



June 9 -12 at the Knoxville Convention Center

Annual Conference lineup features CMFO workshops

Good customer service, grant writing, the budget cycle, and employment laws affected by natural disasters are some of the handful of workshop sessions scheduled as part of the Certified Municipal Finance Officers training program planned for the TML Annual Conference.

Slated for June 9-12 in Knoxville, MTAS consultants will present workshops during the conference that are eligible for CPE credits for Certified Municipal Finance Officers.

Beginning at 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 9, Brad Harris, MTAS finance consultant, will present a session on establishing a budget calendar, as well as discussing the ongoing process of monitoring and evaluating the budget to ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

Also on Saturday afternoon is a session on customer service presented by Kurt Frederick, MTAS training consultant. This course is designed to assist participants in developing effective customer service skills. Highlights include identification and traits of internal and external customers, defining elements of positive customer service, and addressing barriers to delivering positive customer service.

On Sunday morning, Chris Shultz, MTAS grants specialist, will offer a workshop on *Introduction to Grant Writing*. This workshop will give a broad overview of the grant writing process; how and where to find available federal and state grants; and how to find foundation grant programs. Also discussed will be the essential components of the grant proposal package and how to craft

a quality grant proposal designed to align with grant makers' interest.

On Monday morning, June 11, Richard Stokes, MTAS human resource consultant, will offer a workshop on *Employment Laws Affected by Natural Disasters*. This session will explore many employment-related laws facing employers in the wake of natural disasters. Specifically the session will address military leave, FMLA, unemployment compensation, OSHA, wage and hour, workers compensation and others.

On Monday afternoon, Pat Hardy, MTAS management consultant, will offer two workshops on *Developing a Culture of Heroes*. This session will help participants understand the concept of "hero," and how to fill their organizations with public service heroes. In doing so the session will focus on workplace culture and specific strategies for becoming a culture of heroes.

All CMFO workshops are open to all conference attendees.

As in the past, MTAS will also offer the Elected Officials Academy Level II program on Friday and Saturday, June 8 - 9, as a pre-conference event.

To register for the EOA, please visit kate.tennessee.edu/mtas or contact Doug Brown at (865)-974-9140, Doug.Brown@tennessee.edu

In addition to the workshops offered by MTAS consultants, many of the conference workshops will qualify for CPE credits. A complete listing of approved workshops will be listed in the front of the conference program book.

For more information about the TML Annual Conference and to register, go to www.TML1.org.

110th TN General Assembly Sine Die

TML's natural gas bill, small cell deployment among legislation approved

In one of its final actions prior to adjournment, the Tennessee General Assembly approved legislation that allows municipalities to spend revenue from natural gas utilities on funding for chambers of commerce and other economic and community organizations.

SB1894 by Sen. DeLores Gresham, and HB1914 by Rep. Ron Gant, was a TML-sponsored bill that sought to grant natural gas utilities the authority to contribute to community marketing and economic development efforts.

The bill was amended to only apply to municipal gas utility systems that are located in counties having a population of less than 336,400 and utilities cannot raise rates to pay for donations to the chambers.

Among other actions taken by the General Assembly this year was the passage of legislation designed to accelerate the deployment process for small cell wireless technology.

The legislation, called the Competitive Wireless Broadband Investment, Deployment,

and Safety Act of 2018, creates a process for providers and local governments to work together to manage the right-of-ways and to get the new technology deployed as soon as possible.

While the legislation calls for a statewide application process, local governments retain their authority to:

- manage placement of utility poles and facilities in the right of way;
- establish aesthetic plans that govern facilities in the right of way;
- protect historic districts;
- manage and protect areas with underground utilities;
- require damage repair in the right of way;
- manage and reject any deployment based on public safety concerns; and,
- apply right of way permitting and fees.

A more detailed analysis of the legislation will be reviewed at the TML Annual Conference held in Knoxville, June 11.

Conference Workshops to address key legislation

**Sunday, June 10
10:30 - 11:30 am**

*Legislative Review:
The Greatest Hits from 2018*

This workshop will highlight key legislation passed by the Tennessee Legislature during the 2018 session that will impact municipalities.

**Monday, June 11
3:45 - 4:45 pm**

*5G Cell Service Is Coming.
Who Decides Where It Goes?*

Over the past year, TML has worked with the telecommunication industry to communicate the potential impacts the deployment of this new technology can have on a city's aesthetics and the management of its rights-of-way. This new legislation was crafted to balance the interests of the telecom industry with the concerns of Tennessee municipalities.

CDBG program helps cities finance facelifts for aging housing, downtowns

BY KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

Downtown redevelopment and providing affordable housing for residents are two of the biggest challenges facing many communities across Tennessee.

The Community Development Block Program's Downtown Façade Improvement grants are only available to communities in Tennessee that have participated in the Tennessee Downtowns program with an active design committee or Tennessee Main Street communities. The grant applications must be submitted by the local Main Street organization,



The city of Paris is one of many communities that has taken advantage of the CDBG Downtown Façade Grant program. The funds are used to make important repairs and encourage downtown growth.

the sponsoring non-profit organization for the Tennessee Downtowns program or the city in which the improvements will be made.

Projects eligible for these funds include exterior improvements to for-profit or non-profit commercial businesses including signage, painting, awnings, lighting, windows, doors, entryways and other improvements approved by TNECD. Interior improvements are not allowed.

The University of Tennessee-Knoxville Institute for Public Service found cosmetic repairs in downtowns were one factor that can contribute to new investment, create new businesses and jobs, and increase the number of visitors to local downtowns.

Paris is one of several Tennessee communities that has taken advantage of the CDBG downtown program. Jennifer Morris, community development director with the city of Paris, said the city received \$100,000 from the

Downtown Façade Grant program for improvements to downtown Paris. After the city was awarded the grant and went through the environmental process, Morris said city officials met with downtown business owners to discuss how the city planned to award different projects.

"We are in the midst of the façade grants," Morris said. "Rather than one major project we are trying to do 11 smaller projects. We are touching up different areas of the downtown, like awning projects, painting projects, restoring bricks, installing new lamps and lighting, and window replacement. That way, it spreads the money around. One of the projects we are doing is replacing a double door that has been there forever. They are replacing it with a newer door that looks like the old door but is handicap accessible. The current door isn't in a shape for a wheelchair to get through it."

See CDBG on Page 3

USDOT announces \$1.5B TIGER grants available through rebranded "BUILD" program

BY BRITTNEY KOHLER
National League of Cities

On April 20, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced that they opened up \$1.5 billion in new competitive, transportation grant opportunities that cities can take advantage of today to advance projects of varying sizes and types.

Previously known as Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, the new funding will be available through the rebranded and retooled Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation

Discretionary Grants program. This additional funding was provided by Congress for infrastructure in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 to "help states and communities address their most critical transportation projects." Congress stipulated to USDOT that the maximum grant award would be \$25 million, and no more than \$150 million can be awarded to a single state. Additionally, they required that at least 30 percent of funds must be awarded to projects located in rural areas.

Applications for are due July 19. Visit <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants> for more information about these grants.

After decade-long journey, Mt. Pleasant on track for new city wastewater facility

BY KATE COIL

After more than a decade, officials with the city of Mt. Pleasant are hoping to put wastewater woes behind them.

The city recently received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Program for a \$6.83 million poverty interest rate loan and a 37 percent grant of \$2.5 million to rehabilitate its wastewater facility. The funds will allow Mt. Pleasant to pay off \$5 million in funds for a revolving loan borrowed to finance a previously failed project and additional \$1.3 million to rehabilitate municipal infrastructure.

City Manager Kate Collier said Mt. Pleasant is eager to provide citizens with a much-needed wastewater facility, reduce sewer bills, and write the final chapter in a decade-long saga surrounding the facility.

"Our sewer system definitely needs upgrades," she said. "We are on a moratorium for building and under a consent order. There has been such turnover in city staff that we finally got the application for the grant submitted in 2017 and it was on Good Friday of this year that we got the financing we need to finally straighten this problem out."

In 2005, the city of Mt. Pleasant knew it was time to renovate its wastewater facility, which was built in 1978. The city hired a contractor to build a lagoon and spray field system using the former phosphate mines near the town to store water.

"The city bought 545 acres of former mine land, and they were going to do a lagoon-spray field system where the water would be stored in the lagoons and the spray fields would be used for excess liquids," Collier said. "TDEC had



The city of Mt. Pleasant has received two grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program for long-anticipated repairs to the city's wastewater facility, seen here. The city has also borrowed \$1.3 million to rehabilitate municipal infrastructure.

approved the project every step. The lagoons failed; they leaked. The city had taken out an \$8 million loan for this lagoon, and it failed."

The lagoon system was soon fraught with problems including numerous violations for unpermitted discharges. The city was left with a wastewater system that didn't work as promised as well as \$8 million in debt for the project, including \$7.7 million from the state revolving loan fund.

Following lawsuits, Collier said the city was ultimately awarded \$1.8 million from the engineers and \$350,000 from the contractor, which was set aside to help fund renovations and pay down the city loan.

The city was also facing issues with its water system at the same time as well as turnover in its staff and on the city council. Collier herself came to work for Mt. Pleasant in 2016, a decade after the issues had begun.

"Since then, we have built an \$8.5 million, state-of-the-art water plant that opened in May 2016," Collier said.

While city officials were eager to get the wastewater plant project back on track, Collier said the city first had to pay off the debts accrued from the first project.

"We had to get the rest of the funding for the project," she said. "We couldn't even start any projects until we had the funding mechanism in place. We are first using the money from the lawsuits to pay down the state revolving loan fund, and whatever balance is left - probably about \$2 to \$2.5 million - we are going to use to pay off the 40-year poverty interest rate loan because it is at a higher interest rate over a shorter term."

Collier said the financing of the facility isn't typical of similar projects.

"Normally, this is something See WASTEWATER on Page 3

NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



ATHENS

The city of Athens has opened a new dog park at Prof Powers Park, formerly known as Knox Park. The opening of the new park was celebrated in conjunction with the McMinn Regional Humane Society's Old Fashion Carnival, which featured pet-themed games, food, training demonstrations, a pet costume contest, and a bake sale to benefit the organization. Plans for Athens new dog park have been underway since renovations to Powers Park began in 2015. The park includes a fenced-in-area for dogs to play off-leash with separate sections for big and small dogs, pet clean-up stations, benches, and picnic tables.

