

THE BLUE PAGES...



Tre Hargett, Secretary of State

August 2010 - Vol.1, No. 6

From the Desk of the Secretary...

The Department of State has been even busier than usual since our last newsletter. The August primaries saw record early voting turnout as Tennesseans continued to take advantage of the convenience of early voting. Certainly, the Tennessee General Assembly should receive the credit for providing this opportunity for Tennessee voters.

Election Day brought many challenges and several learning opportunities. In the overwhelming majority of our 95 counties, the hard work that went into training and preparing both new and veteran election administrators was demonstrated by the smooth and seamless elections they conducted. One lesson learned is that even the most long-serving administrators can make mistakes. Our Division of Elections remains committed to ensuring all county election administrators have the knowledge base they need to ensure the integrity, accuracy and efficiency of our elections.

We never imagined how many Tennesseans would be checking our web site for real time election results on election night. The system we used for many years crashed as a result of having so many visitors. However, thanks to the yeoman's effort by elections staff as well as our publications and Capitol staff, we were able to put the results online within 24 hours - which matches or exceeds our performance in previous years.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Secretary of State. You can be proud of the hard work of not only the Division of Elections, but our entire department as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.



SECRETARY HARGETT
OBSERVES EARLY VOTING IN
HAMILTON COUNTY

Tre Hargett

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SCHOOL BOND AUTHORITY APPROVES \$212 MILLION FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION LOANS

“I COMMEND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR CREATING THIS PROGRAM,” SECRETARY HARGETT SAID. “OUR LEGISLATORS RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING A VALUABLE NEW FUNDING SOURCE FOR OUR SCHOOLS.”

The Tennessee State School Bond Authority (TSSBA) recently gave its approval to approximately \$212 million worth of school construction loans for 15 school districts. The loan funds, which are being made available through the state’s Qualified School Construction Bond program, will be used to build, renovate and repair schools in those districts.

Money from the program can only be used for new construction, rehabilitation or repair of public school facilities; land acquisition for qualified school construction projects or purchase of equipment used in connection with qualified projects.

The school systems and loan amounts approved were:

Blount County	\$15,016,740
Cocke County	\$5,634,997
Coffee County	\$3,060,000
Dyer County	\$5,734,134
Hawkins County	\$2,357,669
Jefferson County	\$10,710,000
Knox County	\$29,584,000
Lauderdale County	\$2,550,000
Maury County	\$4,959,240
Metro Nashville	\$31,156,000
Sevier County	\$14,661,423
Shelby County	\$67,611,000
Sullivan County	\$5,243,055
Trousdale County	\$2,550,000
Warren County	\$10,710,000

Some of the individual projects within those school districts are still under review to ensure they comply with the program’s guidelines. A final list of projects is expected to be available after the TSSBA approves the loan agreements with the county governments, which is expected to happen this month.

Of the \$212 million, the federal government made a direct allocation of approximately \$85.7 million for various projects in the Knox County School System, Memphis City Schools and Metro Nashville Public Schools.

The bond sale to finance the construction and renovation projects is tentatively scheduled for the week of September 13.

The TSSBA will invest the proceeds from the bond sale in the State Pooled Investment Fund and distribute them to the school districts to cover expenses related to their construction projects. The loans will

be repaid at a very low interest rate.

Last year, the TSSBA provided \$177 million in Qualified School Construction Bond loans to 13 local governments. Those loans are being repaid over 17 years at an interest rate of 1.515 percent.

“I commend the General Assembly for creating this program,” said Secretary Hargett, a TSSBA member. “Our legislators recognized the importance of creating a valuable new funding source for our schools.”

“I am very pleased that we are once again able to provide funding for these school districts through the Qualified School Construction Bond program,” said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson, another TSSBA member. “In difficult economic times, this is an important source of financing for our state’s schools.”

“The low interest rates available through this program are as good as school districts are likely to find anywhere,” said Treasurer David H. Lillard Jr., another TSSBA member. “The needs of some of our school districts are substantial. I am glad that this type of financing is available to meet those needs.”

