

# County Executive's Newsletter to the County Commission



Roane County Government

## Happy New Year !

By Ron Woody, County Executive

Volume 8, Issue 1

We have had a blessed 2015 and as we prepare for 2016 we hope it will be even better. Roane County government experienced a few rough months, in 2015 caused by not having tax bills out to citizens in a timely manner and the resulting shock that when many of those tax bills increased over the prior year.

- The increase in the county property tax was around 15%, the majority of the increase supported education.
- The total property value in Roane County decreased by 3.482%, which automatically adjusted the tax rate up 4.39% or 9.58¢ and then a tax rate increase of 29.92¢.
- We are hoping this increase will satisfy our governmental need for years to come. I had a citizen recently tell me that he wished we would raise taxes every year, two (2) to four (4) percent instead of waiting years to get caught up, novel idea.
- Looking back, other than a small recalibration for debt service, the last tax increase the county had was 9¢ in 2009.
- A percentage rate of 13.72% divided by 5 years equals to an annual percentage increase of 2.74%; which doesn't sound that bad but in some cases equated to \$500 and even \$1,000 increase in taxes owed.
- I don't like taxes and I'm sure you don't like taxes either, but I understand citizens continue to want: good roads, good education, decent jobs, adequate healthcare, park and recreation opportunities, safe communities, animal control, safe and well built buildings, public safety, and garbage disposal. Well, it looks like citizens are still demanding services.
- Lets just work together to (1) determine if we really want or need the service and then (2) determine how can we deliver those services the most efficient way possible.

January 2016  
New Years Day--Jan 1st  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-- Jan  
18th

~~Happy New Year

2016 !!!

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### Financial Management—Boring?—Not Really

In a recent CPA class, our instructor summarizes the title of our corporation and governmental financial managers and what their responsibilities are. We have discussed this in previous articles with terminology of planning and vision. Our instructor described accounting titles as this; Accountants, Comptrollers, and Auditors are the ones that are looking backward to what has happened. I have always said they count the fatalities after the battle. The CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and CFO (Chief Financial Officer) looks forward trying to make good decisions now to achieve stated goals and plans and trying to keep the battle from happening in the first place. Governmental management is about vision and planning and making decisions today that will have a positive impact on us tomorrow. We do any planning through research and study.

**Learn from yesterday,  
live for today,  
hope for tomorrow.**  
— Albert Einstein

## ETEC Presents 2015 Muddy Boot Awards at Annual Meeting

Two titans of East Tennessee's business community were honored on Dec. 11th with the Muddy Boot Award, given by the East Tennessee Economic Council (ETEC) in an on-going tribute to individuals who through their work and activities build a better community.

- This year's honorees are Jim Henry, Deputy Governor of the State of Tennessee, a former businessman, legislator, and Mayor of Kingston; and Dan Hurst, founder of StrataG, an East Tennessee entrepreneurial company and activist in numerous organizations across the region.



**Jim Henry with award presenters Ron Woody, Chris Whaley, & Wade Creswell**



**Dan Hurst with award presenter, Ray Smith**

The Muddy Boot Award was created in the 1970s to honor individuals who have gone above the call of duty—like those who served the nation during the Manhattan Project—to make the community, the state of Tennessee and the nation a better place to live and work. Over 70 people have received the award. A full list of recipients and more information about the award can be found on the ETEC website, [www.eteconline.org](http://www.eteconline.org).

### Department of Energy has Record Funding for Oak Ridge National Lab

Bring on "The Summit". The U.S. DOE Office of Science and National Nuclear Security Administration will help provide funding for Oak Ridge National Lab to once again have the world's fastest computing system known as "The Summit."

### Important Federal Funding for the Chickamauga Lock

The Federal budget includes up to \$29 million for the continued construction of the Chickamauga Lock; which is immediately south of Watts Bar Dam. The Lock is important to the regions transportation system as more freight transported on the river system means less on our interstate system. The Chickamauga Lock has experienced numerous and sometimes lengthy periods of shut-downs which has prohibited water transportation.