CHATTANOOGA

The Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport may soon become the first airport in the nation to be 100 percent energy self-sufficient through the use of solar power. Airport officials are moving forward with the third phase of a solar farm project, which is expected to come online later this year. The new field—added with the 1 megawatt array and 1.1 megawatt array already installed at the facility—would generate enough electricity to pay Lovell Field's power bill. Additional electricity generated at the site would then be sold to the Tennessee Valley Authority. The third solar panel site is being constructed by Dillard Construction Company for \$634,000 and will include lowering the elevation of the site by nine feet to meet federal equipment's. An estimated 90 percent of the project cost will be covered through federal grants.

COLUMBIA

The James K. Polk Home and Museum in Columbia is one step closer to becoming part of the National Parks Service. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would allow for a study to determine the feasibility of placing the only surviving private residence of the 11th president as a unit of the NPS. The site is presently managed by the nonprofit James K. Polk Memorial Association. A companion bill still awaits approval in the U.S. Senate before the study could move forward. Built in 1816 by Polk's father while he attended the University of North Carolina, the home was where the future president returned after graduation and where he began his legal and political career.

COOKEVILLE

Colorobbia USA, Inc., will invest \$5 million to build a new facility and create 30 jobs in Cookeville. The Italian-based ceramics supplier plans to build a 50,000-square-foot facility that includes distribution functions and a technical assistance laboratory. It will be the company's first facility in Tennessee. Gruppo Colorobbia's products include glazes, frits, pigments, and ceramic inks for the ceramic tile and glass industries. The company also produces precious metals and a line of products for artistic ceramics. Colorobbia USA is part of Gruppo Colorobbia, an Italian company and global leader in the ceramic and glass industries. Established in 1921, Gruppo Colorobbia is a family-owned company headquartered in the province of Vinci, Italy. It has more than 2,000 employees and operates in 18 different countries.

DECHERD

The city of Decherd has opened a new special fire training facility and repelling platform financed through a \$250,000 grant from the Federal

Emergency Management Agency. The training facility is located adjacent to the Norris Cope Jr. Fire and Police Operations Training Center and will make it easier for first responders to continue with professional development without having to travel outside the city limits. In addition to the FEMA grant, in-kind donations from personnel helped get the structure ready. The Decherd Fire Department also plans to add a propane car fire simulator, allowing firefighters to train on vehicle fires. Fire departments from across the region can also use the facility.

GATLINBURG

The Chalet Village community of Gatlinburg has joined 20 other communities in Tennessee to earn the Firewise USA recognition based on their efforts to reduce the vulnerability of homes and landscapes to wildfire. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry presented the community with a commemorative plaque and Firewise USA street signs. Community leaders, homeowners, representatives from the Gatlinburg Fire Department, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Division of Forestry officials attended the ceremony. The Chalet Village area of Gatlinburg was hit especially hard by the wildfires of 2016 and have since taken it upon themselves to develop more fire preparedness initiatives. The National Fire Protection Association sponsors the free and voluntary Firewise USA recognition program. This designation enables communities to apply for grants from the Division of Forestry to implement projects specified in their Community Wildfire Protection Plans. For more information about the Firewise USA program visit www.BurnSafeTN.org.

MEMPHIS

The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation will pay \$5.4 million to revitalize the David Carnes Park in the Memphis neighborhood of Whitehaven. The park will receive \$4.5 million in new construction projects and a \$900,000 endowment for maintenance from the project. The renovations are the first project in the first in the health care company's BlueCross Healthy Place Program, an initiative aimed at improving public spaces to foster healthy communities across the state. Recreation construction company PlayCore has been selected to complete the project and will be working with local suppliers.

MORRISTOWN

The city of Morristown has opened a new disc golf course at Frank Loring Park. The new "Blue Course" at the park is an 18-hole disc golf course and joins a "Yellow Course" already at the park. The blue course has longer shots, higher pars and a higher level of difficulty than the yellow course. The financing for the course came from \$8,000 in grant money the Morristown Rotary Club donated to the Morristown Disc Golf Association and Morristown Parks and Recreation Department.

MT. PLEASANT

Smalticeram USA, Inc. will locate new operations in Mt. Pleasant, investing \$4 million and creating 26 new jobs. The company is headquartered in Italy and produces and distributes glazes, frits, pigments and inks for ceramic tiles. Smalticeram will locate its new operations in a 50,000 square foot facility in Mount Pleasant's Cherry Glen Industrial Park, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. With this new location, the company will be better equipped to serve its North American customers.

MURFREESBORO

i3 Verticals, a company providing integrated payment and software solutions, has chosen Murfreesboro for its new operations center. The company will take over 8,500-square-feet of the Fountains Gateway, investing \$500,000 and creating 42 new jobs. Construction will begin in May and is expected to be complete in July. Fountains at Gateway is a 31-acre, Class A mixed-use development at 1500 Medical Center Parkway. Once built out, the \$80 million development will include 400,000 square feet of office space in three office

buildings in addition to 70,000 square feet of retail space. Plans also call for a 100-unit apartment community and a midsize hotel catered to business travelers.

NASHVILLE

Mobile Mentor, Inc., will locate its first U.S. facility in Nashville, creating 110 new jobs and investing \$2 million. Mobile Mentor plans on locating its new operations in an existing location in Nashville's West End neighborhood. With this new location, the company will be better equipped to provide service to its North American customers. Mobile Mentor, Inc., part of Mobile Mentor Limited, develops, secures and manages mobile solutions for health care, banks, airlines, utilities and government organizations and offers application development, mobile security and mobility management. Mobile Mentor will focus solely on health care in Nashville for the first few years. The company was founded in 2004 and is headquartered in Auckland, New Zealand, with locations in Wellington, New Zealand, and New South Wales, Australia.

NASHVILLE

AllianceBernstein L.P. (AB) will invest more than \$70 million and create 1,050 jobs as the global asset management firm relocates its corporate headquarters to Nashville. AB is a leading global investment management firm that offers a comprehensive range of research and diversified investment services to institutional investors, individuals and private wealth clients in major markets across the world. AB's new Nashville headquarters will include finance, IT, operations, legal, compliance, internal audit, human resources, sales, and marketing. AB has approximately \$549 billion in assets under management. The financial firm employs nearly 3,500 employees and operates offices in 22 countries.

PIGEON FORGE

The Pigeon Forge City Commission is moving forward with issuing \$30 million in new bonds to purchase land and create additional parking for the LeConte Center as well as a new trolley center. The city will purchase 16 acres from Mountain Mile, LLC, for use as a parking lot with some 1,600 new spaces, a pedestrian walkway over the parking lot, and a new trolley center at Patriot Park. The project will be funded through the Tourist Development Zone in the area, which allows cities to collect additional tax revenues for tourism-related projects.

RIDGLEY

Excel Boat Company, LLC, will invest \$9 million to establish a new manufacturing facility in Ridgely, creating nearly 200 jobs in the next five years. Excel Boats, located in Mountain View, Ark., manufactures a full line of high-end aluminum boats for outdoor recreational enthusiasts. The company will construct a 100,000-square-foot facility in Ridgely, including an office space, showroom and visitor area. Construction will begin in July 2018, and the facility is expected to be operational in the second quarter of 2019. Excel Boats will begin hiring in the third quarter of 2018. At the Ridgely plant, Excel Boats will produce a new, expanded line of hunting, fishing and recreational boats. The company will also manufacture boat trailers, wiring harnesses, upholstery, bracing and other boating products for its dealership network.

SPRING HILL

General Motors announced it will bring back 700 jobs at its Spring Hill plant originally eliminated in September 2017 to help support the increased demand for the GMC Acadia and Cadillac XT5 crossovers. The auto manufacturer laid off nearly 700 employees because of moderating sales. Employees who were laid off last year in elimination of the third shift have recall rights, meaning they have the option to return to their former or a similar position before new hires. The third shift announcement follows a separate, \$294 million investment for a new Cadillac crossover and plant upgrades announced last year. GM will also build the Holden Acadia in Spring Hill in 2018 for export to Australia and New Zealand.

World's largest Lego Titanic model comes to Pigeon Forge



The world's largest Titanic model composed of Lego bricks has arrived at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge. The 26-foot-long, 5-foot-high, 4-foot-wide Titanic model was built out of 56,000 Lego bricks by Brynjar Karl Birgisson of Iceland.

Athens gets ready to play ball



From left to right, McMinn County Mayor John Gentry, Athens Mayor Chuck Burris, and Tennessee Wesleyan University Softball player Katelyn Cantrell throw out the first pitch of the season at Athens Regional Park as members of the McMinn County Little League look on. Both Little League players and the TWU women's softball team play on the fields.

Oak Ridge officials, donors cut ribbon on public sculpture



Officials with the city of Oak Ridge, Dogwood Arts Council, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory Federal Credit Union (ORNL FCU) cut the ribbon on a new sculpture in the city's Jackson Square. Titled "Angular Separation," the sculpture was made by Greenville, N.C.-based artist Hanna Jubran. The city provided the location for the sculpture while ORNL FCU underwrote the project.

Madisonville completes \$1M water tank construction project



Officials with the city of Madisonville recently cut the ribbon on a \$1 million water tank at the end of Vinegar Ridge Road. The fiberglass tank is virtually maintenance-free and was partially paid for with an ARC grant of \$400,000. From left: Madisonville Alderman Fred Cagle; State Rep. Jimmy Matlock, R-Lenoir City; Alderwomen Linda Hensley; Susan Saunders; Deputy Gov. Jim Henry; Madisonville Mayor Glenn Moser; U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann; and Monroe County Mayor Tim Yates.

Trolleys return to Memphis



Trolley service has returned to Memphis with the opening of the new Main Street Line, which runs between North End and Central Station on Main Street. The new trolleys cost \$1 to ride. The city plans to add a Riverfront Loop line catering to tourists in late 2019.

TENNESSEE TOWN & CITY

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CDBG program helps cities fund facelifts for aging housing, downtowns

CDBG from Page 1

Morris said the projects were chosen by a five person committee that included a historian, contractor, a marketing expert, and a real estate agent. The committee ranked the submitted applications and approved 11 projects. There are an additional seven projects Paris hopes to complete if there is still funding left over.

City officials in Paris have already been working to make improvements downtown. Paris has received a Tourism Enhancement Grant to help install a new restroom facility and a grant from the Tennessee Arts Commission to install art murals in downtown alleyways. Downtown Paris is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district and recently became a part of Tennessee's Main Streets program. Downtown Paris has seen a revitalization in terms of retail as a result of investments into the area.

"For one thing, downtowns represent our heritage and history," Morris said. "Many of our downtown buildings are at least 100 years old. As far as economic development, industries often look very closely at a city's downtown. If the downtown is vibrant and is taken care of, it tells them that community takes pride in itself. That is a big selling point for industries. We are also sales-tax driven, so that retail is important to our downtown. It is also a gathering place for people, so downtown is the heart of the community. It is what makes us unique."

