



City officials must maintain unified front

Now that the 112th Tennessee General Assembly has concluded its business, we as a League, can focus on what lies ahead.

But first I want to thank all of those who dug in and assisted the TML staff in their efforts to build awareness about two of TML's key legislative priorities – restoring of the historic sharing of the state sales tax with cities and returning the local share of the Single Article Tax back to local governments.

It was a true grassroots campaign engaging city officials and local opinion leaders, as well as informing members of the general public through statewide media outlets and social media.

And although the two initiatives did not pass this year, we gained a lot of traction and our work is not done.

Sen. Richard Briggs, State and Local Government Chair, stated, "When TML came to me with the bill I figured we had about a two-percent chance. We gained so much ground, I really believe we can pass it next year."

To make that happen, we must start now. Engage with your legislators this summer. With many legislators running in new districts, it's the perfect time to make our voices heard. When they ask you for your vote, ask them for their vote on returning to the historic practice of sharing a percentage of ALL sales tax revenues collected within our cities.

State revenue collections have reached historic, billion-dollar surplus levels. Yet our cities and towns are faced with the rising



Franklin Mayor Ken Moore
TML President

costs associated with providing essential services that make our communities desirable places to live, work and raise our families. When you meet with your legislators, tell them what the additional dollars will mean for your communities.

And with the increasing efforts to preempt local citizens and officials from determining what is best for their communities, the need for cities and towns to speak with a unified voice is more important now than ever before.

Our work together makes the difference. When cities stick together and speak with one voice, outcomes take shape and begin to happen.

TML is where our state's towns and cities come together, share best practices and help chart our future. Your involvement in TML will be what makes the difference in Tennessee's future. Get involved today and help make your community and our state ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

Ken Moore

Five cities hold spring elections



Five municipalities across the state held elections this spring, including four general elections and one special election for city judge.

Election season will be busier in the summer with five municipal elections scheduled for June and another 77 in August to coincide with the state and federal primaries. More than 200 municipal elections are also scheduled to coincide with the state and federal elections on Nov. 8.

BERRY HILL

Incumbent Dennis Sheffield will be joined on the Berry Hill City Commission by newcomer Andrew Rusnak following a municipal election on March 15, both defeating challenger Melinda Duncan for the two open commission seats.

Rusnak led the vote count with 62 votes followed by Sheffield with 57 and Duncan with 24. Rusnak will take the seat previously held by Berry Hill Vice Mayor Mike Galehouse, who did not seek re-election.

CHATTANOOGA

Voters in Chattanooga went to the polls for a primary election on May 3 to select a new city court judge for Division 1.

Incumbent Sherry Paty defeated challenger Brian Bush with 10,403 votes to Bush's 8,185 votes to retain the seat.

LAFAYETTE

The city of Lafayette held a municipal election on May 3 for four open seats on the city council.

Incumbents Steve Turner and David Kempf will be joined by newcomers Mike Marshall and

Roger L. Jones on the city council. Incumbent Debra Y. Harris and challenger Tabatha Wooten Dias did not garner enough votes to gain a seat on the council.

Marshall led the vote count with 438 followed by Turner with 380, Kempf with 335, and Jones with 334. Marshall, Turner, and Kempf will also serve four-year unexpired terms while Jones will serve a two-year expired term on the council. Dias earned 130 votes and Harris earned 280.

Tom Robertson, who had been appointed to fill a vacancy on the council, chose not to run again.

LORETTO

The city of Loretto held a municipal election on April 26 with two candidates running unopposed for two positions.

Ronald Steven McMasters ran unopposed for mayor after former Mayor Jesse Turner decided to not run for re-election. McMasters formerly served as the city's vice mayor and runs a business in Loretto.

Jonathan Pettus ran unopposed and was elected to the seat previously held by McMasters.

ROCKFORD

A municipal election was held in Rockford on May 3 with two city commission seats on the ballot.

Kenneth M. Arwood and Matt Hester ran unopposed and were elected to the two open spots. Arwood received 88 votes while Hester received 62. They will be taking over the seats previously occupied by Jennifer Brown and Sandra Hitson, who did not run for re-election.

2022 Legislative Summary

TML advocacy efforts stood strong against preemption of local autonomy

The Second Session of 112th Tennessee General Assembly convened on Jan. 11, 2022, and concluded its business on April 28. The relatively abbreviated four-month long session was facilitated in part by a healthy budget surplus and legislators' recognition of the need to campaign in newly-drawn districts. A total of 1,278 bills were filed this session, which is fewer than recent trends would suggest. Of these, TML identified 522 bills that either directly affected or had the potential to directly affect municipalities.

Although fewer bills were filed and the duration of the session was somewhat shorter, it was

still a busy and productive session. The General Assembly addressed a number of issues, including recalculating the K-12 school education funding formula, approving once-in-a-decade redistricting maps for congressional and state legislative seats, and agreeing on a \$52.8 billion spending plan for the 2022-23 fiscal year. The two-year 112th General Assembly was historic in that it included three special sessions to address education, COVID-19 regulations, and to approve major tax incentives for the Ford Motor Company to establish a facility on the West Tennessee Megasite, which may have also



Legislation allowing local smoking regulation passes General Assembly

A bill allowing local governments to more closely regulate cigarette and vapor tobacco use in age-restricted establishments has passed the General Assembly and now goes before Gov. Bill Lee.

Senate Bill 2219 was introduced by State Sen. Richard Briggs, R-Knoxville, who is a medical doctor and a longtime advocate of bills allowing local governments more control over smoking bans to help protect children and victims of second-hand smoke. The companion bill, House Bill 2705, was carried by State Rep. Michele Carringer, R-Knoxville.

The bill allows local governments to pass ordinances and resolutions to regulate smoking and the use of vapor products in age-restricted venues that are not retail tobacco stores – such as bars and restaurants.

The legislation was introduced last year and was largely led by a group of professional



State Sen. Richard Briggs



State Rep. Michele Carringer

musicians called the Musicians for Smokefree Tennessee, who were supporting legislation that would remove the preemption clause that blocks local governments from regulating smoking in establishments with age restrictions, like bars and music venues, and would help create smoke-free workplaces for musicians.

According to the CDC, an estimated 19.5% of adults in Tennessee smoke, above the national average of 15.5%. An estimated 6.5% of

adults in Tennessee use smokeless tobacco or vapor products. An estimated 11,400 Tennesseans die each year due to smoking-related illnesses.

Smoking-related health care costs in Tennessee top \$2.67 billion a year with the state losing \$3.59 billion per year in economic productivity due to smoking. The state has one of the cheapest cigarette taxes in the nation at 62 cents per pack, compared to the national average of \$1.91.

Culture, benefits key to post-Covid recruitment, retention for governments

By KATE COIL
TML Communications Specialist

Creating positive culture, allowing flexible work situations, supporting professional development, and financial and benefits incentives are among the strategies local governments can use to recruit and retain employees in the face of increased competition in the labor market.

Governments, especially municipal governments, have not been immune to the effects of the Great Resignation, which has seen record numbers of employees leaving their positions – or industries entirely. A recent paper published by the University of North Carolina found that many local government employees left their positions during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of burnout, flexibility issues, or safety concerns. Retirements associated with an aging workforce have also compounded the need to recruit and retain workers.

How local governments can creatively compete with employee retention and recruitment was the focus of a webinar "The 2022 Workforce Talent Strategy: The Rise of a New Government Worker" and was cohosted by *Governance* magazine's Center for Digital Government as part of an ongoing series on the Future of Work.

Fred Britain, chief information officer for the state of Maine, said governments have always faced competition from the private sector, but effects from the pandemic have exacerbated the situation.

"If we were having this conversation two years ago, we would be talking about how hard it is to recruit people because our salaries don't compete," Britain said.



With competition from the private sector greater than ever, local governments are having to change the ways they recruit and retain employees to reflect changes in work culture.

"Now, after the pandemic, there is a different story. The headline is about hybrid work and telework. We know the competition for salary is higher than ever, so it's not necessarily about moving that salary needle. The recruitment side is a little more difficult. We have to make our organizations a satisfying place to work and to stay. That can be a little hard to communicate in a job interview."

James Weaver, secretary for information technology for the state of North Carolina, said resignations and retirements are up across government sectors.

"The gap is continuing to widen between what the public sector can offer and what the private sector is willing to offer," Weaver said. "We have seen the impact of the Great Resignation across the government workforce. Our office of state budget and management has seen a 20% turnover of their workforce."

When it comes to both recruiting new employees and retaining

current ones, Britain said offering hybrid work environments and more flexibility is what will make or break the deal for most employees.

"We have to be very upfront about hybrid work," he said. "We have to be employers who are flexible about how often you need to be in the office but also when you are on the other end sitting at your home office do your hours have to be nine to five. If we aren't going to offer that hybrid environment, they are done. They will go apply somewhere else. It doesn't mean they will use every day we give them, but they want it available as an option."

Weaver said governments may need to consider that some employees may fare better working completely remote while others prefer a more hybrid schedule. As a result, communication is key.

