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## City Web Site Improved

*Always current, centrally located information*— that's the result of applying the latest technology to the city web site. "Now property tax information available through our newly developed site is stored in a database," explained Information Systems Director Janet Wright. "That means the new system enables the user to build their query, determine specifically what information they need, 'on the fly,' or in other words, right there and then."

Wright furthered explained, "As the tax office updates their payment records, that very same data is available the next day by city web site users. To access information, the user types in either a name or address to start the query. With the results produced, the user then determines which tax files he wishes to view. Previously, the revenue office printed a public tax log that was manually scrolled through for the same information."

The overall site is more user friendly, too.

"By implementing what is referred to as 'dynamic content,' such as drop-down menus and an internal search engine, we've made the site more efficient and easier to navigate through," explained Greg Lutcavage, who manages the web site for the city.

"City employees who have access to the internet need to use the web site as a primary source of information," said Mayor Ashe. "From job opportunities posted by Civil Service to calendars of events, the city web site is 'Information Central.' Printed material is often out of date before it is circulated. The web is updated constantly."

Future plans for the web include such conveniences as electronic property tax payments and electronic quotes for the purchasing office. The improved web site is the result of the Mayor's Internet Task Force, which included representatives of the public as well as city employees. A committee of city employees then effected the changes.



At left, the new look of the city website homepage. At right, city webmaster Greg Lutcavage reviews changes with committee members (l. to r.) Nancy Tompkins, Richard Slover and David Harrison. Not pictured is Doti Martin.

Search the Site:



In his fourth term as Mayor of Knoxville, Tennessee, Victor Ashe is continuing to develop new and innovative ways to deliver essential public services while maintaining a level tax rate. ([Mayor's next rate](#))

**City Receives Recommendations on Downtown Development**  
Public Building Authority releases recommendations on how to revitalize private development in downtown Knoxville.

**PSA Recommendations Statement from Mayor Ashe**



Construction site of the new Knoxville Convention Center (taken 2-29-01)



## Mayor Ashe's Message:

### **--"Drug Free" Is the Rule for City Employees --Tax Proceeds Are Down So Cost-Cutting Is in Order**

Alcohol abuse and illicit drug use are associated with many of our country's most serious problems. They endanger the health and safety of abusers and those who work around them. The city is committed to maintaining a workplace free of substance abuse in keeping with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act and other drug-related regulations. We have a strong drug and alcohol policy. An employee who has a positive drug or alcohol test may receive discipline up to and including termination. While these comments do not apply to the vast majority of city employees, 36 employees have had positive tests since the city's policy was implemented.

I wish that no city employee ever used illicit drugs or abused alcohol, but it does happen. I want to urge any employee who uses or is tempted to use drugs or abuses alcohol to seek help. It's hard to quit but the city provides all employees with an excellent, confidential, Employee Assistance Program (981-9030) at no cost. Help is also available through the city's health plan.

**There's an anticipated shortfall of more than \$800,000 from the state this year because of the decrease in tax revenue.** It's appropriate, then, that we all watch our

spending during these upcoming months. We're looking at ways to decrease our expenditures, but every single measure of cost saving can add up.

John Homa, Solid Waste's Reduction Specialist, offers the following tips to decrease city expenses:

- Car pool when possible to meetings, training and work sites.
- According to TVA, set building thermostats to 68 degrees in winter and 78 degrees in summer.
- Set all copy machines to automatically default to duplex (double side printing), to save on paper.
- Turn off all unnecessary lights at the end of the day as you are leaving for home. (But don't turn them off during the winter days as they do contribute to heating. )
- Turn off all copy machines, printers, personal computers and monitors at the end of the day that do not need to be in use over night. One monitor turned off at the end of the day, rather than leaving it on 24 hours, will save \$13 a year.
- Drive all city vehicles five miles under the max speed limit to conserve and save on gas cost.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle . . . especially with paper. Reduce the amount of prints generated from the computer, use the back side of discardable paper for scratch paper and be careful in tossing used paper in the blue bins instead of the regular trash.
- Don't send letters when postcards will do.



## **CityWorks February, 2001**

Contributors this month: Stephanie Brewer, Abbie Hudgens, Carlene Loop. *CityWorks* is published for the employees of the City of Knoxville. All suggestions or comments are welcomed and should be sent to: Marie Alcorn, Department of Public Affairs, City County Building, 215-2264, Fax 215-4299, e-mail: malcorn.

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## **Let Us Eat Pancakes**

Come join the folks at the John T. O'Connor Center, 611 Winona Avenue, in honoring a long-observed Mardi Gras (translation: Fat Tuesday) tradition by indulging at their Pancake Fest, being held Tuesday, February 27 from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

\$3 will buy all the pancakes and sausage you care to eat. "You can go there for breakfast or lunch . . . or both!!," said Administration Department's Stephanie Brewer. Brewer has tickets to sell for the event, and tickets are also available at the door the day of the event.

"The set-up will be an improvement over last year's," added Brewer. "There are professional chefs participating, and there will be four pancake 'stations,' so there should be little waiting."