Housing, especially affordable housing, is another important issue many communities are facing. Housing projects through CDBG funds include providing housing counseling services – such as advice on pre-purchase, credit, money management, and foreclosure prevention – to potential homebuyers or to keep homes safe and accessible, projects often used to help neighborhoods with a high volume of elderly residents on fixed incomes.

Housing funds from the CDBG program are often used to develop or renovate affordable housing that already exist, but the construction of new housing is not allowed under the program. At least 51 percent of houses funded through the project must be occupied by low-to-moderate income-residents.

Paris has twice taken advantage of the program, first receiving a \$500,000 grant in 2006 to renovate homes in the Peden Hill neighborhood, which was then combined with a Tennessee Housing Development Agency grant of \$250,000. The CDBG funds alone allowed for the rehabilitation of six homes on Sparks and Yates streets in the community. The city then received a second CDBG grant of \$255,000 grant for housing rehabilitation in the South Porter, South College, and West Blythe Street areas of the community in 2013.



After using funds to demolish several structures in East Columbia, the city used leftover funds to build new sidewalks in the area to make the neighborhood more accessible. The city took down 37 dilapidated homes, allowing those lots to be redeveloped into new, more affordable housing.

Most of these homes were built in the 1960s or earlier.

"Paris was originally built around the railroad, and a lot of these older homes that are within two or three blocks of downtown were where people lived in those days," Morris said. "These are older homes, and over a period of time – like in a lot of other cities – some of those older homes become the place for people with lower incomes to live. Sometimes there are residents who cannot fix the home the way they need to. One of the homes we repaired was for a young woman who had a stroke, and we helped install a wheelchair ramp into the home."

Paris City Manager Kim Foster said the CDBG housing grants are an invaluable tool.

"We have been trying to take advantage of the CDBG housing grants every time we can qualify," Foster said. "Like most rural communities, housing and affordable housing is always an issue and a concern for us. Usually, there is a lot of sweat equity in these grants, but there isn't a lot of financial matches required. That is a win-win for the community, and meets a need we otherwise couldn't provide. It's very disheartening and sad when you get into these programs and find out the conditions some of these people are living in. We do whatever we can to make improvements for these residents."

Foster said repairs to homes included replacing windows, energy-efficiency upgrades, adding new roofs, plumbing corrections, new floors, and new HVAC units. Foster said the repairs made to these homes are "more than just cosmetic."

"A lot of times the place where your oldest housing stock tends to be lower-income," Foster said. "The homes have to be owner-occupied, and our current round is a \$40,000-per-household grant that



This house is one of several in Paris that received repairs through the CDBG program. Home repairs can encourage reinvestment and revitalization of aging neighborhoods.

can be spent through the grant. That allows us to spread the money a bit further."

Foster said residents who have been part of the program are extremely grateful to have participated.

"These projects are a lot of work, but they are so gratifying," Foster said. "You know you've made a difference in someone's life through this program. We have people whose homes are in such a condition that without this funding they might not be able to stay in their homes."

Paris isn't the only community that has seen positive change following a CDBG housing project. The city of Columbia was awarded a \$315,000 grant through the program in 2014 to revitalize its East Columbia neighborhood.

Columbia Assistant City Manager Thad Jablonski said Columbia worked with the Columbia Housing and Redevelopment Corporation and the South Central Tennessee Development District to make the project a reality.

"When structures that are dilapidated dot the neighborhood,

it is hard to attract investors and it is hard to get people excited about maintaining their property," Jablonski said. "We knew something had to be done about these structures, and the CDBG grant provided the opportunity for this project. These houses can attract a lot of illegal activity or activity we want to discourage. You have someone bringing in drugs or alcohol or crime into these vacant structures, and it makes the entire area a target for crime."

Lorie Fisher, community development director at the South Central Tennessee Development District,

"This area had a large stock of vacant and abandoned properties, a high crime rate, and needed economic investment," Fisher said. "Neighborhood decay can encourage small crime which then can lead to more serious crimes. A lot of times, people inherited properties and structures but didn't have the money to remove the structure or to rehab it. The structures then fell into decay over several generations. The city was getting a backlog on their permit violations of all

these structures, but the city didn't have enough money in their coffers to go and remove these structures."

Through the grant, Columbia took down 37 homes that had become dilapidated to the point they were no longer inhabitable. This freed up the vacant lots for redevelopment into affordable housing for the residents of the neighborhood as well as eliminated properties that might attract crime to the neighborhood. Other funds were used to improve walkways and make East Columbia more connected to downtown.

Without the CDBG funds, Jablonski said it would have been a struggle for Columbia to redevelop the neighborhood.

"We budget about \$40,000 a year for paving in Columbia, and this grant allowed us to take care of houses that were blighted by spending \$30,000 to \$40,000 on each of them. We worked with property owners in the community who had a need and getting them to a point they felt comfortable taking advantage of the program. We worked on 37 homes, and it was hard to believe that people were living in some of these homes because of their condition."

While it may seem counter-intuitive, Fisher said taking down these old structures to make room for new structures actually is one way to improve a neighborhood. Columbia has already issued several building permits for new homes in the area.

"The program was voluntary, and there had to be a title to the program proving who the owner was," Fisher said. "One of the issues was finding properties with a clear title. The goal of the project was to increase single-family homes. Once you clear the property, a nice single-family home can be built on that property. Columbia even changed some of their zoning so that you couldn't have rental property or modular homes to encourage single-family homes. Once you have ownership of property, people tend to take better care of it and have better pride in their community."

Fisher said that affordable housing is an important economic development tool for communities, and without programs like CDBG, it might be harder for communities to keep revitalizing local neighborhoods.

"I have worked in the CDBG program for more than 30 years, and this is by far the program that assists small, rural communities more than any other," she said. "This is really the only program that is available on a regular basis that helps small rural towns. I don't know what some communities would do without this program. I have some towns that apply for funds every other year. Small towns who don't have the population or revenue can't afford to do these major projects without assistance from a grant program."

After a decade, Mt. Pleasant on track for new city wastewater facility

WASTEWATER from Page 1

you wouldn't do," she said. "You wouldn't take a short-term loan and refinance it, but it helps our bottom dollar so much. It gives us more cash on hand to fix issues. Infrastructure here has not been attended to for years and years. We have been barely getting by. This way, we have more money every month and every year we can set aside for capital projects. We will pay off all the debt that exists, refinance, and then we can start using grant money. That should allow us to get all of the plant renovations done."

Collier said Mt. Pleasant already has big plans for renovations to the plant.

"It has taken years for us to regroup, but we have a plan to renovate the existing plant," she said. "We are bringing in a new system called BioMag, which is another way to treat waste. As part of renovations, we are also replacing a large 18-inch trunk line that feeds all the waste to the sewer plant and send excess rainwater to the plant. We are able to use the lagoons to store that excess water and then send it back to the plant when it can handle it in the case of large rain events. It will be an asset to us to store excess water. The spray fields will be decommissioned, and they will never be used."

Matthew Johnson, project manager with Barge Design Solutions, said the design phase of the project is expected to be completed



Mt. Pleasant's existing wastewater facility was constructed in the 1970s and has several repairs in years since. The city intended to overhaul the facility in 2005, but issues with a contractor led to more than a decade of issues for the city.

by August.

"The new plant will essentially run very similarly to the way it does now," he said. "What we are installing into the plant is a process that allows the materials in clarifiers to settle much more rapidly than they currently can. From an expansion standpoint, we are trying to get more through the plant and those clarifiers have previously been the bottleneck. The driver of this project was to minimize how much new construction we had to do and utilize what is there. While we are doing that project, we are also go-

ing to be doing other things around the plant that are just general rehab.

The improvements to the facility will also impact how Mt. Pleasant is able to grow and develop, both in terms of residents and business.

"We have the third-highest sewer rates in the state; the minimum bill is \$50 a month," Collier said. "Once we get this project done, we will be able to move toward lowering those bills. Every time we want to build 25 more houses we have to go to the state because of that moratorium. They've



When construction is complete, the city of Mt. Pleasant will have a new wastewater facility like the BioMag one seen here. The city will also be able to use former phosphate mines to store water during heavy rain events.

always said yes, but we still have that moratorium hanging over us. This gives Mt. Pleasant a chance to focus on doing more housing, because as soon as a house goes on the market it's under contract. We also have new industry prospects coming in on a regular basis. We have to be able to handle their water and sewer needs. It will be a tremendous boon to get us back to where we need to be."

In addition to providing citizens with a better wastewater facility, Collier said the project is a way for Mt. Pleasant to wipe the slate

clean and move past an issue that has long plagued the community.

"Sadly, our sewer system has become somewhat of a running joke among people. This history of negativity is why this project is so important," Collier said. "There has been a lot of finger-pointing over the years. I've always said the only people who were innocent in this whole thing were the citizens of Mt. Pleasant, but they're the ones who have ended up paying for it. My attitude is this is what it is; we have to move forward. This has been a longtime coming."



PEOPLE



Tim Beavers has been selected as the interim planning and community development director for the city of Bristol following the departure of Brian Rose. Beavers has served as the city's director of public works for the past four years with a total of 27 years of experience with the city. A native of Bristol, he graduated from Virginia Tech in 1989 with a bachelor's in civil engineering and worked in Virginia for two years in the engineering and construction fields. He returned to the city of Bristol in 1991, and worked closely with the city's planning and community development department as a city engineer.



Tim Beavers

Jacob Chandler has been named as interim public works director for the city of Bristol while current director Tim Beavers steps in as the city's interim director of planning and community development. Chandler will oversee the daily operations of the public works department. He presently serves as city engineer and has been with the city of Bristol for four years. Chandler has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Before coming to work with the city of Bristol, he served as an operations management specialist with the city of Greensboro, N.C., and as a civil engineer for Durham, N.C., for 13 years.



Jacob Chandler

John Coker has been selected as the new vice mayor of Athens following a 3-1 council vote. Coker was selected for the position after former Vice Mayor Dick Pelley resigned his position in April. Coker is currently serving in the second year of his first term on the council, and he will serve as the city's vice mayor until November municipal elections. Coker also serves as the mayoral designee on the city's planning commission.



John Coker

Former Tennessee Supreme Court Justice **Frank F. Drowota III** died April 15 at the age of 79. First elected to the state Supreme Court in 1980. He was the second-longest serving justice in state history when he retired in



Frank F. Drowota II

2005. During his tenure on the high court, he also served two terms as chief justice. Even after his retirement, he remained active in the state's legal community. The Tennessee Bar Association created the Justice Frank F. Drowota III Outstanding Judicial Service Award in his honor, and he became a board member of the Nashville School of Law in 2006. A graduate of Vanderbilt for both his bachelor's and law degree, he served as a naval officer aboard an aircraft carrier and served as a commanding officer for a local reserve unit. He began his legal career in 1970 in Davidson County Chancery Court and was appointed to the state Court of Appeals in 1974.

