

6,250 subscribers

www.TML1.org

Volume 74, Number 5

May 2023

Can't we all just get along?

TMLConference features workshops on civility



TML has invited Matt Lehrman back for two workshops that focus on public engagement and intra-council relations.

Matt Lehrman will conduct two workshops on Monday afternoon, July 24, as part of the 2023 TML Annual Conference in Nashville.

Entitled "From Conflict to Conversation: Workshops in Practical Civility," the two workshops will focus on practical tools and strategies for navigating real-life situations.

TML's 2021 conference in Chattanooga showcased an inspiring opening keynote titled "From Conflict to Conversation," which encouraged local leaders to engage in conversations that build communities where individuals feel connected, respected, and heard. In response to the overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, TML has invited Mr. Lehrman back to conduct two workshops dedicated to public engagement and intra-council relations. Attendees are welcome to join either or both sessions.

Lehrman is managing director

of Social Prosperity Partners, an Arizona-based firm that works nationally to help municipal leaders gather consensus around important community decisions.

The TML 83rd Annual Conference will be held July 22-25 at the downtown Renaissance Hotel. The four-day event will feature top-notch speakers and workshop sessions, several special events, and ample time to network with your peers.

The conference will kick off Saturday afternoon, July 22, with several sessions offered by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service that will provide CPEs for CMFO graduates and required Utility Board Training.

Sunday and Monday will feature additional sessions and workshops. The conference will wrap up on Tuesday morning, July 25, with the Annual Awards Breakfast.

For more information or to register, <u>click here.</u>

Resources, training can help mitigate local risk in derailments



TML Legislative Wrap Up 2023 session

The first session of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly concluded its businness April 21.

A total of 1596 bills were filed during this session. Of these, TML identified 720 bills that either directly affected or had the potential to directly affect municipalities. More than a third of these bills, 250, were put on notice for consideration in a committee

The General Assembly addressed a number of issues, including approving a \$56.2 billion spending plan for the 2023-22 fiscal year which included Lee's \$3.3 billion transportation and infrastructure plan, fully funding Tennessee's new K-12 education funding formula (\$1.1B), increasing teachers' salaries, and implementing new business tax reforms.

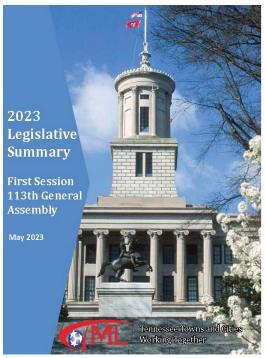
Rushed effort to adjourn; Governor calls special session

With no elections, natural disasters, pandemics or extraordinary issues casting a shadow over the session, most of the session was business as usual as committees methodically worked through their calendars and floor sessions were effecient and uneventful. However, the final weeks of the session were turbulent marked with protests, expulsion proceedings, and an ethics violation resulting in a resignation – all of which, prompted lawmakers to rush to conclude their business and adjourn a few weeks earlier than planned.

In the wake of a horrific shooting at the Covenant School in Nashville that left six dead including three 9-year-old students, thousands of protesters descended on the state Capitol over multiple days to urge lawmakers to take up gun-reform laws. Two House representatives were expelled for leading protests from the well of the House chamber, while a third legislator survived expulsion by one vote. The national media appeared in numbers – something

rarely seen at the state Capitol. In an unrelated matter, a House representative resigned after the House Ethics Committee found him to have violated the House's workplace discrimination and harassment policy.

Within hours of the Tennessee General Assembly concluding its business on Friday night, April 21, Gov. Bill Lee called for a special session on public safety. Following the Covenant shooting, Lee



To read the full Legislative Report, go here

asked state lawmakers to pass an Order of Protection bill that would keep guns away from at risk people who pose a threat to themselves or others. The General Assembly did not take up Gov. Lee's proposal, nor did they address other pieces of gun-related legislation prior to adjourning. A date for the special session has been set for Aug. 21.

In February, Gov. Lee rolled out his legislative priorities and *See* **LEGISLATION** *on Page 5*

Survey of U.S. residents highlights desire for community connectivity, investment

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Economic stability and increased connectivity – both in terms of infrastructure and personal relationships – are among the priorities Americans have for their communities.

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) recently partnered with the National Research Center at Polco to release the white paper "<u>loday's lop 10</u> Community Needs According to U.S. Residents." The report highlights what community characteristics are most valuable to today's citizens to provide insights and goals local governments can work toward. Data from the report comes from three decades of research based on the National Community Survey (NCS), which asks millions of people nationwide to rate their communities on livability, government services, and more. The top ten values indicated by the survey were economic health followed by community, safety, infrastructure, public trust, land use, education, natural environment, health and wellness, and the ability to age in place. Many of these values can be interconnected to help communities find solutions to residents' wants and needs.



The 2015 derailment and toxic spill from a train in Maryville is one of several dangerous incidents that have occurred in Tennessee similar to what unfolded earlier this year in East Palestine, Ohio. Many smaller communities don't have the resources to deal with these events, despite the fact that chemicals are transported through their communities daily.

By KATE COIL

Following the train derailment and resulting toxic spill in East Palestine, Ohio, in February, many community members and local leaders are asking questions about their own municipality's preparedness for a similar incident.

The state of Tennessee presently has 28 railroad companies operating on 2,604 miles of track, many of which pass through towns and cities throughout the state. Tennessee itself is no stranger to train derailments including the derailment of a train carrying a concrete barrier after it was struck by a semi-truck in Collegedale in December 2023, the 2015 CSX derailment that spilled hazardous materials in Maryville, a 2002 derailment in Farragut that resulted in the release of oleum or fuming sulfuric acid, and the famous 1978 tank car explosion in downtown Waverly that followed a train derailment and killed 16 people.

Donald Pannell, a fire management consultant with the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (UT-MTAS), said local emergency responders are often on the front lines of these incidents.

How You Can Take Action:

NLC: City leaders urged to weigh in on regulations following Ohio derailment *Read more on Page 7*

"The risks to emergency responders and the public vary greatly regarding the transportation of hazardous materials through Tennessee communities," Pannell said. "Though classified as hazardous, many of these types of chemicals are essential in the manufacturing and production processes of everyday goods and services. The health effects on individuals from exposure to some of these chemicals can be severe, and likewise, the effects on the environment can be highly detrimental and long-lasting. As evident from the derailment in East Palestine, the costs associated with

See TRAINS on Page 8

ECONOMIC HEALTH

The economic health of a community is a top priority for both residents and businesses. NCS survey respondents said employment opportunities, cost of living, well-planned growth, and downtown vibrancy in a community are how they measure that community's economic health.

Michelle Kobayashi, principal research strategist at Polco, said citizen uncertainty about their own economic future may be why economic health ranked as the top concern for citizens.

"Sometimes local government practitioners express that they don't have power over the health of their local economy, but governance and economy are deeply entangled, especially with a sales tax that helps fund local governments," she said. "Public-private partnerships and building stronger relationships with chambers of commerce can help local governments influence economic health."

Kobayashi also noted that the economic health of a community can be improved by working on several of the other top ten values ranked by NCS respondents.

COMMUNITY

Since the pandemic, increased

For the majority of Americans, the ideal community or neighborhood design is a familiar one: the pre-automobile downtown. This design offers mixed use development where residents can live, work, and play in highly walkable communities with access to public parks and spaces that provide opportunities for health and wellness.

personal isolation and loneliness has become a chief mental health concern for citizens of all ages. As a result, many Americans looking to build a sense of community and want cities to engage them in that experience.

"A lot of cities are struggling with building communities that are strong, that are unified, and have solidarity," Kobayashi said. "Local governments can improve a sense of community by throwing events and engaging residents in decision-making. We have seen a lot of movement in local government, with citizen academies, community liaisons, and forming diversity, equity, and inclusion task forces."

Cities can improve their community engagement by making sure involvement is equitable, finding new and creative ways for engagement, making it easier to participate, and actively listening to feedback from the community so they don't become disengaged in the process.

By meeting people where they are, identifying which voices are missing in a conversation, and finding ways to engage beyond the traditional "town hall" meeting, communities can engage and energize citizens, especially those who have not been participating in the process. NCS data also found a need to engage specific populations such as persons of color, foreign-born residents, residents who speak a language other than English, citizens with disabilities, senior citizens, and households with children.

SAFETY

Ranking third on the list, public safety is often ranked in the NCS as a top need, but recent reports indicate that priorities have shifted for many citizens in recent years. Drug abuse and the opioid epidemic has remained at top public safety concern for NCS respondents since 2018, though other public safety concerns have shifted since.

Citizens ranked their second biggest public safety concern as DUIs followed by traffic problems, burglaries and theft, and then domestic violence. The National Law Enforcement Survey also noted public trust in police has been on the decline since the start of the pandemic. A Gallup poll conducted in early 2023 found that 45% of Americans surveyed were confidence in police and 39%-the lowest level on record– were confident police were properly trained in use of force.

Confidence in the police has fallen among all races since 2010 with 30% of non-white Americans and 53% of white Americans reporting confidence in police.

INFRASTRUCTURE

NCS survey respondents reported clean drinking water, safe roads and bridges, and internet access were their top three infrastructure priorities. Many communities are looking to address their ongoing infrastructure needs through programs like ARP.

The Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Re-See COMMUNITY on Page 10





CHATTANOOGA

Kordsa, Inc. officials announced the company will invest \$50 million to expand manufacturing operations at its Chattanooga facility. Through this project, Kordsa, Inc. will create 200 new jobs and expand its capacity to convert its products into tire cord fabric. Currently, the Chattanooga facility manufactures Nylon 66 yarn and ships it to North Carolina where it is converted into tire cord fabric and sold to tire manufacturers across the U.S. Kordsa Inc. The U.S. subsidiary of Kordsa, develops environmentally friendly products in the tire industry that reduce fuel consumption and provide better wet grip. Additionally, the company develops technologies that allow for lighter cars, performing with lower fuel consumption and lower carbon emissions in the composite industry.

COLLEGEDALE

Progress is being made at the new Little Debbie Park at Collegedale Commons in the city of Collegedale. The park is a public-private partnership between the city of Collegedale and the McKee Foods Corporation, which is the manufacturer of the Little Debbie brands. The park will include multiple sculptures of Little Debbie products including a Christmas Tree cake, an oatmeal cookie, a Nutty Bar, a cosmic brownie, and a chocolate cupcake. The park will open in the fall of this year and will feature a nature-themed playground, zipline, musical instruments, benches, picnic tables, and a bridge over the creek running through the area.

ELIZABETHTON

The Elizabethton Police Department received a \$149,999 grant from the Rural Violent Crime Reduction Initiative (RVCRI) program to support a two-year program to decrease crime in the area. The department will use the funding to purchase and install automated license plate readers (ALPR) to help provide real-time data coinciding with alert technology identifying stolen vehicles, AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, and others. The system increases the possibility of officers being able to locate vehicles of interest. The funds will also be used to buy equipment to enhance recording equipment and systems in the department's interview rooms, which will put it on the same system presently used by in-car recording devices, as well as upgrade storage capacity for these recordings. The department will also be able to use a 3D laser scanning system that can help in crime scene documentation and reconstruction.

equipment, expanding to \$250 million in future phases. The company will also use its recently announced \$50 million U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) grant opportunity for the factory placing the initial combined investment over \$200 million. 6K Energy, the cathode materials production division of 6K Inc., will create 230 new jobs in Madison County to support operations at the new manufacturing plant. 6K Energy's PlusCAM factory will be the world's first UniMelt® plasma cathode plant, providing low cost, ultra-sustainable production of battery material for localized supply chains in the U.S. Founded in 2014 and headquartered in North Andover, Mass., 6K uses microwave plasma technology to develop advanced materials for industries, including electric vehicle manufacturing, renewable energy, aerospace and consumer electronics. With the addition of the Jackson facility, 6K will employ nearly 500 people across its operations in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

JASPER

Primex Color, Compounding & Additives Corporation officials announced the company will invest \$5.4 million to construct a new research and development center and expand existing manufacturing space in Jasper. Primex, a full scope plastics manufacturer, will create 28 new jobs as a result of the project. A division of Primex Plastics Corporation, Primex Color, Compounding & Additives Corporation develops and manufactures custom color concentrates for plastics to be used in commercial, medical or food grade applications. Through the expansion, the company will employ nearly 130 Tennesseans.

KINGSPORT

The city of Kingsport has received the Innovation in Economic Development category from the American Planning Association's Economic Development Division for the redevelopment of the greater Kingsport Press site and nearby properties. The award was presented as the APA's annual conference held April 2 in Philadelphia. This award category is reserved for projects or programs that are creative and establish new pathways in addressing unique economic development needs. Kingsport received the award for its work on the redevelopment of the Dobyns-Taylor warehouse and the greater Kingsport Press property, including the Food City shopping center, the Kingsport Farmers Market, the Kingsport Carousel and nearby Town Park Lofts. According to the APA, economic development consists of policies and actions which strive to improve the overall quality of life for a community or region by raising its standard of living, reducing inequality and using resources in a sustainable manner.

Jackson officials cut ribbon on men's shelter



The city of Jackson has broken ground on its first men's homeless shelter in 25 years. The decision to build the shelter came after a survey found the majority of the city's homeless population were men as the only shelter in the community only houses women and children. By providing transitional housing such as shelter that can provide wrap-around services, the population has a better chance of transitioning out of homelessness, and Jackson becomes eligible for more grant and funding opportunities aimed at helping the population. Construction is expected to begin by summer of this year with the shelter's targeted opening date in January 2024.

