuals in the state of Tennessee to hold this designation and only three within the La Vergne Fire Department.

Mark Carter has been selected as the new assistant chief of fire administration for Collierville Fire and Rescue following the retirement



Mark Carter

of Mark King. Carter began his career in emergency services as a firefighter and paramedic for the Germantown Fire Department from 1987 to 1991 and then as EMS chief for the organization from 1991 to 2018. He also worked as an ambulance sales manager from 2019 to 2021 and as an EMT instructor at Southwest Community College from 2011 to 2017. Carter has also served as the EMS operations manager for the Delta Fair. He joined the town of Collierville in 2021 when the town launched its own ambulance service.

Jessica Crouch has been selected as the new community development director for the city of Paris. Crouch takes over the role



Jessica Crouch

from Jennifer Morris, who recently retired from the position after a long career with the city. Crouch was initially hired by Paris in January 2021 to serve as administrative assistant to City Manager Kim Foster. In her new role, Crouch will be responsible for grand administration, the Paris Municipal Regional Planning Commission organization and agendas, plans reviews, and managing the city's community engagement coordinator and risk and compliance coordinator.

Gary Disheroon, former municipal judge for the city of Red Bank, died Feb. 22, 2025, at the age of 74. Disheroon served as Red



Gary Disheroon

Bank's city judge for 18 years beginning in 1988. A graduate of Chattanooga High School, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Memphis Law School, Disheroon also served as a lawyer in the greater Chattanooga area.

Randy Evans, police chief for the city of Cookeville, has retired from his role after more than 40 years with the Cookeville Police Depart-



Randy Evans

ment. Evans joined CPD as a patrol officer in 1983. He was promoted to sergeant in 1990, lieutenant in 1998, captain in 2007, major in 2010, and chief in 2013. He has served all aspects of police work during his tenure from patrolling the streets of the city to serving as a departmental instructor to serving as a SWAT commander, shift sergeant, shift lieutenant, and uniform services commander.

Chris Fiske has been selected as the new fire chief of Tracy City. Fiske served for 12 years with the Lone Oak Volunteer Fire Depart-



Chris Fiske

ment in Grundy County before joining the Tracy City Fire Department eight years ago. Prior to that, he was a member of the National Guard in Dunlap. Fiske has been serving as interim fire chief for Tracy City since July 2024. Under his leadership, the department is looking to increase its training opportunities, build a new station, and start an Emergency Medical Responder program.

Don Fox, former mayor of Lebanon, died Feb. 21, 2025, at the age of 86. Fox served as mayor of Lebanon for 15 years from 1994 to 2008.



Don Fox

During his tenure as mayor, the former Castle Heights Military Academy was turned into Lebanon's new city hall, the Hartmann Drive interchange was built, the creation of The Jimmy Floyd Family Center, and the Music City Star began operations in the city. The city also created the 26.1-acre Don Fox Park later named in his honor. After spending four years in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, Fox returned Lebanon to serve as central operations manager for the Middle Tennessee operations of Southern Bell – later AT&T.

Jason Head, chief of the Springfield Police Department, has been appointed to the International Association of Chiefs of Po-



Jason Head

lice (IACP) Education and Training Committee through 2027. As a committee member, Chief Head will contribute strategic insights, technical expertise, and leadership to shape the future of policing on a global scale. Head has more than 20 years' experience serving Knox County Sheriff's Office, Clarksville Police Department and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. He has been chief of the Springfield Police Department since 2006. He holds both a bachelor's in criminal justice and a master's in criminal justice administration from Bethel University.

Billy Ray Helton, former vice mayor of Lawrenceburg, died Feb. 1, 2025, at the age of 86 from injuries sustained in an automobile



Billy Ray Helton

crash. A Lawrecenburg native, Helton served as a commissioner of finance and as former vice mayor of Lawrenceburg. He also was past president and CEO of Lawrenceburg Federal Bank and a past trustee for Freed-Hardeman University.

Patience Melnik has returned to the city of Knoxville, this time as the city's director of the office of sustainability. Melnick served as



Patience Melnik

waste and resources manager for the city for almost five years, leaving in 2022. In the interim, she has worked as a professional grants consultant for organizations like Trees Knoxville and the city's urban forestry department. Prior to joining the city of Knoxville, she was executive director of Keep Knoxville Beautiful and director of environmental health programs from the Tennessee Clean Water Network.

