



Knox County News

Spring has finally arrived and we are hopeful that it has brought with it the beginning of better economic times. We received news this week that even though unemployment around the state continues to be challenging, Knox County's rate is lower than any other County. We are also encouraged with the news that we have collected 98% of our property tax revenues, which puts us ahead of where we normally are at this time of year. That is very good news.

We are working through next year's budget now. I'll be presenting it on April 28th at the Bijou Theatre as part of the annual State of the Community Address and would welcome you there.

Mike Ragsdale

County announces ADOPT-A-PARK program

32 parks and greenways up for adoption



Do you spend time in our beautiful County parks? If so, you might be interested in the new program that the Parks and Recreation department has developed to engage volunteers to enhance our community park system.

ADOPT-A-PARK is a volunteer program that recruits and trains citizens to assist in the general care, supervision and maintenance of neighborhood parks and greenways. Adoption will augment, rather than replace, publicly funded maintenance and will have a significant impact on the quality of life in our community. The program is an opportunity for businesses, community groups, families and civic-minded individuals to lend a hand in the preservation and beautification of our county parkland. It helps educate the public about the importance of providing clean and safe parkland and trails for everyone's enjoyment.

Volunteers are asked to perform tasks at their park or greenway a minimum of twice per month. More information about the program is available from the [Parks and Recreation website](#).



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County Government Week announced

Knox to join nationwide week of awareness, May 3-9

Knox County will be taking part in National County Government Week to raise awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government. Counties operate public libraries, schools, senior centers, jails, court systems, etc. They maintain local roads, bridges, parks and recreation facilities, provide health services and much, much more.

Planning is currently underway for a program of events for County Government Week, which will be May 3 - 9. More information will be available soon.

April 4th Set for "Run for the Schools"

New race to serve as fundraiser for teachers/students

The inaugural Run for the Schools will be Saturday, April 4th, at 8:30 a.m. The race is designed to benefit Knox County's public and private school teachers and students.

In the current state of the economy, all schools are in need of additional sources of revenue to maintain their desired level of educational opportunities for the students. This event will provide all of the schools a spring fundraising opportunity. Proceeds from the event will be distributed to the schools based on each individual school's level of participation.

For more information about the event, contact race director Betsy Johnson at betsy@runfortheschools.org.



Sick Around the World screening set for April 6 at Baker Center

**Health care documentary screening and panel discussion
kick off National Public Health Week**

The debate about America's health care system will likely heat up in the coming months as our national leaders investigate ways to improve it. Is it possible that the U.S. could learn something from our friends abroad?

To highlight National Public Health Week, Knox County Health Department and the Baker Center for Public Policy are sponsoring a screening of the PBS FRONTLINE documentary "Sick Around the World," followed by a facilitated panel discussion and audience interaction. The screening will be Monday, April 6, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., in the Toyota Auditorium of the Baker Center, 1640 Cumberland Avenue. Admission is free and the public is invited to attend.

"Sick Around the World" examines the health care systems of five advanced capitalist democracies: the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Taiwan and Switzerland. PBS correspondent T.R. Reid provides first-hand perspective and analysis.

Following the hour-long film, four local community members will give viewpoints

[and Recreation](#)

[Knox County Public Library](#)

[Young Williams Animal Center](#)

Superintendent to hold community budget forum

[Budget available online](#)

Superintendent James McIntyre's Fiscal Year 2010 operating budget is available for review on the school's [website](#).

Dr. McIntyre will meet with the community on Wednesday, April 1, at Fulton High School at 6:00 p.m.

County road projects

[Online listing](#)

Engineering and Public Works has a listing of the County's ongoing road and bridge construction projects on their [website](#).

School Board looking for student rep

Deadline: Friday, April 17

Rising high school seniors who are interested in being

and answer questions from the audience. Scheduled panelists are Brian Bonnyman, MD, medical director for two Cherokee Health System clinics, Randy Boyd, president and CEO of PetSafe, Dr. Carole Mayers, assistant professor at the University of Tennessee College of Nursing, and County Commissioner Amy Broyles, who recently experienced the health care system as a patient.