"Culturally as well what employees are starting to see is that for some the five-day remote works

See **EMPLOYEES** on Page 3

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BRISTOL

The city of Bristol and BVU Authority have received a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) as part of upgrades to the Bristol Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. Provided through the American Rescue Plan, the grant will help install a state-of-the-art centrifuge system to separate water and biosolids from wastewater as it flows through the plant, replacing a belt press system installed in the 1980s. These upgrades will enhance the plants efficiency and help serve future economic growth in the area.

DAYTON

The city of Dayton cut the ribbon on the new Dayton Dog Park at Swinging Bridge Park near the Dayton Farmer's Market. The new dog park was made possible through a \$25,000 grant from the Boyd Foundation's Dog Park Dash program in 2019. The dog park features separate areas for small and large dogs, water fountains, and obstacles for dogs to play on. The grant was administered through the Rhea Economic and Tourism Council (RETC).

GREENEVILLE

The town of Greeneville and George Clem Multicultural Alliance announce plans for Greeneville's first annual Juneteenth celebration. Juneteenth, which became a federal holiday in 2021, commemorates the June 19, 1865, announcement proclaiming freedom for enslaved people in Texas, the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery. The local event will offer free festivities for all ages from 3 to 7 p.m. Sunday, June 19, at the Big Spring. Live entertainment, food, and other activities will be held throughout the day at the Big Spring, which is located behind the Greeneville-Greene County Library. More details of the event will be announced as they become available.

HUMBOLDT

Tyson Foods, Inc., has begun construction on a new \$3.5 million childcare facility catering to employees of its Humboldt poultry processing plant. The pilot project will be operational by 2023 and will support up to 100 children five years of age or younger as a way to support employees with young children. Titled Tyson Tykes, the childcare center will serve as an early childhood learning center by KinderCare and will be subsidized by the company at a lower cost for its workers. The company will also hire 18 people to work at the center. The company noted that childcare expenses have increased 214% since 1990, and said that access to child care and early education is beneficial for both workers and children. Tyson's Humboldt poultry complex, which includes a processing plant, hatchery, and feed mill, currently has a staff of more than 1,235 people and is expected to eventually employ 1,500.

KNOXVILLE

The city of Knoxville has created a Greenways Ambassador program, which was announced at the 2022 Neighborhood Conference. The Greenways Ambassador initiative was developed by the Knoxville Greenways Commission, with support from the Parks and Recreation Department. The ambassadors will be volunteers who promote the use of the greenways and serve as a friendly resource of information to greenway users. The city boasts more than 112 miles of greenways and soft surface trails, with about 54 miles of paved ADA-accessible greenways. Greenways Ambassadors will answer questions about traversing the city's greenways as well as picking up litter, promoting appropriate greenways etiquette, reporting trail conditions, providing basic assistance in the event of an emergency, and, if certified to do so, providing FirstAid.

LEBANON

Permobil, Inc., will invest \$15.5 million to expand operations at its North American headquarters in Lebanon. The company will create 70 new jobs in the next five years as it constructs a 70,000-square-foot addition to its existing facility. Permobil is the global leader in trusted healthcare solutions for power and manual wheelchairs, seating and positioning products, and power assist. The company has 1,600 employees worldwide, and is part of Patricia Industries, a subsidiary

of Investor AB. Since its founding 55 years ago, Permobil has enabled millions of end users with empowering innovations, including the first standing power wheelchair, the world's most advanced seating solutions, the world's most configurable lightweight manual wheelchairs, and the world's first connected power wheelchair, among many others.

LEBANON

Ultimate Linings, LLC officials announced the company will relocate its chemical manufacturing facility from Bedford, Texas, to Lebanon, investing \$31 million and creating 50 new jobs in the next five years. To meet new growth and expand global research, Ultimate Linings' Tennessee facility will house both the company's advanced automated chemical manufacturing and its research and development laboratory and innovation center. Headquartered in Houston, Texas, Ultimate Linings has served the automotive industry's need for high quality bedliner material and systems for nearly three decades. Today, the company has a global presence with applicators located in the U.S. and roughly 30 other countries around the world.

MANCHESTER

Dot Foods, Inc. officials announced the company will expand its Tennessee operations by establishing a new distribution facility in Manchester at the Manchester Industrial Park, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. Dot Foods will invest \$50.5 million and create 171 new jobs as the company constructs a 177,000-square-foot plant in Manchester, which will be Dot Foods' second distribution center in Tennessee. The Manchester site will function similarly to Dot Foods' operations in Dyersburg and will include dry, refrigerated and frozen warehouse space. In addition, the facility will have the capacity to expand its square footage in order to meet Dot Foods' growing customer demand among the southeastern U.S. Dot Foods anticipates breaking ground on its new distribution center late this summer, with operations expected to begin in late 2023. Founded in 1960 and headquartered in Mt. Sterling, Ill., Dot Foods is North America's largest food industry redistributor, serving all 50 states and more than 55 countries with a product offering of more than 125,000 items. Today, the family-owned and -operated business employs more than 6,300 across North America.

MIDDLETON

The Ford Motor Company and University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture have announced an historic agreement that will propel economic development, education, and conservation throughout the mid-south. The organizations have signed a stream mitigation and restoration agreement restoring the waters flowing through the University's 1,200-acre Lone Oaks Farm as part of efforts to transform the property into a world-class 4-H and STEM Education Center in Middleton. The property is located 45 minutes east of Memphis and close to the Blue Oval City development. Both properties are under development, and earlier this month UT Extension celebrated laying the top beam of the first of many overnight camping facilities at the 4-H Center. Education programs at Lone Oaks already serve about 5,000 K-12 students each year, but the new facility will allow the program to continue growing and offer overnight STEM programs and camps.

MOUNTAIN CITY

The town of Mountain City has been included in a two-state adventure trail promoting dining, shopping, hiking, fishing, boating, exploring, and sightseeing in Tennessee and North Carolina. The Hi-Lo Adventure Trail is a driving trail stretching between Watauga and Avery counties in North Carolina and Johnson and Carter counties in Tennessee. Mountain City is part of the 85-mile Tasters Loop, 100-mile Mountain 2 Mountain Loop, and the 105-mile Lakeside Loop, each of which offers visitors to the trail routes to engage their interests in the region. The Hi-Lo Adventure Trail site helps guide visitors to where to stay, eat, visit, and explore in the surrounding area. Officials with Mountain City said they are excited for the economic potential of the new tourism trail

Charleston renames city hall in honor of late Mayor Walter Goode



The city of Charleston has named its city hall in honor of longtime Mayor Walter Goode, who died in 2020. Goode served more than 28 years in Charleston city government and was first elected to the Charleston City Commission in 1986, eventually becoming the city's mayor.

Red Bank cuts ribbon on park upgrades



Officials with the city of Red Bank cut the ribbon on a new pavilion and playground at the Red Bank Community Center. The project was made possible through a \$24,000 donation to the Red Bank/Soddy Daisy Charitable Foundation as well as \$64,000 in local funds and provides a new, ADA-compliant playground for children. The new facility was the vision of late Red Bank Mayor Joe Glascock, who originally began planning the park 13 years ago. The park also offers free wifi for visitors.

MT. JULIET

The Mt. Juliet City Commission has voted unanimously to approve \$1.5 million for the construction of tennis and pickleball courts at Jerry Mundy Memorial Park. City leaders authorized a contract with Holm Court, LLC, to construct three asphalt tennis courts and four asphalt pickleball courts as well as sidewalks, curbing, approximately 50 new parking spaces, lighting, and landscaping in addition to the demolition of an existing press box at the park. Collier Engineer Co., Inc., has already completed the design for the project and work is expected to be complete by November. Mundy Park is already home to a disc golf range, multi-purpose field, pavilion, playground, and walking track.

NASHVILLE

Nashville Record Pressing, LLC officials announced today the company will establish operations in Nashville, which will include its headquarters, manufacturing, distribution and back-office functions. Nashville Record Pressing will invest \$13.3 million and create 255 new jobs over the next five years at the company's facility located at 520 Brick Church Park Drive. Nashville Record Pressing is a wholly owned subsidiary of Czech Republic-based GZ Media. In addition to its U.S. headquarters, the Nashville facility will house the company's manufacturing and distribution operations, which will be equipped with brand new, best-in-class equipment and infrastructure, positioning Nashville Record Pressing to be highly competitive and resilient, while also supporting the Nashville music community. GZ Media employs nearly 2,000 people in the Czech Republic and 500 in North America and is the largest global manufacturer of vinyl records.

NEWPORT

The Newport Board of Mayor and Aldermen have approved the purchase of a 72-acre tract of land that will become Woodland Park, the newest park in the city. The property is adjacent to the city's Newport City Park and will allow for hiking and picnicking. The property will be purchased at \$5,000 per acre using

Kingsport cuts ribbon on fire training center



From left to right, Capt. Joel Jones, Kingsport Fire Chief Scotty Boyd and Kingsport Mayor Patrick Shull perform a "hose coupling" as part of the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new fire training facility. Officials with the Kingsport Fire Chief have officially cut the ribbon on a fire training facility almost 20 years in the making. The new, \$2 million training center boasts a 40-person classroom that can be partitioned into two classrooms, a large fire truck bay, restrooms, a kitchen, and an outdoor training classroom. Kingsport Fire Chief Scotty Boyd said the facility was designed to be used as an operational fire station if needed while also offering a burn building and other props that can provide regional training needs. Rescue, medical, and emergency management training will also be offered at the facility.

grant money exclusively.