Marsha Gallardo, children's librarian for the Spring Hill Public Library, has been chosen as the 2018 Daniel Taylor Memorial Award by the Tennessee Library Association (TLA). Gallardo has served as the children's library for Spring Hill since 2006. Before coming to the city library, she worked as a writer for Strang Communications' various magazine publications, now known as Charisma Media, and ghostwrote the 1996 book *Happy Days: And Dark Nights*, a story by Jerry and Susanne McClain.



Marsha Gallardo

Todd Hoppenstedt has been selected as the new public works director for the city of Brentwood. Hoppenstedt brings more than 20 years of maintenance, water, sales and project management experience to the job and, for the past 10 years, held operations superintendent and director of public work roles in three different villages in Illinois. He graduated Illinois State University with a degree in criminal justice and sociology, but chose to pursue a career in maintenance following graduation. As part of a restructuring of the public works department, former director Jeff Donegan will now oversee large-scale capital construction projects within the Brentwood Engineering Department.



Todd Hoppenstedt

Tony Massey, city manager for Columbia, has been selected as the 2018 Middle Tennessee Public Administrator of the Year by Tennessee State University's Department of Public Administration. A Columbia native, Massey returned to the city as its city manager in 2013. Before



Tony Massey

coming to Columbia, Massey was the administrator of Lee County, Ga., for two years and previously served as the city manager of Frankfort, Ky.; Bristol; Savannah; and assistant city manager of Kingsport. He received a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's in public administration from the University of Tennessee.

Ross Peters has been named the interim zoning administrator for the city of Bristol following the departure of Blake Ailor. Peters has served in the city's division of engineering services for the past 15 years. His new duties will include professional, technical, managerial, and administrative work in the planning and zoning division, which operates under the community development director.



Ross Peters

Tim Ward has been selected as the new chief of the Greeneville Police Department, succeeding Chief Terry Cannon who will retire on June 29. Ward is a 27-year veteran of the Greeneville Police Department and most recently served as administrative captain. He began his career in 1990 as a patrol officer and has since worked as a narcotics agent, special response team commander, SWAT team commander, detective lieutenant, and patrol captain. Ward earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from East Tennessee State University in 1989 and also has earned a number of continuing education and professional certifications during his tenure with the city police department.



Tim Ward

John B. Waters Jr., a member of the Appalachian Regional Community and the Tennessee Valley Authority board of directors, died on April 14 at the age of 88 following a battle with lung cancer. Waters was a partner in the law firm of Hailey, Waters, Sykes & Sharp in Sevierville from 1961 until 1984, when President Ronald Reagan nominated him to serve on the TVA board of directors. He also served as federal co-chairman of the Appalachian Regional Commission from 1969 to 1971 under President Richard Nixon's nomination. In 1992, President George H. W. Bush named Waters chairman of the TVA board. During his tenure, Waters was actively involved in TVA's nuclear power operations.



John B. Waters

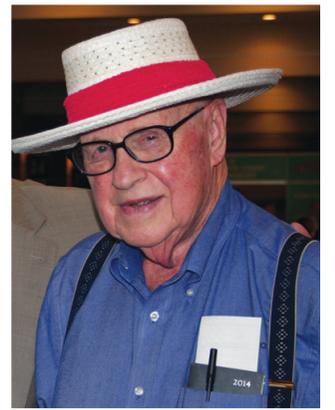
Founder, president of J. R. Wauford & Co. Engineers passes away at 88

J. Roy Wauford, Jr., P.E., founder and president of J. R. Wauford & Company Consulting Engineers, Inc., from 1956-2015, passed away at his home on April 25, 2018. He was 88.

Many of you know him through his engineering firm and the work they have done in your municipality. At TML, we know him as the "ice cream man," who has generously sponsored the ice cream break at our annual conferences for more than 30 years.

Roy Wauford was a native of Lebanon, first attending public schools and ultimately graduating from Castle Heights Military Academy. He attended Tennessee Tech University and then Vanderbilt University, graduating cum laude in 1952 with a bachelor's of engineering degree. After graduation, Wauford worked at D.A. duPlantier, Consulting Engineers and the Tennessee Highway Department.

He established J. R. Wauford & Company, Consulting Engineers, Inc. in 1956. In 1960, he decided that his firm would focus on water and wastewater engineering, which led to the firm being a leading regional environmental firm with projects completed in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Virginia, and other states. In 1969, he purchased Liberty State Bank where he served as president until 1999.



Roy Wauford

He has been a member of numerous professional and civic organizations including First Presbyterian Church in Lebanon. During his 60 years as president, he provided firm leadership and mentoring to numerous individuals during their employment as well as a stable source of income during their retirement.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Lois Ann Flippen Wauford, four children, six grandchildren, and several step grandchildren and great grandchildren. Obituary and additional details may be found at <http://ligonobobo.com>.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and the employees of J.R. Wauford & Co. He will be sorely missed.

MTAS announces staff changes

Longtime Municipal Management Consultant David Angerer has retired from the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) after 17 years of service.

Angerer joined MTAS in 2001 and was assigned to municipalities in West Tennessee.

Prior to joining MTAS, he was with Maryville, Mo. He holds master's and bachelor's degrees in public administration, and an associate's degree in general studies.

His last day was May 1.

During the interim, Athanasia Lewis, former assistant town administrator with Collierville, will serve on a temporary basis as an MTAS Management Consultant. She will work out of the Memphis. Contact Lewis at 865-705-9252 and Athanasia.lewis@tennessee.edu.

Sarah Curtis has joined MTAS as a training coordinator in the Nashville office.

Prior to joining MTAS, Curtis was a training and development coordinator for the state of Tennessee. She also worked with Columbia State Community College.

Curtis holds a bachelor's degree in psychology, and masters'



David Angerer



Sarah Curtis

degrees in sociology and business administration.

TDEC, TDOT accepting 2018 nominations for Sustainable Transportation Awards

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) invites nominations for the fourth annual Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Awards.

Winners will be announced at the Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Awards and Forum, which will take place Sept. 17-18, in Knoxville.

These awards recognize outstanding initiatives within the state of Tennessee to reduce transportation-related energy and emissions, in line with an overarching effort to save natural resources, improve the health and well-being of Tennesseans, and create efficiencies in the delivery of goods and services.

Eligible applicants include federal, state and local governments; commercial, nonprofit and industrial organizations; public and private institutions of higher education; and utilities.

Entities must be located in Tennessee and the project must have been completed in the last five years. All nominees must be in environmental compliance with TDEC. Self-nominations are encouraged.

For more information about the Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Awards, visit the website at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/tsta>.

Read the full press release at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/news/2018/3/1/nominations-open-for-tdec-s-2018-sustainable-transportation-awards.html>.

The deadline to submit nominations is May 31, 2018.

WAUFORD

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P.O. Box 140350
Nashville, TN 37214
615/883-3243

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Jackson
529 Old Hickory Blvd, Ste. A
Jackson, TN 38305
731/668-1953

Branch Office (East):
Maryville
908 W Broadway Ave.
Maryville, TN 37801
865/984-9638

www.jrwauford.com

Water and Wastewater Systems

STATE BRIEFS



The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development marked another year of record-setting growth for the state's \$19.3 billion tourism industry. According to the latest research from D.K. Shifflet and Associates, Tennessee experienced 113.6 million person stays in 2017, an increase of 3.3 percent over 2016. Tennessee places among the Top 10 travel destinations in the U.S. for the fourth consecutive year and is considered to be a top retirement destination.

Tennessee has one of the best-funded state pension programs in the country. The Pew Charitable Trusts, a nonprofit focused on non-partisan government research, listed Tennessee as having the fourth best-funded pension program of any state. Tennessee was ranked only below Wisconsin, South Dakota, and New York as best prepared to fulfill pension promises made to public employees. Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) is the defined benefit pension plan serving more 350,000 active and retired state, higher education, and participating local government employees, as well as K-12 public teachers.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry is now accepting urban forestry tree planting project proposals through the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP). Local governments, private non-profit organizations and educational institutions are eligible to apply. TAEP offers a 50/50 matching cost-share program for tree planting on public property, rights-of-way, and private non-profit land and covers half the cost of trees and shipping, contracted planting, mulch, tree-watering bags, tree labels and acknowledgment signs. Proposals must be received in TDA's Division of Forestry office in Nashville by 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, June 8, 2018. Find more information at www.tn.gov/agriculture/forests/urban.html.

The state of Tennessee saw a slight overall increase in crime in 2017. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's 2017 "Crime in Tennessee" report found murders increased 6.7 percent between 2016 and 2017, reported rape offenses increased by 3.2 percent, and the number of individuals arrested in connection with reported crimes decreased by 0.1 percent. Drug and narcotics violations also increased 4.9 percent over the previous years while DUI arrests were down. The number of juveniles arrested for crimes decreased 0.1 percent to 6.4 percent. Public crime data is now available for review on the TBI's online CrimeInsight platform, available at <http://crimeinsight.tbi.tn.gov>.

Tennessee employers added jobs at more than one and a half times the rate of the rest of the country in the past year. Employers in Tennessee added 69,700 jobs in the past 12 months, cutting Tennessee's jobless rate well

below the national average. The preliminary, seasonally adjusted rate for March was 3.4 percent, which mirrored the revised rate for February and was nearly one percentage point less than the March 2017 rate of 4.2 percent. Tennessee's statewide unemployment rate has remained below 4 percent since last May, hitting an all-time low of 3.3 percent last September. Tennessee added 4,900 new nonfarm jobs between February and March. In the past 12 months, employers across the state created an estimated 49,000 new jobs while employment in Tennessee grew by 2.3 percent compared with only a 1.5 percent growth in jobs nationwide, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Three Tennessee battlefields have received money for preservation from the National Park Service. The Chattanooga and Wauhatchie Battlefields received \$57,065 to protect the 3.61 acres of land while the Fort Donelson Battlefield has been awarded \$24,430 to acquire 11.18 acres of land. The funds will be used to protect battle sites in danger of damage or destruction due to urban and suburban development. The awards were part of more than \$82,000 in grants the NPS awarded to protect a total of 14 acres of battlefields.

Tennessee had the 13th highest gross domestic product growth of all 50 states, according to a recent report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Tennessee's real GDP increased 2.5 percent over the previous year with its real GDP per capita increase 1.4 percent. Tennessee was one of the 47 states that saw its real GDP grow between 2016 and 2007. Increases in durable goods, construction, and professional, scientific, and technical services increased nationally and in every state while agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting decreased nationally. Tennessee's biggest increase was in the durable goods sector while its biggest decrease was in mining and quarrying.