Goodlettsville, local companies and volunteers build new KABOOM playground in single day



Local volunteers, Goodlettsville municipal and Parks and Recreation Department employees, Recreational Concepts staff, and supporters from Mapco worked with recreation non-profit KABOOM to create a new playground at Goodlettsville's Brooks Park in a single day. The community-built, kid-designed playground was ready for play by 3 p.m. the day it was built, and the 250 volunteers also added a new shade structure, eight new benches, three new picnic tables, a bike rack, and two Little Free Libraries to the area. KABOOM volunteers met with children in Goodlettsville to ask them what type of recreational items they would like to see in a playground, which will serve an estimated 2,000 children in the Goodlettsville area.

Eagleville breaks ground on first public safety facility



GREENEVILLE

Main Street Greeneville has been designated as an Accredited Main Street America, joining 862 Accredited Main Street American programs that have met the rigorous performance standards for the program. In 2022, Main Street America programs generated \$6.2 billion in local reinvestment, helped open 7,657 net new businesses, facilitated the creation of 29,174 net new jobs, catalyzed the rehabilitation of 10,688 historic buildings, and leveraged 1,528,535 volunteer hours. On average, for every dollar that a Main Street program spent to support their operations, it generated \$24.07 of new investment back into their downtown communities. In 2022, Main Street Greeneville saw 50 building rehabilitation projects, with a value of private investment spent at \$1,297,071 and 11 public improvement projects with a value of \$5,423,799 invested. The district had a net gain of 46 jobs and five new businesses. Volunteers supported projects and events in the district donating 9,107 hours of their time. Main Street is currently providing financial assistance to rehabilitate five properties downtown through the TnECD Downtown Improvement Grant (DIG) Program.

JACKSON

6K Energy officials announced the company will invest in a fullscale PlusCAM[™] battery material manufacturing plant in Jackson, 6K Energy will invest \$166 million in the plant for construction and

KINGSPORT

Leclerc Foods Tennessee LLC officials announced the company will expand manufacturing operations at its U.S. headquarters in Kingsport, investing \$3.4 million and creating 48 new jobs. In addition to job creation, the food manufacturer will expand by adding machinery to support a new production line in both of its facilities on Airport Parkway. Founded in 1905, Leclerc Foods is a family-owned company that specializes in cookies, snack bars and crackers and exports to more than 30 countries. Leclerc has nine facilities in Canada and the U.S., and this will be the company's second expansion since establishing operations in Kingsport in 2008.

NASHVILLE

The city of Nashville has been ranked as an emerging hub for life sciences with its labor pool growing by 19% to 7,700 workers since 2019. Nashville ranked second overall nationally for the amount of growth it experienced in the life sciences industry in the same period. Nashville's life sciences industry secured \$521 million in NIH funding last year, one of the highest per-capita amounts. Vanderbilt University received the bulk of this funding, making it in the top 20 largest single recipients of NIH fundings.

Eagleville officials broke ground on the David W. Rigsby Sr. Public Safety Center. The new, first-ever public safety facility for the city will feature a former bank property being renovated to house the city's municipal court and police department while vacant land on the lot will be used to create a space for the city's fire and EMS departments. From left to right: Matthew Allen and Chuck Hawkins, both of Hawkins Price LLC; County Commissioner Pettus Read, State Representatives Robert Stevens and Tim Rudd, State Senator Dawn White, Councilman Brandon Emamalie, Councilman Craig Campbell, Mayor Chad Leeman, Vice Mayor William Tollett, Councilman Chris Hendrix, City Manager Hellyn Riggins, George Davis of USDA, Fire Chief Jonathan Armstrong, Police Chief David Breniser, and City Attorney Stephen Aymett.

Newport cuts ribbon on welcome center



Officials with the city of Newport cut the ribbon on the city's new Welcome Center, which will provide information to tourists in the community. Located in the former Tanner School Building, the welcome center was financed through a tourism grant that will also help renovate the historic building. Walters State Community College also operates out of the building.

Voters go to polls in 16 spring municipal elections

By KATE COIL TML Communications Specialist

Spring elections were held in 16 municipalities across Tennessee with 15 electing members to boards and councils and two cities holding referendums.

The Jackson mayoral election led to a second historic run-off between incumbent Scott Conger and two challengers.

Sevierville voters cast ballots on whether or not to permit retail package stores to sell alcohol while Somerville held a sales tax referendum.

BOLIVAR

The city of Bolivar held a municipal election on May 16.

Newcomer Caroline Miller defeated incumbent Carol B. Spinks with 109 votes to 65 votes for the Council District A Position 1.

Incumbent Larry McKinnie defeated newcomer Donell Polk Jr. with 149 votes to 25 for the District A Position 2. Incumbent Todd N. Lowe also defeated challenger Gwenda Woods with 194 to 48 votes for the Council District B Position 1 seat.

Newcomer Christopher Lee Williams ran unopposed and was elected to the District B Position 3 seat with 208 votes. The seat was previously held by Larry Crawford who resigned in March after moving.

BRENTWOOD

A completely uncontested election was held in Brentwood on May 2.

Incumbents Nelson Andrews, Anne Dunn, Susannah Macmillan, and Ken Travis ran unopposed and were re-elected to the four open seats on the Brentwood City Commission. Macmillan led the vote count with 655 followed by Travis with 647, Andrews with 628, and Dunn with 627.

The Brentwood City Commissioners voted to select Mark Gorman as the new mayor of Brentwood and Ken Travis as the new vice mayor.

DAYTON

Incumbents Bobby Doss and Caleb Yawn defeated challenger Dennis Van Meter for the two open seats on the Dayton City Council in an election held on April 19.

Yawn led the vote total with 628 followed by Doss with 506 and Van Meter with 386.



GATLINBUG

The city of Gatlinburg held a municipal election on May 16.

Newcomer James L. "Jay" Horner II defeated fellow challenger Brian Papworth with 232 votes to 78 for the Commission Seat A. Kirby Smith has been filling the seat since April after longtime commissioner Don Smith resigned it in February.

Incumbent candidates were unopposed for the two other open seats on the Gatlinburg City Commission. Chad A. Reagan received 273 complimentary votes for the Commission Seat B while current Mayor Mike Werner received 264 for the Commission Seat C.

HOHENWAD

In an election held in Hohenwald on May 4, incumbent Danny McKnight ran unopposed and was re-elected mayor with 312 votes.

On the Hohenwald City Council, incumbents Don Barber, Scottie Bass, and Kevin King will be joined by newcomer Chris Tull after defeating fellow challenger Susan Hensley for the four open seats. Incumbent Cody Mitchell did not seek re-election.

Newcomer Tull led the vote count with 261 followed by Barber with 254, King with 251, Bass with 201, and Hensley with 175.

JACKSBORO

Three new candidates ran unopposed and were elected to seats on the Jacksboro Board of Mayor and Aldermen on April 1.

Greg Cross and Mark Lay were elected to four-year terms while Roy Green was elected to an unexpired two-year term. Jackson history and the second time Conger has faced a run-off for the seat. When elected to his first term, Conger defeated Woods in a run-off election.

Conger still led the vote total with 3,568 votes followed by Condray with 2,100, Woods with 1,458, Hubbard with 423, Williams-Lyons with 91, and Sherrod with 11. The run-off between Conger and Condray is scheduled for June 13.

In Jackson City Council's District 1 election, challenger J.P. Stovall unseated incumbent Sam Turner with Stovall earning 491 votes to Turner's 197.

In the District 5 election, challenger Frank McMeen defeated incumbent Tara Skinner with 488 to 458 votes. Prior to redistricting in 2022, Skinner had represented District 3.

For the District 6, challenger Larry Lowrance defeated fellow newcomer Byron Elam with Lowrance earning 509 votes to Elam's 492. The seat was previously held by Ross Priddy.

There were also six unopposed races for Jackson City Council. In District 2, incumbent Johnny Dodd ran unopposed and was re-elected with 439 votes. For District 3, newcomer Candice Busby was elected with 659 votes in the seat.

In District 4, Richard Donnell was elected with 498 votes. Donnell was appointed to the role after Councilman Ernest Brooks resigns from Jackson City Council to join the Shelby Co. DA Office.

Incumbent Marda Phelps Wallace was re-elected to the District 7 seat with 993 votes while incumbent Russ McKelvey was re-elected to the District 8 seat with 866. Newcomer Julie Faulder Holt received 665 votes and will take over the District 9 seat from David Cisco, who did not run for re-election. 6 election.

Two newcomers will also join three incumbents on the Maury City Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Incumbent Bobby Wells led the vote count with 91 votes followed by incumbent Robert L. Mansfield with 85, newcomer Dera Koonce Fowlkes with 72, incumbent Letha Johnson with 71, and newcomer James D. Jackson with 61.

In addition to Cook who successfully ran for mayor, incumbent Alderwoman Erica Nance did not see re-election.

MORRISTOWN

On May 2 election held in Morristown, incumbent Gary Chesney defeated challenger Rob Burke in the mayoral race with 810 votes to 710.

For the open at-large seat, challenger Joe Senter defeated incumbent Ken Smith with 740 to 709 votes. In Ward 2, incumbent Chris Bivens defeated challenger Katy Tindall Klose with 815 votes to 614.

Ward 4 incumbent Al A'Hearn was unopposed and was re-elected with 1,060 votes.

PARKERS CROSSROADS

Incumbent Tony Hardee defeated challenger Ben Crews with Hardee earning 22 votes to Crews' 14 in the race for Parkers Crossroads Commissioner.

PIGEON FORGE

Two incumbents ran unopposed for the two open seats on the Pigeon Forge City Commission in the city's May 9 election.

David W. Wear received 53

complimentary votes for the Commission Seat D while Keith E. Whaley received 55 votes for the Commission Seat E.

RED BOILING SPRINGS

Incumbent Kenneth Hollis defeated challenger and former alderwoman Cynthia Fleming Smalling in the mayoral race in Red Boiling Springs. Hollis earned 160 votes to Smalling's 39 in the April 22 election.

Three incumbent candidates also ran unopposed and were re-elected to the three open seats on the city council. Linda Lee Carver led the vote count with 158 followed by Michael Rich with 110 and Donna Grisham with 97.

SEVIERVILLE

Incumbent Robbie Fox ran unopposed and was re-elected to the mayoral seat in Sevierville with 951 votes in an election held on May 4.

In the only challenged alderman seat, incumbent Travis McCroskey fended off challenger Leonard Waring III with a vote of 650 to 432 to retain the Alderman Seat 5.

Incumbents Wayne Helton and Devin Koester ran unopposed and were both re-elected to four-year terms in the Alderman Seat 1 and Seat 3 respectively. Helton earned 908 votes while Koester earned 889.

Sevierville voters also approved a measure to permit retail package stores to sell alcoholic beverages with a vote of 589-482.

SOMERVILLE

Voters in the town of Somerville approved a referendum to increase the town's sales tax from 2.25% to 2.75% with 34 voting for the measure and 12 against the increase. The election was held on March 21.

SPRING HILL

Incumbents John Canepari, Matt Fitterer, and Brent Murray, and newcomer Vincent Fuqua all ran unopposed and were re-elected to their respective seats on the Spring Hill Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Canepari represents the city's Ward 1, Fitterer Ward 2, and Murray Ward 3.

Fuqua, a former Spring Hill alderman, ran unopposed for the seat previously held by Alderwoman Hazel Nievers, who decided to not seek re-election. Fuqua also serves on the Maury County Commission.

DUNLAP

Two incumbents were returned to their seats on the Dunlap City Commission in an election held on May 6.

Rebecca Hatfield Card defeated challenger Margie Clemmer for the Commission Seat A by 349 to 128 votes in the only contested election on the ballot. Incumbent Bryan Harman ran unopposed for Commission Seat B and was re-elected to the seat with 218 complimentary votes.

1 2

JACKSON

Incumbent Scott Conger will face a run-off against challenger and technology manager Ray Condray after neither garnered the 51% of the vote to secure the seat. Conger and Condray faced off against four other candidates: Daryl K. Hubbard, Paul Sherrod, Lisa Williams-Lyons, and Jerry Wayne Woods.

The run-off between Conger and Condray is the second time in

MAURY CITY

Alderman Brian Cook narrowly defeated challenger Lauren C. McLaughlin for the mayoral seat in Maury City with Cook earning 67 votes to McLaughlin's 66. Incumbent Mayor James Rayce Castellaw did not seek re-election in the May



No loan is too large or too small



The city of Algood recently closed a \$2.3 million PBA fixed rate draw loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to be used for sewer system improvements. It is the first time the city has used a TMBF program. Pictured are City Recorder Ann Flatt, Mayor Lisa Chapman-Fowler, TMBF Marketing Representative Kevin Krushenski, and City Administrator Keith Morrison.

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



The Town of Halls most recently closed two note issues through the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund's alternative loan program – one \$376,000 note issue for LED street lighting and one \$270,000 note issue for a sanitation truck. The Town of Halls has used TMBF 10 times beginning in 1988. Pictured are Recorder Tammy Lewis, Mayor Eugene Pugh, and TMBF Marketing Representative Justin Hanson.





for Public



Cathy Ball

Safety Excellence, Inc., to the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). Ball will fill a vacancy on the board reserved for city managers and will serve with 10 other members from the U.S. and Canada who represent both the private and public sector. CFAIR advises agencies interested in maintaining fire accreditation as well as provides assistance toward this goal. Ball was appointed city manager of Johnson City in December 2021 and has nearly 35 years' experience in local government.