OAK RIDGE

TRISO-X LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of X-energy LLC, has announced the company will be building the country's first commercial advanced High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU) based nuclear reactor fuel fabrication facility of its kind. The new facility will be built at the Oak Ridge Horizon Center Industrial Park. Initial plans call for a 500,000-square-foot facility employing approximately 400 people. The facility will use uranium enriched to less than 20% to manufacture nuclear fuel products for a variety of advanced and small modular reactors, plus specialty fuels for space nuclear projects. The TF3 is being commissioned through part of \$1.1 billion from the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Reactor Demonstration

Program (ARDP). Scheduled for commissioning and startup as early as 2025, the TRISO-X Fuel Fabrication Facility (TF3). Site preparation and construction are expected to begin later this year.

RIPLEY

Officials with the city of Ripley, Lauderdale Community Hospital (LCH), USDA Rural Development, and the state have broken ground on a new critical access hospital to replace the current facility, which opened in 1983. The Lauderdale Community Hospital, in partnership with Stone Bank headquartered in Mountain View, Ark., received a \$15.9 million loan through the USDA Business and Industry Loan Guarantee program. This project will save 93 jobs and will provide access to modern healthcare for rural residents.

McMinnville brings in UT, local partners for wetland park project

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

McMinnville and University of Tennessee officials are partnering on a new municipal park project that will provide flood mitigation, educational opportunities, and community collaboration.

The project seeks to address a five-acre tract of land behind a local elementary school that is known to flood, often endangering homes on bordering streets, according to McMinnville Stormwater and GIS Coordinator Lyndon Bussell.

"The area is subject to periodic flooding due to major rain events," Bussell said. "It sometimes impacts the neighborhood there and houses may get flooded. The lot is virtually unbuildable due to standing water, which is almost constant through the summer months."

McMinnville City Administrator Nolan Ming said the problem has been ongoing for several years and there have been many discussions on what can be done in the area.

"In the past, we had discussed different ways to address these issues," Ming said. "That area is in a location where there is nowhere for that water to go. The ability to deal with the water and reduce the impact to the surrounding properties is very limited. We couldn't really put in new pipes or other infrastructure to solve the problem. But one thing that is a best practice is to use plants and vegetation to mitigate flooding there."

Bussell said discussions with Dennis Gregg, a research coordinator with the UT Institute of Agriculture, prompted the city to look into a more natural approach to the problem.

"We had talked with UT before about building a small wetland garden in the area because the soil and environment seemed to take to a wetland," Bussell said. "They did a small project there to enhance the wetland a little bit. As time went on, we noticed the area improved and this could become an entire feature on the property. As we continued to have discussions with UT and people involved, the idea of restoration and rehabilitation of the wetland came about. The idea became more of a park and now we are involving the schools. It has become more of a park with a community garden. It has kind of snowballed from mitigating the stormwater issue to becoming an asset to the community."

UT engineering students will work with the city to design both a park and wetland retention area that will mitigate flooding in the area. Initial plans for the park include the utilization of landscape design and green infrastructure to better manage runoff water. Bussell said the students will conduct a year-long project on the site.

A preliminary design plan will be submitted for approval to the city at the end of the spring semester. The final version of the plan will then be submitted to the city at the end of the year. Once a professional engineer and landscape architect has signed off on the student-led plan, the city can begin moving forward with work on the ground.

"The students who are working on it are passionate about using green infrastructure to mitigate issues," he said. "I think green infrastructure is more sustainable. It can be changed and altered accordingly. A lot of the traditional solutions are more costly, don't



Frequent standing water and flooding have been an issue on a tract of land behind a local elementary school, often causing damage to local houses. Using green infrastructure and natural wetland plants, the city of McMinnville has partnered with UT students and local stakeholders to start a project that will provide flood mitigation, educational opportunities, and a new park for the community.



have the same longevity, and are a lot harder to fix. I see this as a cost reduction for the city. It's also just better for the environment to have more green infrastructure."

Beyond mitigating area flooding issues, Ming said the project could help the city in other ways.

"We feel like any reduction in stormwater runoff will end up reducing our inflow and infiltration to our sewer system," Ming said. "It all works together."

Bussell said there are already frogs and crawfish living in the water area. By incorporating the wetland aspect, he said there is an

expectation the amount of wildlife drawn to the area will increase.

"We just need to enhance their ecosystem more so we can see more of them," he said. "We fully expect by the end of this project to have a more diverse ecosystem out there with birds, butterflies and the like, just by incorporating native species out there."

With McMinnville known as the nursery capital of the world, officials hope to source plants for the project from local nurseries.

"After we get the plans, we will at that time already have partnerships with all the local nurseries

in the area and be ready to execute the plan," Ming said. "The plan is to get all of the material from locally-owned and operated nurseries. All the labor will be done by local groups like Future Farmers of America, the gardening club, 4-H, and those kinds of groups. UT will oversee the installation. Once that is done, the partnership between the city and county schools will be in place. The city department of urban forestry will oversee that."

Dubbed the Bobby Ray Wetland Park Project, the plan shares its name with the neighboring

Left: Flooding and standing water has been an ongoing issue in the neighborhood behind the school. With there no other place to outsource the water that collects, city officials have landed on improving the wetland environment as a natural way of preventing flooding and bringing wildlife and beauty to the area.

Below: Students at neighboring Bobby Ray Memorial Elementary will also be able to take advantage of the park as an outdoor classroom utilizing the wetlands and with plans for community gardening plots. UT students have already worked with elementary students, incorporating them as they took pH samples in the area.



Bobby Ray Memorial Elementary, named after McMinnville native Marine medic and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient David Robert "Bobby" Ray who was killed during the Vietnam War.

Teachers at the school are hopeful the project will also provide more educational opportunities for students. Bussell said the school system already had a meeting where teachers discussed ways in which the park could provide functions as an outdoor classroom.

"The teachers are excited and had a lot of input about things they would like to see at the park," Bussell said. "They wanted to see a lot of picnic tables where families could go, sit, and enjoy the scenery and spend time together. The elementary school also wants a community garden. We are incorporating that idea as well where kids and other members of the community can come learn how their food is grown, pick it, and take it home. I know the UT students are involving the students at Bobby Ray to come and learn about pH tests and things like that while they make their plans. The kids are already interacting with the wetland before it becomes a park."

Ming said the park will also provide unique opportunities for citizens.

"Personally, I feel another park is another feather in our cap," Ming said. "This will be another park in the center of town, which is sometimes an underserved area. It's fantastic to have an interactive wetland in the middle of town."

As local officials and residents learn more about the project, Ming said they are intrigued by the concept. The park project stands to benefit various stakeholders in the community.

"There are several layers to this that make it a success," he said. "There is stormwater mitigation, which is the city trying to address stormwater issues. There is an education opportunity for the entire school district and the public in general who can come to this place and learn about a wetland. The students at UT are getting hands-on, real-life experience not only with designing something like this but interacting with the public."

Culture, benefits key to post-Covid recruitment, retention for governments

EMPLOYEES from Page 1 perfectly," he said. "For others, they miss that human interaction and conversations that are occurring in the office. Part of my challenge as leader of the agency and with my executive team is that while those conversations are happening in the office we have to be inclusive of our remote workforce as well. We have to bring them into those discussions."

Bonuses for recruitment, retention, and team performance bonuses as well as additional benefits can also be effective recruitment tools.

"We are reviewing how we can do things differently for leave time such as giving them an 80-hour balance from the start so that they come in with vacation time ready," Weaver said. "More importantly, they aren't earning leaving at the starting level of an employee but we can bring them up to the top

level at the beginning. There a lot of things we can do without a major financial impact. Our HR department is working with our chief financial officer about what benefits there could be and how to implement these things."

With government jobs unable to compete with private sector salary, giving employees a sense that they are contributing to the public good can also be a major selling point.

"We are seeing more and more there are folks who find the mission important," Britain said. "As salaries rise in the private sector, people are coming to work for the state because they are interested in that public service role. We know we aren't going to get them because of the salary, so we have to get them on mission. It's important to talk about the value they provide for their neighbors when they show up for the interview."

Managers who are invested in their employees can also determine if an employee stays or goes, Britain said.

"People aren't quitting their jobs as much as they are quitting their managers," he said. "There needs to be a realization that our managers are facing down culture shifts. It's a good idea to enlist them in the conversations we are having about job retention. This could be the leadership challenge of their career. We need to invest in managers to they can be effective mentors, coaches and leaders in more ways than just getting the work done. It's about promoting people and setting the right culture. That's where investment dollars are worthwhile and will pay dividends."

Weaver said managers need to be versed in soft skills such as body language, employee engagement, social connections, and building relationships.

Britain and Weaver both agreed that the days of employees remaining in the same job from graduation through retirement are over. Instead, local governments not only have to accept but support decisions by employees to leave the public sector – with the knowledge that they may return.