Janet Middleton has retired as city recorder of East Ridge after nearly three decades of service. Middleton began her work with the city as



Janet Middleton

an administrative assistant in 1995. She came to the city from Alpha Medical, Inc., where she had worked as an executive secretary. In 1998, she was certified as a municipal clerk and recorder. Middleton has been a steadfast presence in East Ridge, helping to ensure the smooth

Franklin announces changes to leadership in several departments

The city of Frankin has announced the promotion of four people to leadership roles in the city following a series of retirements.

Jerry Hatcher has been promoted to director of the Franklin Streets Department, most recently having served as the assistant



Jerry Hatcher

director of the department since 2021. Hatcher takes over the role from Steve Grubb, who retired from the city after 26 years with five as the department's director.

Hatcher is a professional engineer and has more than 30 years of civil engineering experience. He previously worked with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) for 29 years, in various leadership roles. He is a member of the Middle Tennessee Section of the American Society of Highway Engineers where he has served as a member of the Program Committee, Board Member and Section President.

He is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He served for many years on

operation of city affairs and earning

the respect of colleagues and com-

nessee State University. He is also

currently pursuing a master's de-

gree at the University of Tennessee

Knoxville's Haslam College of

nance Director Brenda Imel. Nise-

wander will work closely with Imel

during the coming months to ensure

a seamless shift in leadership. Nise-

wander holds a bachelor's degree in

accounting and a master's degree in

business administration from Ten-

nessee Technological University

(TTU). She is both a certified public

accountant (CPA) and a certified

municipal finance officer (CMFO).

Before joining the city of Cookev-

ille, she spent 15 years at Arnold En-

gineering Development Complex

(AEDC) on Arnold Air Force Base

in Tullahoma. She joined the city of

Patricia "Pat" Vander Schaaf, for-

mer Memphis city councilmember,

died Dec. 30, 2024, in Brownsville

Cookeville in 2022.

Seth Miller

Nisewander

munity members alike.

Seth Miller

has been select-

ed as the new

city recorder

for the town of

Unicoi. Miller

holds a bach-

elor's degree

in accounting

from East Ten-

Jenni Nise-

wander has

been appointed

to serve as the

finance direc-

tor designee

for the city of

Cookeville in

preparation for

the upcoming

retirement of

long-time Fi-

Business.

the Board of Advisors for the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at UT, Knoxville.

Nate Ridley was promoted to Director of Sanitation and Environmental Services and most recently served as the department's



Nate Ridley

assistant director. He takes over the role from Jack Tucker, who retired after 11 years with the six and six as director. Ridley began his career in 1999 on the back of a sanitation truck and has more than 25 years' experience in solid waste management, including working in collection, transfer, and recycling. He holds Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) certifications in Managing Collection Systems (2011) and Integrated Solid Waste Management Systems (2015) and has been a Certified Instructor with SWANA since 2013, sharing his knowledge and experience with others in the industry.

Suzanne Ward has been selected as the new purchasing manager for the city, replacing Brian Wilcox who retired after two years. Ward has been in the purchasing divi-

sion of Franklin's Finance Department for 12 years, beginning as a purchasing analyst and then serving as a purchasing



Suzanne Ward

manager. She is a Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification from the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UP-PCC). She also earned the National Institute of Government Purchasing (NIGP) Certified Procurement Professional (CPP) certification.

Margaret Wilson has also been promoted to comptroller in the city's finance department. Wilson began working with the



Margaret Wilson

city in 2018 and was promoted to financial manager in 2020. She earned her CMFO in 2021 and became a Certified Public Finance Officer through the GFOA in 2024. She takes over from previous comptroller Mike Lowe, who retired after 25 years in the position.

TACIR mourns Timme's death

Michael Timme, longtime director of administration for TA-CIR, died Feb. 7, 2025, at home following a brief battle with glioblastoma, a highly aggressive form of brain cancer.

Timme had recently celebrated 35 years of service to the state of Tennessee, serving as director of administration for TACIR since 2005 as well as working for the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, the Tennessee Department of Education, and the Comptroller of the Treasury.

His vast knowledge and experience allowed him to help staff navigate the intricacies of state government and serve as a mentor to newer staff. His joy, warmth, and dedication to public service will be missed by all.