Hate crimes are on the increase in Tennessee, according to new data from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The number of hate crimes reported in the state went up 10.5 percent between 2016 and 2017. A total of 199 hate crimes were reported in Tennessee in 2017 with 56.8 percent of hate crimes directed against victims based on their race, ethnicity, or ancestry. Nearly 38 percent of hate crimes based on race were directed toward African-American or black victims. Bias against the disabled made up 36 percent of reports while crimes against victims based on their sexual orientation rose to 15 percent. Approximately 10 percent of hate crime reports were based on religious bias with the vast majority of religion-related hate crimes directed against Muslims. The most commonly reported hate crimes were assaults followed by intimidation incidents, according to the report.



Henry Horton State Park, located in Chapel Hill, received a gold-level recognition for the sustainable practices used at its on-site restaurant. The restaurant grows and serves its own fresh produce, as well as composts food waste from the restaurant.

Tennessee state parks expand "green" concepts as part of new initiative

Twenty-six Tennessee State Parks have been recognized by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) for sustainable concepts as part of the state's "Go Green With Us" initiative. Parks that received the highest honors include Burgess Falls State Park, Henry Horton State Park and Montgomery Bell State Park.

"Tennessee State Parks are leading the way across the nation in the first robust sustainability program of its kind," said TDEC Deputy Commissioner Brock Hill. "Sustainable measures instituted at our parks help create the cohesive and exceptional experience our visitors are looking for, all the while reducing operating expenses and saving taxpayer dollars."

The Go Green With Us program recognizes Tennessee State Parks that have integrated sustainable practices into park management and operations. The program launched in 2015 as a recycling initiative at all 56 state parks and evolved into a more comprehensive initiative that tackles all aspects of park management, from energy efficiency to food service to visitor programming. Parks were ranked on a tiered system based on points earned for various sustainable management practices, similar to the LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design) certification model for sustainable buildings.

Initiatives at gold-level winner Burgess Falls State Park include management of a 20,000-square-

PARK	RECOGNITION
Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park	Bronze
Burgess Falls State Park	Gold
Cedars of Lebanon State Park	Bronze
Cove Lake State Park	Bronze
Dunbar Cave State Park	Bronze
Fort Loudoun State Historic Park	Bronze
Fort Pillow State Historic Park	Silver
Harrison Bay State Park	Bronze
Henry Horton State Park	Gold
Indian Mountain State Park	Silver
Johnsonville State Historic Park	Bronze
Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail State Park	Bronze
Long Hunter State Park	Bronze
Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park	Bronze
Montgomery Bell State Park	Gold
Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park	Bronze
Norris Dam State Park	Bronze
Panther Creek State Park	Bronze
Paris Landing State Park	Silver
Pickett CCC Memorial State Park	Bronze
Port Royal State Park	Bronze
Radnor Lake State Park	Silver
Roan Mountain State Park	Bronze
Rock Island State Park	Silver
South Cumberland State Park	Silver
Tims Ford State Park	Bronze

foot pollinator garden, water aerators on all faucets, and low-flow toilets, and a children's educational program on recycling.

Montgomery Bell was named the 2017 Sustainable Park of the Year by TDEC for its food waste reduction efforts, which saves the park nearly \$4,000 per year on diverted solid waste fees.

Henry Horton also composts food from its on-site restaurant and grows fresh produce served in its

restaurant.

The other 23 state parks recognized have instituted concepts such as energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, controlled burns to reduce invasive plant growth, and "Leave No Trace" principles in visitor programming. Parks with golf courses are internationally recognized by the Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and Groundwater Guardian Green program.

MEETING OF TMBF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Notice is hereby given that the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund Board of Directors will meet in regular session on Saturday, June 9, 2018, at 11:30 a.m. local time in Room 200 B of the Knoxville Convention Center in Knoxville, Tenn., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business which may properly come before the Board. Additional information concerning the meeting may be obtained by calling TMBF office at 615-255-6416.

MEETING OF TML BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Municipal League will meet in regular session on Saturday, June 9, 2018, at 3 p.m. local time in Room 301 A of the Knoxville Convention Center in Knoxville, Tenn., in Knoxville, Tenn., for the purpose of considering and transacting all business which may properly come before the Board. Additional information concerning the meeting may be obtained by calling TML's office at 615-255-6416.



Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.

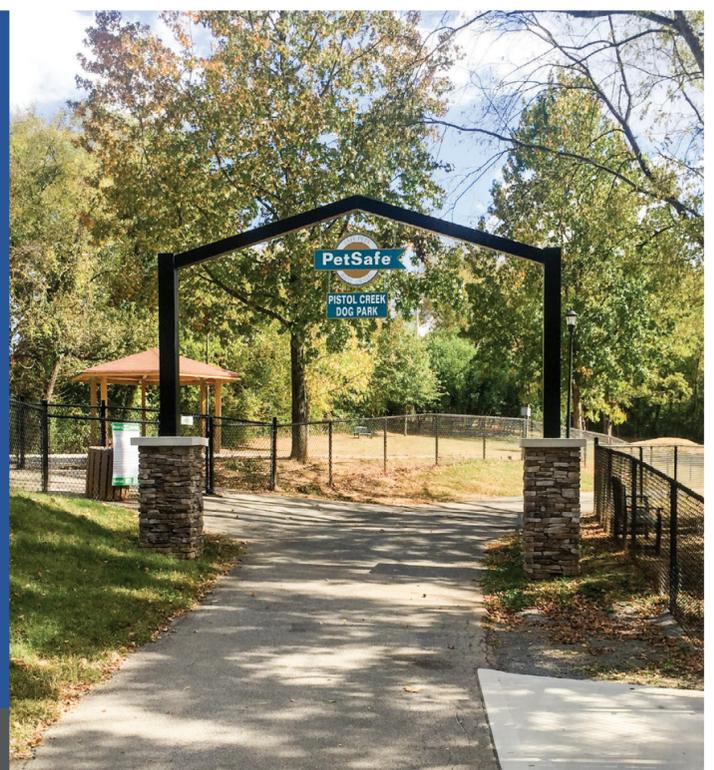
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- ▶ Municipal Utilities
- ▶ Municipal Solid Waste

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Be sure to visit the TML Marketplace at TML's Annual Conference
June 10-11 at the Knoxville Convention Center

The Exhibit Hall will be open Sunday, June 10, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and on Monday, June 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

<http://www.addictioncampuses.com/drug-free-workplace/>




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New TML Affiliate Profile

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social mission organization with a membership of nearly 38 million, 680,000 members in Tennessee, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families — such as health care, employment and income security, and protection from financial abuse.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities encourages states, cities, towns and counties to prepare for the rapid aging of the U.S. population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

To learn more about how your city can be designated an Age-Friendly Community, come to the workshop on Sunday, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Or please come see us during the conference at booth 200 to learn more about what it means to have a livable community.



New TML Affiliate Profile

Entegriety is a sustainability and energy services company specializing in the implementation of energy conservation and renewable energy projects. Entegriety is uniquely qualified to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to Optimize Building Performance. Our comprehensive service package includes energy savings performance contracting, commissioning, energy modeling, building testing, lighting solutions, renewable energy, water conservation, and sustainability consulting.

Entegriety is a proud member of the National Association of Energy Services Companies (NAESCO), the Association of Energy Engineers (AEE), the Association of General Contractors (AGC), the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), and the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

Entegriety currently has over 80 employees in 8 office locations across the country.

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Aging Infrastructure is one of the largest problems facing city government. Compound that with rising maintenance and utility costs, and the problem can overwhelm any city, regardless of size. There is good news, however. Utility incentives and energy savings guarantees can be used to fund badly-needed infrastructure improvements.

Entegriety looks at the entire asset portfolio of a municipality to find opportunities to save money spent on utilities or maintenance. By looking at the city as a whole, low cost, high savings improvements can be used to offset the cost of replacing expensive systems that are past their useful life. Also, as a large processor of utility rebates, Entegriety knows how to make every municipal dollar go further. Potential energy savings measures can include: LED Lighting, Building Efficiency Upgrades, Utility Rate Correction, Water Systems, Solar Power Generation, and Resource Recovery.

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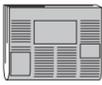


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ASSISTANT TOWN ENGINEER

FARRAGUT. The town of Farragut has a reputation for high standards, and this applies to our workforce as well as our vision for the community. Farragut is a growing community with several capital projects on the horizon. We thrive on professionalism and integrity, and genuinely enjoy serving residents. The town is seeking applicants for an assistant town engineer, whose essential responsibilities include: intermediate to advanced technical and administrative work for supervision of construction and contract management for the Town's capital projects, including construction of roadways, greenways, parks and other public facilities. Inspection of public works and public utilities projects. Supervision, preparation and maintenance of engineering records. Provides technical assistance to engineers, contractors, surveyors, architects, developers and citizens on matters related to residential and commercial development. Performs civil engineering work in the field and in the office relating to municipal public works, capital improvements, drainage and other related "in-house" designs for projects constructed by the town's public works department. Works closely with our citizens, as well as other members of the town's staff. Work is performed under the general direction of the town engineer. Applicants with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, or related field and 3-8 years' experience with civil design, roadway construction, project management, municipal engineering, or equivalent combination of education and experience are encouraged to apply. An EIT or PE certification are preferred. Benefits include a competitive salary, medical, dental, life, LTD, and a matching 401(K) retirement plan. Applications and a job description may be obtained at the Farragut Town Hall, 11408 Municipal Center Drive, Farragut, TN, 37934, or www.townoffarragut.org/jobs. Applicants must submit a completed Town of Farragut application with an attached resume. Deadline is May 22. EOE.

BOOKKEEPER / ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MASON. Responsible for bookkeeping and support services under the general supervision of the office manager/human resources manager. Instructions to the employee are general and the employee must routinely use independent judgment when performing tasks. The employee must occasionally consider a different course of action. The uniform accounting code and accounting system must be followed in order to complete tasks. Graduation from an accredited high school or possess equivalency, and supplemental course work in bookkeeping principles and practices. Experience in clerical accounting work. Responsible for all bookkeeping and financial records of all funds including reconciling bank statements and invoices, bond payments, drafting checks, accounts payable, etc.; balances all receipts and tax collections monthly; prepares all deposits and withdrawals; prepares all bookkeeping reports; prepares all payroll; prepares Social Security and tax withholding reports; prepares quarterly unemployment reports; reviews recorder reports before being submitted to state; maintains general records of account according to established accounting classifications, including various ledgers, registers, and journals; posts entries to books and computer from supporting records; makes adjustments and prepares financial statements; and deposit city receipts at bank. Salary: \$14 Hourly. Apply at the Town of Mason; Mason City Hall; 12157 Main Street. Open until filled. EOE.