Ronnie Barrett has been selected as the new chief of the Gatlinburg Police Department and will

assume his



Ronnie Barrett

role following the retirement of current Chief Randy Brackins on June 2. Presently serving as a captain with the department, Barrett has been with GPD for 27 years. He will be the eleventh chief of the department. A native of Newport News, Va., Barrett holds a bachelor's degree from Tusculum University.

Darek Baskin has been named the new director of engineering for the city of Brentwood after serving as



Darek Baskin

the interim head of the department. Baskin took over the role from Lori Lange, who joined the Tennessee Department of Transportation as its assistant chief of engineering. Baskin joined the city of Brentwood as a city engineer in October 2007. Prior to that, he served as a project engineer for Powers Hill Design in Memphis and spent seven years as the city engineer and director of planning and economic development for the city of Memphis. Baskin holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Memphis.



PEOPLE

semi-retire-

Rhett

Chandler

has been

selected as

the new city

municipal

court judge

for Mt. Ju-

liet. Chan-

dler will

Mark Gor-

man has

been vot-

ed the new

city mayor

of Brent-

wood by

his fellow

city com-

short battle

Harold Cannon

ment. Cannon has held his current role for three years and before that was appointed the city's director of engineering. Prior to joining the city, Cannon served as president and co-founder of Cannon & Cannon Inc., a role he held for 24 years. Before starting Cannon & Cannon, he worked 15 years at Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon as a project manager and vice president. Cannon plans on continuing to be involved in some current municipal projects as well as volunteering for other organizations in the city.



take over the role from previous municipal judge Caroline Christof-

after serving in the role since 2016. Chandler is presently employed at the Murfreesboro law firm of Parkerson, Santel and Garner and previously served as the in-house counsel for Liberty Mutual. Chandler holds a bachelor's degree from Harding University and obtained his law degree from the Nashville School of Law.



missioners. taking over the position from Rhea Little who served two-terms in the role. Gorman was first elected to the city commission in 2013. He has served as vice mayor and as a representative on the Brentwood City Planning Commission. Commissioner Ken Travis was selected as vice mayor, taking over the role from Commissioner Nelson Andrews.

Reynolds to replace Schwinn as TDOE head

Lizette Gonzalez Reynolds will take over the position as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) in July after current Commissioner Penny Schwinn announced her intention to step down at the end of the school year.

Gov. Bill Lee announced that Schwinn will leave his administration after more than four years.

"During her years of dedicated service, Penny has played a key role in our administration's work to ensure educational opportunity for Tennessee students and secure the next generation of teachers, while navigating historic learning challenges," said Lee. "I have tremendous gratitude for her leadership and wish her much success in her next chapter."

Schwinn joined the Lee administration in January 2019 and served as the head of K-12 education in the state of Tennessee throughout the pandemic. Schwinn from the Texas Education Agency, where she served deputy commissioner of academics until 2018.

She also previously served as a high school history and economics teacher; an assistant superintendent, a school principal, and an elected school board member. Schwinn earned her bachelor's degree from UC-Berkeley, her master's in teaching from Johns Hopkins University, and her doc-

Jesse Kraft

parks and recreation in May 2021.

In October 2021, he left the city to

work as a coordinator of housing

facilities for Middle Tennessee

State University. Prior to coming

to Tullahoma, he worked as a golf

course superintendent and equip-

ment operator at Arnold Air Force

Base. Kraft holds an associate's

degree in general studies from

Motlow State Community College

and a bachelor's degree in plant sci-

ences and business administration

from Middle Tennessee State Uni-

versity. Kraft also holds an aquatic

facility operator certification and

Tullahoma

as a forest-

ry resource



Lizette Gonzalez Reynolds

torate in education policy from Claremont Graduate University in California.

Reynolds presently serves as the vice president of policy for Florida-based non-partisan public education policy thinktank ExcelinEd, which was founded in 2008 by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

"Lizzette's significant education policy expertise and leadership make her well-suited to continue our work to deliver a high-quality education and expand school choice for Tennessee students," said Lee. "I welcome her to Tennessee and appreciate her service to students, families and teachers across the state."

Reynolds has previously served as deputy legislative di-



Penny Schwinn

rector for then-Governor George W. Bush, special assistant in the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs for U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, regional representative for U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and chief deputy commissioner at the Texas Education Agency.

Her career reflects a deep commitment to school choice, assessment and accountability, college and career pathways and education policy. She earned her undergraduate degree from Southwestern University.

Sam Pearcy, currently deputy commissioner of Operations at TDOE, will serve as the department's interim commissioner until July 1.

previously held by Chief Chester B. Owens Sr. until his retirement in August of last year after a 45-year career. Lencioni has been with the Humboldt Fire Department for nearly 29 years.

Larry Sanders, mayor of Three Way, died April 20, 2023, at the age of 83 at his home. A Three Way native,



Larry Sanders

Sanders first ran for mayor before the town of Three Way existed when the first of three ballot measures sought to incorporate the community into a city in 1974. Incorporation finally came in 1998, and Sanders was elected mayor in 2015, a position he held for three terms prior to his death. Sanders also was a member of the Tennessee Municipal League and of the West Tennessee Mayor's



Jeff Shugart

sport Parks and Recreation Department. He is also employed by Dobyns-Bennett in Kingsport, but said he plans to leave this position there in order to work full-time with the city. Shugart steps into the role as the city works to revamp its parks and recreation offerings, including the development of the new 60-acre Holliston Mills Park.

Jesse Williams has been hired as the historic resources coordinator for the town of Farragut

eral travel

basketball

area. Be-

the King-



fersen who retired earlier this year





Mark Gorman

LaTrell Billingsley has been selected as the new fire marshal for the city of Jackson. Billingsley has been with the citv



LaTrell Billingsley

for nearly 13 years, most recently serving as fire inspector for the city. He has also served with the Jackson Fire Department as a fire investigator, public education officer, and firefighter. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and management from Lane College.

Ed Binkley, who served as a Mt. Juliet mayor, city commissioner, planning commission member, and



Ed Binkley

judicial magistrate, died April 30, 2023, from congestive heart failure at the age of 85. Binkley was elected mayor in 1989 and became the first mayor to serve two complete terms in the role since the city's incorporation in 1972. During his tenure, the city held its first annual Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting and adopted its city flag. A native of Nashville, Binkley joined the Navy in 1955 and served on three aircraft carriers during his tenure. After leaving the military, he opened D&H Electronic Systems. He was a member of numerous organizations in Mt. Juliet and was presented with several awards for his service to the community.



Lt. Robert Hayes

with pancreatic cancer at the age of 53. A 17-year veteran of the department, Hayes was diagnosed in March. He is survived by his wife of 25 years and their three adult children. He began working in La Vergne as an officer in 2005 and was promoted to detective with the criminal investigations division in 2013. In his time at the police department, he also served as a taser instructor, a CHANT team member, and public information officer. He was promoted to patrol lieutenant in February 2023.



from Chief

Jamie Hinson

Michael Williams who retired from the department after 15 years as chief and a 39-year career. Hinson has served as assistant chief since December 2020, and is a 12-year veteran of the Paris Fire Department. Hinson has more than 25 years of service and firefighting and emergency services in both Paris and Henry County. He also serves as the chief of the Paris Landing Volunteer Fire Department.

Jesse "J.P." Kraft has been selected as the new director of parks and recreation for the city of Tullahoma. Kraft first joined the city of is a certified park and recreation professional by the National Recreation and Park Association.



Greg Lencioni

serving as a captain in the department, Lencioni was unanimously appointed as chief by the Humboldt Board of Mayor and Aldermen to take over the position, which was

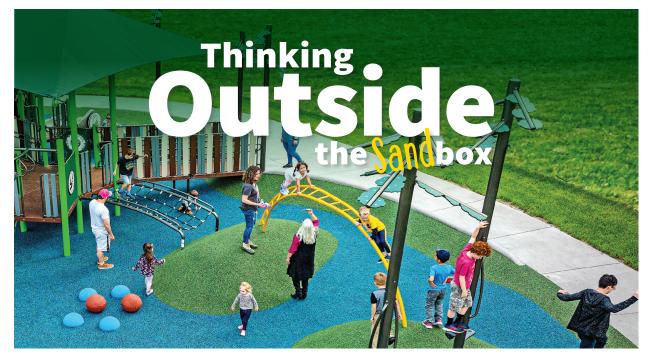
Association, where he served as second-vice president, first-vice president, and then president in 2020. In addition to his service as mayor, Sanders worked for Hart, Freeland, and Roberts Architects and at the University of Tennessee.

Jeff Shugart has been named the new parks and recreation director for the city of Church Hill by the Church Hill Board of Mayor and Alderman. He will take over the role from previous director Tim Wilson. Shugart presently serves as the head coach for the Church Hill Middle School girls' basketball team and previously coached sev-

and will work both with the

Jesse Williams

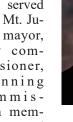
Farragut Museum located at Farragut Town Hall and with community outreach. Prior to joining the town of Farragut, prior to joining the town of Farragut, he spent nearly seven years as a curator and tour guide with the Belle Meade Historic Site and Winery in Nashville. He also served as an emergency curator of collections for the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Frankfort, Ky. Williams holds an associate's degree in hospitality and tourism from Pellissippi State College.



Let Cunningham Recreation help you design and build your next outdoor play and recreation space. Our design experts can give your park playground a "playful landscape" look and feel and add the "WOW factor" to your next project creating outdoor spaces that are unique and give park guests a one-of-a-kind experience. Set your park playground apart from all the rest with custom design capabilities by Cunningham Recreation!







TML identifies more than 720 bills with municipal impact; 250 calendared during 2023

LEGISLATION from Page 1 spending plan during his fifth State of the State Address - his first of his second term. As outlined in his address, his number one priority was gaining approval for his \$3.3 billion Transportation Modernization Act designed to accommodate Tennessee's record growth, address traffic congestion and meet transportation needs across rural and urban communities. 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 a few issues, including funding only \$20 million of his requested \$100 million for Crisis Pregnancy centers, not addressing his proposed gun reforms, and not funding \$9 million for pay raises for state employees.

ates the complexities involved and comprehends the potential consequences inherent in this effort. We will continue discussions with the Speaker, Lt. Governor, and other legislators about their interests and plans and ensure municipal interests and perspectives are fully represented.

Impact Fees and Adequate Facilities Tax Return. This year brought the first meaningful effort to revisit local impact fees and adequate facilities taxes since 2006. Led by officials in Rutherford County and Maury County, proponents contend restoring a local government's authority to levy such fees and taxes is the most logical and immediate avenue to relief from growth-related pressures. This

2023 Municipal Bills Considered by Final Status

Of the 250 bills identified and considered, 70 passed, 160 were deferred and 20 failed.

(See the budget highlights)

Bills Affecting Municipalities

In 2023, our legislative team identified 720 bills out of the total 1596 filed that either directly affected or had the potential to directly affect municipal authority or operations. More than a third of these bills, 250, were put on notice for consideration in a committee.

Here's how these bills breakdown by issue area and final status: General Government legislation typically has the highest amount of bills. The high number of Utility and Public Safety bills is also common. Land Use legislation was on par for a typical session with several harmful bills requiring extra attention from our team. The outlier this year was the high number of Finance/Taxation bills considered.

This report does not address each of the 720 bills that staff identified as directly affecting or having the potential to directly affect municipalities, nor does it attempt to detail the specific contents of each of the 250 bills identified by the team. Rather, it highlights a select portion of the 250 bills identified and considered that address one of five main subjects; including municipal finance and taxation, state preemption, municipal elections, land use, and open records or public meetings' law. effort was met with fierce opposition from homebuilders and realtors. Unable to either negotiate a compromise or to secure the necessary votes to ensure passage, the legislation stalled. Supporters have vowed to continue their pursuit next year and discussions are expected to continue over the summer.

Concerted Efforts by Business Interests Continue. In addition to the increase in the filing exemption for business taxpayers included in the governor's budget, the General Assembly considered four other bills related to the business tax. Included in these four bills was one calling for the complete repeal of the state and local business tax and another shifting responsibility for the administration of local businesses licenses to

officials, and the public about the ills of preemption. This year was the first in recent memory that we have noted a decrease in preemption bills. This does not mean this year's legislative session was devoid of preemption legislation. However, unlike preemption bills considered in the recent past, this year's bills were largely targeted at a specific city(ies) or at an activity only engaged in by a few cities. It remains to be seen whether this year is an early indication that our collective outreach has resulted in a waning interest in preemption legislation or if this year is simply an anomaly and that we will experience a return to preemption at the levels previously seen before. **Municipal Elections**

While the introduction of municipal election-related legislation is commonplace, such bills are often confined to the question of timing and whether municipal elections should be required to coincide with a statewide primary or general election. However, this year, we saw a significant shift in the intent of these bills. The most notable departure from the norm was the introduction of several bills that either required or created an avenue to partisan municipal elections.

Land Use

Land use is not the hotbed of legislative activity that it was five or more years ago but one can always count on several legislative battles related to land use issues each year. The decade-long pursuit of the deannexation of agricultural properties continued and a controversial approach to addressing PC1101 in a post-referendum environment was also presented. This session also brought about a legislative repeal of the "Pending Ordinance Doctrine."

Open Records, Public Meetings

The issues of open records and public meetings consistently generate legislation. Many of the bills in these areas originate with the Tennessee Coalition on Open Government (TCOG). TCOG did not disappoint with the introduction of legislation calling for expansive requirements regarding the availability of meeting agendas and all other meeting-related materials. TML actively opposed TCOG's proposal and, ultimately, substantially improved the bill by amendment. Other legislation in this area touched on notice, public comment and records requests. **Other Municipal Legislation** The General Assembly considered a number of other bills affecting municipalities that were not included in one of the five issue areas discussed above. About a dozen of those bills touch on a broad assortment of topics such as the creation of a new consolidated state utility board, depreciation,



Gov. Lee signs the Transportation Modernization Act into law. The \$3.3 billion plan will add "choice lanes" that Tennessee drivers will pay to use to avoid congestion during peak times.