It is no longer about recruiting the career employee," Weaver said. "That isn't going to work anymore. We have to be willing to hire individuals for about a three to five-year stint and accept that this person is going to leave for the private sector – but perhaps will come back. What we are seeing in our area is a progression of private sector employees coming back to the public sector. I hate to say it this way, but the private sector is where they make their money and they come back to that public sector for that work/life balance."

Britain said it is better to focus

internship and mentorship programs that help new recruits focus on making a longer-term career in government. Rather than seeking fresh college graduates, Britain said governments may need to consider recruiting from the high school level and technical programs for talent. Employees who have the aptitude for learning and ability to be trained may be more valuable than those with four-year degrees.

Additionally, Britain said re-vamping job descriptions to reflect new realities can be important.

"You don't need 10 years' experience and a doctorate in high energy physics to be a wireless technician," he said. "Scaling down some of our job advertisements has been important. Some of them read as 'how dare you apply for this job.' Also providing mentorship programs for these recruits is important."



PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Maria Bush has been selected as the new open records counsel in the Tennessee Comptroller's Office of Open Records Counsel (OORC). Prior to joining the OORC, Bush was an associate general counsel for the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI). She has also worked as a law clerk with Taylor, Pigue, Marchetti, and Blair. Bush is a graduate of Nashville's Aquinas College and earned her law degree from the Belmont University College of Law. She will begin her work with the OORC in May.



Maria Bush

surge in residential, commercial and industrial building activities in the city. Johnson has also been honored for the mentorship and professional development opportunities he has offered his employees. Johnson will be succeeded by Elizabeth Reed, who has been with the department since 2019.

Paul Noel, current deputy chief of the New Orleans Police Department, has been named the new police chief for the city of Knoxville. Noel is the deputy superintendent in charge of the New Orleans PD's criminal investigations division and was a finalist for the title of Chattanooga police chief earlier this year. Noel has spent 25 years with NOPD, working his way up from patrol officer to chief of field operations in 2015. He also created the Ethical Policing Is Courageous program (EPIC), a peer intervention program to educate, empower, and support officers who stop wrongful actions by other officers. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Loyola University New Orleans. Noel will take over the position from Chief Eve Thomas, the first female chief of police for Knoxville, who announced her retirement last fall. His first day will be June 13.



Paul Noel

He rose through the ranks to serve as fire lieutenant, battalion chief, fire marshal, and finally to assistant fire chief in 1990. He has also served as a task force leader for Tennessee Urban Search and Rescue Task Force One and was one of the firefighters who responded to the Pentagon on 9/11.

Asailio "Ace" Timmermeier has been hired as first tourism coordinator for the city of Springfield. A native of the city, Timmermeier has more than a decade of experience working in the city and most recently served as senior manager of community impact for the United Way of Greater Nashville, where she has been employed since 2019. The new position is funded exclusively through the hotel occupancy tax and will be responsible for tourism development and promotion. She holds a degree in organizational leadership and a bachelor's degree in professional studies from Lipscomb University.



Asailio Timmermeier

Dr. David Edwards, longtime city manager for Lakesite, will retire in June after 30 years of service to the community. Edwards has served as the city's city manager since 1992 and also became the city's first certified municipal finance officer (CMFO). Before coming to Lakesite, Edwards was a professor at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and remains an associate professor emeritus with the Political Science and Public Service Department. Edwards holds a bachelor's degree in agricultural entomology for the University of Georgia, a master's of public administration from Valdosta State College, and a doctorate of public administration from the University of Georgia. He also worked for several years with the Georgia Extension Service. He is a member of several professional organizations including the American Society for Public Administration, International City Managers Association, Tennessee City Managers Association, and Government Finance Officers Association.



David Edwards

Josh Ray has been selected as the new town manager for Signal Mountain following a national search over several months. Ray has about 20 years of city manager experience and most recently served as the city manager of Shelbyville from January 2021 until March 2022. Signal Mountain's last town manager, Boyd Veal, retired in December 2021 after serving in the role since 2014. Before coming to Shelbyville in 2021, Ray was the city manager of Lago Vista, Texas, from 2017 to 2020. Before that, he served for seven years as the city manager of Aztec, N.M. Ray holds a master's degree in public affairs from Western Carolina University and a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina.



Josh Ray

Todd Wilcox has been named the new city recorder for the town of Erwin. Wilcox also serves as a sergeant with the Erwin Police Department and previously served as a Unicoi County commissioner. Wilcox is both a veteran of the U.S. Airforce and the U.S. Army National Guard. Wilcox also holds a master's degree. He will be taking over the position from interim City Recorder and former Mayor Doris Hensley, who stepped into the role after the departure of City Recorder Travis Bishop.



Todd Wilcox

Molly Glass, director of parks and recreation for the city of Covington, recently competed the ICMA - International City/County Management Association High Performance Leadership Academy. The three-month program equips local government professionals with leadership skills in organizational development and change management, negotiation and collaboration, effective communication, and how to deliver increased value from high performance management. The focus is to provide mentoring from these experts on the best ways to effectively identify and overcome challenging organizational and market conditions all while being effective in today's increasingly complex environments.



Molly Glass

Fred Schultz has been named chief of police for the Athens Police Department. Schultz has served as the department's interim chief for the past six months and before that served as lieutenant over the department's Special Services Division. A native of Athens, he has been with the Athens Police Department since 2004. Prior to that, he spent 12 years with the McMinn County Sheriff's Office and was with the Regional Drug Task Force for a year. Schultz is also a six-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.



Fred Schultz

David Wilson, who served Goodlettsville as a former city manager, mayor, and vice mayor, died at the age of 83 after decades of service to his community. A Goodlettsville native, Wilson graduated from Middle Tennessee State University before beginning 40 years in service to his community. He served as a member of the planning commission, city commissioner, vice mayor, mayor, city manager, chairman of the industrial development board, and most recently as executive director of the Goodlettsville Chamber of Commerce. Wilson was named Tennessee City Manager of the Year by TML in 1998, and he served on the numerous boards, including the boards of TML and MTAS. Last year, the city of Goodlettsville name is new community development facility the David Wilson Community Development Complex to honor Wilson for his 19 years as city manager and 11 years on the city commission.



David Wilson

Mike Harrison, former state representative and mayor of Hancock County, has been tapped to serve as executive director of the First Tennessee Development District (FTDD). Harrison will take over from interim director Sue Reid, who has been serving in the role since the departure of previous director Chris Craig in January. Harrison will assume the new role on June 1 and will manage day-to-day operations for the FTDD. Harrison currently serves at the executive director of the Association of County Mayors, an affiliate of the Tennessee County Services Association.



Mike Harrison

John Selberg, who presently serves as fire chief for Germantown, has been selected as the new fire chief for Collierville. Selberg will take over July 1 from Collierville Chief Buddy Billings, who announced his retirement earlier this year. Selberg has been the fire chief for Germantown since August 2011. Selberg began his career with the Germantown Fire Department as a firefighter in 1980.



John Selberg

Kelly Wolfe, former mayor of Jonesborough, has been appointed to fill a vacancy left on the Jonesborough Board of Mayor and Alderman left by the resignation of Alderman Stephen Callahan to focus on his business. Wolfe will serve in the alderman position until November when the city holds its next election. Wolfe served nearly 10 years as mayor of Jonesborough after stepping down in 2018.



Kelly Wolfe

19 lawmakers not returning to TN General Assembly



Following the April 7 filing deadline, 19 members of the Tennessee General Assembly have announced they do not intend to seek re-election this fall. Four members of the Senate and 15 members of the House will not be back on the ballot.

Nearly 20 members of the Tennessee General Assembly have announced they will not seek re-election for their seats this fall. The candidate filing deadline for state office was April 7.

At least four lawmakers not seeking re-election are involved in ongoing federal investigations. Four legislators are seeking another office, two in a higher chamber of the legislature and two others positions outside state government.

SENATE

Four members of the Senate have announced they will not be seeking re-election to their seats in the fall.

Sen. Mike Bell, R-Riceville, is not running again for his District 9 seat. Bell has represented District 9 since 2011.

Sen. Brenda Gilmore, D-Nashville, announced she will not seek re-election to her District 19 seat. Gilmore has represented District 19 since 2019 and before that served in the State House for District 54 between 2007 and 2019. Before seeking election to state office, Gilmore was a member of the Metro Nashville City Council from 1993 to 2003.

Sen. Brian Kelsey, R-Germantown, will not seek re-election to the District 31 seat he has held since 2009. Kelsey was indicted in 2021 by the U.S. Department of Justice for violating multiple campaign finance laws in 2016. Prior to serving in the state senate, Kelsey represented House District 83 from 2004 to 2009.

Sen. Katrina Robinson, D-Memphis, was ousted prior to the beginning of the General Session in January following a federal fraud conviction. Robinson had represented District 33 from 2019 to 2022.

State Rep. London Lamar, D-Memphis, was appointed to Robinson's seat for the remainder of the session and has announced she intends to run for Robinson's seat in the fall, opening up the field for her House District 91 seat.

