

# County Executive's Newsletter to the County Commission



Roane County Government

## "Reappraisal Update" By Ron Woody, County Executive

Volume 6, Issue 8

August 2015

We are finally coming to an end of the five-year reappraisal cycle. According to the State Comptroller's Office, Roane County should be confident in the reappraisal values. In cases where an individual or business disagrees with the assessed value of their property, appeals can be addressed to the local board of equalization. See hearing dates and contact information in article on this page.

The State Board of Equalization voted to take control of the Roane County reappraisal program in February 2015. The Comptroller's Office will make a formal presentation to the Roane County Commission at the August 10th commission meeting with specifics as to their work. During the initial stage of the assistance program, the Executive's Office had weekly conversations with the state office and as the process was wrapping up, often daily conversations took place with Jason Mumpower, Chief of Staff for the Comptroller.

In summary, several issues became apparent during the reappraisal process this year. First, the county lost transparency by moving from the state software. Roane County residents and businesses do not currently have access to an interactive map with readily available assessment values. Second, the Comptroller's Office lost access to the same data and thus further loss of transparency occurred. Third, the cost for the reappraisal process increased due to the cost of the new software program (Patriot), a special contract with Patriot for assistance with the reappraisal process, and additional cost to the state for their assistance in order to insure a timely and accurate reappraisal.

The Commission will consider at the August meeting to override the Assessor's decision to change to the Patriot software program and whether to contract with the Comptroller's Office to transition back to the state assessment software.

### Inside this issue:

FY16 Budget	2
Parks & Rec Update	2
Reappraisal -Certified Tax Rate	2
ATVG	3
Harriman Properties Update	3
Working Together Toward a Better Roane County	3
Did You Know About...	4
Upcoming Meetings	4
MPNHP	4
Highway Dept Update	4

### Local Board of Equalization Schedule

The Roane County Board of Equalization is scheduling meetings to assist individuals in review of property assessments. If an individual upon receipt of the assessment notice, doesn't feel the property is accurately assessed, a hearing can be requested from the local board of equalization. The board anticipates going into session on August 10th and will remain in session for 30 days.

Appointments are made by calling the Assessor's office at 865-376-4362.

### *In Memoriam James "Dub" Harmon*

James "Dub" Harmon passed away on July 8, 2015 at the age of 87. Harmon was a veteran of the US Navy. He also owned/operated H.G. Furniture for over 60 years. "Dub" served the citizens of Roane County for 22 years as a County Commissioner for the 2nd District. "Dub" was also honored as a Roane Treasure in 2011. He was also a citizen charter member of Riverside Baptist Church. "Dub" is remembered fondly by all who served with him and will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time.

**FY16 Budget Adopted, Tax Rate to Be Set Next**

The County Commission at their July meeting adopted the 2016 budget resulting in an increase in county property tax of 30 cents. It has been several years since a significant tax increase has been passed.

The majority (73%) of new revenue will be used to replace lost state revenue in the Basic Education Funds for the Roane County School System. Funds were also appropriated to help alleviate the need to expand the female section of the jail and to invest in the county ambulance service through both operations and a purchase of a new ambulance. New to the budget was funding for the county's veterans service officers.

Hopefully the county will be getting to a point of financial stability. The

goal is to have enough economic growth to support the inflationary pressures placed upon our budget.

There are some unexpected expenses which have had a negative impact on the budget. One of the main impacts this year was the funds which were assigned to clean up delinquent tax properties. The county has unexpectedly spent or will spend over \$500,000 on just three (3) properties in Harriman. The county will still owe Harriman back taxes before the county can sell the property. Of course, the county will never receive even a small portion of the amount invested. We must solve our delinquent tax property problem, which may include changes to state law and agreements with cities.

**Reappraisal Changes Certified Tax Rate**

The aggregate property value change from the 2010 Reappraisal to the 2015 Reappraisal is a reduction 3.47 %. Of course some properties increased in value and some decreased, but the average change was an overall property value reduction of 3.47% countywide. The estimated tax rate would be set as follows:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Certified</u>	<u>FY16 Budget</u>
Outside all cities	2.18	2.2553	2.55
Inside Kingston, Oliver Springs, Rockwood	2.13	2.2031	2.49
Inside Harriman	1.99	2.0573	2.345
Inside Oak Ridge	1.97	2.0366	2.325

**Parks and Recreation Update by Mike Beard**

In an effort to improve the hygiene of the shelters near the waterfront the abundance of "goose poop" is being addressed.