Highlights of the final budget include:

Transportation & Infrastructure Modernization

- \$3 billion to the Transportation Modernization Fund to alleviate urban congestion and fund rural road projects across the state, which includes \$750 million allocated to each of Tennessee's four TDOT regions
- \$300 million to primarily fund the resurfacing of county roads that are not eligible for federal funds, not on the state-maintained system of highways, and that provide connectivity to collector and arterial highways. With two notable exceptions, the funding for the State-Aid Highway System has not seen a substantial increase in the base appropriation for nearly two decades. This one-time appropriation is intended to provide catch-up funds to assist counties to meet the needs of roads in the system; many of which have exceeded or are close to exceeding their resurfacing schedules.

Education

- Fully funding Tennessee's new K-12 education funding formula (\$1.1B)
- \$125M for teacher pay raises
- \$987.8M for capital improvements at Colleges of Applied Technology

Enhanced School Safety Measures

- \$30 million for 100 Homeland Security agents across all 95 counties to serve both public and private schools
- \$140 million for armed School Resource Officer (SRO) for every public school
- \$40 million for public school security upgrades
- \$14 million for private school security upgrades
- \$8 million for additional School-Based Behavioral Health Liaisons across the state

Public Safety

- \$4.52 million for 25 new TBI forensic services positions.
- \$357 million to expand TN Advanced Communications Network
- \$30 million for TN Law Enforcement, Hiring, Training Recruitment program

New state parks, natural areas

• \$288 million to create four new state parks and make improvements to three existing state natural areas.

Sports and entertainment facilities

- A \$350 million state grant for the City of Memphis for renovations to FedExForum and Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium
- \$200M to relocate Tennessee Performing Arts Center as part of a revamp with a new TN Titans stadium

Rainy Day Fund

Municipal Finance, Taxation

About 50 bills introduced this year in the arena of municipal finance and taxation warranted monitoring or direct engagement of the team. Of these, legislation in three areas captured most of the team's attention; including property tax, business tax, as well as impact fees and the adequate facilities tax. Although none of the bills in these subsets became law, the level of interest surrounding these bills coupled with the organizations and individuals involved in the debate on these bills suggests we can expect to see these or similar bills again next year and beyond.

Interest in Property Tax **Cap.** Legislation proposing to impose a cap on property tax rates is not new. However, in March, Speaker Sexton amended a caption bill he had introduced with Lt. Governor McNally, which called for the creation of a study of the local property tax, including the imposition of a cap. Subsequent conversations with the Speaker's office and other legislators indicated this was a genuine initiative intended to begin a dialogue about consequential legislation. In the end, the Speaker to opted to convene a meeting of a House finance subcommittee to receive a presentation from Dr. Arthur Laffer, a Reagan Administration supply-side economist and author, who advocated for the imposition of a local property tax cap. Your TML team fully apprecithe TN Department of Revenue. **Preemption**

For several years, TML has observed and reported a marked increase in instances in which legislators sought to have the state preempt local authority. TML and cities have made a concerted effort to work together to educate legislative leaders, fellow municipal Allocated \$250 million to Tennessee's Rainy Day Fund, bringing the total to \$2.05 billion.

Tax Cuts (Local Governments held harmless)

- \$273 million for a one-time, three-month sales tax holiday on grocery items (August – October). Local governments held harmless on loss of local sales tax but not state shared sales tax.
- \$45.8 million for small business excise and franchise tax exemptions
- Increases the filing threshold for the business tax from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Local governments are held harmless.



The General Assembly adjourned without adopting TML's primary legislative initiative to restore the historic revenue sharing relationship. In the final weeks our team provided several alternatives to lawmakers, including a phase in over four to six years. This was done at the request of our House sponsors, leadership and finance chair. During consideration on the Senate Floor, our Senate sponsor, Dr. Richard Briggs, made a statement that included calling on the Governor to put this in his budget proposal next year.

Together, in year two of this campaign, we made progress and positioned our legislation to be adopted and funded in 2024. In year two we:

- Increased House Sponsors to 36; increased our Senate Sponsors to 17 including leaders, chairs and members of House and Senate Finance Committees
- Produced 35 videos, 12 of which were made by member cities, which amassed 2,566 views

and drones among others.

- A total of 30 Social Media posts reached 25,332 people over a 4-month period during the session
- Sent 24 email alerts with materials and updates to TML members
- Developed a Member Campaign Kit with talking points, issue briefs, projected allocations, sample press releases, and numerous videos
- Continued coverage in Tennessee Town & City
- Updated and engaged affiliate originations and members including TCMA, TAMCAR, West TN Mayors and individual city visits
- Campaign focus during our Annual Conference, District Meetings, Legislative Conferences
- Zoom meetings with PIOs & targeted officials key to the Senate / House Finance Committee
- Widespread media coverage
- More than 250 cities were engaged in the campaign

Our Campaign Continues

Our staff remains committed to continuing this effort on behalf of our cities until this important funding is secured. City officials can take these steps today to continue the Campaign this off season:

- Call your legislator and thank them again for being a cosponsor or urge them to become one
- Be explicit about what this increased funding will do for their voters
- Share your expectation that this legislation is adopted and funded in 2024
- Ask them to talk to Governor Lee, leadership, finance chairs, and fellow members

Action Steps

Your community leaders, business owners, HOAs, social media influencers, and other passionate citizen groups are valuable allies in our campaign. They and their customers pay the sales tax every day in your municipality, and they appreciate that bringing more of these sales tax revenues back to their town or city can relieve the pressure to increase property taxes.

- Host a meeting at city hall to educate community leaders about our campaign
- Have attendees sign a letter to Governor Lee and other state leaders with the city
- Provide attendees with talking points and sample letters from TML. Ask them to make calls, send emails, and mail letters to their legislators and state leaders



Sen. Richard Briggs Chair, Senate State & Local Gov Committee

"I'm asking Gov. Lee to put it in next year's budget so that we can give back some of the revenues that municipalities have generated for the state in economic activity."



The state of Tennessee is ranked third best state for business in the nation, according to Chief Executive's annual CEO survey. Manufacturing, tech, and the electric vehicle industry are the top sectors for the state. Tennessee earned its ranking for its low unemployment rate and its low corporate income tax at 6.5%. The state ranked No. 14 on the Tax Foundation's State Business Tax Climate Index ranking an No. 29 on quality of life. The state also earned good marks for the ten Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Tennessee. Texas earned the top state ranking followed by Florida.

The University of Tennessee has partnered with M.S. Benbow and Associates to improve wi-fi service at Neyland Stadium. The project will extend through 2024 with service in the stadium gradually improving throughout the 2023-24 season with wi-fi being extended by sections in the stadium, beginning at the gates. The steel and concrete used to make the 102-year-old stadium has made wireless internet a challenge in the past, but the project will see the installation of 1,800 connectivity points servicing 55-seat areas via cable installation. The project's estimated cost is expected to come in at between \$12 and \$14 million.

The state of Tennessee set a record \$27.5 billion in travel spending in 2022, according to preliminary data from U.S. Travel and Tourism Economics. Among the top 25 states, Tennessee is the fastest-growing state in travel spending since 2018 and has risen from 14th to 11th in the nation for travel spending. The leisure and hospitality industry plays an essential role in Tennessee's economy and employs over 352,000 Tennesseans. While good for the industry, the news also benefits the entire state. As the state's 2nd leading industry, tourism is a significant source of tax revenue for Tennessee contributing \$1.8 billion in state sales tax collections in 2022.

To prepare for flood risks, the state of Tennessee is hoping to raise awareness about the importance of flood insurance for residents. National meteorologists are forecasting above average rainfall across a large portion of the

the Mississippi and Cumberland river basins, which could include significant portions of Tennessee. Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance is joining the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) to prepare for all types of weather hazards, including flooding. Before a flooding event, Tennesseans should review their flood risk and emergency plan. Individuals should have multiple ways to receive weather alerts and stock an emergency kit with supplies for several days. Remember, never cross a flooded road. Turn Around, Don't Drown. For more info, visit this link.

Tennessee's unemployment rate slightly decreased to 3.4% in March after holding steady at 3.5% for five months. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) said the decrease put the seasonally adjusted rate for March just 0.2 of a percentage point away from Tennessee's all-time low jobless number of 3.2%. In a year-to-year comparison, the statewide unemployment rate increased slightly from 3.3% to 3.4%. Employers across the state continue to add workers to their payrolls, creating 1,700 new nonfarm jobs between February and March. The largest increase occurred in the leisure and hospitality sector. The manufacturing sector and the education and health services sector had the next largest month-to-month increases. Tennessee also experienced an increase in nonfarm employment over the last year. Employers added 96,900 jobs across the state. The leisure and hospitality sector, the education and health services, and then the government sector accounted for the biggest gains in employment.

Juneteenth will become an official state holiday following the passage of a bill that will change the state's recognition of the day from a "Day of Special Observance" to a paid holiday for state employees. Gov. Bill Lee initially put the bill forward, stating it was "appropriate to commemorate Juneteenth with a state holiday, both to recognize an important day for freedom in America" as well as to become consistent with the federal calendar. Juneteenth became a federal holiday in 2021. The bill was signed by the governor after passing both the Tennessee House and Senate category.

TDAP Community Tree Planting Program applications now open for municipalities

Communities can optimize the benefits of trees with funding from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry. Applications are now available for the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) Community Tree Planting Program to increase and improve urban tree populations.

"The goal of the TAEP Community Tree Planting Program is to increase the urban tree canopy in cities and towns across Tennessee," State Forester David Arnold said. "Healthy, structurally sound urban trees conserve energy, help prevent water pollution and soil erosion, beautify spaces, and can increase property value. I encourage all eligible groups to apply for funding to help their neighborhoods thrive."

Eligible applicants include cities, local government agencies, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations, such as neighborhood associations, civic groups, and community volunteer tree groups. Awards range from \$500 to \$20,000 for approved projects. TAEP offers a cost-share program for tree planting on public property, rights-of-way, and private non-profit land with public access.

Funds cover half the cost of trees and shipping, contracted planting, mulch, irrigation devices, tree labels, and acknowledgment



An Urban Forestry program undertaken in Johnson City. By planting trees, citizens and municipalities can see a wide variety of benefits including prevention of stream and soil erosion, increases in property values, and energy conservation.

signs. Funding recipients are required to use Tennessee-grown trees.

Projects can include planting on private property on a riparian area, which is a 35-foot transitional area between land that contains a mix of trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers and the edge of a river, stream, or creek bank.

The 2022 TAEP Community Tree Planting Program funded 19 projects serving 15 communities statewide with a total of 4,741 trees planted at a conservation investment of \$123,573.

Proposals must be submitted electronically by emailing <u>forest-</u><u>ry.nashville@tn.gov</u> by 4:30 p.m. CDT on Monday, June 2, 2023.

Find more information at www.tn.gov/agriculture/forests/ urban.html.

For assistance with developing a grant project, contact Diane Warwick at 865-617-8829 or <u>diane</u>. <u>warwick@tn.gov</u>.

April revenues for Tennessee \$425.1M above estimates

Finance and Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson reported that April total tax revenues were \$3 billion, which is \$54.4 million more than April of last year and \$429.1 million more than the budgeted estimate.

The total growth rate for the month was 1.81%.

"April total tax revenues reflect a significant slowdown in growth compared to the beginning of this fiscal year," Bryson said. "While receipts from sales and use taxes, franchise and excise taxes, and the state business tax preceded all tax sources in outperforming budgeted estimates for the month, we are noticing signs of slower economic activity. Gas tax revenues were notably lower for the month and real estate activity within the state continues to remain depressed, thus greatly reducing realty transaction taxes which are reported under the privilege tax

"It is expected that state revenues will continue to outperform our monthly budgeted estimates and that we will soon exceed the annual revenue estimates set at the beginning of the fiscal year. However, with only three reporting months left for the year, we are carefully watching our ability to meet the revised revenue levels that were recommended at last year's November Funding Board meeting and included in the general assembly's appropriations bill passed last month. As such, we will closely monitor collections and expenditures until year end."

On an accrual basis, April is the ninth month in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

General fund revenues were \$413 million more than the budgeted estimate while the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were \$16.1 million more than the estimates. million more than the estimate for April and 3.92% more than April 2022. For nine months, revenues are \$1.1 billion higher than estimated. The year-to-date growth rate for nine months was 8.30%.

Franchise and excise tax revenues combined were \$271.3 million more than the budgeted estimate in April and the growth rate compared to April 2022 was 1.54%. For nine months, revenues are \$708 million more than the estimate and the year-to-date growth rate is 7.99%.

Gasoline and motor fuel revenues for April decreased by 6.98% compared to April 2022 and were \$4.1 million less than the April budgeted estimate of \$113.3 million. For nine months, revenues are less than estimates by \$12.5 million.

Motor vehicle registration revenues were \$6.7 million more than the April estimate, and on a year-to-date basis they are \$32.5 million more than estimates. Tobacco taxes were \$1.1 million more than the April budgeted estimate of \$18.2 million. However, for nine months, they are \$12 million less than the budgeted estimate. Privilege taxes were \$11.2 million less than the April estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, August through April, revenues are \$56.6 million less than the estimate. Business taxes were \$32.5 million more than the April estimate. For nine months, revenues are \$57.6 million more than the budgeted estimate. Mixed drink, or liquor-bythe-drink, taxes were \$5.9 million more than the April estimate, and on a year-to-date basis, revenues are \$49.2 million more than the budgeted estimate. All other tax receipts were more than estimates by a net of \$5.5 million. Year-to-date revenues, August through April, are \$1.9 billion more than the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for nine months is 6.27%. General fund revenues are \$1.8 billion more than the budgeted estimate and the four other funds are \$151 million more than estimated. For more information on the budget, visit the state's website.