### Other Federal Funding for the Area Includes:

- Uranium Processing Facility
- Historic Contribution for the K-25 site of the Manhattan Project
- Small Modular Reactors



### Comptroller's Hotline

Since October 1983, the Comptroller of the Treasury has provided a toll-free hotline for any citizen to report government fraud, waste, and abuse. The hotline plays an important role in holding government accountable to its citizens. If you suspect fraud, waste, or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at (800) 232-5454, or file a report at: [www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline](http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline)

**"Changing Government through Research, Study and Analysis"**

## County Updates — Natural Resource Trust Fund

For about a year Roane County has been preparing for the Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant Application to open up for environmental and recreation projects on the Watts Bar Watershed. Finally on December 4, 2015 the Tennessee Department of Environmental Conservation posted the application on their website.

A couple of changes took place, first the title is now: "Emory, Clinch, and Watts Bar Watershed Habitat and Recreational Restoration Grant Program" and second the grant program has required matching percentage from 20% to 50%. Roane County's original proposals are still solid projects. The county has talked with the city mayors and managers regarding projects that are scheduled within their respective cities and that a match funding will be now required.

In the next several months the county will submit an application that if funded, should provide many recreation and environmental benefits for our residents and our tourism friends. More about Roane County's plan can be found on the county website [www.roanecountytn.gov](http://www.roanecountytn.gov) > County Executive, >Articles and Speeches, >Proposal Natural Resource Transfer Program 4-20-15.

### **Highway Update by Brian Matthews**

- The Roane County Highway Department participated in the Harriman, Kingston, Oak Ridge, Oliver Springs, and Rockwood Christmas Parades and we want to thank everyone that worked on putting those events together because they did a great job!!
- Road Superintendent Ferguson organized a winter preparedness meeting and we had a great response from those in attendance and are looking forward to working with our partners throughout the county to keep everyone safe this winter.
- Our guys have been going through some training classes. The guys have been through a First Aid/CPR/AED class and they just completed a truck safety class. After the Holiday season they will have a chainsaw safety class and a class on flagging.
- Our goal is to always put safety first and to be prepared for whatever might come our way.

### **Working Together Toward a Better Roane County**

#### **Happenings at Roane County Park**

The weather is cold, but activity at Swan Pond Sports Complex is heating up. The goal is to be ready to play next spring with utilities, a picnic shelter, and a restroom.

Your Sports/Recreation Committee and the Roane County Parks and Recreation staff are meeting regularly and progress is being made every day with help from The Roane County Codes office, Lee Maines, WBUD, HUB, Soil Solutions, Lewis Group and TDEC. Plans, permits, building designs,

and site drawings decorate the Cottage walls instead of garland and lights this season. Please stop by and take a look at these designs and join in the anticipation of brining this significant Roane County asset to realization.



#### **Operation REACH 2015**

County Commissioners Ron Berry, Peggy Collier, Carolyn Granger, and Randy

Ellis volunteered at the 40th Anniversary of Operation REACH. Thank you to Roane County for helping raise \$120,000 and providing 506 children with Christmas.



**Did You Know About . . .What Happened at the End of the Civil War ? (Part Two)**

**By Robert Bailey, Roane County Historian**

As was mentioned in last month's article, the Paint Rock Baptist Church sent out a petition requesting churches in the Hiwassee Baptist Association to look at removing all members who had aided the Confederacy in the Civil War. Not all of the records of these churches survive. The Paint Rock Baptist Church minutes are among those missing. Of those that survive, the largest number of members removed was at Shiloh Baptist Church, located South of the Tennessee

River. There were 99 members removed including the minister, Rev. M.H. Sellers, who was charged with **"Loaning his gun to the rebels & saying that wasent able to gaw himself but he had his gun in hands that would use it & for Joining a Company."** Interesting enough, Jonathan Barnard (who was pro-union), had given the land for the Church, closed and locked the door to the Shiloh Church to the members who had joined or aided the Confederacy during the

Civil War. The Confederate supporters created another Shiloh Church and the two Shiloh Churches remained split until 1879 when **". . . that in the year 1865 there arose a division in the Shiloh church which remained until the present and it has long since been found that said division has not been beneficial to the cause of the Lord & master but instead thereof we feel satisfied that it has proved detrimental to the cause of Religion in the vicinity of our once happy church. Therefore we the surviving members mutually agree to rescind all our acts of Exclusion. Note this is intended to embrace only those exclusions that was declared against each other for political principles or that had their origin from politics."** In the minutes of other churches, Cave Creek Baptist Church excluded four members. In the Smyrna Baptist Church minutes, there is approval of the petition but no exclusions

of members. At that time the Smyrna Church only had twelve members. Also there is mention in the Hickory Creek Baptist Church minutes of the petition but no record of any removal of members. In the Hinds Creek Baptist Church minutes, the petition is not mentioned at all.