BUILDING CODES INSPECTOR

ASHLAND CITY. The town of Ashland City is accepting applications and resumes for a certified building codes inspector. Applications and the job description can be obtained on the city website at www.ashlandcitytn.gov under job postings.

Applications will be accepted at Workforce Essentials at 202 North Main Street; Ashland City, TN., 37015, until May 25 at 12 pm. The Town of Ashland City is an Equal Opportunity Employer and a drug-free workplace. Title VI Civil Rights Act 1964 (942 USC 2000D)

CITY MANAGER

MILLERSVILLE. The city is accepting resumes for the position of city manager. The position is appointed by, and responsible to a five member board of C=commissioners, for the day-to-day administration of all city services. The city manager is responsible for oversight of a budget of approximately \$3.7M and 36 FTE employees. The city is seeking an energetic, facilitative and visionary city manager who will wear multiple hats, with an emphasis on excellent fiscal management, economic development, and grants development and management. The successful candidate will possess a strong ethical compass, an ability to communicate vision as well as tactical goals, a capacity to work in a political environment, with direct experience working with elected officials. The city manager must have a passion for leading a small town, the ability to relate well to the community, and the ability to partner with an engaged commission to carry out the strategic priorities of the city. The position requires working closely with the city commission, staff, federal, state, other local officials and citizens in a collaborative and helpful way. Core skills include a working knowledge of financial statements, including trend assessment and forecasting; organizational skills with an eye for efficiencies and the role of technology in that process; communication skills (both oral and written); excellent interpersonal skills and a passion for customer service. The ideal candidate will have: a bachelor's degree in public administration or business management, a master's degree would be preferred, and will have three to five years of experience as a city manager, assistant city manager, or department head in a similar sized community; or will have more than ten years of experience in a management role in municipal government or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this position. Residency preferred within one year, but will accept living within an 8 mile radius of the city limits. Additional information about the community will be on the city's website: <https://www.city-ofmillersville.com> Starting salary range is \$70,000 - \$85,000; plus a competitive comprehensive benefits package. EOE. Resumes will be accepted until 5:00 pm, June 1, 2018. All interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter along with three professional references, and salary history to: Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 226 Capitol Blvd, Suite 606, Nashville, TN 37219. Attn: Gary Jaeckel, Municipal Management Consultant

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BRISTOL. The city of Bristol is accepting applications for the following full-time position director of community development. Salary range \$65,927 - \$102,186 DOQ. Under executive direction of the city manager, the purpose of this position is to plan, organize, direct, and integrate the city's planning and code enforcement programs and services, and the Community Development Block Grant and Home programs and services. This position is responsible for policy development, program planning, budget management, administration, and operational direction of the community development department functions. Has responsibility for accomplishing department objectives and goals within the guidelines established by the city manager and performs related work as assigned. This position interprets the department's codes, regulations, plans, policies, and functions for elected and appointed boards, citizens, the business community, and the public. Plans, organizes, controls, integrates, and evaluates the work of the community

development department; with staff, develops, implements and monitors long-term plans, goals, and objectives focused on achieving the city's mission and council priorities; directs the development of and monitors performance against the annual department budget and the city's capital improvement plan budget; manages and directs the development, implementation and evaluation of plans, policies, systems, and procedures to achieve annual goals, objectives, and work standards that support the city's mission and values. Master's degree in planning, public administration, or related field required, with six years increasing responsible experience in municipal planning, zoning, permitting, enforcement, and consultation, two of which are supervisory in nature; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this position. Must possess excellent knowledge in the field of municipal planning, state planning legislation, and land use regulations. Must possess knowledge and proficiency in the operation of personal computers and be knowledgeable in the field of Geographic Information Systems with some knowledge of ArcView preferred. To be considered, candidates must complete an application and upload a resume at: <http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx>. EOE

FIRE MARSHAL

GALLATIN. The Gallatin Fire Department is seeking qualified applicants for the position of fire marshal. Reporting to the Fire Chief, the Fire Marshal is responsible for management and administration of Fire Prevention and Life Safety Division. Additionally, will plan, coordinate and participate in fire inspection, arson investigation, and Fire Prevention Division budget development and management; advise Fire Chief on jurisdictional code issues. This is a 40 hours-per-week, day-shift position. Current salary range is \$68,099 to \$102,627 with excellent benefits. Minimum qualifications: a bachelor's degree in fire science or closely related field with a minimum of 10 years of fire service experience and extensive experience in fire prevention and investigations. Holds the Fire Marshal Designation from Center of Public Safety Excellence. Preferred qualifications: a master's degree in fire science or closely related field. Executive Fire Officer Designation from the National Fire Academy. Substitution of experience for education may apply. Must have a minimum of 10 years supervisory experience. Must have previously held the rank of chief officer and fulfilled all requirements of the rank. Must be able to respond to the fire station within 45 minutes in case of call back for emergency service. Must have completed FEMA ICS 100, 200, 700, 800, 300, and 400 series courses prior to appointment. Must have a valid driver's license and meet physical standards established by the Gallatin Fire Department. Visit the city's website at www.gallatin.gov to apply. Deadline to apply is May 18. For a copy of the full job description, email shameka.grady@gallatin.gov. EOE.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville is seeking a maintenance worker for grounds and parks maintenance. Salary range is \$24,960 (DOQ) annually with excellent benefits package. This position is a semi-skilled and unskilled manual laborer as part of a parks and grounds crew performing routine maintenance and construction tasks for various public facility projects. Requires a high school diploma or GED; previous experience and/or training in maintenance and construction work in area of assignment is preferred; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this job. May require occasional weekend work. Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license. The work involved in this job requires sufficient physical strength, stamina, and ability to pass a work related physical proficiency test and pre-employment examination including drug test. The work is physically demanding, may require lifting heavy objects, and may require working in inclement weather. Selection process may include: examinations, interviews, assessment centers, practical skills, etc. Drug testing may be required. Submit

applications to Human Resources Office, 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN, 38017 EOE

POLICE CHIEF

MOUNT CARMEL. The town of Mount Carmel (population 5,429 with six full-time officers and several part-time officers) is seeking an outcome-focused manager with excellent leadership, interpersonal and communication skills to become the chief of police. This position reports to the city manager and requires a team focus with sound decision making skills and the ability to interact and communicate effectively with the public, local, state and regional law enforcement personnel. POST Certification, a bachelor's degree in related field with a minimum of six years supervisory experience is preferred. The hiring process includes an assessment center. Salary DOQ: range is \$41,300 - \$45,500. Full job description is available at Mount Carmel City Hall. Cover letter and resume (including three professional references) should be sent to: City Manager, 100 Main Street East, Mount Carmel, TN 37645 or email resume and cover letter to Mike.Housewright@MountCarmelTN.gov. The position shall remain open until filled with initial review of applications on May 21. Resumes are a public record.

POLICE OFFICER

COLLIERVILLE. This position involves the performance of responsible, general duty police work in protecting the life, persons, and property of the citizens of the town of Collierville through even-handed enforcement of laws and ordinances. Must have an associate degree (60+ semester hours) from an accredited college; or two years' previous experience as a full-time law enforcement officer; or two years of active duty military experience. A degree in criminal justice or a related field is preferred, however, majors with a concentration in management, technology, behavioral sciences, physical education or other related fields are acceptable; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Incumbents must be citizens of the United States of America. Applicant must possess an Honorable Discharge and provide a DD214, if they have prior experience in the Armed Forces. Must possess upon hire or complete within six months of hire the State of Tennessee Police Officer P.O.S.T. certification and maintain appropriate certification throughout employment. Must be in compliance with TCA 38-8-106. Applicants must have the ability to pass a work-related physical proficiency/agility test, a medical/physical examination, a psychological examination and background investigation. Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license. The work of this job requires sufficient physical strength, stamina, and ability to pass a work-related physical proficiency test and pre-employment examination. The work is physically demanding, may require lifting heavy objects, and may require working in inclement weather. All new hires must successfully complete a 365-day training and assessment period. Starting salary is \$36,000 annually (DOQ) with excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit an original Town of Collierville application. Applications are available to download at www.collierville.com under the Employment Opportunities tab, or you may obtain one from our Human Resources Office located at 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN, 38017, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Completed applications must be submitted either by mail or in person to the above address.

UTILITIES SUPERINTENDENT

ROGERS, ARK. This executive management position reports directly to a five-member Waterworks and Sewer Commission. Commissioners are appointed by the other members of the Commission with the approval of City Council. The superintendent is responsible for the effective management and administration of all aspects of the water delivery, wastewater and business operations. Administrative and management assignments include personnel, budgeting, planning, report writing, public relations, implementing and enforcing utility policies and procedures,

regulatory compliance and other duties as assigned. In addition, the utility superintendent is responsible for continually evaluating the utilities operation and making appropriate reports and recommendations to the Waterworks and Sewer Commission in order to ensure the entire organization operates at the highest practical level of efficiency. Salary: \$100,605 to \$113,180, DOQ. A city of Rogers employment application and a detailed resume must be submitted for consideration. Internal candidates may apply by resume only. Applications and job description are available online at www.rogersark.gov. EOE.

WATER PLANT OPERATOR II

GALLATIN. The city of Gallatin is currently accepting applications for a Water Plant Operator II in the public utilities department. The purpose of this position is to perform intermediate technical work in the operation and maintenance of the water treatment plant; does related work as required. Work is performed under regular supervision. Limited supervision may be exercised over subordinate plant personnel. This is a 40-hours-per-week position. The shift could be first or second, depending on the needs of the department. The hourly rate is \$20.11 + excellent benefits. The following duties are normal for this position: oversees proper functioning of water pumps, motors, chlorinators, filters and chemical feeders making adjustments as necessary to maintain proper flow of water; performs manual cleaning or preventive maintenance duties as assigned; replenishes treatment equipment with chemicals; and collects water samples from designated points. Other duties may be required and assigned. High school diploma/equivalent with two years recent experience in maintenance work involving plumbing, mechanical and electrical repair and installation. Must have a valid, appropriate driver's license. Must possess a Grade IV Water Treatment Plant Operator certificate issued by the state of Tennessee, and must retain certification throughout employment. Interested persons should apply online at www.gallatin.gov. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. EOE.