Sales tax revenues were \$121.4

Some 80 municipalities share in \$232.7M in ARP funds

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) has announced more than \$232.7 million in state ARP funds divided among 102 projects with more than 80 municipalities receiving grants or benefiting from grant projects.

Of the 102 total projects, 17 were collaborative grants and 85 were non-collaborative grants. There are 10 municipalities awarded collaborative grants with 10 more benefiting from collaborative grants and 70 municipalities being awarded non-collaborative grants.

There are also 132 individual drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure projects among the grants total. The grants are part of the \$1 billion non-competitive grant program. The remaining funds (\$269 million) will go to state-initiated projects and competitive grants.

Collaborative grants were awarded to municipalities including Atwood, Charlotte, Clarksburg, Dayton, Jasper, Kimball, Lakeland, Stanton, Tracy City, and Waverly.

Atwood's \$815,203 grant will be in collaboration with Caroll County while Charlotte's \$687,212 grant will be in collaboration with the Water Authority of Dickson County. Clarksburg will collaborate with Caroll County on its \$669,054 project while Dayton will collaborate with Rhea County with its \$3,963,044 project.

Jasper's grant of \$1,363,324, Kimball's grant of \$799,195, and Tracy City's grant of \$915,194 will all be used in collaboration with Marion County.

Lakeland's \$2,614,797 grant will be used in collaboration with

Shelby County and will also decrease wastewater flows into the city of Memphis' sewer system. Stanton will collaborate with Haywood County with its \$4,024,745 grant while Waverly will collaborate with Humprhey's County on a \$1,325,000 grant project.

A \$8,650,011 grant to Bradley County will also benefit McMinn County as well as the municipalities of Cleveland, Calhoun, and Charleston. Dickson County will receive \$4,370,769 for a project also benefiting the town of Vanleer. Hancock County will receive \$3,009,713 for a project benefiting the city of Sneedville. Washington County will receive \$6,353,535 for a collaborative project benefiting Johnson City, Jonesborough, and Kingsport.

Additionally, Carroll County will receive \$2,224,218, Knox County will receive \$15,166,601, and Jackson County will receive \$3,646,304 for a project in collaboration with Putnam County.

Non-collaborative grants were also given to 70 cities and 14 counties.

East Tennessee municipalities receiving grants included Baileyton \$617,833, Benton \$737,437, Huntsville \$1,268,141, Jacksboro \$3,569,953, Kingston \$1,692,595, Madisonville \$1,085,917, Morristown \$4,472,852, Red Bank \$1,619,984, Red Boiling Springs \$748,472,andSneedville\$777,319.

Middle Tennessee municipalities awarded grants included Algood \$722,955, Allardt \$611,154, Bell Buckle \$587,437, Belle Meade \$666,588, Carthage \$765,538, Chapel Hill \$969,173, Cowan \$764,654, Cumberland City \$859,047, Dover \$748,283, Eagleville \$601,250, Estill Springs \$733,485, Gallatin \$3,926,714, Goodlettsville \$1,909,021, Greenbrier \$1,144,207, La Vergne \$3,494,124, Lawrenceburg \$2,056,490, Linden \$3,820,722, Loretto \$739,398, McEwen \$1,273,527, Millersville \$955,714, Monterey \$1,479,719, Murfreesboro \$10,115,421, Pulaski \$1,751,814, Sparta \$1,072,232, Tennessee Ridge \$1,895,856, Thompson's Station \$832,321, Vanleer \$599,993, Wartrace \$637,105, Waverly \$1,487,920, Westmoreland \$258,776, and Winchester \$1,395,523.

West Tennessee municipalities earning grants included Alamo received \$831,197, Bolivar \$2,550,364, Bradford \$794,015, Brownsville \$2,078,119, Camden

\$2,442,490,Covington\$1,789,511, Crossville \$3,549,752, Decatur \$4,159,003,Dyersburg\$4,204,446, Friendship \$1,848,671, Grand Junction \$1,827,974, Henning \$708,224, Hornbeak \$613,985, Hornsby \$592,243, Middleton \$1,545,363, Milan \$1,729,735, Oakland \$1,596,587, Savannah \$4,714,467, Scott's Hill \$2,230,909, Selmer \$6,046,448, Somerville \$2,259,831, South Fulton \$879,957, Tiptonville \$2,321,792, Toone, \$657,188, Trenton \$1,208,392, and Troy \$725.905.

Non-collaborative grants given to counties included \$1,481,306 for Benton County, \$6,584,513 for Cocke County, \$1,713,706 for Crockett County, \$1,424,739 for Decatur County, \$3,530,705 for Grainger County, \$3,909,120 for Grundy County, \$770,850 for Hardin County, \$5,168,790 for Lawrence County, \$4,411,275 for Lauderdale County, \$637,500 for Marion County, \$3,075,564 for Marshall County, \$2,651,889 for Roane County, \$2,217,776 for Scott County, and \$7,128,064 for Sevier County.

To learn more about the specific scope and details of each project, <u>visit here.</u>



NLC: City leaders urged to weigh in on regulations following Ohio derailment

BY KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Following the toxic train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, city leaders can take an active role in promoting federal regulation intended to reduce the risk their own communities face.

The National League of Cities continues to support action by Congress to give the U.S. Department of Transportation, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to take actions to improve rail safety in the U.S.

While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes important rail safety programs, like the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, there is room for targeted policies that have been in discussion in the halls of Congress for some time.

NLC has both asked city leaders to contact federal representatives and their lawmakers with their concerns about rail safety as well as use available tools to assess their own risk for derailment.

In 2022 alone, there were 1,164 derailments on America's more than 140,000 miles of railroad track - averaging out to three derailment per days.

The National League of Cities is one of many organizations across the country asking both state and federal leaders to take a closer look at what can be done to ensure that hazardous materials are transported safely through America.

"With 140,000 miles of track in the U.S. crossing directly through many of the nation's 19,000 cities, towns and villages, local officials continue to look for actions to improve rail safety in their communities with federal assistance and taking precautions," wrote Clarence Anthony, CEO and executive director of National League of Cities (NLC) in a letter submitted to congressional policymakers. "The safe and efficient movement of people and goods must be the prime objective of transportation policy at all levels of government, but local governments find most rail safety improvements questions boomerang back to Congress as the only recourse."

Chuck Gluck, an OSHA outreach coordinator safety consultant with the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service, has been at handling incidents like chemical spills from trains for 40 years in his career as a fire fighter and in public safety. He said the Ohio incident was a textbook example of what not to do. "It is cheaper to flare that material than to pick it up, but it is against the law for them to flare that material because it is a known carcinogen," Gluck said. "Everyone downwind from that site can now sue that company for what they did. I was outrated when I saw what they were doing there. They definitely showed a lack of leadership. The railroad is going to be there for the next ten years whether they like it or not because of what they did. When a railroad signs an agreement with the federal government, the railroad is responsible for all spills that they make."



The derailment of a Norfolk Southern train in East Palestine, Ohio, in February 2023 and how a resulting toxic chemical spill was handled by railroad officials has prompted local, state, and federal officials across the country to look at how train derailments are handled, especially in small communities like East Palestine who do not often have the resources to deal with these incidents on their own.



A smoke cloud looms over East Palestine, Ohio, after large quantities of vinyl chloride and other contaminants entered the environment when the 50-car train derailed. The incident has prompted many local officials and residents to start asking more questions about what chemicals are being transported through their communities and what is being done to ensure they are being transported safely.



ferent in each place they go," Gluck said. "The railroads often take 24 hours to respond. All railroads have issues because of lack of maintenance on the trains and tracks and that they overextend their employees. This is how that stuff gets out on the street. Each tank car may carry 30,000 gallons and there are super containers that can carry up to 45,000 gallons. No community on earth has the ability to contain a spill like that into a

waterway." While many spills such as the one in Ohio have a direct local impact, regulating railroads is something done on a state or federal level.

clude the expedition of rail safety improvement technology and community assessments of local pedestrian and car crossings, expanding the list of hazardous materials that are reported to first responders, improving signage and signals, and support for the National Transportation Safety Board's recommendations.

"Local governments have raised concerns about longer trains dividing communities in two in emergencies, causing fire trucks, ambulances and police to be cut off from their destinations with no clarity on how long a particular crossing might be blocked," Anthony said. "This concern is now compounded by the shift to longer trains (referred to as precision railroading), which means each train is more likely to be carrying hazardous materials that could have similar environmental consequences to East Palestine when a derailment happens."

Another way Gluck said the federal and state governments could improve rail safety is by staging necessary equipment and materials for handling spills in places along railroads that make them easier to access. He said instead of the traditional caboose, train companies could also consider adding a car carrying the necessary equipment or material to treat chemical spills onto each train. "Most of your resources are in big cities," Gluck said. "We are kind of behind the curve all over the country when it comes to this because there isn't money to fund what they are supposed to do by law. This is a resource intense operation where there are no resources. Operations can be hamstrung severely because of this. "I would recommend the state of Tennessee stage equipment and material at rail spurs," Gluck continued. "The problem is you are telling a private company what to do. No one wants to comply with HazMat rules until we make laws that you have to."

While many companies handle dangerous chemicals, Gluck said the difficulty in regulating

In addition to the fumes, dead fish turned up in nearby waterways and prompted many East Palestine residents to evacuate, despite assurances from officials the area was safe. Soon, many communities in waterways connected to the Ohio River began to consider their own risk of contamination to water used for drinking and recreation.

how they are used by railroads comes in the fact that railroads don't operate in a single state but rather nationwide.

"They are interstate commerce, which makes them dif-

Gluck said the role of the government then becomes to make sure the railroads are being good corporate citizens.

"The whole idea is to keep the railroads honest," he said. "From experience, when you go to these types of incidents on the railroad, the railroad company is going to look at what is going to get them out of this situation the cheapest. Cheaper to flare material known carcinogen in railroad lawsuit because of flaring instead of removal. We do want people to be bad corporate citizens. That is what this whole thing turned out to be: a bad corporate citizen."

NLC has issued a list of recommendations to address railway safety concerns from a local perspective and suggests that financial fines should be used to address the emergency situation and required environmental cleanup.

Other recommendations in-

COVERAGES DESIGNED TO PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY



www.PEPartners.org

800.624.9698

- GENERAL LIABILITY
- CYBER COVERAGE
- LAW ENFORCEMENT LIABILITY
- EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES LIABILITY
- WORKERS' COMPENSATION
- PROPERTY



Resources, training can help mitigate local risk in derailments

TRAINS from Page 1

clean-up is significant and the full impact on the community can be uncertain for some time."

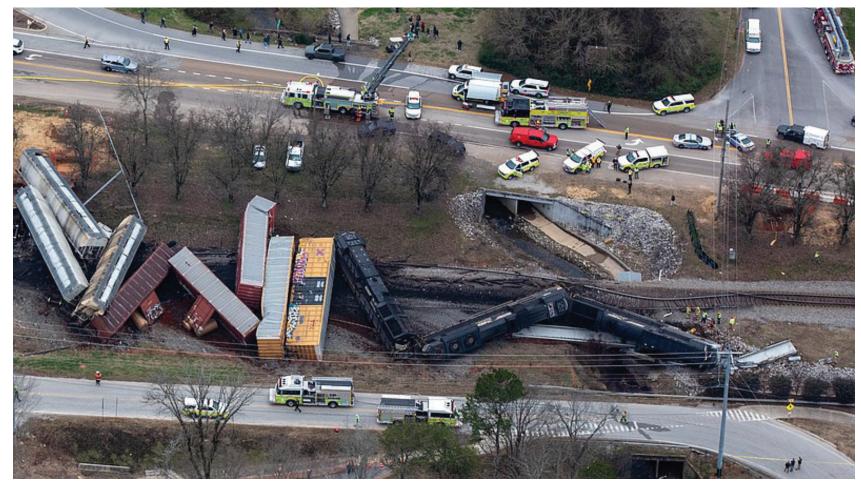
Charles Gluck, an OSHA outreach coordinator safety consultant with the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service, has more than 40 years' experience dealing with train derailments, toxic chemical spills, and hazardous materials incidents during his career a firefighter, HazMat official, and in public safety.

"In Tennessee, we are like little Detroit," Gluck said. "Industry has a lot of chemicals that do good things for us. Chemicals are safe if you handle them right. We have derailments all the time, and we know what to do when there are derailments. The problem is they store them in large containers as they transport them across the country and most little communities do not have the resources to deal with a spill. What happened in Ohio was there were hardly any resources there. The biggest problem we have is when there aren't any resources available, and then there isn't someone who can step in and say 'this is what we need to do.""

While there is a limit on what many local first responders can do, Pannell said a good way to begin is simply by identifying what railroads operate in the area.

"Local emergency officials should plan for the risks that are present or have the potential to impact their communities," he said. "This begins with a thorough community risk assessment (CRA) to understand the frequency and severity of risks. This should not be a one-and-done process. Risks are constantly changing, and local emergency officials should continually seek to reveal gaps in their existing risk assessments and adjust their response benchmarks for identified risks as needed. They should regularly conduct training and multi-agency table-top exercises to practice their response to this type of incident. Local emergency officials should know what railroads operate in their communities. They should maintain updated points of contact and stay in communication to understand how the railroad operations, schedules, and materials shipped can impact the community."