Bard's birthday at the library

Teens are invited to celebrate Shakesfest

Get thee to Shakesfest, where Knox County Public Library invites teens to make merry for Shakespeare's birthday on Saturday, April 4, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the East Tennessee History Center.

Teens can enjoy Knoxville's very own players-the Tennessee Stage Company-in a modern interpretation of some of Shakespeare's classic scenes. Knoxville native Young Adult author Alan Gratz will also be reading from his Shakespearean-themed teen mysteries *Something Rotten* and *Something Wicked*. Come and revel in such stuff that dreams are made of!

Throughout the month, teens can enter the Shakespeare-themed book cover design contest for grades 9-12. Pick up an entry form at any public library location, or download one from the Library's website. All participants' entries will be on display, and the winners announced, at



Shakesfest.

Take A Walk in the Park April 7th

Celebrate National Public Health Week at New Harvest Park

Knox County Health Department is celebrating National Public Health Week (April 6-12) by inviting the public to bring the whole family for a community walk on April 7th. New Harvest Park will be the setting at 5:30 p.m., rain or shine, for an evening that is sure to be a crowd pleaser. In addition to a short half-mile walk around the park trail, there will be free dinner for up to 300 people, pedometers to the first 100 participants, door prizes and information on related interests and activities. Bring the family for fresh air, physical activity and fun!

A Walk in the Park Agenda

5:30 p.m. - Registration: provide your name, e-mail address and how you heard about the event. Your registration form will serve as your dinner ticket and prize drawing ticket.

5:30 p.m. - Dinner in the pavilion.

6:00 p.m. - Proclamation and brief remarks

6:30 p.m. - Walk begins

7:00 p.m. - Prize drawing *Must be present to win

Close Read: *Monster*

New York Times best-selling author chosen for spring "read"

"The best time to cry is at night, when the lights are out and someone is being beaten up and screaming for help."

With this dramatic sentence, sixteen-year-old Steve begins the story of his jail

the student representative on the Knox County School Board should submit their applications by April 17th. The student must have attended a Knox County public high school for one year and be in good standing. More information is available from the [schools' website](#).

Knox County Calendar

March 30

Magic Tree House:
The Musical

March 31

PTA Roundtable:
Hardin Valley
Academy

April 1

Superintendent
budget forum

April 4

ShakesFest
*

[Run for the Schools](#)

April 6

*Sick Around the
World* screening

April 7

Kindergarten
Round-up
*

Close Read
discussion-
Fountain City
Library
*

New Harvest Park
community walk

April 8

Brown Bag: Green

Book

April 9
[Fill up for Education](#)

April 15
Close Read discussion - Burlington Library

April 17
Close Read discussion - UT University Center

April 18
May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture at Alex Haley Farm (free and open to public)

April 20
Commission's Finance Committee

April 21
Commission's Intergovernmental Committee

April 22
Board of Zoning Appeals

April 27
County Commission

April 28
State of the Community address

Suggestions or comments?

We'd love to get your input. Send your comments or questions to our [newsletter editor](#).

experience and his trial for felony murder. Steve writes most of his story in the form of a screenplay; in his mind he calls the movie *Monster*, after what the prosecutor called him. The word torments him, as do fears about what will happen to him, concerns about how his family is responding to his arrest and trial, and questions about the nature of truth. In this innovative novel for young adults by Walter Dean Myers, the reader becomes both juror and witness during the trial of Steve's life.



Walter Dean Myers is a New York Times bestselling author and a five-time winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. Myers will be in Knoxville on April 18th to be recognized at the 2009 May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture presented by the Association for Library Services to Children. To celebrate his visit, the Library has chosen *Monster* as the spring featured read.

The following book discussion events will happen around the County:

April 7, 4:30 p.m. Teacher workshop at Fountain City Branch Library: A workshop on teaching young adult literature [*teacher in service credit is available*, information at 215-8767].

