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Save the Dates

TML District Meetings

Thursday, Nov. 29	District 4	Crossville
Friday, Nov. 30	District 3	Collegedale
Tuesday, Dec. 4	District 5	Gallatin
Wednesday, Dec. 5	District 2	Morristown
Thursday, Dec. 6	District 1	Greeneville
Monday, Dec. 10	District 7	Henderson
Tuesday, Dec. 11	District 8	Millington
Friday, Dec 14	District 6	Columbia

Mark your calendars.

More information about time and location coming soon.

Congress passes third bill to address opioid crisis

BY STEPHANIE MARTINEZ-RUCKMAN and YUCEL ORS
National League of Cities

On Oct. 3, the Senate approved, by a 98-1 vote, a broad package of opioid legislation that looks to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the opioid crisis. The House cleared the package on Sept. 28 before recessing until after the elections.

The bill, SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6), now goes to the White House which has signaled its strong support for this effort, making it likely that President Donald Trump will sign the package into law.

This bill is an important step in fighting the opioid epidemic, but it

falls short in many areas including ensuring sustained, systemic investments to local efforts to combat substance abuse disorders. The National League of Cities (NLC) is concerned that while Congress has provided a considerable amount of federal dollars toward the opioid crisis, this money is still not getting down to fund local prevention, treatment and recovery programs.

The bill authorizes an additional \$500 million per year from the 21st Century Cures Act for the State Targeted Opioid Response (STOR) Grants program to provide funding to tribes and give states additional flexibility for using the grants. The STOR program is designed to increase access to treat-

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Tullahoma adopts storm ravaged communities



Photo by Erin McCullough, *The Tullahoma News*

Janie Mirtes, left, and Marie Guilliams have already begun collecting items for the people of Blountstown, Fla., which was devastated by Hurricane Michael earlier this month. Tullahoma previously helped the city of Swansboro, N.C., with hurricane relief efforts. Mayor Lane Curlee said the efforts show the generous spirit of Tullahoma residents as well as the power of a single person to make a big difference.

BY KATE COIL

The city of Tullahoma has taken the Volunteer State spirit a step further by adopting two out-of-state communities affected by hurricanes in recent months.

The initiative began when Tullahoma citizen Marie Guilliams asked Cedar Lane Church of Christ Minister Steven Hovater if there was something that could be done to help the town of Swansboro, a North Carolina community of about 2,600 near Jackson. Guilliams said she had

seen a news report that 11 of the town's 13 firefighters had suffered damage to their homes during the storm. She also knew that, being a smaller town, Swansboro wouldn't be high on the priority list when it came to removing debris, restoring power, or providing other services.

The town itself received 34 inches of rain, breaking the state record for the most rain in a single period and flooding much of the area. Swansboro Mayor John Davis said the town's historic district was deeply hit with tin roofs peeled

See DONATIONS on Page 4

Amid legal wrangling, scooter shares are coming to cities big and small

BY KATE COIL
TML Communications Specialist

Zipping and zooming across cities throughout the country, electric scooters have become the latest craze in the emerging sharing economy – though this innovative business model is stirring up about as much controversy as it is profit.

Lawsuits over public safety issues, the definition of a motorized vehicle, and company operations have ensued almost immediately after the scooter-sharing system was rolled out in some cities.

While these issues may seem like the domain of the major metropolis, kick scooter sharing services have already been unveiled in mid-sized and smaller cities like Golden Valley, Minn. (pop. 21,376), Winthrop, Mass. (pop. 18,190), Clayton, Mo. (pop. 15,939), Key Biscayne, Fla. (pop. 13,182) and Keyport, N.J. (pop. 7,085).

Dubbed the next Uber or Lyft, the goal of these scooters is to provide an alternative method of transportation to cars at an affordable rate that will encourage lower-income residents to use them. Unlike the toys popular with kids, these "kick scooters" run on electric or gas motors - which has raised some questions as to whether these devices are street legal as they cannot be tagged, titled, or insured but are still considered different from larger motorized scooter models like Vespa or Lambretta products.

Rex Barton, a police management consultant with the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS), said many cities faced similar issues when Segways were introduced.

"Back when Segways first came out, the company behind them went to every state and they were successful in Tennessee in getting legislation passed preventing local governments from regulating Segways," Barton said. "If this is the latest, greatest trend in public transportation it's very hard to regulate. These scooters are starting to crop up in major cities where tourism is big, and people want to use these scooters because it's quicker."

These electric scooters are in some ways similar to the bicycle-sharing services already operating in cities across Tennessee, such as B-Cycle, Pace Knoxville, Bike



Memphis City Council Chairman Berlin Boyd, left, and Council Member Kemp Conrad, right, test ride a couple of Bird scooters. While the city of Memphis worked with kick scooter share services prior to their roll out in the city, not all municipalities have been able to do so. Even cities with scooter policies are tackling new concerns as this newest ride-share service gains popularity nationwide for its affordability and green credentials.

Photo courtesy of Kemp Conrad

Chattanooga, and Explore Bike Share. Patrons can rent scooters that run on electric motors for a short period of time either paying a small fee for a single ride or for weekly, monthly, and annual memberships.

If patrons use the scooters over the amount of time they have paid for, usage fees may also apply.

Theresa Costonis, assistant attorney with Metro Nashville, said city officials didn't have much time to prepare for the launch of the service.

"There was maybe an email from the company that arrived barely before or precisely when they launched the scooters; they just kind of showed up," she said.

While kick scooter companies ask users to avoid using sidewalks unless allowed, to wear helmets, and follow rules of the road, this can't always be guaranteed. Barton said the same legislation introduced for Segways may have an impact on how kick scooters can operate

in Tennessee as well.

"Because of the regulations introduced by Segway – which regards motorized vehicles operated on sidewalks – these scooters may be precluded from helmet requirements," Barton said. "You also run into the issue of crowded downtown areas where pedestrians are getting knocked down by scooters. Gatlinburg has had similar problems with Segway rentals because the people riding them don't know how to use them and bang into other people. You can tell the company they can't let people abandon their scooters in certain places, but the company can't control that. When people leave it there anyway, who do you charge?"

The return policy many kick scooter companies have for their products is what is causing most of the trouble for the industry. Unlike most bicycle-sharing services that require bikes to be "docked" in

See SCOOTERS on Page 3

THRIVE Regional Partnerships optimizes community development opportunities, inspires growth from within, enhances regional connectivity in Southeast TN area

BY HONNA ROGERS
MTAS Management Consultant

Recently the Tennessee southeast region has seen tremendous growth in population and industry. It was during this time that THRIVE 2055 was born in an effort to grow in a smart way.

From 2012 to 2015, community volunteers created a 40-year regional plan for 16 counties in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. I served on the coordinating committee, which was the governing body made up of 30 community, business, and nonprofit leaders.

We held citizen input meetings and consultants compiled data on a 16-county tri-state scale for the very first time. The group identified a shared regional vision ("educated people with good jobs living in a great place") and established a strategic plan of action.