Gluck said gone are the days when he and other firefighters often received a package of 400odd forms known as bills of laden detailing what is being hauled in each train. Today, many rail companies use downloadable packets, software, and mobile apps to alert officials to what the train cars rolling through their communities are carrying. As a result, Pannell said fire officials should have both a working knowledge of the placarding and labeling system used to identifiable material as well as how to access the digital bills of laden. "They should also have available and understand how to use these resources," Pannell said. "These are some of the free resources that are generally available in print, downloadable software, or mobile app versions. Resources like AskRail help emergency responders to respond to incidents safely and effectively by providing immediate information about rail cars and the hazardous materials they are transporting. There are many other resources available to enable local emergency officials and responders to plan for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of large-scale incidents involving chemicals." Taylor Ackerman, a rail safety manager with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) Freight and Logistics Division, said TEMA is happy to help any municipality who wants specific training on how to deal with a derailment. 'Local EMA's are critical in response as they are most commonly the first to arrive on scene," Ackerman said. "The responding agency can use Ask Rail or the train crew can provide the first responders with an up to date and itemized train consist, by comparing the commodities on the train with the Hazmat ERG a primary response can be planned. Dispatchers should be trained on how to respond to an incident by knowing how to locate the crossing identification number and call the correct railroad; Dispatchers trained in the ERG can also provide first responders on the ground with critical and timely information. My office is glad to be of assistance if needed."



Collegedale was the site of a train derailment in December 2022 when a semi-truck driver failed to yield for a CSX train and collided with it. The train, which was carrying a concrete beam, was taken off the track and the driver of the semi-truck arrested for felony reckless endangerment. While no chemical spill resulted from the incident, the derailment blocked both rail and vehicle traffic with the stopped train blocking several intersections.

Resources and Info:

- DOT <u>Pipeline and Haz-</u> ardous Materials Safety Administration Emergency Response Guidebook
- <u>Chemical Companion</u>, also known as (ERDSS).
- ASPR <u>Chemical Hazards</u> <u>Emergency Medical Man-</u> <u>agement (</u>CHEMM)
- ASPR Radition Emergency Medical Management (REMM)
- <u>CAMEO Chemicals</u> from NOAA
 Assocation of American
- Assocation of American Railroads' <u>AskRail</u>
 - Charles Gluck, safety and environmental training Consultant with UT's Institute for Public Service, Center for Industrial Services can be reached at 831-247-0708 or <u>charles.</u> <u>gluck@tennessee.edu</u>





A train derailment in Farragut in 2002 released the same chemical in the East Palestine, Ohio spill - oleum or fuming sulfuric acid. Some 2,600 Farragut residents were evacuated as the spill was cleaned up and no deaths were reported. The Farragut train was operated by the same company responsible for the East Palestine incident.

a gap in the response capability, they can train firefighters to a higher level so they can do something before hazmat officials show up. The LEPC can also do a tabletop exercise to role play scenarios, and your best bet is to do tabletops on the worst-case scenarios. Most good railroad companies would be willing to partner with you for this.

US Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Freight and Logistics Division Office of Rail Safety and Inspections, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others. To ease public concerns, Pannell suggests that local communities use their own knowledge to help educate the public and make them a part of the overall preparedness measures taking place. Pannell said this provides departments with another opportunity to do community outreach while potentially saving lives. "Local emergency officials should inform community members of the risks without instilling fear and relay the expected public response to the degree possible," he said. "This can be accomplished in several ways and can be instrumental in gaining public support for the emergency preparedness needs in Tennessee communities. Public facing emergency notification apps are gaining popularity. Social media posts with directions for evacuations have proven effective. Adding this type of information to the more traditional public education outreach methods could include many of the following: websites, safety classes, safety talks to civic and church groups, community safety messages in water/utility bills, a safety messages in a newsletter sent to all residents. Other methods are articles in the local newspaper, an open house at a fire station or other emergency agency facility, and other age-appropriate hazard and safety education programs." Ackerman said it is important to educate the public how to report a derailment. "By citizens knowing about the blue ENS signs located at every crossing they will be able to report an incident to the correct officials without delay," Ackerman said. "A good thing to educate the public on would be how to locate the sign, annotate the crossing identification number and the phone number and name for the railroad dispatcher. By calling the railroad dispatcher directly and giving them the crossing ID number, the dispatcher can contact local Fire and Police without delay which could account for saved lives with time is critical."

While not the deadliest train-related incident in Tennessee history, the 1978 tank car explosion in downtown Waverly was the deadliest single-incident in the city's history until the floods of 2022. Two days after a train derailment, a tank car containing liquid petroleum gas exploded killing 16 people, including Waverly's fire chief Wilbur York and police chief Guy Barnett, TOCD state investigator Mark Belyew, members of the L&N wreck crew, and several area residents. The incident, in part, lead to the creation of FEMA.

There are also numerous training resources available for emergency responders and community leaders on the state and federal level.

"The Tennessee Fire Services and Codes Academy is the state's premier agency for the development and delivery of education and training that promotes professionalism and competency of fire service and codes enforcement personnel in Tennessee," Pannell said. "They include modules on product identification and initial response and containment for hazardous materials involved in transportation incidents in their Hazardous Materials Operations level training offerings. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency also covers these topics in greater detail in their Hazardous Materials Technician level training courses."

Ackerman said the state of Tennessee also puts on trainings through various agencies.

"The State of Tennessee Department of Transportation Rail Safety Office puts the safety of Tennesseans and railroad employees as the primary goal in our mission," he said. "In doing so the Rail Safety Office has worked with the railroads and local agencies on 'mock disaster' scenarios where we have a mock disaster on a train, the local agency uses the free training given to them to combat the disaster and a thorough debrief is conducted. The last scenario we took part in was in April 2023."

Additionally, Pannell and Gluck said community leaders and first responders can often take advantage of state and federal funding to participate in:

- Both online and on-site trainings offered by their local railroad, often on request,
- UT's Institute for Public Service Center for Industrial Services' DOT and HAZWOPER trainings,
- FEMA's Emergency Management Institute's NIMS and ICS courses,
- U.S. Office of Emergency Management Advanced ICS training, and
- IAFF HazMat training

Gluck said smaller communities especially should also train on having a regional response to a derailment issue that allows responders from multiple jurisdictions to be of aid on scene. While a state or federal response is often necessary to these incidents, these responses are often not as quick to mobilize as local officials can.

"We in Tennessee – especially in the rural areas – have a lot of that for fires and auto accidents, but there are very few for hazardous materials response," Gluck said. "There are plants in Tennessee that deal with extremely dangerous materials, but those companies are in charge of the response and carry that responsibility. Most general industry people do a very good job.

Making sure that any local emergency planning committees (LEPC) are active, meeting, and training together is another essential step in being proactive.

"Local emergency planning committees are mandated by the federal government to look at the amount of hazardous materials going through communities and develop strategies to mitigate hazards," Gluck said. "If the LEPC sees Because they are often first on the scene, Pannell said local EMS officials should familiarize themselves with FEMA incident response and systems

"One thing that we know that it is important for local emergency officials and responders is that this type of incident can quickly escalate above their local response resources and capabilities," he said. "Identifying the product involved, realizing the scope of the incident, implementing immediate precautionary measures (initial containment and isolation), and quickly notifying the additional applicable authorities are keys to their successful response effort. An important role of local emergency officials and responders that cannot be minimized is to understand and train on the FEMA National Incident Management System's (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS). It is vital that they are prepared to operate within the system's organizational structure as these types of incidents are almost certain expand beyond a local agency response."

Gluck, who has worked in numerous ICS situations, said the model has proven effective from natural disasters to 9/11. By training both emergency officials and city staffers on this model ahead of time, everyone will know their role from clean-up to gathering information to providing the public with information about their health and safety.

"We take over; that's our job," he said. "We establish an incident command system. Everyone talks to us, and we are the ones who lead the whole operation. We've been using the incident command system long before anyone else did, and as a result, fire departments across the country are very adept at it. These systems protect both our lives and the lives of people around us."

Pannell said that most local communities will rely on both the rail industry in their community and federal organizations like the

'RainSmart Yards' provides benefits to local stormwater systems, waterways

By KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

An East Tennessee program aiming to help residents improve local water run-off and stormwater issues is hoping to go statewide.

RainSmart Yards is one of several programs operated by Chattanooga-based WaterWays, a non-profit focused on clean water initiatives in both Tennessee and the Caribbean. The organization was initially created 19 years ago to help bring safe water to Caribbean communities like St. Lucia, but founder and executive director Mary Beth Sutton said friends back home reminded her of clean water issues in her own backyard.

"One thing I've learned is that most water problems are the same around the world," Sutton said. "It's very interesting. The big three are erosion and sedimentation, treatment, and plastics in the water, especially microplastics that are not regulated at all in our drinking water systems. It makes it interesting to learn all of this. I started making connections with stormwater folks in Chattanooga, Hamilton County, and Signal Mountain, because that's where I live. It kind of evolved from there."

Sutton, who holds environmental science and education degrees from both the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and UNC Chapel Hill, decided to connect her mission to bring clean, safe water to underprivileged communities in the Caribbean with the desire to educate friends and neighbors back in Tennessee with ways they can also contribute to clean water efforts in their own communities.

"Our foundation starts with education because there are so many people who don't know that there is an issue with water or stormwater and that they can do something about it," Sutton said. "Our goal is to help people make positive impacts in their watersheds for our water. We work on stream restoration projects, litter remediation, and three streambank stabilizations."

Founded in 2018, the RainSmartYards program is one of several outreach efforts the group does in East Tennessee to help educate homeowners on how they can use their own yards to help mitigate issues like stormwater run-off and contribute to their communities. The program initially started as a with a grant and a Chattanooga business owner, who was dealing the business owner to implement a green infrastructure plan to develop a wetland on the property. The result was an 85% reduction in the property owner's stormwater fee because the majority of the water coming off his property had to be infiltrated. The result gained the attention of the city of Chattanooga, and Sutton said Don Green, then an employee with the city of Chattanooga's Stormwater program, suggested developing a reward program for homeowners who participated.

"We put something together, and actually went up to Vermont to look at a program there," Sutton said. "We looked at programs all across the country and came up with RainSmart Yards. The program has taken off as people understand that they can do something in their own yard, which makes it so much easier to explain."

Often times, Sutton said residents are just not educated on how human infrastructure impacts the



Rain gardens like this one are colorful and effective ways to help mitigate stormwater issues while also employing green infrastructure, like planting native species. Fringe benefits of these gardens is that they also attract plenty of wildlife, including birds and butterflies.



natural flow of water during and after storms or that they can utilize things like native plants, green infrastructure, and knowing the slope and scope of their yards to improve not only their own stormwater



Above: By ensuring stormwater is properly managed, a RainSmart Yard can benefit both community water infrastructure and the health of local waterways. By preventing herbicides, pesticides, and other chemicals from going down storm drains, RainSmart homeowners can also make it easier for their municipal water system.

Right: Founded in 2018, the RainSmart Yards program is one of several outreach efforts the group does in East Tennessee to help educate homeowners on how they can use their own yards to help mitigate issues like stormwater run-off and contribute to their communities. The success of the program prompted the city of of Chattanooga to start reducing stormwater fees for those who achieved bronze, silver, or the coveted gold award from the RainSmart Yards program.

if it has a rain guard," she said. "We look where does your water drain, pesticide and herbicide use, does water drain onto another property or do you contain that water. The best way to contain water coming grass a little longer also means the grass will grow longer and that helps as well. Composting grass right on the yard also helps."

Sutton said most residents are already doing a lot of RainSmart

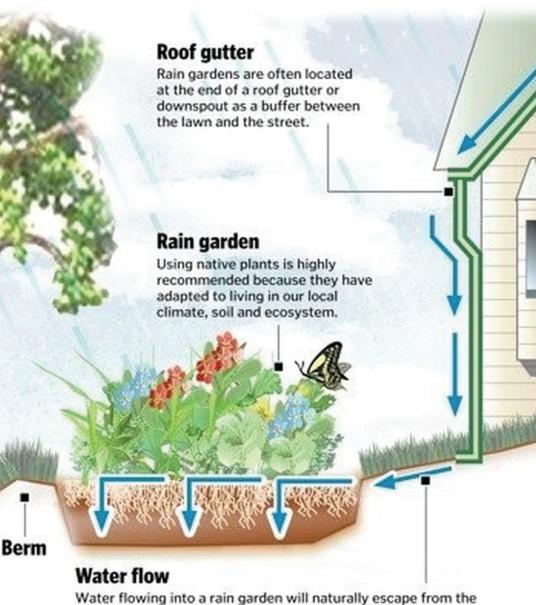
including Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly, Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon, and Red Bank Mayor Hollie Berry who have all had their own yards examined as part of the program.

with stormwater drainage issues in a parking lot.

Sutton said Water Ways worked with a local landscape architect and

intake but stormwater across their community.

"One of the things we look at is where your downspouts empty and off your property is by planting native plants because they have longer infiltration capacity because they have longer roots. Mowing



Water flowing into a rain garden will naturally escape from the downhill edge. A berm, which is a gentle rise along the bottom and sides of the garden, will help keep in the water.