April 15, 4 p.m. Teen Book Discussion at Burlington Branch Library
Join us for a special teen discussion on this great YA book. Call Bess at 215-8723 for more information.

April 17, 7 p.m. An Evening with Christopher Myers at UT's University Center Auditorium. UT's Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature presents award-winning author and illustrator Christopher Myers, son of Walter Dean Myers.

April 18, 1 p.m. Walter Dean Myers: 2009 May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture at the Alex Haley Farm. This event is free and open to the public, but [registration is required](#).

Spring fever = pollen

Department of Air Quality Control offers tips

We call it "Spring Fever" but it can really be pollen. The trees and spring flowers are bursting into bloom and the air smells so fresh and clean. But if you have seasonal allergies, your nose is itchy and either running or congested. Your eyes are red and watering and you might be sneezing. Those same trees and flowers are coming back to life and releasing large amounts of pollen. So is that grass that everyone is starting to mow.

Allergists recommend avoidance as the first line of defense against seasonal allergies. Here are other ways you can reduce your seasonal allergy symptoms:

1. Stay indoors when pollen counts are high and on windy days when pollen and dust are blown about.
2. Use air conditioning and a dehumidifier to clean, cool, and dry air.
3. Shower or bathe and change clothes following outdoor activities to remove pollen and fungal spores from your hair, skin and clothing.
4. Don't hang clothes outside to dry.
5. Wear mask when doing yard work to filter out pollen particles and mold spores.
6. Keep windows closed at night to prevent pollen and fungal spores from entering the house.
7. Take your vacation to a more pollen free area, like the beach.

Quick Links

[Knox County Office of Neighborhoods Public Library Public Schools Parks & Recreation Health Department](#)

2nd Brown Bag -- Green Book discussion set

Cradle to Cradle: Rethinking the Way We Make Things featured

On Wednesday, April 8, the Knox County Public Library continues the Brown Bag -Green Book series with Elizabeth Eason, Principal Architect of Elizabeth Eason Design llc. Eason will continue this important discussion on sustainability at 12:00 noon on Market Square talking about the book *Cradle to Cradle: Rethinking the Way We Make Things* by William McDonough and Michael Braungart.

According to the Library's website, McDonough and Braungart question the wisdom of "reduce, reuse, recycle" and propose that products might be designed so that, after their useful life, they provide nourishment for something new - either as "biological nutrients" that safely re-enter the environment or as "technical nutrients" that circulate within closed-loop industrial cycles, without being "downcycled" into low-grade uses (as most "recyclables" now are). "This is a great book for a broad discussion of sustainability in East Tennessee," Elizabeth Eason says, "because we can discuss Cradle to Cradle as it applies to decisions made by anyone that manufactures, specifies, purchases, or consumes products. That's all of us in one way or another."

Be One in 10,000: The Great American Cleanup

Join Knox campaign today

The Great American Cleanup™ is a national Keep America Beautiful effort to clean up and beautify our country. Last year, approximately three million volunteers rolled up their sleeves to pick up waste across the nation and raise awareness in more than 17,000 communities.

Keep Knoxville Beautiful, a Keep America Beautiful affiliate, is challenging you to take part in the coalition and beautify our community. If you want a cleaner, greener, more beautiful Knoxville...come join us. The campaign is going on now through the end of May. Visit www.keepknoxvillebeautiful.org or call 521-6957 to receive the gloves, vests and bags needed to start a clean up effort in your neighborhood or to find out details on how to participate on a team that is already being organized.

Help improve your community and assist us in reaching a local goal of recruiting 10,000 volunteers. Help to make Knoxville the community you want it to be!

Join us in our efforts to make Knox County *A Great American Community*. **Become a part of the conversation.** Tell us about our programs and services that are working for you, and the ones that aren't. **Support our teachers** and the great work they are doing to educate our children. **Get involved** with the workforce development effort. **Participate** in the great events our libraries and parks offer. County government starts with you, the citizen, so **join in!**

Best regards,

Mike Ragsdale, County Mayor
Knox County, A Great American Community



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