John H. Acuff, who had two sons in the Union Army and two sons in the Confederate Army (one of which died in the war), led the uniting of the Post Oak Springs Christian Church, located near Roane State Community College, by arranging for a Communion Service at the church. At the close of the service he invited all of people there to partake. His two sons from the Union Army and the one from the Confederate Army came forward and sat down together to have Communion. This marked the beginning of the healing of the Post Oak Christian Church. **[The words in quotations are transcribed as they are written.]**

*"Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance."  
- Samuel Johnson*

**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

Date	Meeting	Location	Time
Jan 4th	Environmental Review Board		No meeting
Jan 11th	County Commission	QCR	7:00 pm
Jan 12th	Public Utility Board	WWP	5:30 pm
Jan 12th	Fire Board	QCR	6:00 pm
Jan 14th	Emergency Services Com	OES	6:00 pm
Jan 18th	COURTHOUSE CLOSED	MLK Jr	
Jan 20th	Board of Zoning Appeals	QCR	6:00 pm
Jan 20th	Planning Commission	QCR	7:00 pm
Jan 25th	Codes Committee	QCR	6:00 pm

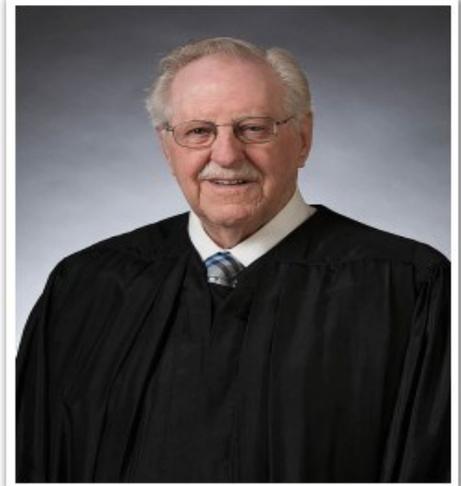
**MARK YOUR CALENDAR- CLOSINGS/OTHER EVENTS**

Jan 1st- Courthouse Closed /New Year's Day  
Jan 18th Courthouse Closed/Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Please submit articles/items of interest to Arlene at [arlene.daugherty@roanecountytn.gov](mailto:arlene.daugherty@roanecountytn.gov) by the 20th of the month. ~Ron

### **Honorable E. Eugene Eblen Retires**

The Honorable E. Eugene Eblen retired December 31, 2015. Judge Eblen served the counties of the Ninth Judicial District Criminal Courts for Roane, Loudon, Morgan, and Meigs counties since 1978. Congratulations on your retirement and our very best wishes and thoughts go with you.



### **Governor Haslam Appoints Jeffery H. Wicks as Ninth Judicial District Judge**

Congratulations to Jeffery H. Wicks for being appointed as Criminal Court Judge for the Ninth Judicial District by Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam. Jeffery Wicks will be replacing Judge E. Eugene Eblen, who retired December 31, 2015. The Ninth Judicial District serves Loudon, Meigs, Morgan and Roane counties.



Judge Wicks, 52, has served as General Sessions Court Judge in Roane County since 2006. He was an attorney in Kingston from 2003-2006, operating a law practice that included criminal, civil domestic, juvenile, and probate matters. We are fortunate to have a public servant with such a depth of experience as Judge Wicks to fill this role. He will serve the Ninth Judicial District well in this capacity.

Jeff Wicks was a special agent for the United States Secret Service in Cleveland, Ohio from 1990-1994 and a special agent for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms in Nashville from 1987-1990.

He received his law degree from the University of Tennessee in 1999 and a bachelor's degree from UT in 1986. Judge Wicks appointment will be until the August 2016 elections.

Appointment for Sessions Judge vacancy of Judge Jeffrey Wicks will be held on January 4, 2016 at 6:30 in a special called meeting of the County Commission in the Qualls Commission Room. The Commission will appoint the new sessions Judge to serve until the next General Election in August

“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.”

Franklin D Roosevelt

“Changing Government through Research, Study and Analysis”