Four key priority initiatives were determined as the primary forces driving the future prosperity of the region: regional transportation, regional economic development, natural treasures, and education and workforce training. The overall process resulted in 37 key goals for the next 40 years. Once this part of the process was completed in 2015, the Thrive



Whitwell, home to the Children's Holocaust Memorial, is one of four communities that have completed the 2018 Thriving Communities program of Thrive Regional Partnership. They are now eligible to apply for a \$20,000 seed grant from the Lyndhurst Foundation to kickstart their incubated strategies for local, asset-based community vibrancy and growth.

Regional Partnership was formed in order to carry on the regional vision.

There have been great things happening in all areas of Thrive's focus, but one great example of the work of Thrive is the Thriving Communities program. Thrive Regional Partnership adopts an understanding that driving forces such as economic development, education and workforce pre-



NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE



BRENTWOOD

The city of Brentwood is moving forward with plans for the city's fifth fire station to serve the southeastern portion of the city. The purchase of a property along Split Log Road for \$685,000 was recently approved by the Brentwood City Commission to house a station that would house a single response unit and one crew. The station would dramatically improve response times to the southeastern area of the city, which includes the Split Log Corridor, Ravenwood High School, Smith Park, and the new Jordan Elementary School.

BRUCETON

ZLINE Kitchen and Bath officials will locate its new distribution headquarters in Bruceton, creating 74 new jobs and investing \$3 million in the area. The kitchen range and hood manufacturer and distributor was founded by Andy Zuro and is a family-owned company with its corporate headquarters locations in Nevada and Ohio. The company is investing in a 205,000-square-foot facility in the area, which will serve as its Southeast distribution hub and will be the company's distribution headquarters.

CHATTANOOGA

FreightWaves any will expand its operations in Chattanooga, investing \$3.9 million and creating 260 new jobs. The transportation and logistics data and content provider presently employs 50 people at its Chattanooga facility. FreightWaves delivers data analytics, news and commentary, innovation engagement and risk management tools to the transportation and logistics industry. FreightWaves helps participants navigate freight markets through FreightWaves.com, ranked by Amazon Alexa as the No. 1 logistics news site globally. FreightWaves plans on expanding its current operations in Chattanooga to keep up with the growing demand for its products and services. The company plans on adding nearly 22,000-square-feet to its facility.

CHATTANOOGA

The Electric Power Board of Chattanooga (EPB) has topped 100,000 paying subscribers to its fiber optic network after only 18 months of operation, well-surpassing its initial goal of 30,000 customers in five years needed to break even. The Internet, video, and phone services have attracted triple the subscribers with EPB providing telecommunications connections to more than 60 percent of all the homes and businesses in its service territory. As a result, the initial telecom investment will be paid back years ahead of its original forecast date and \$42 million a year will be put back into the local electric system. EPB helped Chattanooga become the first U.S. city to have 1-gigabit-per-second internet speeds available throughout the entire city. To celebrate its 100,000 customers, the EPB sponsored the EPB Big Gig event in Miller Park.

COLLEGEDALE

The city of Collegedale has celebrated its 50th years as an incorporated city. The city grew around Southern Adventist University, which was established in the area in 1916. Collegedale officially incorporated in 1968 with Fred Fuller elected the first mayor and J.M. Ackerman hired as the first city manager. Present Mayor Ka-

tie Lamb and City Manager Ted Rogers were among those on hand to usher in the city's 50th year at a celebration held Oct. 21 at Southern Adventist University's Founders Hall. The school also unveiled a mural honoring the city's anniversary as well as the connection between the school and Collegedale.

FRANKLIN

The city of Franklin has become the first city in the state of Tennessee to achieve LEED Silver Certification. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, was created by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and is the world's most widely used green building rating program. The city has worked throughout the past nine months to engage local stakeholders, community leaders, and city employees on ways to make the community more sustainable. Projects undertaken by the city include LED parking garage and street lighting retrofits, 1.2 Megawatts of installed solar at the wastewater plant, a residential curbside recycling program, significant bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and the implementation of a long-term integrated water resources plan.

HENDERSONVILLE

The city of Hendersonville has erected a "chair of honor" behind home plate at one of its baseball fields at Drakes Creek Park. Many professional and college stadiums have also erected their own chairs of honor, which serve as memorials to honor those who are Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. Hendersonville Parks Director Andy Gilley said he and other baseball coaches came up with the idea this spring, while Gilley was coaching at Hendersonville High School. The chair was dedicated and installed during National POW/MIA Week at a ceremony attended by local VFW post, JROTC members, and the Hendersonville High School baseball team. A local trophy store created the plaque that accompanies the empty chair, which reminds visitors of those who have not yet made it home from the warfront.

JOHNSON CITY

Johnson City has been selected as the Top Adventure Town by *Blue Ridge Outdoors* magazine. The city beat out 55 other adventure hubs across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic to win the medium-sized category. The city and what makes it a top adventure destination will be featured in the October issue of *Blue Ridge Outdoors*. This is the eighth year the magazine has held the contest and Johnson City received more than 50,000 votes in a six-week period to take the top spot. The magazine has previously profiled Johnson City, touting destinations such as Buffalo Mountain, fishing the Holston River, the Tweetsie Trail, and local restaurants and shopping destinations.

LAWRENCEBURG

Craig Manufacturing Ltd., will establish its first U.S. manufacturing facility in Lawrenceburg, investing nearly \$64 million and creating approximately 80 jobs in the next five years. A third-generation, family-owned business, the company will locate operations in the 60,000-square-foot spec building in Team Lawrence Commerce Park, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. The company will add approximately 7,500 square feet of office space for its U.S. corporate offices. Craig Manufacturing anticipates its Lawrence County facility will be fully operational in the second quarter of 2019. Founded in 1946, Craig Manufacturing produces steel attachments for heavy construction, forestry, mining, energy and utility equipment. Headquartered in New Brunswick, Canada, Craig Manufacturing also has operations in Alberta and Ontario. The company supplies directly to original equipment manufacturers and their regional dealer networks.

KNOXVILLE

The city of Knoxville has received a Transportation Alternative Grant of approximately \$1.86 million for the second phase of its North-

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Ground broken at Tri-Cities Aerospace Park



Officials from Bristol, Kingsport, Johnson City, Northeast State Community College, Sullivan and Washington Counties gathered together to break ground on the 160-acre site that will become the Tri-Cities Airport's Aerospace Park. Located adjacent to the regional airport in Blountville, site preparation work has begun on 73 acres of the park, which is designed to attract aviation-related industries to the area. The park already has 32 acres of developed land.

west Greenway Connector. This project includes construction of a greenway beginning at a new trailhead at Middlebrook Pike (State Route 169) and Third Creek Road and ending at the SR-62 Western Avenue Pedestrian Bridge. The project also includes landscaping, a retaining wall, ADA upgrades, and fencing. The transportation alternative grant is made possible through a federally-funded program formerly known as transportation enhancement, and is administered by the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

MEMPHIS

Memphis has ranked among the top ten metro areas for jobs in 2018, according to employment website Glassdoor. Memphis was ranked seventh of the top metro areas due to low unemployment rates, record-high job openings, and increased opportunities for workers. The city of Memphis was ranked 23rd for job satisfaction and reported median base salaries of \$43,900 and median home values of \$133,100. Glassdoor said the arts-and-entertainment industry were among the top industries for job seekers with product manager, account executive, and restaurant manager being among the most in-demand jobs in the city. Glassdoor said the goal of the survey was to find a more holistic approach to statistics surrounding employment by also weighing in factors such as cost of living.