WATER SUPERINTENDENT

BELLBUCKLE. The town of Bell Buckle is seeking applicants for the position of water superintendent who will work as the technical advisor to the board of mayor and alderman. Qualification requirements include: Grade II Water Distribution, Grade II Water Collections & Grade III Wastewater License. Salary is DOQ. Interested applicants must submit a resume, cover letter and professional references to Town of Bell Buckle, Attn: Human Resources, PO Box 276, Bell Buckle, TN 37020, or by email to janet_robinson@townofbellbuckle.com. For more information, call Bell Buckle Town Hall at 931-389-9513. EOE. The Town of Bell Buckle is a Smoke-Free Workplace

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

BRISTOL. The city of Bristol is accepting applications for the following full-time position of zoning administrator. Salary Range \$44,311 - \$68,682 DOQ. Under the direction of the community development director, the position is to perform professional, technical, managerial, and administrative work within the Planning and Zoning Division. Job functions include, but not limited to: administration of zoning activities; interpretation and application of Tennessee state statute, Sullivan County, and Bristol city codes, ordinances, and regulations; communication with other departments, public agencies, and the general public; initiation of actions necessary to correct deficiencies or violations of regulations; extensive research for city projects; and development of strategies to promote efficient land use consistent with community goals and objectives. Excellent oral communication and interpersonal skills to present research findings to various boards and committees. Prefer master's degree in planning or a related field with three years of experience in the planning profession or bachelor's degree in planning or related field and 5 years of professional planning experience. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification is desirable. To be considered, candidates must complete an application and upload a resume at: <http://bristoltn.org/jobs.aspx>. EOE

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EPA announces new funding for water infrastructure

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of funding that could provide as much as \$5.5 billion in loans, which could leverage over \$11 billion in water infrastructure projects through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. Prospective borrowers seeking WIFIA credit assistance must submit a letter of interest (LOI) by July 6.

The WIFIA program received \$63 million in funding in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, which was signed into law by President Donald Trump on March 23, 2018. This more than doubles the program's funding from 2017. Leveraging private capital and other funding sources, these projects could support \$11 billion in water infrastructure investment and create more than 170,000 jobs. This year's Notice of Funding

Availability (NOFA) highlights the importance of protecting public health including reducing exposure to lead and other contaminants in drinking water systems and updating the nation's aging infrastructure.

The WIFIA program will play an important part in making vital improvements to the nation's water infrastructure and implementing the President's Infrastructure Plan, which calls for increasing the program's funding authorization and expanding project eligibility.

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the WIFIA program is a federal loan and guarantee program at EPA that aims to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental loans for regionally and nationally significant projects.

WIFIA credit assistance can be used for a wide range of projects, including:

- drinking water treatment and distribution projects
- wastewater conveyance and treatment projects
- enhanced energy efficiency projects at drinking water and wastewater facilities
- desalination, aquifer recharge, alternative water supply, and water recycling project
- drought prevention, reduction, or mitigation projects

EPA will evaluate proposed projects described in the LOIs using WIFIA's statutory and regulatory criteria as described in the NOFA. Through this competitive process, EPA will select projects that it intends to fund and invite them to continue to the application process.

For more information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>



May 19-20: Greeneville

24th Annual Iris Festival
Features two entertainment stages, a food court, a beauty pageant, "Sundown on Depot" Car Show, the Evergreen Woodcarvers, and artists, craftsmen, food vendors and merchants from numerous states selling their wares. Hours of the festival will be Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. in downtown Greeneville. Visit <http://www.visitgreenevilletn.com/events/24th-annual-iris-festival/>

May 19 - 20: Maryville

37th Annual Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival and Games
A weekend of authentic Scottish Highland festivities the entire clan can enjoy on the grounds of historic Maryville College, located at 502 E. Lamar Alexander Parkway. For \$35 per weekend pass, guests can take a trip back in time to experience Celtic music and dancing, genealogical research, sheep dog demonstrations, a dog show and parade, Celtic food, merchandise, and much more. Visit www.smokeymountaingames.org

May 26-27: Brownsville

8th Annual Exit 56 Blues Fest
West Tennessee Delta Heritage Center invites blues fans from around the globe to attend. The festival, presented from the porch of the last home of blues legend Sleepy John Estes, will showcase two full days of blues performances hosted by N Da Kno's Jazzii A, an entertainment industry veteran that has toured with Bobby Rush. Featuring live music from an eclectic gathering of blues men and women, arts and crafts, car and motorcycle cruise-in/car show, and the famous deep-fried barbecue eating competition.

June 2: Coopertown

2018 Barrel Festival
Join thousands celebrating the heritage of the barrel maker at the Coopertown Barrel Festival. Hundreds of vendors will showcase their wares along Old Coopertown Road in this free outdoor, rain or shine, event from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Enjoy live cooper demonstrations, a classic car show, antique tractors, music, food, shopping, history exhibits, our "Cooper of the Year" contest, kids zone, barrel raffles, and a whole lot more. Festivities will kick off with the Barrel Fest 5-Miler at 7 a.m. Walker and runners register at www.runsignup.com. Check out the town's Facebook pages: www.facebook.com/coopertownbarrelfestival; www.facebook.com/barrelfest5miler; www.facebook.com/coopertowncommunitydevelopment

NATIONAL BRIEFS



Housing construction has not kept pace with population growth in the U.S. for more than a decade, with 7.3 million more homes needed to be built in the country to meet shortages. The Up for Growth National Coalition, a group of real estate developers, owners, and builders of affordable housing, found builders in 22 states and the District of Columbia have not kept pace to meet demand since 2000. Many states have fewer homes than necessary to meet

demand, and are struggling with a lack of availability for buildable lots, labor, and materials. Home construction per household is at its lowest rate in 60 years.

Urban cities could see a \$2.25 return on investment for every dollar they spend planting trees, according to a new study focusing on the environmental impact of urban forests. Researchers from the University of New York, USDA Forest Service, and Davey Institute studied 35 major cities across

the world to see the impact urban forests and tree planting had on the local environment. The study found that each square kilometer of urban forest saved cities an average of \$930,000 per year in air pollution-related health costs, \$20,000 per year in capturing water runoff, and \$478,000 in energy heating and cooling savings for buildings. Trees also diminished carbon dioxide output in cities, reduced stormwater-related flooding, and dampened urban noise.

UT-MTAS JUNE MAP CLASSES

ADA COMPLIANCE OFFICER TRAINING

Target Audience:
All Municipal Employees

Credits: (4 CPE)



Dates/Locations/Times:
June 5 Jackson
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EST
June 6 Nashville
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EST
June 7 Knoxville
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CST

To register for a course, go to www.mtas.tennessee.edu, or fax to 865-974-0423. Credit card payments must register online with the Solution Point System: <http://www.solutionpoint.tennessee.edu/MTAS> or by invoice. For registration assistance, call 865-974-0413. For more information, contact Kurt Frederick, training consultant, at 615-253-6385.

UTILITY BOARD TRAINING - MODULE B

Utility Board Member Training is pursuant to state law (P.C. No. 118) requiring municipal utility board members to receive training. MTAS offers a total of 12 hours of training over three sessions. Module B revolves around Financial Oversight.

Target Audience: Municipal Utility Board Members

Dates/Locations/Times:
Jun 13 Knoxville
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EDT
Jun 14 Jackson
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CDT
Jun 14 Nashville
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CDT
Jun 28 Johnson City
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EDT
Jun 28 Cookeville
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CDT

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The city of Clinton closed a \$550,000 capital outlay note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to purchase a new fire truck for the city. Front row from left to right: Gina Ridenour, city recorder; Mayor Scott Burton; and Gail Cook, finance director. Standing from left to right: Roger Houck, city manager; Archie Brummitt, fire chief; and Steve Queener, TMBF marketing representative.



The town of Arlington closed a \$6 million fixed-rate PBA loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to finance various capital improvement projects at the town's Forrest Street Campus. The money will also be used to construct and equip a new town hall. Pictured from left to right are: Gerald D. Lawson Jr., town attorney; Mayor Mike Wissman; and Brittney Owens, recorder/treasurer. Standing: Tommy Green, TMBF marketing representative.



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TDOT's Schroer reflects on his long-term approach, future of agency

BY LINDA BRYANT

When John Schroer accepted the job of Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Transportation in 2011 he'd already traveled a long and notable career path, holding down an array of positions in the private and public sectors.

He's worked in corporate management and training, mortgage lending, owned his own construction company, and earned his MBA along the way.

Schroer served as a member the Franklin Special School District for more than a decade and was also a member of the Tennessee School Boards Association. For a period of time, he was president of both organizations. In 2007, the Indiana native was elected mayor of Franklin, beating an incumbent mayor by two to one.

Schroer, 67, describes himself as a lifelong learner who's known both failure and triumph. He encourages employees and associates to accept and learn from failures, because he says his own learning curve from mistakes eventually led him to his highest achievements.

"I owned my own business for 30 years, but this job has been the most fun I've ever had," Schroer said. "There is always a challenge, and there is always a crisis. I love a crisis because I love solving problems."

Eric Stuckey, city administrator of the city of Franklin, says Schroer brings "great passion and energy to everything he does."

"John hired me almost 10 years ago for the city administrator position, and I worked closely with him," Stuckey said. "He will challenge you and ask you tough questions but in a constructive way. He sets a fantastic tone as a leader, and he does it with a great sense of humor."

Stuckey says he appreciates Schroer's work at TDOT.

"I admire the long-term approach he's taken," he said. "He understands how things work on a local level, and he doesn't just blindly stick to a position. He's open to new ideas and is willing to change. I think that's made him very effective in his position."

TT&C: Can you reflect on your transition moving from the local level as mayor of Franklin to state level as Commissioner of the Department of Transportation?

JS: I spent 13 years on the school board and three-and-a-half years as mayor of Franklin. I was going into my fourth year as mayor when Gov. Bill Haslam asked me to do this. When the governor started talking to me about the job he told me he wanted to have a mayor run TDOT. He had a lot of TDOT connections when he was the mayor of Knoxville and told me he thought that mayors know more about infrastructure and transportation issues than just about anybody else in the state.

When I came into the organization we had 3,800 employees and a \$1.8-billion-dollar budget. I didn't know anything when I got here. I just had to shut up, listen and get to know people. Now I run what is, basically a \$2.1-billion-dollar company.

In the beginning, I didn't sleep very much. I would read anything I could get my hands on. I worked 12 to 14 hour days and most weekends just to understand what the department was all about. After the first year, I had an idea of what was going on and after the second year, I felt good. It took two years for me to accept my commissionership.

TDOT is the only state department that builds things. We are so different than every other department. Other departments provide external and internal services. Some departments provide general services to us like HR or finance and administration. Most of the other departments provide services directly to the communities and to the citizens. We provide services to them by building roads bridges and other functioning modes of transportation. In essence, I run a large construction and development business — and it's big! Right now we have about \$3.2 billion dollars' worth of work under construction. Then there's another \$3 or \$4 billion dollars under development.