These shelters are where most of the large catered or covered dish events are held in the park. These deposits accumulate rapidly in a single night after cleaning and therefore require last minute re-cleaning just prior to the event.

When the event starts and the food comes out.....here come the ducks and geese to join the party!!

At the recommendation of TRWA, The Roane County Park management was directed to the US Department of Agriculture's (DOA)office in Knoxville.

The recommendations of this office were to:

1. Stop feeding all wildlife
2. Start an Education Program to explain to the public why this is important
3. Start an aggressive harassment effort.

.....then the Department could relocate an appropriate number of Canada Geese at our expense. Other species can be relocated by TRWA and do not require a Federal License to manage.

All 3 of these recommendations are being addressed by:

1. Initiating a "no feeding of wildlife" policy (begun 7/1/15)
2. When feeding is observed, the citizens are approached, given a flyer and, if willing, the problem and solutions are discussed. The \$.25 feeders have been taken out of service.
3. Two noise cannons are fired at accumulations of waterfowl in the morning and afternoon to actively harass the birds.

After about a month it is my plan to have a follow-up conversation with the DOA to discuss next steps.



### Association of TN Valley Governments- ATVG

The Association of Tennessee Valley Governments (ATVG) met in Oak Ridge on July 22 & 23, 2015. Executive Woody is the current president of this liaison organization between local governments and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

Attendees were welcomed to Oak Ridge and Roane County by County Executive Woody. They also received an update on current TVA operations from Bert Robinson, Sr. Program Manager for TVA., including Watts Bar Unit 2, Kingston Fossil Plant Ash Recovery and Willow Creek becoming a Google Site.

The participants were taken on tours of several significant operations within Roane County and Oak Ridge. On the first day of the conference, attendees were given a history and overview of the Y-12 National Security Complex and a presentation about the Manhattan Project National Historic Park (see article on page

3). They then traveled to the Kingston Fossil Plant for an overview of plant operations and a presentation on the Ash Spill Recovery efforts.

The second day of the conference saw the attendees touring the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. During the tour, they visited the Oak Ridge Computing Facility which houses the "Super Computer" Titan. They also received a tour and presentation of the Neutron Spallation Source.

Also in TVA news, on Saturday, July 25th, J.P. King Auction Company conducted the auction of the 62 TVA properties on the Emory River. All 62 properties were sold at absolute auction for a total of \$9.183M. The return of these properties to the county tax rolls will have a positive impact on Roane County.

### Update on Harriman Back Tax Properties by Lynn Farnham

Bids were opened on June 11 for the demolition of the two remaining buildings adjacent to the Miller Brewer property that was destroyed by fire earlier this year.

There were two bids received and the contract has been awarded to First Place Finish in Oak Ridge with a bid of \$403,130. The company is in process of getting the performance and payment bonds secured and expects to have the bonds in hand late the week of July 27th.

The following is a schedule of activities submitted by the contractor:

**August 10** – Preconstruction activities begin (permits, site evaluation, security, submittals, erosion control, etc.)

**August 13** – Abatement procedures, completed by August 24

**August 24** – Demolition begins (duration 6 weeks)

**October 5** – Site reconfiguration & stabilization (duration 2 weeks)

**October 22** – Project completion

### Working Together Toward a Better Roane County

#### Staff Retreat

Executive Woody will host a staff retreat/seminar on August 24th at the Agricultural Extension Office conference room for all department heads under his supervision. Department heads will present current operations and future plans for their respective departments. The theme of "Working Together Toward a Better Roane County" will be the focus of the retreat.

***"Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle"***

~Thomas Jefferson

#### Animal Shelter– Volunteer Program

The Roane County Animal Shelter is implementing a new volunteer program. With the interest of several area non-profit groups and individuals, Shelter Director John Griffin is working with the Animal Control Advisory Board, which met on July 16th, to establish a new volunteer program which will enhance the operations of the Animal Shelter. These groups are working together for a better Roane County.

#### MPNHP

In preparation for implementation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Alliance Tourism Director Pam May and County Executive Ron Woody established a website to serve as a repository of information and to be a planning tool to assist in the implementation process and to share Roane County's Manhattan Project stories. More to come, but you can view the progress by visiting [www.manhattanprojecttn.com](http://www.manhattanprojecttn.com).