Michael Timme TACIR Director of Administration

Timme is survived by his mother Nancy, who is 94; his children Ruth, Clara, Anna, and Carl; grandchildren Ivy, Abigail, Maddie, Edie, Ruby, and Eloise; and his loving partner Carolyn Breda.

at the age of 81. Born in Trenton, N.J., she earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in business administration from Rider



Schaaf College. She moved to Memphis in 1966 and began a long career in public service, including serving on the Memphis City Council from 1975 to 2002. She also served as vice president of Vander Schaaf and Associates, a development company which created Davies Plantation in Shelby County. She also served on numerous boards and commissions within the city.

BrianZacharias, Clarksville's mayor protem and Ward 1 City Councilman, has been selected to participate in the Smart Growth America (SGA)

2025 class of the Champions Institute. The program helps local officials define, design, build, and evaluate Complete Streets in their communities.



Mayor Pro Tem Zacharias was selected as one of the many local elected officials from across the United States and its territories. The program is part of SGA's Active People, Healthy Nation Initiative that educates officials on Complete Streets principles ranging from health communities to safer street design. SGA will also provide continuing support to the Clarksville community following the end of the Institute series, helping with the numerous initatives aimed at making Clarksville streets safer.



City officials gather in Nashville for 2025 TML Legislative Conference



City officials from Paris. Front Row, from left to right, Commissioner Jackie Jones, Mayor Kathy Ray, Commissioner Vickey Roberts, and City Manager Kim Foster. Back row, left to right, Commissioner Sam Tharpe and Vice Mayor John Etheridge.



Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell, left, and Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon, right.



East Ridge Councilmember Aundie Witt, left, and Finance Director Diane Qualls, right.



From left to right, Eliabethton Mayor Pro Tem Mike Simerly, City Manager Daniel Estes, Councilmember Wes Frazier, and Mayor Bill Carter.



Millington Alderwoman and TML District 8 Director Bethany Huffman, left, and Germantown Vice Mayor Mary Anne Gibson, right.



Clarksville Mayor and TML Director At Large Joe Pitts, left, and Bolivar Mayor and TML First Vice President Julian McTizic, right.



Above: From left to right, Atoka Town Administator Marc Woerner, Mayor Barry Akin, and Alderman Chris Detje.

Top Right: Morristown Councilmember Al A'Hearn, left, and Vice Mayor Tommy Pedigo, right.

Bottom Right: Arlington Vice Mayor Harry McKee, left, and Bartlett Alderman Kevin Quinn, right.





City officials gather in Nashville for 2025 TML Legislative Conference



 $From \,left\,to\,right,\,Millington\,Vice\,Mayor\,Thomas\,McGhee,\,Mayor\,Larry\,Dagen,\,and\,Alderman\,Don\,Lowry.$



Savannah City Manager and District 7 Director Blake Walley, left, with State and Local Government Vice Chairman and State Sen. Page Walley, right.



Above: East Ridge Vice Mayor David Tyler, left, and Councilmember Jeff Ezell, right.

Right: From left to right, Nolensville Commissioner Russell Gill, TownAdministrator Victor Lay, and Vice Mayor and District 6 Director Jessica Salamida.

Below: From left to right, Bartlett Alderman Robert Griffin, Mayor David Parsons, and Alderman Jack Young.







Loudon CMFO/City Recorder/Treasuer Melissa Huskin, left, and Selmer Mayor Sherry Inman, right.







Above: From left to right, Milan Mayor B.W. Beasley, HR/Economic Development & Government Relations Director Jason Griggs, and McKenzie Mayor Ryan Griffin.

Top Left: Brentwood Interim City Manager/TCMA President Jay Evans, left, and Goodlettsville City Manager and District 5 Director Tim Ellis.

Bottom Left: Bells Alderwoman Alice McDearman, left, and Columbia Councilwoman DaVena Hardison, right.

STATE BRIEFS

Tennessee State Parks have an economic impact of \$1.9 billion dollars in the state and support employment of 13,587 people, according to an analysis by a leading economic consulting firm. Based on figures from fiscal year 2024, the report by Impact DataSource says the parks created \$550 million in annual household income for Tennessee families. Because of the strong performance, state parks generated \$111.8 million in state taxes and \$22.1 million in local tax revenue. Overall. Tennessee State Parks account for \$1.1 billion of Tennessee's gross domestic product.