HOUSE

In the House, 15 sitting members have announced they will not seek re-election this fall, including Lamar.

Rep. Eddie Mannis, R-Knoxville, announced he will not run again so that he can focus on his Knoxville based businesses. Mannis was elected to the District 18 seat in 2020.

Rep. Mark Hall, R-Cleveland, announced he will be leaving his District 24 seat to run for the state senate. Hall has represented District 24 since 2019 and prior to that served on the Bradley County Commission from 2006 to 2014.

Rep. Robin Smith, R-Hixson, resigned earlier this year after pleading guilty to federal charges. Smith had represented District 26 since 2018. Prior to that, she served as chair of the Tennessee Republi-

can Party from 2007 to 2009.

Rep. Greg Martin, R-Hixson, was appointed to fill her seat in the interim and has announced he will run for the seat in the fall. Martin previously served as a Hamilton County commissioner.

Rep. Kent Calfee, R-Kingston, will not seek re-election to the District 32 seat he has held since 2013. Prior to that, Calfee served for 20 years as a Roane County commissioner.

Rep. Jerry Sexton, R-Bean Station, will not seek re-election after serving in the District 35 seat since 2015.

Rep. Mike Stewart, D-Nashville, will not seek re-election to the District 52 seat he has held since 2009. Stewart said he intends to shift his energy to "protecting America's democratic system."

Rep. Jason Potts, D-Nashville, will also not be seeking another term representing District 59. Potts has held the seat since 2018 and said that stress and low pay contributed to his decision to not seek another term. Potts previously served two terms on the Metro Nashville City Council.

Rep. Brandon Ogles, R-Franklin, will not be running again for the District 61 seat. Ogles has held the seat since 2018.

Rep. Glen Casada, R-Franklin, is not running again for his District 63 seat. The former Speaker of the House is presently under federal investigation. He filed paperwork to run for Williamson County clerk, but lost the Republican primary race held May 3.

Rep. Jason Hodges, D-Clarksville, announced he will not run again for the District 67 seat. Hodges was first elected to the seat in 2018. Prior to that, he served on the Montgomery County Commission from 2014 to 2018.

Rep. Michael Curcio, R-Dickson, will not seek re-election to the District 69 seat. Curcio was first elected to the seat in 2016, and said he is leaving the State House to focus on his family and business.

Rep. David Byrd, R-Waynesboro, announced he would not seek re-election to District 71. Byrd spent eight months in the hospital with COVID-19 and required a liver transplant as a result in 2021.

Rep. Bruce Griffey, R-Paris, has announced he will not be seeking his District 75 seat in order to run for circuit judge for the 24th judicial district. Griffey has held the District 75 seat since 2018. He has previously served as both an assistant district attorney and an assistant Tennessee attorney general.

Rep. Curtis Halford, R-Dyer, will not seek re-election to the District 79 seat. Halford has represented the district since 2009. Prior to that, he served on the Gibson County Commission.

Tommie Johnson, building official for the city of Pipperton, has retired from his position after 10 years of service. During his time at the helm of the building department, Johnson grew the staff to four individuals and oversaw a



Tommie Johnson

WAUFORD

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

Legislative Summary: Second Session 112th General Assembly

LEGISLATION from Page 1 contributed to a slightly abbreviated 2022 session.

FY22-23 Budget Highlights

In January, Gov. Bill Lee rolled out his legislative priorities and spending plan during his fourth State of the State Address. Much of his proposed budget, including allocations later added in his budget amendment, was approved by the Legislature. However, the General Assembly and the Lee Administration disagreed on several issues, including the "Truth in Sentencing Act," funding for the new Titans stadium, and various other grant initiatives favored by the Governor.

Budget Highlights include:

- \$750 million for K-12 funding (placeholder for TISA, the replacement for BEP, which will take effect next fiscal year);
- \$250 million to "Rainy Day Fund" – an increase of the governor's initial \$50 million by redirecting \$200 million initially proposed by the governor to address 14 schools located in a flood plain;
- \$111 million for vendor compensation (businesses collecting and remitting sales tax);
- \$300 million for tax relief, including a one-month moratorium on the state's 4% sales tax on groceries – local option to be held harmless (\$80 million);
- \$25 million to fund increased incarceration costs associated with "Truth in Sentencing"
- \$55 million for principal and debt service to support authorization for issuing up to \$500 million in bonds for new Titans stadium;
- \$90 million for airport/general aviation support;

Bills Affecting Municipalities

In the 2022 legislative session, our legislative team identified 522 new bills that either directly affected or had the potential to directly affect municipal authority or operations. Consideration of legislation by the various Senate and House Committees began in earnest the week of Jan. 31 and continued through the final week of April. During that three-month period, about 40 percent of these bills were considered by the various committees. Our team either directly engaged legislators or closely monitored an average of 79 bills in 21 different committees in each of the five most active weeks of the session; peaking at 112 bills during the week of March 7. The legislative and communications team coordinated on 37 legislative alerts sent in support of municipal positions on various bills of importance and mobilized members of the Municipal Advocacy Committee (MAC) as warranted.

Included among the bills our team closely monitored this session were more than a dozen bills that sought to either limit or eliminate local authority, including legislation addressing Airbnb, deannexation, zoning and land use decisions among other subjects.

The team engaged in protracted and multi-faceted battles on many of these preemption bills as final consideration was deferred for various reasons. Some deferments were granted at the request of either the bill's sponsor or committee members. In addition, the late introduction of various amendments led to additional delays. Finally, the referral of several of these bills to multiple committees of jurisdiction combined with deferrals and amendments to prolong these battles. As a consequence of these various delays, six preemption bills were considered for six or more consecutive weeks, or roughly half of the session. Moreover, as a result of this consecutive string, many of these preemption bills were considered by various Senate and House committees at the same time, along with other legislation of importance to municipalities. In the end, the efforts of our team, working in coordination with the Municipal Advocacy Committee and assisted by the emails and calls of responsive individual municipal officials, not a single preemption bill became law.

Not all bills considered by the General Assembly this year sought to restrict local authority. There were a number of bills adopted that were favorable to local government. For example, legislators approved legislation granting local governments the ability to prohibit or otherwise regulate smoking and the use of vapor products in age-restricted venues. The General Assembly also adopted legislation extending the current authority to treat certain video captured by police officer's body-worn video cameras as confidential and not subject to public inspection through July 1, 2027. New authority was also granted local government to regulate "entertainment transportation services," allowing municipalities to regulate the activities of trucks, buses, trailers and other transportation vehicles that are used primarily for entertainment on city streets.

TML Legislative Initiatives

Last summer, TML invited any elected or appointed municipal official to submit a proposed policy initiative that was signed by at least three eligible local officials to be considered for inclusion in the League's annual legislative priorities. Qualifying submissions were reviewed and ranked by the TML Policy Committee, which is comprised of the TML Second Vice President and each of the eight district directors. Next, these proposals and accompanying rankings were considered by the TML Legislative Committee and its recommendations were presented to the TML Board for consideration. The TML Board reviewed each submission, the Policy Committee's rankings and the recommendations of the Legislative Committee, prior to voting to establish the League's legislative priorities for the upcoming session. At the conclusion of this process, the Board directed the TML

team to pursue six initiatives in the 2022 legislative session.

SSST and Single Article Campaign

The TML Board directed our team to pursue adoption of legislation restoring the historical sharing of state sales tax with municipalities that was altered in 2002. The Board also directed the team to attempt to secure authorization for local governments to receive the portion of sales tax collected on purchases between \$1,600 and \$3,200 that is normally reserved for the local option sales tax. To that end, Sen. Richard Briggs (SB2076) and Rep. Dale Carr (HB2012) introduced legislation related to the restoration of the sharing of state sales tax and Sen. Bill Powers (SB2469) and Rep. Gary Hicks (HB2562) sponsored a bill to allow local governments to retain the local option sales tax on the first \$3,200 of a purchase. Following introduction, members of the TML officers and Executive Director Anthony Haynes met with Butch Eley, Deputy to the Governor and Commissioner of Finance and Administration, to advocate for both initiatives. Throughout the session, the team met with officials in the Lee Administration, the leadership of the General Assembly, finance committee chairs and individual legislators to advocate for passage of these two bills. In addition to our team's advocacy efforts, TML engaged municipalities in a grassroots campaign as well as a statewide media campaign to inform state and local officials and local residents about the relevant issues and of the benefits afforded under the two bills.

Grassroots, Media Campaign

Our team conducted 14 online kickoff events across the state, which afforded an opportunity for every city official to learn more about the legislation and the purpose of the campaign and its components. In conjunction with these kickoff events, our team released an online tool kit that included talking points; video clips; one-page summaries; and estimated revenue gains statewide, by grand division, and by both House and Senate district to use when communicating with different audiences. In addition to the tool kit, a sample resolution was distributed to each city. Ultimately, 77 municipalities adopted resolutions urging their legislators to support the two bills. Lastly, the campaign included the distribution of a mayors' letter signed by 236 Tennessee mayors that was sent to Gov. Lee, Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, Speaker Cameron Sexton, and members of the General Assembly supporting passage of our state share and single article cap legislation.