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

**Did You Know About . . .John Randolph Neal, Jr.? ?**

**By Robert Bailey, Roane County Historian**

As you drive down Highway 70 towards Rockwood, there is a cemetery on the left before you get to the Post Oak Springs Christian Church. This is the Ault Cemetery but through the years it has been called the Brown and Kimbrough Cemetery.

Buried here is John Randolph Neal, Jr. He was involved in two projects that dramatically changed Roane County and East Tennessee. He helped to

found the Tennessee Valley Authority (T.V.A.) by his early support of a public utility as opposed to private ones.

In an article that appeared in The Roane County News, 6 Feb 2015, Gerald Largent talked about a conversation in 1954 or 1955, that he had with John Randolph Neal, Jr., in which Neal revealed that he had suggested the site of the Manhattan Project in Oak

Ridge. When asked by Senator Kenneth D. McKellar about a location for this secret project, Neal suggested the Black Oak Ridge area in Roane and Anderson County on the Clinch River.

Neal led an interesting life. Among other things he was the chief defense counsel for John T. Scopes in the famous "monkey trial" in Rhea County in 1925.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

Date	Meeting	Location	Time
Aug 6th	Environmental Review Board	ETTP	6:00 pm
Aug 10th	Commission	QCR	7:00 pm
Aug 11th	Public Utility Board	WWP	5:30 pm
Aug 11th	Fire Board	QCR	6:00 pm
Aug 13th	Emergency Services	RMC	6:00 pm
Aug 17th	Sheriff's Liaison	QCR	6:00 pm
Aug 19th	Board of Zoning Appeals	QCR	6:00 pm
Aug 19th	Planning Commission	QCR	7:00 pm
Aug 20th	Ag Ext Open House	Ag Ext Office	3-6 pm
Aug 20th	Animal Control Adv Cmte	QCR	6:30 pm
Aug 24th	Staff Retreat	Ag Ext Office	8:30 am
Aug 24th	Bldg Inspector Cmte	QCR	6:30 pm

**Highway Department Update by Brian Matthews**

First, we want to thank everyone that attended our Community Picnic. We served over 200 people and a great time catching up with some of our friends and former employees. We were pleased to honor Jim Beason for his service to Roane County and the Highway Department. We were also blessed to have Scott Martin join us and tell us about his road to recovery. Scott wanted to thank everyone for the prayers and asked for your continued prayer and support as his journey continues.

We also want to take the time to thank all of our brave men and women in uniform that allow us to continue to be the land of the free and home of the brave. We also want to remind you of some quick safety tips when dealing with some weather situations that we see arise in the Summer. **1. If it roars, go indoors. 2 Turn around. Don't drown.** Make sure to like our Facebook page to keep up with what all we are doing. [www.facebook.com/RoaneCountyHighwayDepartment](http://www.facebook.com/RoaneCountyHighwayDepartment)

**MPNHP**

**Department of Interior and Department of Energy Work for Local Communities**

Roane County Executive Woody and Alliance Tourism Director Pam May traveled to Los Alamos, New Mexico on July 15-17 to take part in the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) Peer Exchange. Woody is Secretary of ECA.

Oak Ridge is one of the three primary sites in the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP), which is a joint collaboration of the Department of Interior, National Park Service (NPS), and the Department of Energy.

**Local Attendees** included Executive Woody; Director May; Amy Fitzgerald, Oak Ridge Governmental Affairs Staff; Oak Ridge Councilman Chuck Hope; Colin Colverson, DOE- OR advisor; Marc DeRose, Executive OR Convention and Visitor Bureau; Kathryn Baldwin, OR Community Development Director; Jordon Reed, Library Clerk at the Center for Oak Ridge Oral History. **National Attendees** included David Klaus, Deputy Under Secretary of Management and Performance for DOE; and Victor Knox, Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities and Lands for NPS, Jeff Reinbold, Associate Director of Partnerships and Civic Engagement for NPS.

May and Woody were asked to present on the MPNHP and Oak Ridge/Roane County/Anderson County's part in the planning, design and implementation of the new park. May and Woody, along with various Oak Ridge officials, expressed the Oak Ridge, Roane and Anderson County's commitment to the Manhattan Project National Historic Park.

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