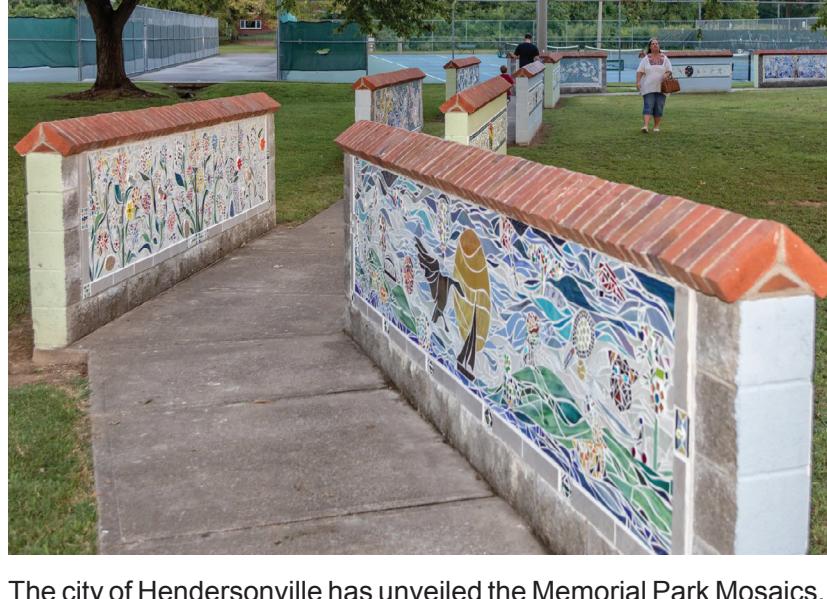
OAK RIDGE

The entire Oak Ridge reservation, including ORNL, the Y-12 National Security Complex and the East Tennessee Technology Park, will receive more than \$4.5 billion in the new federal spending package — up from the annual \$3 billion the area normally receives. U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann says Oak Ridge National Laboratory and nearby federal facilities will receive the highest dollar amount ever from new legislation that also aids Chattanooga. The legislation was recently signed into law and includes \$117.7 million for continued construction of the new Chickamauga Lock in Chattanooga, Fleischmann said. The spending package includes \$703 million for ongoing construction of the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) in Oak Ridge and \$200 million for the Oak Ridge Leadership Computing Facility, an increase of \$37.5 million above last year. UPF will employ more than 2,000 workers on site when construction peaks in a few years to build a more modern location to enrich materials used in America's nuclear arsenal.

TOWNSEND

The Townsend City Commission has awarded the contract for construction of a long-anticipated new city hall and community center complex. Sevierville-based Custom Crafted Construction received the winning bid of \$820,255. The company also recently completed construction of a city maintenance building that came in some \$160,000 lower than other contractors' bids. The new facility will be approximately 4,500 square feet, housing city offices, a meeting room, police facilities, a 100-seat auditorium, and community spaces on a property adjacent to an existing community center. The city purchased the 2.37-acre property on Tiger Drive between the current municipal center and Lamar Alexander Parkway in 2003.

Hendersonville's new park mosaics are city's largest public art display



The city of Hendersonville has unveiled the Memorial Park Mosaics, the city's newest and largest public art installations. Throughout the past year, local artists Yvette Renée and Mark Cowden of Diamond Studio have created 24 large mosaic designs on the walls at Memorial Park with the help of organizations, schools and residents. The installation consists of 1,270 square feet of stained glass and mixed media mosaic designs and is estimated to be the largest public art project of its kind in Middle Tennessee.

Bristol earns award for community relations



The Bristol Office of Community Relations was honored by the City-County Communications and Marketing Association with the Silver Circle Award, the second highest honor possible, in the One-Time Special Event category for cities with populations under 100,000. The award recognized the efforts of Community Relations staff in debuting the City's new brand platform in June of 2017 with a full day of events culminating in Bristol's Biggest Block Party.

Manchester unveils new murals at greenway, parks



New murals are coming to the Little Duck River Greenway in Manchester, including these recently unveiled works under the North Woodland Street Bridge heading into Rotary Park. The mural depicts an American eel winding itself through the cement supports of the bridge and was painted by Miami-based artist Ivan Roque at no cost to the city. Other murals added to the city include a dragonfly painted by a local Central High School graduate and a lamppost base to be painted by a 14-year-old script artist.



PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Katie Ashley, director of legislation for Gov. Bill Haslam, has announced she will leave the administration on Nov. 9 to return to the private sector. Ashley will be taking a position as a senior advisor for government affairs and economic development at the Nashville offices of Alabama-based law firm Bradley Arant Boult Cummings. Ashley began working on Haslam's 2010 gubernatorial campaign and has been part of the governor's legislative team for eight years, rising through the ranks to the position of chief legislative advisor in 2017. Prior to her work with Haslam, Ashley was a constituent relations manager for Sen. Lamar Alexander. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee – Martin with a bachelor's degree in university studies emphasizing political science.



Katie Ashley

Tim Beavers has been selected as the new director of the Bristol Department of Development Services after the city of Bristol restructured its public works and community development departments into a single department. Beavers had been serving as the interim community development director. In his new role, he will lead the planning, engineering, codes enforcement and building inspection, public services, utilities, and the metropolitan planning organization departments for the city. Beavers has been employed with the city of Bristol for 27 years, beginning as a civil engineer and serving as the city's public works director from 2013 until earlier this year. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Virginia Tech.



Tim Beavers

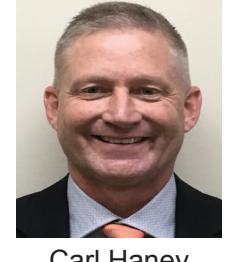
Ruby Luckey Fielden, the first female mayor of Kingston and a long-time city council member, died Sept. 24 at the age of 94 in Nashville. A native of Trenton, Fielden moved to Kingston with her first husband, Bob Luckey, after he was assigned to work at the Kingston TVA steam plant. An office worker at local high schools, she ran for the Kingston City Council and eventually served as the city's first female mayor in the 1980s. During her tenure, she advocated civic projects like senior housing, building new walking trails, and organizing committees for the 1982 World's Fair. After her husband Bob died



Ruby Luckey Fielden

in 1991, she remarried Gordon Fielden in 1997. Fielden also went on to earn degrees from Roane State Community College and UT-Knoxville.