In addition to these efforts to engage and mobilize municipalities, the team developed and launched a media campaign in each of the state's five regional media markets. This campaign involved the distribution of an Op-



"When TML came to me with the bill I figured we had about a two-percent chance. We gained so much ground, I really believe we can pass it next year," said Sen. Richard Briggs.

Ed article, penned by TML President and Franklin Mayor Dr. Ken Moore. President Moore's article was published in a Sunday edition of The Tennessean and reprinted in the Bristol Herald. The media campaign also resulted in local network news coverage in Middle and West Tennessee, featuring broadcast interviews with TML Board Members, including Mayors Paige Brown, Jim Strickland, Jill Holland, Keith McDonald and Justin Hanson. Locally-tailored information and statistics were distributed to the state's weekly papers, which resulted in favorable stories in print and online news publications across the state. Finally, the team utilized our social media presence to enhance our traditional media outreach posting seven different campaign-related items that received more than 2,200 unique views.

Additional TML Initiatives

In addition to SSST and Single Article, the Board directed the TML team to pursue four other initiatives. Three of these four initiatives are now law, while a fourth is positioned for quick action next year.

Small Cells

The first of these four additional initiatives was sponsored by the Town of Farragut and relates to the state's small cells law that was initially adopted in 2018. The team was successful in negotiating an agreement with cellular providers in Tennessee, which brings the provisions of state law into alignment with the more expansive authority afforded under federal law. This agreement was represented in legislation sponsored by Sen. Briggs (SB149) and Rep. Jason Zachary (HB170). The bill was adopted by the General Assembly and signed into law by the governor on April 8.

CMFO

A second initiative was initially proposed by several West Tennessee cities and has narrowly escaped enactment in each of the

last two legislative sessions. Since 2020, TML has pursued legislation championed by Sen. Ed Jackson (SB1985) and Rep. Dale Carr (HB2039) to fund a payment and the reimbursement of expenses. In addition, Comptroller Jason Mum-power remains a vocal and active proponent for this funding. This year, our multi-year persistence was rewarded as the final budget agreement includes the Comptroller's requested funds.

Harmonizing Compensation

A third initiative sought to bring uniformity to the manner in which the compensation of members of a municipal governing body are compensated. Sen. Rusty Crowe (SB2564) and Rep. Tandy Darby (HB1949) filed legislation to harmonize the establishment of compensation. This legislation was adopted by the General Assembly and signed into law by the governor on April 26.

Electronic Meetings

The last of these four additional initiatives did not become law; however, the League expects to be positioned to push for quick adoption next year. This year, the legislative team sought to fulfill the Board's directive by building upon last year's agreement with the Tennessee Coalition on Open Government (TCOG) to allow any local government to conduct meetings electronically in times of a declared emergency and to allow local citizen advisory committees to meet electronically. This initiative was incorporated into an amendment that Sen. Page Walley (SB971) and Rep. Jerome Moon (HB1029) were prepared to offer to their bill. Prior to consideration of the amendment, TCOG expressed concerns about the provisions related to citizen committees. Rather than rush through a revision or risk jeopardizing the agreement, we consulted with the bill's sponsors and agreed to work to arrive at a definition of citizen advisory committee that satisfies local government and TCOG.

No loan is too large or too small



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



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

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STATE BRIEFS

The Tennessee Entertainment Commission (TEC) announced a new franchise and excise (F&E) tax credit program aimed to advance Tennessee's entertainment industry by promoting job creation and economic development. Companies approved as a qualified production can apply for a tax credit generated through resident and non-resident Tennessee payroll expenses and apply for a point of purchase sales tax exemption certificate on non-payroll expenses. To learn more about the new F&E tax credit program, visit tntentertainment.com/film/incentives/fe-incentive

Statewide unemployment reached its lowest rate in history in March 2022. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) showed the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased to 3.2%, the lowest level ever recorded. The decrease of 0.2% in March allowed the month to eclipse the previous all-time low rate of 3.3%, recorded in August 2019. The latest rate is 1.7%, lower than it was this time last year. Tennessee reached this historic low just 23 months after it marked its all-time highest unemployment rate of 15.9% in April 2020, during the height of pandemic-related business closures across the state

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) announced the state broadband map is now available for public comment. The map is available on the TNECD mapping site, and the public comment period closes on May 30, 2022. TNECD invites broadband providers, local leaders and community members to provide input on the map via TNECD's broadband site. Following the May 30, 2022, deadline, TNECD will work with Connected Nation to make any necessary validations and adjustments to the map. TNECD anticipates releasing an updated version of the map in late summer 2022. For more info, visit <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/tnecd-broadband-initiative.html>.

Two Tennessee rivers are on the list of most endangered rivers in the U.S. The Coosa and Mississippi rivers, both of which flow through Tennessee were ranked fifth and sixth respectively on the list of ten most endangered rivers in the U.S. by American Rivers, an organization that highlights threats to both the environment and residents living along these waterways. Agricultural pollution was listed as the biggest threat to the Coosa River while pollution and habitat loss were cited as the biggest threats to the Mississippi River.

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) announced 28 of the 56 Tennessee State Parks have attained Platinum status, the highest level of achievement, in the department's Go Green With Us program. It is the highest number of Platinum parks in the history of the program. The comprehensive Go Green With Us program, established in 2015, incorporates guidelines throughout park operations that help staff and guests become more environmentally friendly. Parks implement sustainability

practices and are recognized in the spring near Earth Day. A total of 37 parks this year increased by one level in status from the last assessment in 2020, with 22 parks achieving Gold status and six Silver. Park visitors are encouraged to ask about their park's Go Green initiative and what they can do to participate. More information about the program can be found online at <https://tnstateparks.com/about/go-green-with-us>.

The projected growth of Tennessee's over 60 population will outpace the availability of public services in the state designed to keep seniors out of nursing homes, according to a new report from the office of Tennessee Comptroller Jason Mumpower. The state's population of those 60 and older is expected to increase 30% over the next 20 years with the number of those 80 and older projected to double at the same period. The three key programs for seniors administered by TennCare, Tennessee's Medicaid program, and the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability are already over capacity with long waiting lists. State and federal funds will be required to improve these programs to meet increasing demand. As a result of programs already being overburdened, the report noted that there is an increased in unlicensed facilities targeting the elderly and vulnerable adults. For the complete report, visit <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/research-and-education-accountability/publications/other-topics/content/senior-long-term-care-in-tennessee--trends-and-options0.html>

Two interstates that run through Tennessee were ranked among the top 10 deadliest interstate highways in the country. Interstate 40 ranked as the third deadliest interstate in the country with a total of 270 crashes in 2020 and an average of 10.6 fatalities per mile while Interstate 75 ranked fourth on the list with 246 fatalities in 2020 and 13.8 fatalities per 100 miles. The data was compiled from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 2020 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and covers nearly 40,000 interstate fatalities reported in 2020. The report also found that Mississippi, Wyoming, and Arkansas had the highest incidents of fatalities on interstates. The study found Interstate 95 to be the most dangerous interstate in the country with 379 deaths in 2020 or 19.7 deaths per 100 miles. The road travels through Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

TNECD has announced the first round of the Tennessee Historic Development Grant Program (HDGP). The funds encourage communities and private developers to invest in buildings that have contributed to a community's history but now sit idle. A letter of intent is required to participate and can be submitted until June 15, 2022, to confirm eligibility of the historic property by TNECD and the Tennessee Historical Commission. Applications will be accepted June 30 through Aug. 19, 2022. To apply or for more info, visit <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/historic-development-grant-program.html>.

TDEC opens applications for ARP funds

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) announced the application process is open for non-competitive grants from the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP), which TDEC is partially administering for the state.

The funds are targeted for improving water infrastructure in communities throughout Tennessee.

The American Rescue Plan of 2021 was designed to help Americans recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Tennessee received \$3.725 billion from the ARP, and the state's Financial Stimulus Accountability Group dedicated \$1.35 billion of those funds to water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects.

Of the \$1.35 billion, approximately \$1 billion was designated for the non-competitive formula-based grants, and the application process for those grants begins now. The remaining \$269 million of the total will go to state-initiated projects and toward competitive grants.

"We have an opportunity to greatly enhance our water infrastructure in communities across our state," TDEC Commissioner David Salyers said. "These funds can go a long way, although our need for water infrastructure improvements still greatly exceeds what is covered in this plan. We look forward to what these funds will bring to deserving communities."

Reports from the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the TN H2O plan led by TDEC say the necessary investment in Tennessee water infra-



structure ranges from \$5 billion to \$15 billion between now and 2040.

TDEC conducted a virtual town hall, webinars and grant workshops leading up to the applications period for the non-competitive grants. TDEC is focusing the grants on the following goals:

Protect and promote human health and safety and improve the quality of water by supporting water systems in non-compliance to work toward compliance with water quality requirements

Improve the technical, managerial, and financial capabilities of small, disadvantaged, or underserved water infrastructure systems

Address critical water infrastructure needs across the state

TDEC will review, evaluate and recommend grant awards within 30 days of receiving a complete grant proposal and application. TDEC will announce grant awards and execute contracts within 60 days of the recommendations. Grant applicants should anticipate

project management discussions with TDEC during the process.