After years of increases, the number of fatal drug overdoses fell both in Tennessee and nationwide. After collecting and analyzing data, researchers found Tennessee's overall overdose rate fell 6.6% between 2023 and 2022 with the number of overdoses dropping from 56 per 100,000 people to 52.3 per 100,000. Tennessee's overdose death rate has increased 20 of the past 24 years. At the same time, the U.S. saw its rate drop 4% in the same period. This fall-

ing rate may be because of combined effort, such as giving wider access to over-the-counter naloxone, opioid abatement funding and programs, and other efforts. One concerning trend is that overdose deaths have trended younger in recent years.

The state of Tennessee saw its rate of net in-migration decrease in 2023 with 28,000 people moving to the Volunteer State. U.S. Census data analyzed by Storage Cafe, an online marketplace, found that Tennessee saw 47,000 less residents in 2023 than it had migrate in 2022 and 69,000 less than the state saw during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Tennessee ranked as the state with the ninth most in-migration in 2023 with the majority of migrants coming from California and Florida. Local and interstate moves have decreased across the country with home affordability issues as well as rising insurance and property tax rates contributing. Texas reported the most net migration followed by Florida and North

Keep Tennessee Beautiful with cleanups this March

Spring is upon us, and as Tennesseans begin to emerge from winter's hibernation, the Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT) Nobody Trashes Tennessee (NTT) is partnering with Keep Tennessee Beautiful to encourage residents to get outside and do their part to keep our roadways and waterways clean safe, and litter-free.

"Litter detracts from Tennessee's natural beauty and has harmful impacts on safety, the environment, and the economy," said Deputy Governor and TDOT Commissioner Butch Eley. "We encourage everyone to participate in the Great American Cleanup by joining efforts to remove litter and beautify our state. This is a fantastic chance to give back, embrace the spirit of volunteerism, and make a lasting impact on our communities. Your involvement can truly make a difference."

Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup is the nation's largest community improvement program, coinciding with March's Keep Tennessee Beautiful Month. TDOT's litter prevention partners, including Keep Tennessee Beautiful affiliates, host cleanup events statewide.

Residents may also coordinate their own community cleanups, with many local affiliates providing safety tips and supplies.

All residents participating in litter prevention efforts may be

rewarded with TDOT's Nobody Trashes Tennessee <u>Trash Masters</u> <u>Rewards</u> program. Participants earn points for activities like taking a litter quiz, attending cleanup events, and spreading awareness.

Points may be redeemed for various rewards, including discounts at local businesses and exclusive Nobody Trashes Tennessee swag. It's a fun and engaging way for individuals to contribute to a litter-free Tennessee while being recognized for their environmental commitment.

Youth groups, including Girls Scouts and Boy Scouts, can earn Nobody Trashes Tennessee patches for springtime cleanup service projects. Scouts conducting their first cleanup will receive the Nobody Trashes Tennessee logo patch. Second cleanups earn scouts the new Trashsquatch patch, featuring the campaign's loveable mascot, who is on a mission to end littering. Educational resources, including spring scavenger hunt worksheets, are available online.

All Tennesseans are encouraged to take personal responsibility for the litter in their communities. This may be through picking up litter when you see it or taking a litter bag along when walking, hiking, hunting, or fishing.

Learn what constitutes litter and avoid unintentional litter by securing trash in pickups and knowing that food waste, such as apple cores, harms wildlife.

TACIR: Tennessee needs \$77.7B in public infrastructure improvements

Tennessee needs at least \$77.7 billion worth of public infrastructure improvements during the five-year period of July 2023 to June 2028—a \$9.5 billion (14%) increase from the year before—according to a new report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR).

Transportation and Utilities infrastructure needs increased by \$3.8 billion—40% of the overall increase in the total estimated cost of the inventory. Three billion, one hundred million dollars is needed for new projects and \$3.7 billion of cost increases in existing projects.

The increase was largely offset by \$1.8 billion in completed projects, \$444 million in cost decreases, and \$191 million in canceled projects.

The \$2.2 billion increase in needed improvements for Education also contributed to the overall increase in the total estimated cost of the inventory. The increase was primarily driven by a \$895 million increase in school renovations—most of the increase was needed in Metro Nashville Public Schools (\$668 million), followed by Wilson County (\$106 million) and Rutherford County (\$93 million).

Health, Safety, and Welfare infrastructure needs increased by \$1.4 billion—15% of the overall increase in the total estimated cost of the inventory. Water and wastewater (\$484 million) and law enforcement (\$475 million) comprise 66% of the increase in the category.