Carl Haney has been selected as the new director of the Cookeville Electric Department, and will take over the position after the retirement of current director Tony Peek retires in February. Haney will be only the fifth person to help the city's electric department, which was founded in 1903. Presently, he is employed with the department as an operation superintendent, a position he has held for nine years. He began his career with the Cookeville Electric Department in 1994.



Carl Haney

Shane Horn has been selected as the new city manager for Lakeland. Horn joined the city on Oct. 1 after serving as city administrator for Adrian, Mich., for more than four years. Horn began his career with the city of Adrian in 1997 as a water plant superintendent and was then promoted to director of utilities in 2007 before being selected as the city administrator in 2013. He holds an associate's degree in water quality technology from Lake Superior State University, a bachelor's degree in public service administration from Siena Heights University, and is currently pursuing a master's of public administration from Villanova University.



Shane Horn

Angie Marshall, city clerk for the city of Kingsport, has been selected as the new president of the Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR). She was secretary of the organization in 2010, the same year she came to work for the city of Kingsport. Marshall began her career as a records clerk for the Johnson City Police Department in 1996, moving into the role of public safety officer in 1998. She also served as a police officer and dispatcher for the Oak Ridge Police Department for a year and a half beginning in 2005. She then became a records specialist and crime analyst for the department in 2006. Marshall holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and corrections and a master's in public administration, both from East Tennessee State University.



Angie Marshall

Tony Peek will be leaving his post as the director of the Cookeville Electric Department after 44 years with the city. Cookeville announced he intends to retire from the department in February 2019, at which time he will have worked for the city for 45 years. Peek began working for the department on the line crew when he was 22 years old. He was drafted in the U.S. Army in 1972 and served at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, before returning back to the area in 1974. He rejoined the city electric department again on the line crew before he began moving up the ranks. Eventually, he served with the engineering department, as the engineering department director, and was selected as the director of the entire electric department in 1988.



Tony Peek

Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris has been confirmed as the U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Norris has been a member of Nashville-based Adams and Reese LLP since 2006 and has served as the Senate Majority Leader since 2007, the longest-serving senate majority leader in state history. Norris was elected to represent the state's 32nd Senate District in 2000. Prior to that, he served for six years as a Shelby County Commissioner.

"I am honored to receive the U.S. Senate's confirmation to continue my public service as a federal judge," Norris said. "While I will miss working with my clients and colleagues at Adams and Reese in the Tennessee Senate, I look forward to this next chapter to serve our nation and the legal profession. I thank President Trump, Sens. Alexander and Corker, my fellow state senators, and my friends in the legal community for their support. Most of all, I would like to thank the citizens of the 32nd District for the exceptional privilege of serving as their senator for almost 20 years."

Norris holds a bachelor's degree in political science from

Tullahoma adopts storm ravaged communities

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off like the top of soda cans.

Problems didn't cease following the end of the storm. Much of the floodwaters in the area were polluted due to a lack of regulations regarding animal waste disposal and more than 42,000 gallons of wastewater spilling into the local river as a result of the hurricane. The stagnant waters after flooding attracted mosquitos. Many homes and businesses were devastated with millions of dollars in damage to local schools, many of which remained closed well into October. Even Swansboro's town hall wasn't spared from the storm.

"We had major water penetration through the roof," Town Manager Scott Chase told the *Jacksonville Daily News*. "We're working aggressively to start fixing things, but we're open for business."

After hearing about the devastation, Hovater called Tullahoma Mayor Lane Curlee to see if there was something the city could do. Curlee, in turn, called Mayor Davis in Swansboro.

"When I called Mayor Davis he answered his cell phone on the first ring and sounded very tired and overwhelmed," Curlee said. "When I told him the people of Tullahoma wanted to 'adopt' Swansboro, he was very appreciative. He said he had received only one other call offering help and was working on a list of items his citizens would need once the electricity comes back on. Within the hour he texted me his list of needs."

Tullahoma citizens were encouraged to drop off donated items at Tullahoma fire stations, the D.W. Wilson Community Center, or

Colorado College and earned his law degree from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 1980.

In addition to Norris, the Senate also confirmed Eli J. Richardson to serve as the U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee.

A former U.S. Attorney and FBI agent, Richardson's most recent position is with Nashville firm Bass, Berry & Sims. He graduated from Vanderbilt Law School in 1992 and was admitted to the Tennessee Bar in 2004.

C.D. Stamps Community Center to be collected and then sent to Swansboro.

"I know for a fact the people of Tullahoma are very generous and willing to help others in need," Curlee said. "This goes to show the power of one person taking the initiative and doing something. I appreciate Ms. Guilliams' suggestion we help this small community."

When Hurricane Michael ripped through Florida not even a month later, residents of Tullahoma also answered the call to help the small city of Blountstown. With a population of around 2,500, much of Blountstown was completely destroyed by the hurricane but didn't start receiving any sort of federal aid until a week after the storms hit. Some 150 locals rode out the storm and its aftermath in a local library where local librarians provided food and a generator. Downed electric and cell towers meant residents could not contact anyone outside of the town for days.

The Tullahoma Utilities Authority has already sent three linemen down to the town to help with repairs and get the community's electrical system back online. The community is also again collecting supplies to be sent to residents of Blountstown.

"I am confident the citizens of Tullahoma will respond just as enthusiastically to help Blountstown as we did Swansboro last month," Curlee said. "It would be great if Tullahoma earned the reputation of always helping communities in need."

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STATE BRIEFS

Enrollment in Tennessee's community colleges has increased this fall. Preliminary data presented to the Tennessee Board of Regents shows enrollment in the state's 13 community colleges is up 1.3 percent compared with the official fall 2017 enrollment count. Total enrollment for the fall semester is about 88,300 students. Enrollment in community colleges has increased nearly 17 percent in the last 25 years. The board has attributed this most recent enrollment increase to the new Tennessee Reconnect program.

Tennessee's graduation rate held steady year-over-year at 89.1 percent. More than 56 percent of school districts in the state saw their high school graduation rates improve compared to last year's data. Tennessee calculates graduation rates by the number of students

September revenues exceeds estimates

Tennessee revenues exceeded budgeted estimates for September, which is the second month of the state's fiscal year. Finance and Administration Commissioner Larry Martin reported that overall September revenues were \$1.4 billion, which is \$63.4 million more than September of last year and \$53.3 million more than the budgeted estimate. The growth rate for September was 4.66 percent.

On an accrual basis, September is the second month in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

For September, general fund revenues exceeded the budgeted estimates in the amount of \$64.2 million and the four other funds that share in state tax revenues were less than the budgeted estimate by \$10.9 million.

Sales tax revenues were \$40.4 million more than the estimate for September. The September growth rate was positive 7.23 percent. Year-to-date revenues are 6.67 percent more than this time last year.

Franchise and excise taxes combined were \$2.9 million more than the September budgeted estimate of \$397.8 million. The September growth rate was negative 0.49 percent, and on a year-to-date basis 0.01 percent.