**Find out how you can get involved with the national effort led by Secretary of State Colin Powell to help our kids. America's Promise continues to take root across the nation and in East Tennessee. Learn how to get involved at the 3rd Annual Alliance for Youth Regional Summit presented by Knoxville's Promise, Campbell County's Promise, Anderson County's Promise, and Greene County's Promise.**

**WORKSHOPS! SPEAKERS! ENTERTAINMENT!**

**Monday, March 12, 2001, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

**Location: Austin-East Magnet High School**

**Call 865-523-2775 for more information.**

**Pull your  
weight.**



## McClendon and Sands Named Officers of the Month

Mayor Victor Ashe and Chief Phil Keith named Officers Don McClendon and Chuck Sands as Officers of the Month for December 2000. Officer McClendon is a two-year veteran and was chosen for his actions on December 29 by following up on a car-jacking investigation.

A female was car-jacked on that same day at 1 a.m. from a grocery store on Asheville Highway. Officer McClendon checked with his various confidential informants and learned the suspect had been spotted driving the victim's car in the area.

Officer McClendon spotted the car on January 5, 2001, stopped the car, conducted a field interview, photographed the driver of the car and later that day met with the victim at police headquarters. The driver was positively identified as the car-jacker and warrants were taken for Thomas Phelps, Jr for car-jacking, felony theft and aggravated assault.

Officer Chuck Sands was recognized for his actions on December 2, 2000 when he responded to a domestic violence call in South Knoxville. Upon arrival he heard the female victim screaming for help and sounds of a violent struggle. He began knocking on the door and identifying himself as a police officer. The victim was able to get loose from her attacker and unlock the door but the suspect was able to slam the door, knocking Officer Sands into the railing.

Fearing for the safety of the victim, Officer Sands climbed through a broken window and was able to subdue the suspect and free the victim. The suspect, 51 year old Steve Shersky, the victim's husband was taken into custody and charged with aggravated assault, aggravated burglary, vandalism and false imprisonment. The victim had an outstanding order of protection at the time of this incident and his bond on violation of that charge was set at \$150,000 with an additional \$18,000 on the other four charges.

*"There are two kinds of failures: those who thought and never did, and those who did and never thought."*

*-Laurence J. Peter*

## Free Tax Filing Assistance Offered Again

City Employees once again have access to free assistance in filing their personal income taxes. This service is compliments of the City of Knoxville and the VITA tax program. Appointments are available on Mondays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The electronic tax filing takes approximately 30 minutes. Please call the Central Payroll Office at 215-2099 or 215-2223 to set up an appointment. Appointments are available on a first come, first serve basis.

There are many advantages to filing electronically with the City:

--You would have to pay from \$25 to \$40 for electronic filing at a tax preparation agency,

--You usually get your refunds 2-3 weeks from the date that the IRS acknowledges receipt of returns, as opposed to 4-8 weeks for paper returns.

--You can use the direct deposit option to have your refunds deposited directly into your savings or checking account.

You can be assured your returns are filed because the IRS will electronically send an

acknowledgement of receipt to the Treasurer's office.

--You can have the return transmitted anytime during the tax season, but you do not have to send any payment due until the April deadline.

**It is necessary that you bring all the documents required for filing your tax return, which would include W-2s, 1099s, interest income, etc. If you have children, you will need to provide their social security numbers and birth dates. Both spouses must sign a return filed jointly. If you are having a refund directly deposited into your account, you must bring a blank voided check.**



*Income tax filing assistance is private and confidential. City Tax Office's Sherry Bennett confers with John Brown.*

## The Solid Waste Office Is Pleased To Again Sponsor the

## Backyard Compost Bin Sale

**\$35 each**  
**(sold elsewhere at \$80)**

**Saturday, February 24**  
**9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**(Or While Supplies Last)**

**Two Locations:**

**--Big K-Mart,**

**7428 Kingston Pike Parking Lot**

**--Knoxville Center, Near Regal Center**



# DROP Tops Pension Provisions for Long-Term City Employees

The DROP pension provision, only recently available for non-uniformed employees, is proving as popular with general government as it has during the last two years with uniformed. The Delayed Retirement Option Program enhances the benefits received in retirement, because it:

- Stops the deduction of employee contributions during the DROP period (two years or less at the end of employment).
- The Pension Board accumulates the benefit that the employee would have received as a retirement benefit during this DROP period.
- At retirement, this DROP accumulation can be taken in one lump sum *OR* all or part of it can be directed into another tax-deferred arrangement.
- Regular retirement benefits, established at the time of the member's election to exercise the DROP, begin at the same time the DROP benefit is distributed.

DROP is only available to uniformed employees who are 50 years of age with 25 years or more of service. For non-uniformed employees, they need to be age 62 or qualify

under the "Rule of 80" (employee age plus employment years equal 80 or more.)

"DROP allows our newly retired to get a jump on their new life," said Pension Board Executive Director Mike Cherry. "With a lump sum payment, they could use it toward a down payment on a new home, a new boat or to pay off old debts."

For those wishing to continue to apply a portion of their pay toward their retirement

during this period, they could increase their Deferred Compensation contribution. "The ceiling for employee donations almost doubles to \$15,000 during the last three years of work," said Deferred Compensation's Allen Sheets. "Increasing a contribution is as easy as filling out a form."

For more information, call the Pension Office at 594-8305 or Deferred Compensation at 215-2947.



*On Ground Hog Day, February 2, students from Austin-East High School "job shadowed" employees throughout city government and later enjoyed pizza while Mayor Ashe awarded certificates. As Dan Myers photographs, Mickey Foley looks on.*

**City of Knoxville  
Office of Public Affairs  
P.O. Box 1631  
Knoxville, TN 37901**

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