SOURCE: Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District

JAMES OWENS | THE PLAIN DEALER

Using native plants, planting a rain garden, the use of rain barrells, low-flow fixtures, Energy Star appliances, employing green infrastructure in landscape design, actively infiltrating water on-property, erosion management, and disposal of pet waste are all tactics that help make a yard RainSmart. The result may not only mean the end of water pooling in a yard or overflow annoying the neighbors but can also have the consequence of improving infiltration for municipal wastewater and water systems as well as keeping local waterways cleaner for drinking water and recreation.

actions, such as planting pollinator plants, collecting and properly disposing of pet waste, using organic mulches, keeping septic tanks in working order, and riding their yards of invasive species like kudzu.

Through the RainSmart Yards program, WaterWays determines what "smart" tactics homeowners are using in their own yards and then presents those who make the cut with awards for their efforts. A site visit from WaterWays helps determine if a yard qualifies as an award-winner with the program. The three awards – bronze, silver and gold–correspond to how much effort residents are putting in to controlling stormwater on their property.

Residents who actively work to infiltrate water on their property through rain gardens, rain barrels, low-flow fixtures, erosion management activity, EnergyStar appliances, and green infrastructure qualify for higher rewards. The city of Chattanooga partners with the RainSmart Yards program by giving reduced stormwater fees to homeowners who have been awarded through the program.

Sutton said the RainSmart Yards program also encourages a little friendly competition between participating communities. Each year, the RainSmart Yards program and the city of Chattanooga pits themselves against the city of Knoxville and the University of Tennessee's sister SmartYards program for the NoogaKnox Challenge. The city with the most certifications between World Water Day on March 22 to Sept. 23 is counted the winner.

A similar challenge dubbed the Battle of the Mountains also kicks off this year, pitting the municipalities of Lookout Mountain and Signal Mountain against each other to see which produces the most RainSmart participants.

The program has also drawn the attention of elected officials,

Ultimately, Sutton said the community approach programs like RainSmart Yards provides help individuals take part in solving larger issues, especially as issues like flooding and severe weather events continue to impact communities.

"Citizens will have more pollinators in their yard, including birds, bees and all those things we like to see. They won't have wet spots or issues with drainage in their yards because they will have figured out how to drain it. They are helping the overall stream quality of their community. If they are infiltrating their water and everyone in their neighborhood is, that water is now rushing down to the stream and eroding the streambed. Private homeowners control the most land in a municipality, so it is incredibly helpful for a municipality who is trying to reach the stipulations of their stormwater permit. The program also helps stormwater officials do the outreach and education they are required to do as well as actively improve their stormwater output."

After a presentation at the recent Tennessee Stormwater Association (TNSA) Conference, Sutton said communities outside of East Tennessee have been expressing industry in how RainSmart can expand into their municipality.

"We don't want to just be in Chattanooga," she said. "We are trying to figure out how do we manage expanding the program. We are thinking of doing the back-office stuff here and training city staffers to give out the awards. We would be glad to help or teach officials with any city across the state. When we started this program, we wanted to go statewide. We want to make sure everyone has the ability to do this, and I think we're about there." For more information about the RainSmart Yards program or to connect with WaterWays, visit https://mywaterways.org/ rainsmartyards/.

Tennessee Municipal League 2022-2023 Officers and Directors PRESIDENT Bobby King Mayor, Henderson VICE PRESIDENTS **Ron Williams** Mayor, Farragut Paige Brown, Mayor, Gallatin DIRECTORS **Kirk Bednar** City Manager, Brentwood Kevin Brooks Cleveland Mayor John Cooper Mayor, Metro Nashville **Stefanie Dalton** Vice Mayor, Red Bank (District 3) Darrell Duncan Kingsport Alderman (District 1) **Roland Dykes** Mayor, Newport Mike French Alderman, Somerville (District 7) **Bethany Huffman** Vice Mayor, Millington (District 8) **Blake Lay** Mayor, Lawrenceburg (District 6) Tim Kelly Mayor, Chattanooga Indya Kincannon Mayor, Knoxville Julian McTizic Mayor, Bolivar Keith Morrison City Administrator, Algood (District 4) Ken Moore Mayor, Franklin Ann Schneider Mayor, Springfield (District 5) David Smoak City Administrator, Farragut (District 2) Jim Strickland Mayor, Memphis AFFILIATE DIRECTOR Kay Senter, City Council, Morristown (TMBF) Kim Foster, City Manager, Paris (TCMA)

TMLAFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS TN Assn. of Air Carrier Airports TN Building Officials Assn. TN Assn. of Chiefs of Police TN Assn. Municipal Clerks & Recorders TN Government Finance Officers Assn. TN Fire Chiefs Assn. TN Fire Safety Inspectors TN Assn. of Floodplain Management TN Assn. Housing & Redevel. Auth. TN Municipal Attorneys Assn. TN Municipal Judges Conference TN Chapter, American Public Works TN Recreation and Parks Assn. TN Chapter, American Planning TN Personnel Management Assn. TN Assn. of Public Purchasing TN Section, Institute of Transport TN Public Transportation Assoc. Assoc. Independent & Municipal Schools TN Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council TN Urban Forestry Council TN Stormwater Assn

TML SPONSORS FEATURE LEVEL GovDeals SERVPRO **DIAMOND LEVEL** Voya Financial Advisors PLATINUM LEVEL VERIZON TN Electric Cooperative Association GOLD LEVEL First Horizon Bank J.R. Wauford & Co. Samsara SILVER LEVEL Alexander Thompson Arnold AARP Asa Engineering Bank of New York Mellon, Co. BCA Environmental Consultants Blue Cross Blue Shield BuyBoard Purchasing Cooperative Charter Communications **Collier Engineering** Cunningham Recreation Environmental Products Group Local Government Corp. Mauldin & Jenkins **Onsite Environmental** Pavement Restorations, Inc. Performance Services Recreational Concepts Rubrik Siemens Simmons Wealth Management Tennessee Development District Assn Waste Connections of TN Waste Management **BRONZE LEVEL** A2H, Inc. Ameresco Deckard Technologies Employee Benefit Specialists Mattern & Craig, Inc. Mark III Employee Benefits Smith Seckman Reid Tennessee Health Works TLM Associates, Inc. Trane Commercial Systems TML Sponsored Programs Public Entity Partners Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund TML PARTNERED PROGRAMS American Fidelity Everywhere.care GovCard Peachtree Recovery Services, Inc. Reach Alert TN Drug Card VC3

Getting your city ready for EV charging stations

BY KELLY AVES, KYLE FUNK & JAMES BROOKS NLC Staff

NLC recently released its second brief on electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Bring Electric Vehicle Charging to Your Community: Put Federal Funding and Private Partnerships to Work is a brief that prompts local leaders to think about approaches they want to take to apply for federal EV charging funds or work with the private sector to set EV chargers throughout their communities. Many communities will take a mixed approach of both public and private funds to deploy EV charging in their municipalities. Whichever path local leaders takes, the key to success is centering collaboration around a municipality's utility provider and private sector partners backed by municipal policy changes in zoning, planning and permitting to ensure equity and safety throughout a community.

Following is a subset of recommendations and policy questions for local leaders to think about when seeking EV charging in their community, sourced from the new NLC brief. To underscore the basics of EV charging and other key questions to get your community started on EV charging read EV Charging: A Primer for Municipal Officials.

Utilities

Whether a municipality is served by an investor-owned utility, cooperative or its own municipal utility, a best practice is to include the electric utility in the planning stages of EV charging, deployment and installation. Utilities maintain electricity distribution lines, and must complete the service connection upgrades necessary to draw more power from the grid for both DC Fast Chargers and Level-2 Chargers. With the large number of EVs predicted to hit the roads in the coming years-more than 26 million by 2030-it is important to work with utilities to ensure that capital planning will meet the increased capacity needs. Lastly, many utilities have their own EV

charging incentives and programs, such as Time-of-Use pricing. When working with utilities, consider the following.

• How is the utility planning to meet future demands-through greater energy efficiency or expansion?

• Will they need to expand capacity and/or distribution, potentially leading to higher rates for residents and businesses?

• Does the utility offer, or plan to offer, different rates for EV charging? Does this differ between residential and commercial customers?

Zoning, Planning, Permitting

Regardless of what entity a municipality partners with to bring EV charging to a community, municipal zoning, planning and permitting ordinances should be updated for the new technology to occupy certain areas safely. At a minimum, municipalities will want to list where EV charging is permitted in their community. Planning teams should look at where potential EV charging gaps exist in a community and how additional private/public partners or funds may help fill those areas. Permits should be streamlined for ease of setting a charging safely. While EV charging and vehicles are generally safe local leaders will want to talk with fire chiefs about their readiness should an accident occur. For zoning, municipal leaders may want to address the following:

• Where will EV charging be allowed, incentivized and required? In which zoning areas? Chelan, WA allows for Level-1 and 2 EV charging in all zones, while Level-3 is allowed only in industrial, highway service commercial, and public lands and facilities zoning districts and requires a conditional use permit.

• Under what circumstances should any new construction be EV-ready, capable or installed?

• Where will EV Charging be allowed in parking lots and the right of way? Will improvements to parking lots or streets require upgrades to EV-ready capable or installed?

• If EV-installed is required in public areas, how many will be

required? Avondale, AZ, has Level-2 EV charging minimums for installed and capable for parking spaces as a percentage. This includes 100 percent of residential family parking being EV-capable.

Private Partners

As municipalities work through the multiple steps to set EV chargers in their community, they should continually engage private sector partners. Private partners in the EV sector can provide a range of resources helpful to local leaders including mapping, data gathering, chargers, management of chargers, mobile chargers and planning. Before engaging private sector partners local leaders should consider the following issues:

• Does the municipality have its own electrification vision, goals and strategic implementation plan in place? For example, read the Baton Rouge, LA, EV Strategic Plan developed with private partner Stantec.

• Will interested private sector partners support EV charging build-out to rural, underserved or disadvantaged communities?

• Does the municipality view EV charging as a public service only or as an economic catalyst incentivizing future development?

• What decisions have been made about pricing—whether charging stations earn revenue, break-even or are subsidized?

Bringing It All Together

After local leaders have met with their utility provider, updated their municipal codes and gathered their partners, municipalities may bring it all together in the form of requests for proposals (RFPs), contracts and other ordinances or policy changes. Local RFPs will be issued to meet specific site selection, ownership and maintenance goals. Harrisonburg, VA's RFP, for example, looked for vendors to lease parking spaces from the city to install, operate, maintain and manage EV charging stations on city-owned parking lots throughout the downtown and in city parks. Local leaders may want to consider additional policy changes that increase economic development, expand workforce opportunities, or adopt electrical municipal fleets.



May 27-28: Brownsville

Exit 56 Blues Festival Celebrating the legacy of local country blues pioneers "Sleepy" John Estes, Hammie Nixon, and Yank Rachell, this two-day festival features music, food, arts, crafts, and a car show. Learn more <u>here</u>.

June 1-4: Paris

Tennessee River Jam By land and on the lake, this music festival features multiple artists, concerts, and venues in both downtown Paris and Paris Landing State Park. For more info, <u>visit here.</u>

June 2-3: Covington

World's Oldest BBQ Festival For its 51st year, Covington's Cobb Memorial Park will host the world's oldest barbecue cooking contest along with a demolition derby, arts and crafts exhibits, a truck pull, live bands and many other fun activities. Learn more <u>here</u>.

June 3-4: Lenoir City

60th Annual Lenoir City Arts and Crafts Festival

The beautiful Lenoir City Park is home to this festival featuring some 180 crafters and artists ranging in mediums from fine art to glassware to metal work and jewelry. Learn more <u>here</u>.

June 7-10: Ashland City

27th Annual Summerfest

Riverbluff Park hosts Ashland City's Annual Summerfest, a fourday, family-oriented festival with music, arts, crafts, good, games, a carnival, nightly music, and a fireworks display. Learn more <u>here</u>.

June 10: Selmer

Rockabilly Highway Revival Grounded in the heritage and community jams that created the Rockabilly genre, this annual festival honors music legends. Learn more here.

June 10: Pulaski

SunDrop Fest

Historic downtown Pulaski honors this favorite Southern soda along with family-friendly arts, crafts, vendors, and activities. Learn more here.

June 15-18: Manchester

Bonaroo Music and Arts Festival This four-day music and arts festival brings big name performers from across the country to Tennessee. Learn more <u>here</u>.

TML STAFF

Anthony Haynes, Executive Director Chad Jenkins, Deputy Director Mark Barrett, Legislative Research Analyst Kate Coil, Communications Specialist Jackie Gupton, Administrative Assistant Carole Graves, Communications Director

& Editor, *Tennessee Town & City* Sylvia Harris, Conference Planning Director John Holloway, Government Relations Debbie Kluth, Marketing Director /

Member Services Rhett Pratt, Government Relations

1.1% rate in the first quarter of 2023 with the gross domestic product increasing for a third straight quarter. Consumer spending also remained robust despite higher interest rates. Weakness in the housing market and business investment-both of which are heavily influenced by interest rates - were the reason growth was not larger. The Federal Reserve has raised interest rates by nearly 5% since early last year in an effort to curb inflation. However, consumers have remained resilient with spending rising at an inflation-adjusted 3.7% annual rate, up from 1% in the previous quarter. A strong job market and rising wages have help offset high prices with

NATIONAL BRIEFS

The U.S. economy grew at a after-tax income rising at an annual

rate of 8% in the first quarter. While spending slowed as the quarter progressed, savings rates have been edging higher – a sign that consumers may be growing more cautious or falling behind on debt payments.