Gasoline and motor fuel revenues for September increased by 3.09 percent and were \$1.9 million more than the budgeted estimate of \$101.7 million. Motor Vehicle Registration revenues were \$1.5 million more than the September estimate, and on a year-to-date basis exceed estimates by \$13.3 million.

Tobacco tax revenues for the month were \$600,000 less than the budgeted estimate of \$21.5 million. The growth rate for September was negative 1.01 percent.

Privilege tax revenues were \$4.1 million more than the budgeted estimate of \$27.3 million. Business Tax receipts were \$2.1 million more than the budgeted estimate for September. Hall income tax revenues for September were \$1.2 million less than the budgeted estimate. For two months revenues are \$1.1 million less than the budgeted estimate.

Gross receipts, excluding TVA tax payments, were \$1.3 million more than the budgeted estimate of \$200,000 for September.

who graduate in four years plus a summer semester. The state put higher graduation rate standards into practice in 2011. Graduation rates have slowly risen since then with 89.1 percent being the highest on record in both 2017 and 2018.

Tennessee State Parks and Tennessee Brew Works have raised more than \$7,000 for the Tennessee State Parks Conservancy in the first year of the State Park Blonde Ale partnership. Tennessee Brew Works has dedicated 50 cents to the Tennessee State Parks Conservancy for every case of State Park Blonde Ale sold. Funds also come from pledges by participating distributors including: DET Distributing in Nashville and Jackson; Eagle Distributing in Knoxville; AS Barboro Distributing in Memphis; Ajax Distributing in Clarksville; and L&H Distributing in Tullahoma. An effort is underway to increase the number of participating Tennessee distributors in 2019. The Tennessee State Parks Conservancy will use the funds to support the preservation and protection of natural resources within Tennessee's 56 state parks system. The signature State Park Blonde Ale label features Tennessee State Parks' Randy Hedgepath, who's been the state naturalist for more than 30 years. The beer is sold with the support of many major retailers, restaurants and bars throughout the state.

National Park Service, Southeast Development District to develop Sequatchie River walk trail



A National Park Service program will help officials develop ideas and plans for a water trail on the Sequatchie River. The 116-mile-long river bisects its pastoral namesake, the Sequatchie Valley, between Brady Mountain in Cumberland County southward to the Tennessee River near Jasper. Popular with canoeing and kayaking enthusiasts already, the river largely runs through private or inaccessible lands. The National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program will now be assisting the Southeast Tennessee Development District, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and local governments near the river to introduce a blueway or water trail to promote both outdoor activity in the river and the economic opportunities outdoor recreation can bring. The project will try to identify potential water access sites, promote water recreation, develop marketing strategies, and showcase the communities of the Sequatchie Valley.

TRPA announces 2018 annual award winners

The Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association (TRPA) has announced the recipients of the association's 2018 Awards Program.

The outstanding achievements of these individuals, communities, and organizations were acknowledged during the association's 67th Annual Conference in Knoxville.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

The Distinguished Young Professional Award was presented to Lauren Cox of Farragut Parks and Leisure Services for her outstanding service to the Parks and Recreation profession and her community.

The Fellow Award is the highest award the association can confer on an individual and recognizes professional members who have made outstanding contributions to the recreation field throughout their career. This year's recipient is Marlane Sewell of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation.

The Longfellow Award is presented by the Programming and Recreation Branch each year to an individual for outstanding programming or accomplishments in Aquatics. The recipient is Sheila Rico of Tullahoma Parks and Recreation.

The Wellness Award is presented by the Programming & Recreation Branch each year to an individual who focuses on physical activity, fitness and wellness programs, policies, and activities. The recipient is Jacob Cave of Pigeon Forge Parks and Recreation.

The Dennis Rainier Award is presented by the Athletics Branch each year to an individual to recognize personnel who have demonstrated excellence in athletic planning and programming. The

recipient is Pam Williams of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation.

Award of Excellence is presented by the Facilities and Parks Branch to one individual that has demonstrated outstanding achievement in the field of resource management. The recipient is J.P. Kraft of Tullahoma Parks and Recreation.

The Arts Award is presented by the Programming and Recreation Branch to an individual that has demonstrated innovation and creativity and to inspire others to develop similar programs. The recipient is Vonchelle Stembidge of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation.

The Marketing Award is presented by the Programming and Recreation Branch to an individual



that has demonstrated innovation and creativity and to inspire others to develop similar programs. The recipient is Dave Anderson of Pigeon Forge Parks and Recreation.

The Special Events Award is presented by the Programming & Recreation Branch to an individual that has demonstrated innovation and creativity and to inspire others to develop similar programs. The recipient is Vonchelle Stembidge of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation.

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

The Four Star Awards recognize excellence and community impact by agencies. These categories include innovative programs, public relations, renovated facilities, and new facilities.

Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation took home the award for a renovated facility with a budget of \$500,000 or less for the Fannie Mae Dees "Dragon" Park.

Collierville Parks, Recreation, and Community Services took home the renovated facility with a budget more than \$500,000 award for the Linda Kerley Recreation Center.

Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation took home the award for a renovated facility with a budget of \$500,000 or less for the Mary Vatal Greenway Extension.

Knoxville Parks and Recreation took home the award for a new facility with a budget of \$500,000 or less for the Linda Kerley Recreation Center.

Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation took home the new facility award for projects with a budget of more than \$500,000 for its Miracle Field.

President's Cup recognizes agencies that have provided exemplary service to TRPA through attendance at state conferences, workshops, membership, staff writing for publications or serving on boards and committees.

Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation took home the Category I award for population 100,000 and over, Farragut Parks and Leisure Services for the Category IV for population of 10,000 to 19,999, and Pigeon Forge Parks and Recreation took the award for Category V awards for population 5,000 to 9,999.

The Donald H Stanton Award is presented by the Ethnic Minority Interest Section to the community center determined to have the best overall programs. The recipient is Lester Community Center of Memphis Parks and Neighborhoods.

Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association is the leading nonprofit organization for parks and recreation in Tennessee with more than 1,400 members united to strengthen those committed to the benefits of parks and recreation by supporting highly effective professionals to achieve healthy, livable communities.

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Congress passes third bill to address opioid crisis

OPIOIDS from Page 1

ment, reduce unmet treatment need, and reduce opioid overdose-related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment and recovery activities for opioid use disorder (OUD) (including prescription opioids as well as illicit drugs such as heroin).

In Fiscal Years (FY) 2017 and 2018, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded more than \$1 billion in grants to states and territories to help combat the opioid epidemic through the STOR program. Lack of clarity from Congress and the administration on how states should use this money has left millions of dollars in federal spending on the table.

As such, at their Summer Board and Leadership Meeting, NLC's Board of Directors passed a resolution allowing NLC staff to actively push for

changes to the STOR program over the last three months. These proposed changes would have required the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency within HHS, to either set aside up to 20 percent of the grants for competitive local grants or to require the states to pass through 80 percent of the STOR grants to local substance abuse, treatment, prevention and recovery programs. While these changes did not make it into the final bill, NLC will continue to fight for additional changes to the various opioid grant programs to ensure the money is getting down to the local level.

