

TENNESSEE
COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS
ASSOCIATION

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TCCA News

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General Assembly Convenes

The week of January 10th marked the organizational session of the 107th Tennessee General Assembly. The new members have been sworn in. The Speaker of the House and Lieutenant Governor of the Senate have been elected. Other leadership positions have been filled. Senator Ron Ramsey returns as Lt. Governor. Representative Beth Harwell was elected the Speaker of the House in an uncontested vote.

In joint session, the legislature returned David Lillard to the position of State Treasurer and Justin Wilson to the office of Comptroller of the Treasury. Secretary of State Tre Hargett still has two years remaining on his term.

New standing committee appointments were named. There were few changes in the State Senate, except that Sen. Ken Yager was named chair of the State and Local Government Committee. Sen. Yager takes the post after Sen. Ketron moved to the position of Republican Caucus Chair with the departure of former Sen. Diane Black to Congress. Sen. Yager has extensive experience in county government, having served several terms as County Executive of Roane County.

In the House on the other hand, virtually every committee has new leadership. One exception is the State and Local Government Committee, where Rep. Curry Todd of Shelby County continues to serve as chair. Rep. Bob Ramsey of Blount County will serve as Vice Chair and Chair of the general subcommittee of the State and Local Government Committee.

Speaker Harwell instituted the first major change under her leadership when she revamped the subcommittee structure in the House of Representatives. Previously, every House committee had 2 or 3 subcommittees and all bills moved through a subcommittee before passage in a full committee. Now, each committee will have only one general subcommittee and not all bills will be referred to a subcommittee. The Speaker announced the change as a means of streamlining the legislative process.

Following the inauguration of Governor-Elect Bill Haslam, the General Assembly left for a 3 week recess so that offices can be moved and staff can prepare for the many changes. The legislature will reconvene on February 7th.

Statement of Disclosure of Interest Due by January 31st

All local elected officials are required to file a Statement of Disclosure of Interests (Form 22-8005) with the Tennessee Ethics Commission. This requirement also applies to officials who were appointed to fill a vacancy in an elected public office. The deadline for filing the statement is January 31. You can file this report online by going to www.tennessee.gov/sos/tec/forms.htm and clicking on the appropriate link or you can download the file, fill it out and mail it in. It is available for download [here](#).

If you have questions about the disclosure requirement or form, contact the commission office at (615) 741-7959 or by email at ethics.counsel@state.tn.us.

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December State Tax Collections

State tax collections exceeded budgeted estimates in December for the fourth consecutive month of this fiscal year. Finance and Administration Commissioner Mike Morrow announced that state revenue collections for December were \$828.6 million, which is \$33.6 million more than the state budgeted. December sales tax collections reflect retail sales activity that occurred in November.

Sales tax collections were \$6.3 million more than the estimate for December. The December growth rate was 2.53%. For five months revenues are over collected by \$56.5 million, and the year-to-date growth rate is 3.75%.

Gasoline and motor fuel collections for December increased by 0.97% and they were \$2.0 million below the budgeted estimate of \$65.0 million. For five months revenues are over collected by \$10.9 million.

Year-to-date collections for five months were \$98.9 million more than the budgeted estimate. The general fund was over collected by \$78.4 million and the four other funds were over collected by \$20.5 million.

TCCA Commissioner Compensation and Benefits Survey

We are still waiting on responses from a number of counties on the survey sent out at the end of last year. If you can, please get those surveys returned soon so that we can make the information available. This information is requested regularly by members of the association.

TCCA Board Meeting

The Board of Directors of the Tennessee County commissioner Association will meet in the ground floor conference room of the 226 Capitol Boulevard Building in Nashville on February 1st at 10:00 a.m. central time. The board will receive regular quarterly reports, discuss legislative initiatives for the upcoming session of the General Assembly, review legislation impacting county governments that has been filed to that date and conduct other business. The meeting is open to the public and the full membership. However, members should be aware that this board meeting, which is not held in conjunction with a broader conference, will include no presentations or programs other than the board meeting itself.

Unless a special meeting is called, the other board meetings of the association will occur in conjunction with the three major Tennessee County Services Association meetings and conferences:

County Government Day: Nashville, April 19 and 20
Legislative Conference: Glenstone Lodge, Gatlinburg, June 7-8
TCSA Fall Conference and Trade Show: Murfreesboro, October 26-28

Registration is now open for County Government Day. You can visit the [TCCA Website](#) for a registration form. Information regarding hotel accommodations is located at the bottom of the registration form. It is best to make your hotel reservations early, rooms are booked quickly. If you have any questions or would like to pay for your registration with a credit card, you may contact Jessica Himes at 615-532-3767.

Basic Education Program Publication

In December, the Offices of Research and Education Accountability within the State Comptroller's Office released a Legislative Brief on Tennessee's Basic Education Program. The 34 page document summarizes the provision of the law, explains how the various funding components work and provides several charts of system comparisons of funding and costs.

The publication is available online by visiting <http://www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/Repository/RE/BEP%20Final.pdf>

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Education Workshops

The County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS) and TCCA are offering a training session about Education Funding and Reform. This is the second class in the series of evening workshops that began last fall with the Overview of the County Commission in Tennessee classes.