The U.S. Surgeon General has said widespread loneliness poses health risks as deadly as smoking 15 cigarettes daily, declaring loneliness a public health epidemic. About half of U.S. adults say they have experienced loneliness and health officials said the result can cost the health industry billions of dollars. Americans have become less engaged in their communities and even own families in recent decades with the number of single-individual households doubling in the The hardest hit group is Americans aged 15 to 24. Loneliness is believed to increase premature death risks by 30%, leading to a greater risk of stroke and heart disease, anxiety, depression, and dementia.

last 60 years. The crisis was deep-

Inflation moderated at 4.9% in the year ending in April, the tenth straight month inflation declined. The Consumer Price Index has come down from a peak above 9% last summer, though it has remained higher than the 2% annual gains typical pre-pandemic. The slowdown in price increases came even as gas costs increased and rent costs continued their brisk climb. Prices on new cars, medical care, and airfares all declined.

June 16-18: Adamsville

Buford Pusser Festival Celebrate a weekend of music, food, and Americana in the hometown of former McNairy County SHeriff Buford Pusser, made famous by the 1973 film "Walking Tall." Learn more here.

June 17: Bell Buckle

RC Cola and Moon Pie Festival Historic downtown Bell Buckle honors this traditional combination with an annual festival featuring music, clogging, parades, a 5K and more. Learn about the event <u>here</u>.



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

Competitive Retirement Plan Services for Tennessee's Towns & Cities

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

Investment adviser representative and registered representative of, and securities and investment advisory services offered through Voya Financial Advisors, Inc. (member SIPC). 385783777_0321



Ed Stewart,ChFC,CLU,CF Financial Advisor

Survey of U.S. residents highlights desire for community connectivity, investment

COMMUNITY from Page 1 lations (TACIR) recently reported the state of <u>Tennessee needs at least</u> <u>\$62.9 billion</u> worth of public infrastructure improvements during the five-year period of July 2021 to June 2026 to meet needs. This funding includes infrastructure for transportation and utilities; education; health, safety and welfare; recreation and culture; general government; and economic development.

The Report Card for America's Infrastructure in its 2022 report gave the state of Tennessee a grade of "C" and said while some progress has been made, there is still work to be done.

"Tennessee, like the rest of the country, is seeing its roads, bridges, drinking water systems and more reach the end of their service lives," the report found. "However, state action-along with more robust federal support - is coming at a crucial time and allowing us to rehabilitate much of our built environment. And not a moment too soon. We've seen what happens when we don't invest, with closures of the I-40 bridge in Memphis, pipe breaks that prevent water from reaching homes and businesses, and power outages that last days or weeks following unexpected events including extreme weather, or domestic terrorism."

PUBLIC TRUST

Increased polarization on the national level has trickled down to local politics with more Americans feeling less trust in their local governments. Between 2020 and 2022, the NCS found citizen confidence in government eroded from 56% to 48%. Additionally, only 46% of residents feel their local government is open and transparent with the public and 49% feel their local government is informing residents about community issues.

However, a study from Deloitte found that damaged trust between government and citizens can be rebuilt. More than 84% of Americans believe political trust can be improved, while 86% believe social trust can be improved, according to the consultant firm.

Key factors in rebuilding trust are humanity, transparency, capability, and reliability in interaction with customers or citizens. Governments can show humanity through "demonstrating empathy, kindness, and fairness" and capability by creating high-quality programs and services that effectively meet expectations. Providing reliable programs, services, and experiences to all constituents is another trust-building tactic. In a world where information is increasingly at citizens' fingertips, transparency has become more important than ever before. Governments who openly share "information, motives, and choices related to policy, budget, and program decisions in straightforward language" are considered more trustworthy. A 2021 survey, also from Deloitte, found that access to digital services and data can improve citizen faith in government.



Many of the desires Americans have for their communities are interconnected. Citizens want walkable, connected community design with more green infrastructure and public spaces that puts basic necessities like transit, food, healthcare, and recreation in easily accessible distance from their front door, which in turn is shown to have positive benefits to other areas of community concern including health and wellness, aging in place, improving economic investment, and providing a desirable natural



While citizens report a desire to connect, trust in public institutions including local government and police are at record lows. By seeking citizen involvement, acting on citizen feedback, and providing more digital transparency on how government works, local officials can work to both restore public trust and help build the more connected communities their residents desire.



preserves natural areas, the cleanliness of their community, and how much open or public space is located in the community.

A 2022 study done by the Urban Institute found that access to community parks and green spaces have the potential to reduce crime, improve physical and mental health, increase community programming and outreach, reduce stress levels, increase workplace productivity, and provide social connections that remedy isolation so long as they are properly designed and maintained to

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Ease of access to healthcare, fitness opportunities, healthy foods, mental health services, and preventative services were among the top concerns for survey respondents. Communities that can provide quality healthcare have become more of a priority, especially following the pandemic.

"If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that the health and wellness of our residents is a major factor in community livability," Kobayashi said.

The state of Tennessee ranked 44th among the states in the 2022 America's Health Rankings from United Healthcare, often seen as the benchmark for health statistics. Many medical officials cite the fact that Tennessee has opted not to expand Medicaid as the most significant challenge the state faces as tis increases the number of Tennesseans without comprehensive coverage and has contributed to the closure of rural hospitals and medical facilities.

There are approximately 65 acute-care small and rural hospitals in the state, 15 of which provide certified critical care, according to the Tennessee Hospital Association. The Tennessee Health Care Campaign (THCC) - a nonprofit founded in 1989 to ensure healthcare access for all state residents - found that more than 75% of these hospitals are at the risk of closure in the next few years largely because they have to provide care to uninsured patients. Approximately 10.1% of all Tennesseans reported they were uninsured in 2022 with the majority of Tennesseans (47.6%) getting their insurance through their employer, according to the Kaiser Foundation.

Additionally, America's Healthcare Rankings found the state's most significant challenges included a high premature death rate exacerbated by the state's 44% increase in drug overdose deaths, his prevalence of multiple chronic conditions, high prevalence of cigarette smoking, and rate of residents often in mental distress (31%).

AGING IN PLACE

Similar to a need for health and wellness, the ability for residents to age in their homes through services like at-home health care, telemedicine, and other necessities that help maintain independence were a major consideration for many when looking at a place to live. The Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA) conducted by NRC at Polco found that 84% of residents plan to remain in their community throughout retirement. A similar study conducted by AARP found that 77% of adults age 50 and over want to remain in their homes for the long-term and that the number of seniors wanting to stay in their homes has trended upward for more than a decade. The number of households headed by people age 65 and older is expected to grow from 34 million to 48 million in the next two decades, according to studies from the Urban Institute. Especially as Baby Boomers begin to age, however, this desire is becoming more difficult to manage. "It's really important that we understand what people's housing preferences are, what they want, what they need and how well their options are meeting their needs," says Rodney Harrell, vice president of family, home and community at AARP. "It's foundational to our work to improve housing options and communities." AARP found that seniors felt in order to safely age in place they would need a modified bathroom with grab bars or no step showers (79%), access to high speed internet (76%), increased ease of access to the inside and outside of their house (71%), an emergency response system (61%), and a smart-home device such as doorbell cameras (48%). While more than half (51%) of seniors said they have no mortgage on their home, the cost of amenities needed to remain in place or to move into a home or residential living facility that meets their needs is too cost prohibitive. As a result, many said they had to consider living with a family member (69%) or a friend (54%) with more than half of Americans (52%) now living in multigenerational households and 1 in 5 Americans serving as a caregiver to an older adult. "A portion of seniors are aging in place but are also stuck in place," Linna Zhu of the Urban Institute said. "They don't have the financial resources to help them move or relocate or downsize, or they cannot afford to live in the nursing homes."

"Because digital is now a first point of interaction for government to generate a positive impression, a positive online experience and secure and user-friendly services can be very important," the survey found.

LAND USE

While residents ranked land use as sixth biggest concern, most ranked in rather lowly in their own community. About half said they felt growth was well-planned in their neighborhoods with only 40% saying they feel positively about residential and commercial growth. Less than a third say there is available, quality affordable housing in their community.

"Land use is also where governments have the most power to affect outcomes with regulations and policy changes," Kobayashi said. "Land use always has to be on this list because governments have so much control over the quality of livability through how you design a community and land use policy."

The urban planning concept known as the 15-minute city has become a framework for many communities as they aim to improve land use, especially as citizens look for more easily walkable communities post-pandemic. The 15-minute city is defined as a neighborhood or community where people can access everything they need in their lives – from food to healthcare to commercial centers to transit to parks – within 15 minutes walking or cycling distance from their home.

Robert Steuteville, of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), a Washington, D.C., nonprofit that advocates for walkable cities, said Feeling increasingly isolated post-pandemic, many Americans are looking for new ways to engage and connect with their communities. By looking beyond the traditional town hall meeting, municipalities can capitalize on this desire for involvement and help address community issues at the same time.

most cities built before the 1950s were planned around this concept when the use of automobiles and the development of suburbs increased in the post-war economy. The more modern framework – largely developed by Carlos Moreno, professor at the Sorbonne in Paris – is not onesize-fits all and allows communities flexibility.

By providing a more walkable community, Stueteville said cities can improve socioeconomic equity, improve health and well-being, and counteract depopulation and disinvestment.

"For 30 years, new urbanists have been promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods," he wrote in for <u>CNU's Public Square</u>. "The 15-minute city takes that idea to a new level, by proposing how neighborhoods, districts, corridors, parklands, and natural features may be combined to enable relatively self-sufficient urban lives. The metric of time applied to walking and biking imposes a spatial discipline that makes the concept useful and meaningful."

EDUCATION

Since the pandemic, residents' satisfaction with education in their community has dropped in satisfaction, with many feeling schools do not teach the skills students need for the Digital Age.

"The pandemic really did a doozy on education," Kobayashi said. "The day of working on conveyor belts and construction lines is over. Training kids and adults in critical thinking, cultural competency, communication, technical literacy, collaboration, and creativity, will help align skills in modern day jobs and improve the decline in satisfaction in education." With the world and technology changing at an unprecedented pace, 21st Century skills and education focus on problem solving, creativity, hands-on learning, cultural competency, effective communication, ethical decision making, media literacy, critical thinking, personal responsibility and initiative. This type of education also recognizes that the type of jobs students may eventually seek may not yet exist in the current world but will evolve with technology.

This may also include rethinking post-secondary education. While students with at least some post-secondary education still benefit more than those with only a high school diploma or equivalency, certifications through TCATs, community colleges, and other post-secondary credentials may be of more benefit to some students than a traditional fouryear college or university education.

The 2023 Tennessee SCORE Report, which measures education outcomes in the state, found the state's college-going rate fell to a new low last year at 52.8% - the lowest it's been in over a decade – despite an overall increase in the number of students earning post-secondary degrees and credentials, which increased to 63.8% for four-year universities and colleges and 26% for community colleges.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Communities that provide resources like green space, environmentally-friendly infrastructure, parks, nature, and outdoor amenities are increasing in popularity. The NCS results show 8 in 10 respondents seek a community with good air quality and 7 in 10 consider use of water resources while 6 in 10 are concerned with how the community meet community needs.

"Evidence suggests that parks and green spaces have significant benefits for their users, with additional benefits accruing with investments in park and green space access and quality," the survey stated. "This is fueled, in part, by a growing recognition of the broader utility and value of parks for individuals and communities. Park leaders and advocates are identifying ways to unlock the full potential of parks to spur economic benefits for neighborhoods and residents, foster belonging and collective identity, and provide health benefits for users."

Especially with the amount of dangerous and damaging weather events on the increase, the need and desire for green infrastructure and sustainable communities is growing with many communities finding sustainable design is more cost-effective.

FEMA found sustainable planning, design, environmental management, and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment successfully build more resilient communities and can save communities money in the long-term over more traditional or "gray" infrastructure. Added benefits include decreased stormwater runoff, energy cost savings, drought risk reduction, heat risk reduction, property value improvements, and removal of pollutants.

Communities that put an emphasis on natural environment also tend to have better public safety and healthcare outcomes. A study by the USDA found that a 10% increase in urban tree canopy led to a 12% decrease in crime in the same area.

A similar study from the National Public Institutes of Health found that by planting trees cities can save hundreds of dollars per tree in offsetting pollution costs while simultaneously bringing down the core temperature of sidewalks and urban areas, making their communities more walkable, bettering mental health outcomes, and increasing community engagement.

Tennessee cities celebrate National Police Week



The Crossville Police Department Honor Guard participates in a ceremony at the Cumberland County Courthouse.



Residents take part in an obstacle course as part of a fundraiser by the Bartlett Police Charitable Foundation as it hosted the 4th Annual Police Week 5K and other family-friendly events on May 6. Each year the proceeds from this event are donated to the C.O.P.S. Foundation, an organization that supports fallen police officers' families. This year's event raised over \$25,000 for the C.O.P.S. Foundation.



McMinnville Police officers help fill eggs for the McMinnville Housing Authority Easter Egg Hunt.







Officers with the Clinton Police Department help a young prospect test out being on the motorcycle patrol.



The Brentwood Police Department softball team at the Spencer Bristol Softball Tournament, which honors the fallen officer from Hendersonville. Officers with the Pigeon Forge Police Department decorate the graves of former and fallen police officers in and around the city as part of Police Week events.



Students learn about crime scene technology from Nolensville Police officers at the department's annual kids camp.



Corporal Scott Baubiltz and Sgt. Justin Spann with Jr. Officer Sir Johnathon Brewster who had stopped by the Columbia Police Department to show off his new patrol car.



Elizabethton Police Department partner up with children to do a little Santa Shopping at the annual Shop With a Cop at the local Walmart.



The Collierville Police Honor Guard presents the colors at a Tennessee Titans game last fall.



Lawrenceburg Police Officers purchase lemonade from local children.

To see the complete slideshow, visit this link.