NLC was successful in getting language added to the final bill that requires Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide a detailed report on how states are using the federal funding to support prevention, treatment, and recovery activities.

Justice Department awards \$320M to combat opioid crisis

The Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is awarding \$320 million to help communities impacted by the deadliest drug crisis in American history, including crime victims, children, families, and first responders. The following is a breakdown of the grant funding:

- Innovative Prosecution Solutions for Combating Violent Crime and Opioid Abuse (\$2.8 million). Help prosecutors develop strategies to address violent crime caused by illegal opioid distribution and abuse.
- Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site-based Program (\$162 million). Help jurisdictions plan and implement programs aimed at reducing opioid abuse and mitigating its impact on crime victims, including training and technical assistance.
- Justice and Mental Health

Collaboration Program (\$5.9 million). Address the treatment needs of people using opioids under the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program.

- Helping Children and Youth Impacted by Opioids (\$46.6 million). Provides training and technical assistance.
 - Drug Courts (\$81.2 Million). Assist adult, juvenile, and family drug courts and veteran's treatment courts, including training and technical assistance.
 - Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program (\$17 million). Address the dramatic increase in deaths and the backlog of seized drugs because of the opioid crisis.
 - Opioid-Related Research for Criminal Justice Purposes (\$4.1 million). Development of new tools to enforce the law, ensure public safety, prevent and control crime, and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice.
- For more information about the grant funding, view the OJP's fact sheet.



NATIONAL BRIEFS

**U.S. jobless claims are on the rise despite jobless benefits being at their lowest point in 45 years.**

The U.S. Labor Department said claims for state unemployment benefits increased from 5,000 to 215,000 toward the end of October despite having fallen to 202,000 in September, the lowest rate since November 1969. While the number of jobless claims has seen a slight increase, the number of Americans actually receiving benefits remains at a 45-year low, pointing to a tightening labor market. Economists said one reason for the rise in jobless claims may be Hurricane Michael's impact on the labor market.

The economic gap between

out the relative economic stability and variety of urban and suburban areas following times of economic stress.

U.S. home borrowing costs have reached their highest in seven years

, having a negative impact on current and prospective homeowners. The Mortgage Bankers Association said borrowing costs have reached their highest point since 2014, leading refinancing requests to dip to their lowest part since 2000 while mortgage requests dropped to their lowest point in the past 20 months. The jump in mortgage rates is another blow to the American housing industry, which is already facing issues like gaps between the price of available inventory and what the average citizen can afford.

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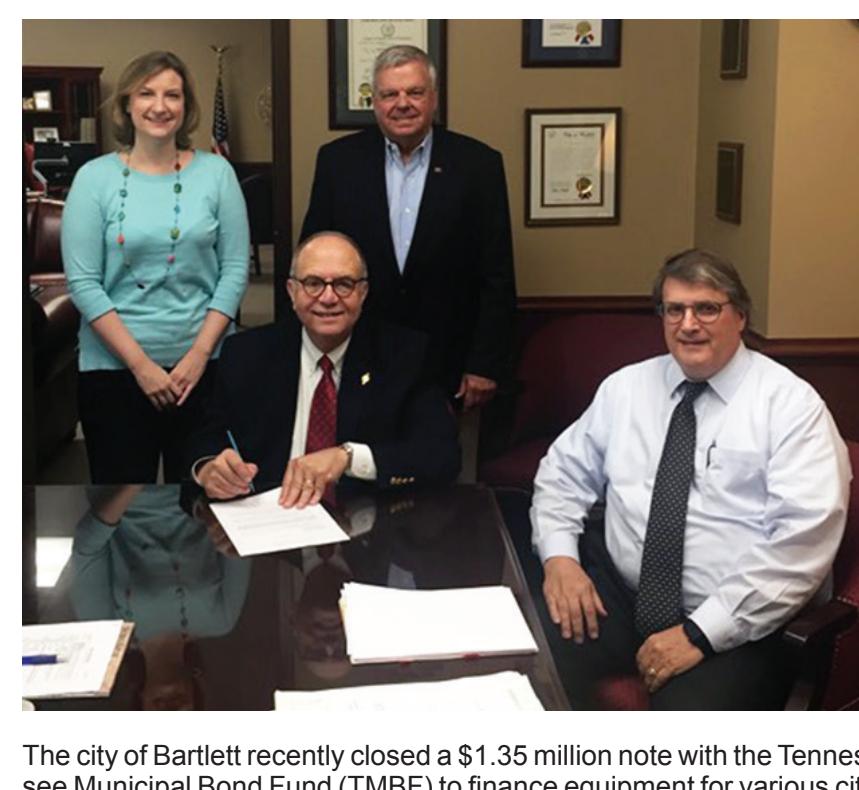
No loan is too large or too small



The city of Tullahoma closed a \$7 million fixed-rate loan for several public works infrastructure improvement projects within the city. The city first borrowed through the TMBF variable rate loan program in 1986 and has used various TMBF programs 23 times since then. Pictured standing are: Sue Wilson, finance director; Linda Mooningham, TMBF marketing director; and Rosemary Golden, city recorder. Seated is Mayor Lane Curlee.

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The city of Bartlett recently closed a \$1.35 million note with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund (TMBF) to finance equipment for various city departments. It marked the city's ninth note issued through TMBF's alternative loan program. Seated are Mayor A. Keith McDonald and Dick Phebus, finance director. Standing are Stefanie McGee, city clerk, and Tommy Green, TMBF representative.

TMBF
TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL BOND FUND

Johnson sees Cleveland through changes big and small

BY LINDA BRYANT

Most communities have at least one resident who can speak about bygone days as well as current times with so much knowledge and authority that almost everyone responds with deep respect and admiration.

Hands-down Avery Johnson fills that role in Cleveland and Bradley County.

Johnson has been working and serving the region for decades. He has gone from attending school and working during a time when, as an African American, he was required to use separate water fountains, bathrooms — even a separate bus station — to serving in many key leadership roles, including vice mayor and councilman at-large in the Cleveland City Council.

Johnson showed leadership qualities early in life, and although he wanted to pursue a rigorous education after high school, his ambitions were whittled down because he needed to help his mom, who was a single parent. He went to work for Magic Chef, the storied Cleveland-based company that is now Whirlpool Corporation, at the age of 19, worked his way up to various positions for more than 43 years. All the while, Johnson educated himself wherever and whenever he could, joined key community organizations, and set about making Cleveland a better place to live for all.

Bill Estes, city councilman and dean of the Helen DeVos College of Education at Lee University, says Johnson is widely revered as a trusted leader in the community.