Funds from the ARP must be obligated by Dec. 31, 2024 and expended by Dec. 31, 2026.

TDEC's non-competitive grant manual can be found at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/arp/non-competitive-grant.html>.

Those interested in submitting formal applications should visit the TDEC Online Grants Management System. Users will need to register and login, then search for "DWR-ARP Collaborative Grants State Water Infrastructure Grants (SWIG) Program."

TDEC's strategy for deployment of ARP funds is described in the Water Infrastructure Investment Plan. This plan was developed by TDEC based on input from leaders and experts from agencies internal and external to state government. The plan can be found at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/environment/arp/documents/arp_tdec-water-infrastructure-investment-plan.pdf.

State revenues \$286.8M above estimates

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

Overall March revenues totaled \$1.6 billion, which is \$286.8 million, or 22.78% more than the state received in March of 2021 and \$348.8 million more than the budgeted estimate for the month.

"Total tax revenues for March exhibited remarkable growth compared to this same time last year," Eley said. "Of the \$286.8 million in additional tax revenue, nearly 70% is attributed to growth in sales tax collections, based on February sales tax activity in all categories of industry. Specifically, building materials grew 33.99%, general merchandise retailers saw 15.22% growth, food stores grew 11.43 percent, auto dealers and service stations saw a 19.50% increase in sales taxes, apparel and accessory retailers grew 36.58%, home furnishing retailers grew 23.51%, restaurants and bars serving food grew 33.41% and sales tax receipts on taxable services grew 45.70%. Aside from sales taxes, we saw notable growth in franchise and excise taxes, privilege taxes and motor vehicle registration fee receipts in March.

"At this time, the large tax growth we have experienced in these first eight months of the fiscal year puts the state in a good position to meet and exceed budgeted revenue estimates within the next few months. Nevertheless, we will continue to closely monitor our monthly receipts, being mindful we are in an extremely inflated economy and a large number of

uncertainties still exist."

On an accrual basis, March is the eighth month in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

General fund revenues were \$324.4 million more than the budgeted estimate while the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were \$24.4 million more than the estimates.

Sales tax revenues were \$196 million more than the estimate for March and were 25.53% more than March 2021. For eight months revenues are \$1.5 billion more than estimated. The year-to-date growth rate for eight months was 17.88%.

Franchise and excise tax revenues combined were \$114.6 million more than the budgeted estimate in March and the growth rate was 23.52%. For eight months, revenues are \$828.8 million more than the estimate and the year-to-date growth rate is 33.72%.

Gasoline and motor fuel revenues for March increased by 3.13% compared to March 2021 and were \$0.4 million less than the budgeted estimate of \$83.6 million. For eight months, fuel tax revenues are above estimate by \$33.4 million.

Motor vehicle registration revenues were \$10.4 million more than the March estimate, and on a year-to-date basis they are \$12.5 million more than estimates.

Tobacco tax revenues were \$1 million more than the March budgeted estimate of \$19.8 million. For eight months, revenues are \$2.8 million less than the year-to-date budgeted estimate.

Privilege tax revenues were \$13.3 million more than the March estimate. On a year-to-date basis, August through March, revenues

are \$116.8 million more than the estimate.

Business tax revenues were \$8 million more than the March estimate. For eight months, revenues are \$12.3 million more than the budgeted estimate.

Hall income tax revenues for the month were \$0.4 million more than the budgeted estimate. For eight months, revenues are \$4.4 million more than the budgeted estimate.

Mixed drink, or liquor-by-the-drink, taxes were \$5.3 million more than the March estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, revenues are \$32.4 million more than the budgeted estimate.

All other taxes were more than budgeted estimates by a net of \$0.2 million.

Year-to-date revenues, August through March, are \$2.5 billion more than the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for eight months is 18.62 percent. General fund revenues are \$2.3 billion more than the budgeted estimate and the four other funds are \$151.1 million more than estimated.

The budgeted revenue estimates for 2021-2022 are based on the State Funding Board's consensus recommendation of November 24, 2020 and adopted by the first session of the 112th General Assembly in April 2021. Also incorporated in the estimates are any changes in revenue enacted during the 2021 session of the General Assembly.

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

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Unpacking some technical email terms

BY JOE HOWLAND, VC3

Many people view SPF, DKIM, and DMARC as the equivalent of organizational antispam protection. These terms are used all the time on audits and insurance questionnaires related to antispam. However, no one seems to understand that these technologies alone do not protect you from spam.

Sender Policy Framework (SPF). SPF is a way to ensure that the email sent to you is actually sent by the domain it claims (such as vc3.com). If an organization uses the Sender Policy Framework, they explicitly document on a sort of public list that the email servers sending their email are allowed to send that email. Your email software then checks the source of the email with this list. If it's confirmed, then the email is deemed safe. If not, then the email is deemed suspicious.

To use an analogy, think of SPF like receiving a package from a friend from a physical address and that friend texted you to confirm they sent the package from that address. With this security check, it's highly unlikely that the package was sent from someone other than your friend from a different address. However, to continue the analogy, some friends may not text you to confirm—and so you may receive some packages from friends without any confirmation those packages came from their address. Similarly, an email from an organization not using SPF isn't necessarily spam—it's just that you can't confirm with certainty that it came from their email servers.

SPF alone is not antispam. For example, a spammer can still spoof the from line in an email and not get flagged by SPF because the protocol cannot form any logical connection between a spoofed name and the domain sending it. In other words, if a spammer sets up SPF correctly, the protocol will identify that the email comes from a legitimate

source. However, SPF doesn't flag the false information in the from line, which can trick you.

DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM). The intent behind DKIM is the same as SPF but uses a slightly different approach. Instead of focusing on authorized email servers like SPF, DKIM is a digital signature that works like a digital "handshake." The sender digitally signs the email and the receiver confirms the digital signature. When this "handshake" happens, it indicates that the email was sent from the correct domain and that the contents of the message (such as the from field, subject line, body of the message, etc.) were not altered in transit.

A good analogy would be to think of a spy novel. Imagine two spies exchanging a message but needing to confirm it's authentic. One spy says one part of a code phrase and the other spy completes the other part. Only those two know this code, and so they know the message they exchange is legitimate. While a crude example, it essentially captures the essence of this DKIM digital handshake. It gives you the confidence through a near-impossible-to-crack digital signature that a message has not been corrupted.

So why is DKIM alone not antispam? First, other parts of the email not identified in the DKIM digital signature could be altered in transit. Second, a spammer could share a legitimate DKIM digital signature from their domain and then spoof the From line. For example, I might send out emails from my spam servers with correct DKIM digital signatures that your email program confirms—but then I can attempt to trick you by using your CEO's name in the From line. Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC)

DMARC is the simplest of the three terms to explain. Through DMARC, you tell the servers that receive your emails what to do if they fail the SPF and/or DKIM test. You can tell the servers to do nothing, to quarantine the email, or to reject the email. DMARC not

only protects you from malicious and junk emails, but it also protects the reputation of your organization. For example, if a spammer is spoofing your organization and sending out emails as you, then your domain reputation would decrease if you did nothing. With DMARC, you proactively tell servers that receive your emails to reject or quarantine suspicious emails.

For an analogy, let's say you're working at a government office and require two proofs of ID for someone to receive a document. If someone brings only one proof, or if someone's ID fails in some way (such as the addresses on the IDs not matching), then you would halt the process and either ask for additional information or refuse to hand over the document.

A Holistic Antispam Strategy

SPF, DKIM, and DMARC are just one element of an overall set of antispam techniques. A combination of antispam software embedded in existing email platforms, customized settings, non-technical email policies set by your organization, and additional techniques overseen by IT professionals all contribute to an antispam strategy. In addition, your antispam software, settings, and strategy may include:

- Scanning email attachments for viruses and malware
- Filtering out suspected spam based on known malicious IP addresses, invalid email addresses, and likely spam content
- Filtering out legitimate emails that are simply junk or unwanted
- Ensuring that outbound emails from your organization are not flagged as spam
- Using advanced techniques to stay ahead of the latest spammer tricks

Implementing these technologies involves more than just checking incoming messages for spam. It's about being a good steward of your information. If you're ticking SPF, DKIM, and DMARC off on a list and thinking they're your antispam strategy, then you're missing the big picture. If you're unsure about your antispam situation, then reach out to us today through the form below.

NATIONAL BRIEFS



Most major metro cities lost population as the result of the pandemic, though the South and West saw an increase in migration. New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, San Jose, Boston, Miami, and Washington D.C. saw some of the highest losses in residents with tens of thousands of inhabitants moving away. However, other cities like Dallas, Phoenix, and Houston saw an increase in population through a combination of migration and births outpacing deaths. The U.S. Census bureau reported that micropolitan areas – those with a core city having less than 50,000 residents – gained population during the pandemic as did smaller population areas. Migration drove most of these population gains with deaths outpacing births three-quarters of the country.