Changes to existing projects drove the increase in water and wastewater needs by \$414 million, including a \$68 million wastewater treatment plant upgrade in Blount County and a \$38 million water tank in Sumner County. New law enforcement needs also con-

tributed, with two major jail construction projects: \$70 million in DeKalb County and \$30 million in Humphreys County.

Needs also increased for General Government (\$1.2 billion), Recreation and Culture (\$878 million), and Economic Development (\$215 thousand).

The percentage of funded infrastructure needs report-

ed at the time the inventory was conducted increased by 1% from 2022 to 2023. Funding is often not identified until a project reaches the construction stage.

This year's inventory shows \$19.0 billion in funding that has been identified for the \$55.5 billion in needs for which funding information is available. Improvements needed at existing schools and those drawn from capital budget requests submitted by state agencies do not include funding information.

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

- Transportation and Utilities: \$39.1 billion
- Education: \$18.9 billion
- Health, Safety, and Welfare: \$12.4 billion
- Recreation and Culture: \$3.4

JANUARY
2025

BUILDING
TENNESSEE'S
TOMORROW
Anticipating the State's
Infrastructure Needs

Tennessee Advisory Commission
on intergovernmental Relations

billion

- General Government: \$3.7 billion
- Economic Development: \$239.4 million

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

The full report is available on TACIR's website..

For more information, contact Tyler Carpenter, Research Manager, at <u>Tyler.Carpenter@tn.gov</u> or 615.253.4095.

TDEC taking applications for Waste Tire Reuse Program grant

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) began accepting applications on Wednesday, Jan. 15 for grants from the state's Tire Environmental Act Program (TEAP).

The grants are to fund projects that create or expand beneficial uses for waste tires. Such projects include tire recycling and processing, using materials such as aggregate that are derived from tires, initiating research and development in tire management, using tires for alternative fuels, or promoting innovation in infrastructure.

"This program is an important environmental step for dealing with waste tires," said TDEC Commissioner David Salyers. "The financial assistance can help divert tires from landfills and repurpose them. We look forward to the results that can come from this process."

Tennessee produces approximately 6 million waste tires every year. TEAP has helped divert more than 7.6 million tires since the program's inception. The Tennessee General Assembly established the Tire Environmental Fund in 2015. Since then, grantees have been awarded almost \$10.8 million to address waste tire disposal in the state.

The deadline for submission of grant applications is April 15.

There are no restrictions on eligible entity types. All organizations are eligible to apply for the funding.

Further information on the program is available <u>online at the TEAP website</u>. Information about the <u>TDEC grants management system</u> is also available online.

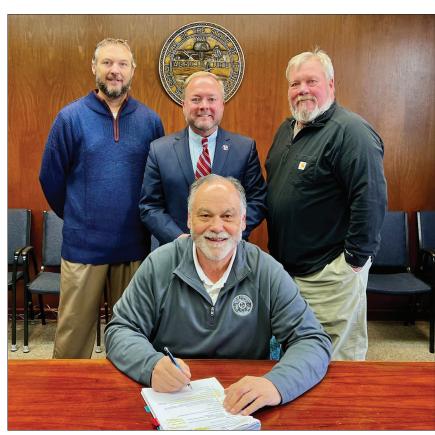
The Tire Environmental Act Program is funded through a flat fee assessed to the sale of new motor vehicles in Tennessee based on the number of wheels of the vehicle. The fee is \$5 for a new vehicle with four or fewer wheels, \$10 for new vehicles with more than four but fewer than 11 wheels, and \$15 for new vehicles with 11 or more wheels.

No loan is too large or too small



The City of Madisonville recently closed a \$700,500 note issued to finance the purchase of a new fire truck. The city has used TMBF loan programs seven times since 1999. Seated L to R are: City Recorder Sherri McCrary and Mayor Scott Hunt. Standing is Steve Queener, TMBF Marketing Representative.





The City of Dyersburg first used TMBF loan programs in 1999 and has used the programs eight times. The latest was in late December – a 4,000,000 fixed rate draw loan to finance fire trucks and the construction of a gym. Seated is Dyersburg Mayor John Holden. Standing L to R are: Steve Anderson, City Treasurer; Justin Hanson, TMBF Marketing Representative; and Scott Ball, City Recorder.