"Avery Johnson is much more than a pillar of the Cleveland community," Estes said. "Yes, he is foundational to both our past and who we are today, but I am continually amazed at his energy and vision in making Cleveland stronger in both the near and long-term. From his decades of service to one of our manufacturing companies, to his service to the local school board, to his representing all of Cleveland at-large on the city council, Avery continues with a very unique and personal skill set to unite all of our community as we work through the issues in municipal government.

"He has the institutional knowledge combined with the personal integrity to give all of us both direction and courage to serve the entire community in our duties," Estes added. "He's never afraid to question, nor to listen. I can't imagine a Cleveland without his leadership."

TT&C: Describe your history and roots in Cleveland. Tell us about growing up in the area and give a few details about your family.

AJ: My grandmother, mom and family moved to Cleveland in 1938 from Hollywood, Ala. My grandmother, whose maiden name was Dovie Cobb, opened a restaurant known as the Eveready Cafe on East Inman Street around 1939. I was born in the early 1940s and graduated from College Hill High School with honors. I was president of the student council, editor-in-chief of my class yearbook, and also played football. I worked everyday after school at Watson Grocery, Simon Grocery, and Cedar Lane Restaurant. Sometimes I worked for the janitor cleaning up after school.

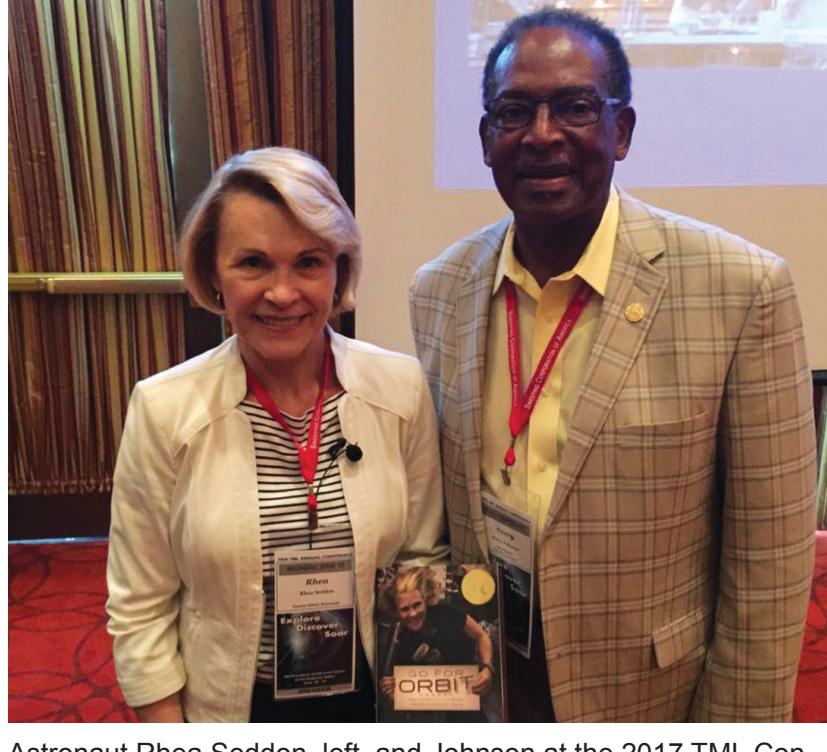
I have two sons. My oldest son, Avery Jr., has his own music studio in Atlanta. He's traveled all over the world and toured with BeBe & CeCe Winans and with Bobby Jones out of Nashville. My youngest son, Sean, is also musically inclined, and he's a juvenile correctional officer. They are both great kids, and they have never been in any trouble. I lost my first wife in 2011, and we were married for 49 years. I've remarried again and have gotten lucky twice. I have two grandsons, and they are the best grandsons in the world.

TT&C: You have been on the Cleveland City Council since 1993. Thinking back, what inspired you to run for office?

AJ: I was always involved in community services. I was a member of the Citizens Improvement League when I was 19 years old, which meant listening to people twice my age talking about segregation issues and discrimination problems. In 1992, I was asked to serve on the Charter Study Commission to look at the different forms of governments and decide which form of government best fit the city of Cleveland. After our recommendation passed on a referendum in the



Cleveland Councilman Avery Johnson



Astronaut Rhea Seddon, left, and Johnson at the 2017 TML Conference in Murfreesboro.

1993 elections, I was asked to serve as a city councilman. At that time, we were appointed for two years. Under the council-manager form of government we needed three additional council members. I was appointed for the first two years, and after that I was hooked like a fish and have run six times and won six times. Hallelujah!

TT&C: What professional interests and jobs have occupied you over the years?

AJ: I worked for Magic Chef Inc./Maytag Cleveland Cooking Products/Whirlpool Corp. for 43 years and eight months. [The company changed names because of corporate acquisitions.] I actually started out working in the garage department washing trucks and changing the names on tractors and trailers from Dixie Products to Magic Chef Inc. I was 19 at the time. When I retired in 2005, I was superintendent of the shipping and warehouse department. I was a molder in the foundry for seven years, grinder and sand blast machine operator for three years, assembly line supervisor, general foreman in the electric range department and team process coordinator.

TT&C: Is there anything about your career at Maytag that helped you prepare as a public servant?

AJ: Everything about Maytag prepared me because I took all the training that they offered — all the workshops and seminars. I went to Middle Tennessee State University for training; I went to the University of Tennessee for training; and I also went to Black Mountain, N.C., for a leadership conference. Plus, I gained a lot of experience as a supervisor and general foreman. I spent five years working on and off in HR. All of this contributed to the success I've had in the community.

I really got lucky with Maytag because when I got out of high school I didn't have money for college. I had to go to work and help my mom because she was a single-parent. I worked and went to night school at Cleveland State and got whatever I could for education. I was very studious when I was in school. I took all of it, everything that I could. Plus, I read a lot of books.

TT&C: What is the most important book that you've read?

AJ: My favorite book is by Congressman John Lewis called *Walking with the Wind*. Lord have mercy, there are so many books that I have read! Reading has taught me a lot of lessons in life to live by, especially leadership books.

TT&C: Can you share some impressions of living and working during the Civil Rights era?

AJ: I was very involved. There were a lot of things going on especially in Alabama and Mississippi; we just didn't talk about it much. We were very much in tune here in Cleveland with what was taking place both here and all over the world. Race relations here in Cleveland were pretty good. People wanted better opportunities and equal rights for everybody. I really do think the majority of the people really did want that here in Cleveland, but we were just watching the rest of the world. Every time somebody had an opportunity to make a difference here in Cleveland they did. I was proud of the way people here acted, even though we still had some discriminatory practices going on. The great company I worked for years, Magic Chef, had separate water fountains and restrooms. The bus stations here in Cleveland were separate. It was very much like that when I was growing up in the 50s and 60s. It was called equal, but it wasn't really equal. It was amazing to live through this time when everything changed and so much of it for the better.

TT&C: Did you ever have a hard campaign or a tough race?