TT&C: Do you think Gov. Haslam's theory of hiring a mayor for TDOT Commissioner worked out?

JS: Yes, and I think it's because you can communicate with mayors. The governor was a mayor and I was a mayor, and we both dealt with a lot of local communities. The first two years I made sure to go to every county in the state and as many cities within those counties as I could. One reason was because I wanted to understand the depth and the breadth of what TDOT does. Another reason was to get a handle on projects in those communities. A third reason was that I wanted to meet all the different people involved. It worked out well because I have friends all over the state now. I have great relationships with most of the mayors, county mayors, and county executives.

We have four regions, and at that time, we had a lot more districts but we have trimmed them down. I tried to meet as many people as I could just to understand what we do, how we do it and what are processes are. I wanted to understand who worked for me and know if they were going to be able to work for me in the future or if we were going to need to make some changes. The governor and I were both adamant that if you're going to run an organization of this magnitude you have to build your own team. You can use some of the old team — maybe a lot of the old team — but you still have to have your team because



John Schroer
Commissioner Tennessee Department of Transportation

ultimately you are held accountable. It's your department and you're responsible for it.

TT&C: Do you have a definable leadership style?

JS: Mine is more casual. I don't know everything about everybody, but I make it a point to get to know the people I'm working with. I'm interested in their families and what they do on weekends. Around our offices — and especially among those in leadership — we text on weekends about our family and other concerns. I have pictures of people's dogs and kids. I know when people are getting married or when they're having babies. I know when they are sick. One of our employees' son was temporarily paralyzed from playing football. I texted him about it. We said prayers for him. Fortunately, he turned out okay. But even to this day, after two or three years, I still ask him how his son is doing.

TT&C: Over the last seven years can you name some milestones or achievements?

JS: One of the best moments for me was when I truly understood what we did, how we did it and how I could apply my previous experience to it. I arrived in January, and I didn't make an employment change until the middle of August. I did hire a communications director because we didn't have one, and she is my chief of staff now. Communications is critical in government, and we have a great communications department.

This is a complex organization. For example, I have archaeologists who work for me, historians, and designers who make complicated bridges. I have a huge real estate department because we buy more real estate than anyone in the state of Tennessee. I have a department that does nothing but scientific research on asphalt and concrete. I have airplane pilots and airplane mechanics. We run multi-modal departments and fund a lot of transit agencies. The list goes on and on.

We are also one of only five states that has no transportation debt. We built our way on a pay-as-you-go basis. No other state has done that. And Tennessee has really done a great job of managing our money. One change I made was to bring in a chief financial officer because managing our money is such a critical part of what we do.

TT&C: What are some of the changes that you have made in the department?

JS: This was a very bureaucratic agency when I got here by design. When Gov. Phil Bredesen got elected, TDOT was part of his campaign. There had been some issues with bid rigging and other things, and there were some questions about how the department was run. Leadership did not want this department to make any mistakes. Things were checked, double-checked and triple checked, and we had multiple layers of approval processing. I would get something on my desk to sign, and there would be seven other signatures in front of mine. It would take months for a document to get through the rank-and-file to get to me. We would have inspectors inspecting inspectors. At the end of the first year, I said that we had to start managing our risks. Trying to be perfect had slowed up our processes significantly. The speed and delivery of projects in a timely manner is critical to me.

TT&C: Is it too simplistic to say that you streamlined things and sped them up at TDOT?

JS: I think that's a good way to describe it. We are much better at delivering projects than we were before. We have made significant changes in this department, and we are doing some great work. We have new concepts, new ideas, and we have brought technology to a higher level. We got rid of some divisions that were overseeing other divisions. The other thing that we did was to start to hold people personally accountable for what they did and to allow them to make decisions. You can't run an organization efficiently from the top down. Not only that, people don't have the freedom to learn, and they are not held responsible ei-

ther. Someone is going to be covering for them all the way up and then ultimately, like on a construction site, it's the chief engineer and his deputies who get the blame if something goes wrong, releasing anyone of any obligation because they signed off on the project.

Training is also a big part of what we do. I gave a speech to young state employees called "Failure is an Option." I believe failure is a necessary part of growth.

As a real estate developer, I've built shopping centers and office buildings in Middle Tennessee. Two or three times a week I would be at a project to look at it and, more importantly, if there was a crisis I would be there immediately. Say you've got a problem with design plans. You have got to go to the job site and go over things with your contractor, architect, engineer and make a decision and go forward. You don't stop the project. It may cost you money, but you've got to make a decision and move forward.

Say we used the wrong type of piling or were dealing with some unknown soil conditions. Before, we would have to draw something up and pass it to the district manager, and they would go out and meet. Then they would pass it to the regional director and ultimately it would go up to the 7th floor. Six weeks later they'd have a decision. We just don't do that now. Our people in the field are trained and are smart enough to make those decisions.

TT&C: What are our pressing infrastructure needs in Tennessee?

JS: From a quality standpoint, the state of Tennessee is in really good shape. Our roads are traditionally ranked second or third best in the nation. In Tennessee we are only responsible for state highways; we are not responsible for county roads or city roads. There are some states where the transportation departments are responsible for everything.

We have on-system and off-system bridges. On-system bridges are the ones that are on our state highways. We've got 8,367 of those bridges. And only 2.6 percent are considered structurally deficient. Structurally deficient simply means that they are weight listed, so it might be a 30-ton bridge and we moved it to 20 tons. It doesn't mean that it's not safe. It is safe for what we have listed the bridge at — so, 2.6 percent is nothing really.

We have about the same amount of old bridges. They are not structurally deficient but they were designed for smaller vehicles. That number is at about a 3 percent range. We inspect around 19,500 bridges every two years. Our off-system bridges are in pretty good shape too. Only 5.3 percent of them are structurally deficient. As an example, in 1992, 20 percent of our bridges were considered structurally deficient and now in 2018, we are down to 2.6 percent.

TT&C: How do we compare to other states when it comes to our roads and bridges?

JS: Tennessee is touched by eight different states, and we outshine all of them with our roads. I have to commend the state for this. The way TDOT is structured has a lot to do with the department's success. The commissioner is appointed directly by the governor and has no other additional oversights. The governor basically controls TDOT.

In some other states, the governor has nothing to do with the leadership of the department of transportation. For example, in Arkansas, there is no relationship between the secretary of the department of transportation and the governor.

In Tennessee, we work on a long-term plan every two or three years, and if we inherit a project from a previous administration, we can modify enlarge and expand it. You may make minor changes along the way but you don't make massive changes. That's not true in all states. Our legislature doesn't have the authority to pick different projects, it just approves our budget. They don't have the power to veto a project, and they don't bring projects in or earmark projects to be done. They leave it up to the experts to decide what roads are to be built and in what order they should be

built in. It's much more efficient that way; we can control our maintenance processes. That's why our roads are traditionally better than other states.

TT&C: Does that make us the envy of other states?

JS: Sure. We are very highly respected across the country for a lot of the things that we are doing. At the same time, there are other states I envy because of what they are doing. We are doing a lot of creative things. For example, we did the Fast Fix 8 project where we built bridges off site and drove them in on weekends and put them in place. We only shut down the interstate a total of 10 weekends for a project that would have taken two-and-a-half years if we did it conventionally. They are doing a project just like this in Memphis right now. We are looking at new techniques all the time and trying to improve what we do and trying to be more efficient in how we do it.

TT&C: Do you think the Trump Administration will pass an infrastructure plan? If so, how could it affect Tennessee?

JS: We are under a funding plan now called the FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act) and it lasts for two more years. [The FAST Act is a \$305-billion, five-year federal transportation bill passed in late 2015 under the Obama Administration.] I don't think anything will happen with infrastructure until this current funding bill is about to expire and it's time to talk about a new one. I don't think Washington is going to do anything about infrastructure in the next 24 months.

TT&C: The annual TACIR report on infrastructure said that the state needs \$24.8 billion for transportation and utilities during the five-year period of 2016 to 2021. How is the state funding its infrastructure projects, even if you can't stretch the budget all the way to 2021? What about the IMPROVE Act? How is it impacting your work at TDOT?

JS: Gov. Haslam and I drove around the state for a year-and-a-half before the IMPROVE Act was even floated out there to listen and understand what citizens felt like they needed in infrastructure, focusing mainly highways and bridges. So, we have really listened to people's concerns from all over the state.

The IMPROVE Act has 960 projects listed in it at the cost of about \$10.5 billion. We're going to build those projects. Could we have done with another \$5 or \$6 million dollars? It could have sped things up; we've had to spread some things out. But there are new projects coming and going. Through the IMPROVE Act, I believe the state sufficiently addressed the current and ongoing needs of highway infrastructure.

TT&C: What are your future plans?

JS: Well, first of all, I'm not going to retire. I love to work and I'm going to continue to, but I don't know where necessarily. I hope to continue in transportation; I have dedicated the last eight years of my life to that. I am president of AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) — which every department of transportation in the country is a member of.

TT&C: What challenges does TDOT face in the future?

JS: Technology is the new infrastructure, and we need to ask, "How does that relate to us? How do we handle that technology?" We need to use the assets that we have in smarter ways rather than to just build more. For instance, TDOT is not planning on building new lanes on our interstates around Nashville. We need to use what we have more efficiently.

Nationally our roads are running about 14 or 15 percent capacity and in Nashville, we're about 20 percent capacity. That's not scientific; that's just my overall opinion. Whether you're driving daytime or nighttime you'll say there's nobody on the roads. But that's because they're only busy between 7 and 8:30 in the morning and 4:30 to 6 at night. Why would we spend billions of dollars to add a couple lanes just to help traffic for three hours a day?

I'll give you an example in real estate because that's my whole background. Imagine you own a hotel and you have a 100 rooms and 24 days out of every month you're only renting 20 rooms. But 7 days out of the month you have a demand for a 120 rooms. Would you build those other 20 rooms just for those seven days because the rest of the time you have 80 rooms empty? No. It's not a good return on your investment.

That's exactly where we are now. Building new lanes on I-24 from Murfreesboro is not a really good return on our investment. It isn't going to really help the situation. We need to be smarter and wiser about the roads that we currently have. That means new technology and working with companies that can spread out the time that people go to work. It also means looking at [mass] transit options as we go forward, but I'm not counting on that one way or another.

We are looking at all sorts of options — synchronized signals, connectivity between infrastructure and cars that are connected and knowing what's going on so that drivers are aware. They have the information available to them in real time to make good logical decisions about where and when they need to drive. That would make more of a difference, and it's not nearly as expensive as building new lanes.