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

Tennessee Municipal League 2023-2024 Officers and Directors

PRESIDENT Paige Brown Mayor, Gallatin VICE PRESIDENTS Julian McTizic Mayor, Bolivar **Kevin Brooks** Mayor, Cleveland

DIRECTORS Gary Chesney

City Mayor, Morristown (District 2) **Stefanie Dalton** Vice Mayor, Red Bank (District 3)

Johnny Dodd Councilman, Jackson Darrell Duncan Vice Mayor, Kingsport (District 1)

Roland Dykes Mayor, Newport

City Manager, Goodlettsville (District 5) Bethany Huffman

Alderwoman, Millington (District 8) Tim Kelly

Mayor, Chattanooga Indya Kincannon Mayor, Knoxville

Keith Morrison City Administrator, Algood (District 4) Freddie O'Connell

Mayor, Metro Nashville Jessica Salamida

Vice Mayor, Nolensville (District 6) **Joe Pitts**

Mayor, Clarksville Blake Walley

City Manager, Savannah (District 7) Ron Williams

Mayor, Farragut Paul Young

Mayor, Memphis AFFILIATE DIRECTOR Kay Senter, City Council, Morristown (TMBF) Jay Evans, Interim City Manager, Brentwood (TCMA)

TMLAFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

TN Assn. of Air Carrier Airports TN Building Officials Assn. TN Assn. of Chiefs of Police

TN Assn. Municipal Clerks & Recorders TN Government Finance Officers Assn.

TN Fire Chiefs Assn. TN Fire Safety Inspectors TN Assn. of Floodplain Management

TN Assn. Housing & Redevel. Auth. TN Municipal Attorneys Assn.

TN Municipal Judges Conference TN Chapter, American Public Works TN Recreation and Parks Assn.

TN Chapter, American Planning TN Personnel Management Assn. TN Assn. of Public Purchasing

TN Section, Institute of Transport TN Public Transportation Assoc.

Assoc. Independent & Municipal Schools TN Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council TN Urban Forestry Council

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Tennessee AG's office announces top consumer complaints of 2024

In honor of National Consumer Protection Week, the Tennessee Attorney General's Office Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA) announces the top ten complaint categories of 2024.

DCA received 8,536 formal consumer complaints during the last calendar year. The division diligently routes complaints to appropriate agencies or mediates them.

The informal mediation process addresses disputes regarding consumer financial transactions, such as purchasing products, goods, or services for the home or personal use. The process affords customers and businesses a good faith means to remedy disputes.

DCA's voluntary mediation program facilitated consumer recoveries of over \$3 million in cash, merchandise, and services in 2024.

The categories that received the most complaints are as follows:

1. Home Improvements/ Repair & Home Warranties: 684 complaints

(Same ranking as 2023) Involves the purchase and execution of home warranties, as well as the use of contracting services to repair or remodel the home.

Common complaints include disputes related to warranty coverage; quality of work performed by hired individual/business; incomplete work; and structural damage caused by hired individual/ business.

2. Health Services & Products: 675 complaints

(*Up from 3rd in 2023*) Involves consumer disputes with health service providers such as hospitals, laboratories, physician offices, and dental offices.

Complaints regarding the manufacturing and distribution of health supplements and products (such as hearing aids) also fall within this category.

Common complaints relate to inaccurate billing, misquoting service prices, and responsiveness to billing questions.

More than 31 million Amer-

icans - roughly 12% of

the population - reported

needing to borrow money

to pay for healthcare de-

spite already having health

insurance. About \$74 billion

was borrowed by Americans

to cover healthcare costs last

year and nearly one-third of

Americans (28%) reported

being very concerned a major

health event could put them

into debt. The poll from West

Health and Gallup also found

that those under the age of 49

were more likely to need to

385783777_0321

NATIONAL BRIEFS



Division of Consumer Affairs

3. Landlord/Tenant: 614 complaints

(Down from 2nd in 2023)) Involves disputes between tenants and property owners or property managers. Common complaints relate to security deposits, conditions of the rental, and responsiveness to repair requests.

4. Internet Sales: 520 complaints (Up from 8th in 2028)

Involves consumer dissatisfaction with items or services purchased online. Common complaints include issues with refunds and returns, or the product or service not being provided after payment. Often, the product or service was solicited via social media advertisements.

5. Personal & Professional Services: 495 complaints

(*Up from 9th in 2023*) Complaints about health clubs, as well as services offered by professionals including hair stylists, locksmiths, exterminators, photographers, surveyors, and others.