The amount of pills containing illicit fentanyl seized by law enforcement increased nearly 50-fold between 2018 and 2021, according to new research from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). By the end of 2021, pills represented more than a quarter of fentanyl seizures by law enforcement. The U.S. hit a record high in the number of overdose deaths recorded in 2021 with 106,000 Americans dying in a 12-month period ending in October. Synthetic opioids and fentanyl are largely to blame for this increase. Fentanyl is highly potent, cheaply made and

is often used by those naïve to drug use with low tolerances, increasing the risk for overdose and death.

Pedestrian deaths are on the rise across American with a 17% increase in fatalities in the first six months of 2021 alone. The Governors Highway Safety Association said that 3,400 pedestrians were killed in the first half of 2021 by drivers and the number of pedestrians killed by drivers has increased by 46% in the past decade. Research noted that 80% of states saw an increase in the number of pedestrian fatalities reported.

Executive Committee Board to Meet May 19

The Executive Committee of the Tennessee Municipal League Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at 12:45 p.m. in the at the law office of Spencer Fane, 511 Union Street, Suite 1000, Nashville, TN 37219 for the purpose of considering revisions to the organizational by-laws drafted by counsel as directed by the TML Board on March 14, 2022. The executive director will also discuss recent revisions to the organization's Employee Handbook. Additional information may be obtained from Jackie Gupton, 615-255-6416.





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May 20-21: Wartburg
7th Annual Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival

Each year when the mountain laurel blooms, this Wartburg festival shows off their natural splendor via For more info, visit <https://www.tennesseemountainlaurelfestival.com/>

May 25-26: Tullahoma
Arts Alive Tullahoma

Celebrating the legacy of the Country Blues in the hometown of Blues Pioneers "Sleepy" John Estes, Hammie Nixon and Yank Rachell. For more info, visit <https://www.exit56blues.com/>

May 28-29: Brownsville
Exit 56 Blues Fest

The Arts Alive juried arts festival will consist of drawing, painting, photography, digital design, crafts (contemporary and traditional), sculpture, pottery, wood and glass. For more info, visit <https://www.tullahomaaartsCouncil.com/arts-alive>

June 4: Red Boiling Springs
Red Boiling Springs Folk Medicine Festival

Where healing arts practitioners, biodynamic farmers, organic gardeners, artists, craftsmen, singers, musicians, dancers, storytellers all come together to celebrate the restorative power of nature. For more info, visit <https://www.facebook.com/folkmedicinefestival>

June 4-5: Lenoir City
59th Annual Lenoir City Arts and Crafts Festival

Thousands of buyers from throughout the greater Knoxville area and beyond will come view the wares of some 240 crafters. Items range from ceramics and glassware to metal work and jewelry, to baskets and much more. For more info, visit <https://lenoircityartsandcrafts.com/>

June 16-19: Manchester
Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival

The iconic music and arts festival returns to Manchester. For more info, visit <https://www.bonnaroo.com/>

June 18: Bell Buckle
RC Cola and Moon Pie Festival

This wacky, fun for the whole family event celebrates the South's original fast food – an ice cold RC Cola and a fresh MoonPie.. For more info, visit <https://bellbucklechamber.com/rc-cola-moonpie-festival/>

June 18: Oak Ridge
Jackson Square Lavender Festival

Tennessee's only festival celebrating lavender, good health, herbs and the environment is back again in Jackson Square Oak Ridge. For more info, visit <https://jackson-squarelavenderfestival.org/>

Cities salute public works employees for National Public Works Week



Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, with representatives of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association (TCAPWA), presented the proclamation recognizing May 15-21, 2022, as Public Works Week in Tennessee.



The town of Farragut Public Works Department works hard every day to keep the town's public properties beautiful and operational. In 2021, the department designed and built a 45-foot lighted Christmas tree at Mayor Ralph McGill Plaza.



Above: The city of Columbia's public works traffic crew works to install a new public parking sign in the city.



Right: A Brighton public works crew removed a downed tree following winter weather.



Above: A Galatin public works employees works on the city's Lakeshore drive stormwater project.

Left: Greeneville public works employees provide tractor hayrides as part of a downtown Halloween event.



Paris Public Works employees Zack Braham and Andru Tharpe painting the street light poles around the city of Paris Court Square.



Top Left: Red Bank public works employees repair pot holes in the city.



Top Right: Nolensville Public Works employees keep the flag flying.

Right: Public works crews with the city of Mt. Juliet clean up debris after a tornadic event struck the city in December 2021.

To see more ways in which public works employees contribute to cities across Tennessee, visit our full online slideshow at: <https://tic.tml1.org/2022/05/03/cities-salute-public-works-employees-national-public-works-week>



Employees of the Munford Public Works Department working hard on the job.

2022 Tennessee Police Memorial ceremony held in Nashville

The 21st Annual Tennessee Police Memorial ceremony was held in the Tennessee Legislative Plaza in Nashville on May 10 to honor 19 fallen officers from across the state.

Hosted by the Tennessee Fraternal Order of Police and Concerned Police Survivors (COPS), the annual ceremony brings together state officials, statewide law enforcement agencies, families, and the public to honor law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Names of fallen officers are also annually added to the Tennessee Police Memorial located on the site along with the state's War Memorial Plaza. The event is part of National Police Week, which was held from May 11-16 this year.

Officers honored during this year's ceremony included:

- Darrell Adams, Memphis Police Department
- Willie Lois Dortch, Shelby County Sheriff's Office

- Teresa Fuller, Wilson County Sheriff's Office,
- Michael Garbo, Nashville DEA
- Kenny Gibbons, Dyer County Sheriff's Office
- Joshua Hayes, Gibson County Sheriff's Office
- Michael Hill, Memphis Police Department
- Toby Keiser, Knox County Sheriff's Office
- Danny Laughner Jr., Chattanooga DHS
- Ray McCrary Jr., Shelby County Sheriff's Office
- David Miller, Clarksville Police Department
- Roger Mitchell, Sullivan County Sheriff's Office
- Edgar Morris III, Collierville Police Department
- Vassar Richmond, Bartlett Police Department
- Jimmie Shindler, Memphis Police Department
- Derek Sidwell, Overton County Sheriff's Department

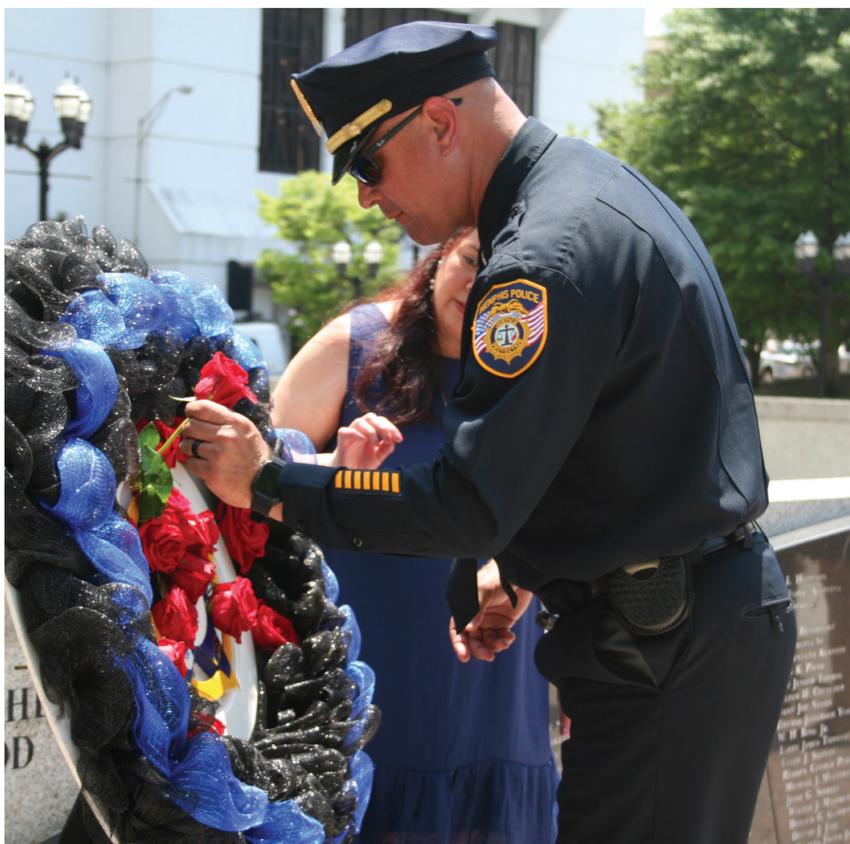


Above: Officers with the Lebanon Police Department attend the ceremony.

Right: Members of the Bartlett Police Department watch the memorial ceremony in the shadow of the Tennessee State Capitol Building

Below Left: The family of a fallen Sullivan County Sheriff's Department deputy is escorted to the service and saluted by officers.

Below Right: Gov. Bill Lee and First Lady Maria Lee visit with family members of fallen officers.



Above Left: An officer with the Memphis Police Department places a rose honoring one of the agency's fallen officers during the ceremony.

Above Right: The Peacemakers, a singing group consisting of officers from the Memphis Police Department, perform the national anthem during the ceremony. The group also sang their song "Rights of Freedom" to honor fallen officers.

Left: Family members of fallen officers and Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) members attend the memorial ceremony.