AJ: Every race was a challenge, except for one when I didn't have an opponent running against me. There was always opposition. I had worked at Maytag for a long time and knew a lot of people and had a lot of friends, black and white, and it paid off. I was also involved in community services. I've always been trying to do something that makes a difference since I was 19. I understood early on what the issues were, and I served on a lot of boards and have been in all types of civic organizations — the United Way Board, American Red Cross, the Gideons, and others. I was president of the Lions Club twice.

TT&C: It sounds like you worked hard for those campaigns and those wins.

AJ: Oh yes, I knocked on a lot of doors. My brother and I went through my entire district knocking on doors and asking people to vote for me. It was a good feeling to be out there campaigning. That was one of the joys I really got out of the whole process — getting to know the community and people. I represented District 3 until the last few years. Now, I'm a councilman at-large.

TT&C: Was it hard to hold down a full-time job and still have your civic responsibilities?

AJ: Not really because the people I worked for were very proud of me

running for office and wanted to support me. My company was always involved in the community, and there were other people besides me from Maytag and Magic Chef active in the community, especially when the Rymers owned the company.

TT&C: Cleveland is growing and changing rapidly, but it must have been very different back in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Did you always have the feeling that Cleveland could grow into what it is now? What were the most important issues back then?

AJ: I have always had confidence in the people of Cleveland. Those in the old commission form of government had their hands full keeping up with the growth and development on the north and west side of Cleveland. Things were changing everywhere. The east and south side of Cleveland suffered as victims of budget cuts and a slow economy. Small businesses were beginning to leave neighborhoods in east and south Cleveland. Jobs were sometimes uncertain and layoffs always a threat.

TT&C: Can you talk about the advantages of city growth? Are there downsides to consider?

AJ: There is definitely an advantage to growth. For example, our city's growth a few years ago was so consistently at 4 to 5 percent and more, that the Cleveland City Council voted to give our schools a percentage of our budget increase annually, one that's equal to the population growth percentage. It was one of the best things we did. And, yes there's a downside to growth. If you fail to anticipate growth, you start seeing over-crowded conditions everywhere — street traffic backup, unsafe pedestrian conditions, sidewalk shortages, etc.

TT&C: Can you share some achievements you are proudest of?

AJ: The Maytag Cleveland Cooking Products (Whirlpool Corporation), which was the largest employer in Cleveland, was considering closing down the Cleveland plant and moving everything to the Mississippi division, which would have put more than 1,800 local employees out of their jobs. Thanks to Mayor Tom Rowland, County Mayor Gary Davis, the Cleveland City Council, and the Bradley County Commission, we made a proposal to help with infrastructure and setup costs for the new facility by donating \$1 million from the city and \$1 million from the county. The state also contributed several millions of dollars. We saved nearly 2,000 jobs.

Here's another example of a proud accomplishment: the new Cleveland High School athletic arena. It is really beautiful and first class. The old gym had been condemned due to a deterioration of several weight-bearing support beams, causing severe cracks in the walls and foundation. The building was totally unsafe. We had enough funds left to begin construction of a new arena. The vote for the project was tied 3 to 3. I was the last to vote, and I voted yes.

TT&C: Do you have a philosophy of leadership? How do you deal with conflict or difficult issues?

AJ: My philosophy of leadership is always do what is right, be fair and respectful to everyone. When there is a conflict, always strive for a win-win solution when possible.

TT&C: What is it like since long-time Mayor Tom Rowland retired as Cleveland's mayor? He had been in office since 1991. What is working with the new mayor like?

AJ: Mayor Rowland is truly an icon. He set a standard all of us are trying to measure up to. He is such an excellent communicator and facilitator. The new Mayor Kevin Brooks is a chip off the old block. He is off to a very good start. [Brooks, a Republican who did not seek re-election to the Tennessee House District 24 seat, won the mayoral election in August 2018.]

I worked with Mayor Rowland during all the years that I have been on Cleveland City Council. So, that's been 25 years. Mayor Rowland had a lot of experience. He's very knowledgeable, and he has great communication skills — probably more than any leader I've worked with. Of course, there were times when we had disagreements, but I learned a lot from him.

The transition is going great. Mayor Brooks has already come out of a governmental environment. He has a lot of leadership and fa-

cilitating experience. Our mayor in Cleveland doesn't have a vote, but he has a voice and a veto power. Mayor Brooks comes already equipped to handle all those issues. We have a lot of things coming up, especially in the next three to five years. We have a great visionary plan put together. I think Kevin is doing to a great job.

TT&C: What is the visionary plan?

AJ: The visionary plan is a plan for downtown revitalization and turning our community into a walkability community. We also have several intersections that are overcrowded and issues with traffic. We want to go in and rebuild those areas and make them safer for pedestrians and traffic. We have a great plan in place for the next four to five years. Our growth in Cleveland has been so good that we have fallen a little behind in infrastructure improvements. Now we have a plan in place that will help get us caught up.

TT&C: Why do you think Cleveland has been a such a success story in recent years?

AJ: There are so many people here who have invested in and given back a lot to the community. They are very interested in good government and good leadership. There are many people in Cleveland with a lot of experience, and they have a certain standard that they hold for the city. And the community really supports the people who want to be in leadership roles and who want to help keep the community going. That's the reason why we have such a unique city. At one time we had 14 Fortune 500 companies here, and now we have 12 or 13. The leadership of all those companies always come together, and make sure they stay in touch with the leadership of our community — the mayor, city and county commissioners. We all come together in Cleveland even though we have our disagreements from time to time. When it comes to really important issues like jobs, housing, redevelopment and infrastructure improvement we set our differences aside and always come together. We sit down and talk about what is best for Cleveland. I think that's part of why we've been so successful.

TT&C: What are some of the biggest challenges in your community right now?

AJ: Here's my perspective: even though we are known as political figures you don't want to get too political and let politics override your common sense. You always want to do what's right and what's best for the community. In the political environment there are sometimes hidden agendas and ulterior motives. Some people don't know the whole story, and they only see one side of it. But when they come to us we have all kinds of information about what we're getting involved in — in the community and in the state.

So, it's hard sometimes to tell people no. Especially when it's someone you really like and have a lot of respect for. But sometimes we have to vote or go against what they want because they don't have all the information that you have. You have to do the right thing. Especially on a local level it's important to be as bipartisan on issue as you can. These are very challenging times.

TT&C: You have been active with Tennessee Municipal League for years. Why do you think TML's work is important?

AJ: I have grown and learned so much through TML conferences and workshops. The facilitators have been the best of the best — very informative. Through TML the municipalities across the state have a united voice to our state legislators. Together we have made a difference. I am very honored to have served as district director for District 3 at least two times, and I'm enjoying the privilege of currently serving as one of the at-large directors.

TT&C: Can you think of an experience in your life that has really humbled you or taught you a major life lesson?

AJ: I ran for the office of city councilman six times and won six times. I learned that people will vote for and follow anyone, as long as you help them meet their needs. It does not matter whether you are tall or short, fat or skinny, black, white, or green. As long as you help people meet their needs, they will follow and support you. Your word is very important. I go by this: DWYSYWD — do what you say you will do!