Common complaints involve the quality of service, charges for services not received, and problems redeeming gift certificates.

6. Debtor/Creditor: 490 complaints (Down from 4th in 2023) Involves matters related to financial services such as debt collection, payday loans, credit repair, and account management.

7. Motor Vehicle - Repairs & Warranties: 483 complaints (Down from 6th in 2023)

Involves complaints of consumer dissatisfaction with vehicle repair service. Common complaints involved issues regarding the length of time taken for repair and availability of appropriate parts.

borrow money to cover medical

expenses (20%) versus those 50 to

64 (9%). Women were also more

likely to need to borrow than men

while Americans with children un-

der the age of 18 were twice as like-

ly to report borrowing compared to

households with no children (19%

The U.S. unemployment rate

rose to 4.1% in January with

151,000 nonfarm jobs added.

Economists are anticipating the

labor market's resilience to erode

amid changes in trade policy and

federal government cuts to funding

vs. 8%).

vehicle warranties.

8. Motor Vehicle—Used Sales & **Advertising: 482 complaints**

Involves consumer dissatisfaction with the purchase of a used vehicle. Common complaints include disputes over the vehicle's condition, difficulties getting the vehicle properly titled and registered, and inaccurate advertisement of the vehicle.

Rental/Parking: 413 complaints (Down from 7th in 2023)

of a vehicle.

10. Timeshares/Vacation Clubs: 406 complaints

(Up from 11th in 2023) Complaints related to the purchase of property under a timesharing agreement and the sale of these agreements. The most common complaints report high-pressure sales tactics, misrepresentation of

terials.

consumer.affairs@ag.tn.gov.

at www.tn.gov/consumer.

The category also includes consumer dissatisfaction regarding

(down from 5th in 2023)

9. Motor Vehicle - Lease/Towing/

Involves dissatisfaction with the leasing, towing, rental, or parking

the contract, and resale scams.

In addition to complaint mediation, DCA also makes numerous presentations to interested groups every year and distributes free printed consumer education ma-

In 2024, the division doubled its efforts to spread scam prevention messages to older Tennesseans by completing 40 presentations to senior centers statewide. Groups can request a speaker by contacting DCA's online consumer com-

plaint form and numerous electronic educational materials are available on the division's website

and employees. The impact of fed-

eral government layoffs is expected

to be revealed in the February jobs

report. In the meantime, consumer

spending and homebuilding de-

creased as the trade deficit surged

in January, linked to tariffs. Econ-

omists have slashed their predic-

tions for U.S. gross domestic prod-

uct (GDP) estimates for the first

quarter to below a 1.5% annualized

rate from around 2.0% last month.

The Atlanta Federal Reserve is

forecasting GDP contracting at a

2.4% rate. The economy grew at

a 2.3% pace in the fourth quarter

TENNESSEE

FESTIVALS

March 27-30: Knoxville

Big Ears Festival Big Ears provides innovative, enriching and transformative experi-

ences of music, art and culture for all.

March 29: Dandridge

Spirit of Nations Powwow

Join us for competition powwow dancing, a silent auction, outstanding craft demonstrations, flute playing, hoop dancing, storytelling, children's activities and much more.

April 5: Chattanooga

Chattanooag Outdoor Festival Celebrating Chattanooga as an exciting outdoor destination through vendors, conservation, education, retail, music and community.

April 3-6: Columbia

An annual celebration of all things related to Mules.

April 4-5: Atoka

Atoka BBQ Festival Sanctioned by the Memphis Barbe-

que Network, this festival is held at Nancy Lane Park. **April 4-5: Covington**

51st Annual BBQ Festival Celebrate this Covington tradition

with BBQ, a demolition derby, and tractor pull. **April 4-6: Beersheba Springs**

21st Annual Trails and Trilliums This festival offers a slate of guided hikes and walks as well as na-

ture-themed presentations, workshops, and exhibits.

April 5: Cleveland Hot Slaw and Art Y'all Festival A fun, unique and totally unexpected

April 5: Monterey

food and art festival.

Banana Pudding Festival

With mouthwatering food, vintage finds, one of kind treasures across three streets including Farmers Market, petting zoo, kids zone; there is something here everyone will love!

An Annual Scottish music and craft

April 5: Tullahoma

Piping on the Green

April 5-6: Collegedale <u>Yellowhorse Powwow</u>

Keeping Native American culture alive through dance competitions, traditional clothing and adornment, food, crafts, music and ritual.