This class is designed to inform county commissioners about how education funding in Tennessee is structured while also providing an overview of major developments in education reform currently being implemented in our school systems. The funding portion of the class will give officials a general understanding of the Basic Education Program formula which is used to determine state and local funding for K-12 school systems in Tennessee. The funding portion of the class will focus on how an individual system's share of education funding is determined, including the calculation of local fiscal capacity, and describe the funding requirements that state law places on local funding bodies. The reform portion of the class will review recent developments in Tennessee related to K-12 education reform, including changes in school standards and assessments through the Tennessee Diploma Project, the impact of Race to the Top Grants, the First to the Top program, changes in teacher assessments and other possible reforms. The intent is to help county officials understand new changes that are currently being implemented and how they will impact the overall performance, operation and evaluation of their local school system. Dinner will be provided at 6:00 p.m. with the session offered from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Attendance is free for county officials.

The dates and locations are below.

South East Tennessee

Tuesday, February 8 Athens
Athens Conference Center
2405 Decatur Pike, Athens, TN

Middle Tennessee

Wednesday, March 23, Franklin
Williamson County Ag Expo Park
4215 Long Lane, Franklin, TN

East Tennessee

Wednesday, February 9 Knoxville
UT Conference Center Building (Room 413A)
600 Henley Street. Knoxville, TN

West Tennessee

Thursday, February 17, Jackson
West TN Research and Education Center (Room A)
605 Airways Boulevard, Jackson, TN

Additional Training Opportunities Coming Up

In addition to the evening workshops on education designed specifically for county commissioners, the University of Tennessee County Technical Assistance Service has several valuable offerings during the upcoming weeks that are a part of its County Officials Certificate Training Program (COCTP). These classes are held during the day, from 8:00 am to Noon. Of particular interest to commissioners would be the Budgeting Workshops scheduled for February 10th in Athens, February 14th in Jackson and February 16th in Franklin. Commissioners may also be interested in a series of classes related to Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 54. These are offered February 18th in Athens, February 23rd in Jackson and February 24th in Franklin. More information about the COCTP program and these individual classes can be found at the CTAS website or by calling CTAS at (615) 532-3555.

Using Social Media

The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) has created a publication that is a guide for municipalities in the use of social media. What CTAS does for counties, MTAS does for municipalities. While the publication is directed more toward cities, there is information that may be of interest to any local government official using social media for communicating with constituents or employees. It discusses how social media may be used for interacting with employees, communicating with citizens and marketing your community. It reviews the benefits of using social media but also provides warnings for potential areas of concern related to privacy, employment law and harassment.

The 22 page publication can be found [here](#).

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Haslam Cabinet Almost Complete

The following were appointed to the Haslam Cabinet by the time of his inauguration. Two appointments remain to be made. Susan Cooper is continuing on an interim basis at the Department of Health and Patrick Smith, who was heading up the First to the Top Oversight team, was named acting Commissioner of Education while a search continues for a new Commissioner. For each appointment, the appointee's prior positions are listed.

AGRICULTURE: Julius Johnson, 62, chief administrative officer for the Tennessee Farm Bureau.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES: Kathryn O'Day, 54, president and CEO of Knoxville-based advocacy group Child and Family Tennessee.

COMMERCE AND INSURANCE: Julie Mix McPeak, 41, former executive director of the Kentucky Office of Insurance.

CORRECTION: Derrick Schofield, 50, assistant commissioner of corrections in Georgia.

DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR: Claude Ramsey, 67, mayor of Hamilton County.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Bill Hagerty, founder and managing director of investment firm Hagerty Peterson & Co.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION: Robert Martineau, 52, partner at Nashville law firm Waller Lansden Dortch and Davis and formerly of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: Mark Emkes, 57, retired president and CEO of Nashville-based tiremaker Bridgestone Americas.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: Greg Gonzales, 53, held same position in Bredesen administration.

GENERAL SERVICES: Steve Cates, 47, Brentwood real estate developer.

HUMAN RESOURCES: Rebecca Hunter, 55, director of human resources for Hamilton County

HUMAN SERVICES: Raquel Hatter, 41, president and CEO of Family and Children's Services in Nashville.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: Jim Henry, 65, president and CEO of Omni Visions Inc., and a former gubernatorial candidate and state House minority leader.

LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Karla Davis, 44, director of Urban Strategies Memphis Hope and previously worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for 16 years.

LEGAL COUNSEL TO THE GOVERNOR: Herbert Slatery, 58, chairman of Knoxville law firm Egerton, McAfee, Armistead and Davis.

LEGISLATION ADVISER TO THE GOVERNOR: Dale Kelley, 71, mayor of Huntingdon and a former state lawmaker and transportation commissioner under then-Gov. Lamar Alexander.

MENTAL HEALTH: Doug Varney, 60, president and CEO of Gray-based Frontier Health.

MILITARY: Tennessee National Guard Maj. Gen. Max Haston, 53, held same position in Bredesen administration.

REVENUE: Richard Roberts, 56, attorney and director at Miller Industries Inc. of Greeneville, the world's largest manufacturer of towing and recovery vehicles.

SAFETY: Bill Gibbons, 60, Shelby County district attorney general and former Republican gubernatorial candidate.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR: Mark Cate, 45, Haslam campaign manager.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT: Susan Whitaker, held same position in Bredesen administration.

TRANSPORTATION: John Schroer, 59, mayor of Franklin.