April 11-13: Erwin

<u>Nolifest</u>

For all who paddle and love the outdoors NoliFest is the springtime gathering

April 12: Clinton Mosaic: Downtown Celebration of

the World

the Arts Historic Downtown Clinton brings you the 5th Annual Mosaic Arts Festival! Kick off the day with a color run and stick around for all things art inspired as we celebrate Art Around



of 2024.

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

Competitive Retirement Plan Services for Tennessee's Towns & Cities

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Contact Ed Stewart at 615-627-5936 or ed.stewart@voyafa.com



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

City officials gather for 2025 TML Legislative Conference

TML, from Page 1

city officials connecting with each other and said he had found value in sharing experiences with other municipal leaders from cities of different sizes.

Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson provided an economic outlook for the state in the coming fiscal year. Bryson said the state budget is projected to be about \$58.4 billion, down about \$2 billion due to the decrease in federal funds from ARP and other programs sunsetting.

State tax revenues are expected to be up 2%. While normal growth is in the 3-5% range, Byrson said the state reported zero growth the previous year. He said the 3-5% growth rate reflects a new normal post-pandemic.

Bryson also expressed his admiration for the work of city officials

"I appreciate the work you do for our citizens," Bryson said. "Where the rubber meets the road, you all are there. I thank you for what you do."

Additionally, Bryson said the state is looking into issues such as cybersecurity and is seeking feedback from local governments as they determine how AI will play a future in government with the goal of developing a master AI policy all governments can adopt.

Comptroller Jason Mumpower highlighted the efforts to allow for more frequent property value appraisals, new online options for submitting budgets, and a new report on worker's compensation in municipalities. He also discussed the continued population growth in Tennessee.

Every county in this state has experienced growth, and you are to be commended because I know it is the cities in our state that are the economic engines," Mumpower said. "You also provide a quality of life that people across this nation want."

UT Institute for Public Service Vice President Herb Byrd III discussed a new partnership with the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence and the city of Germantown to see more municipalities complete applications for the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Program designation. Byrd said UT-MTAS is also using the process for help with succession planning, strategic planning, and making more data-driven decisions.

Dr. Marianne Wanamaker, dean of the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs, talked about the work of the Institute of American Civics offered through the school as well as the undergraduate and graduate degrees in public policy and administration offered through the school.

Wanamaker said the school has a program where they pay students to attend city council meetings, and as a result, the students are enjoying learning how local government works and seeing problems being solved. The Institute Fellows program has led to several students to volunteer for campaigns, work in the mayor's office, and work on the city council rules around public comments. The program is run every spring and features a discussion session on campus after each meeting with a former local official.

Senate State and Local Government Committee Vice Chair Page Walley addressed concerns about maintaining road infrastructure. Walley said he supported restoring the historic revenue-sharing relationship as a means of doing this.

"Cities are what make our state go," Walley said. "There are 345 municipalities constituted here in Tennessee... None of the cities in my district are huge, but they all have the same demands you do. They have demands for infrastructure... We have some catching up to do, and we have to help you do that. When we balance the state budget on the backs of cities and counties, that isn't right."

Emily Hutchins, investigative counsel for the Tennessee Comptroller's Office, discussed how city employees can prevent and report fraud, waste, and abuse to ensure good stewardship of public funds and prevent issues in audits and budgets.

Tennessee Bureau of Ethics Executive Director Bill Young



Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson



Tennessee Comptroller Jason Mumpower.



Dr. Marianne Wanamaker, dean of the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs



Tennessee Bureau of Ethics Executive Director Bill Young

outlined the role of his office, resources for campaign finance issues, and how ethical violations undermine public trust in government.

VC3 Regional Vice President Bill Piper and Account Executive McKenzie Walton discussed current challenges in cybersecurity, particularly as ransomware attacks on municipalities but are increasing in utilities. Piper highlighted concerns over the security of utilities, like electric and wastewater facilities using equipment and monitoring services connected to the internet.

Walton discussed how new cybersecurity policies could limit the access municipal police departments have to online services like NCIC, NICS, and fingerprint databases if they are not in com-



Senate State and Local Government Committee Vice Chair Page Walley



Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell



UT Institute for Public Service Vice President Herb Byrd III



Emily Hutchins, investigative counsel for the Tennessee Comptroller's Office



VC3 Regional Vice President Bill Piper