HISTORIC TENNESSEE NEWSPAPERS TO BE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Thousands of issues of old newspapers from across Tennessee will be available to the public online, courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Using grant funding provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the National Digital Newspaper Program, the State Library and Archives will make available dozens of urban and rural newspapers from across the state.

The State Library and Archives, which is part of the Tennessee Department of State, has been preserving newspapers on microfilm since 1957. The two-year process of converting those microfilmed documents into digital records will be managed by the University of Tennessee.

Eventually, the digital images of Tennessee newspapers will be part of the Chronicling of America website: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>. Newspapers from 15 other states are already available for use on the site.

“We are delighted to be a part of this project,” Secretary Hargett said. “Going digital enables us to put these wonderful historic sources directly onto computer screens in Tennessee schools and homes. History takes on new meaning when you read these first-hand newspaper accounts.”

The State Library and Archives’ vast collection of old newspapers is stored on some 20,000 rolls of microfilm negatives. The collection includes newspapers dating back to 1791, when *The Knoxville Gazette* was founded as the state’s first newspaper.

This phase of the project will focus on newspapers from 1836 through 1922, involving approximately 2,500 microfilm rolls from the collection.

“Newspapers are one of the great hidden treasures of the Library and Archives,” said State Librarian and Archivist Chuck Sherrill. “So much information is buried in those pages. From horrible accounts of

lynchings to reports about winners at the county fair, they reveal the foundations of life and culture in Tennessee in a very real way.”

For more information about TSLA’s newspaper microfilm collection go to: <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/newspapers/tn-paper.htm>

For more information about the National Digital Newspaper Program go to: <http://www.neh.gov/projects/ndnp.html>

For more information about the University of Tennessee’s role in the project go to: <http://www.cci.utk.edu/NDNPgrant>

LAW JUDGE GIVES OVERVIEW OF HIS DIVISION’S OPERATIONS

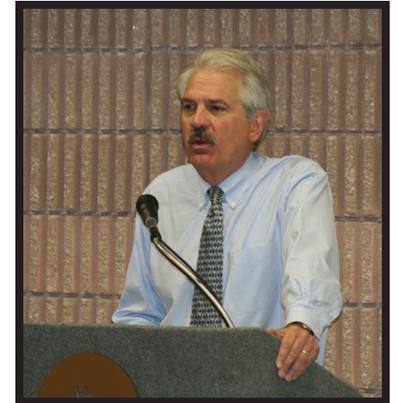
Tom Stovall, head of the Department of State’s Administrative Procedures Division, recently provided an overview of the division’s operations during the Tennessee Municipal League’s annual conference in Gatlinburg.

Stovall, the state’s chief administrative law judge, discussed the types of contested cases heard by the division’s judges, with particular emphasis on cases pertaining to local governments.

“Our judges do hear quite a few cases involving local government, particularly cases relating to employment issues,” Judge Stovall said.

“I am glad to have had an opportunity to help local government officials from across the state get a better idea of what our division does.”

During his remarks, Judge Stovall also discussed Public Chapter 1128, which allows local governments to conduct administrative hearings to hear building and property code violations.



*DIRECTOR TOM STOVALL
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION*

TRAINING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION CASES

Judges from the Department of State’s Administrative Procedures Division recently attended an annual training seminar addressing issues related to cases involving special education students.

The training was conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts with the approval of the Tennessee Department of Education’s Division of Special Education.

The Administrative Procedures Division was given the responsibility for handling all due process hearings and mediations filed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2007. Since that time, the division’s judges have handled about 300 IDEA cases.

This year’s training focused on the challenges of providing special education to children with special circumstances, such as non-English speaking children and children in the custody of the Department of Children’s Services.

Administrative judges from Michigan and North Carolina also attended the daylong training session, which was held in Nashville.

DEPARTMENT PLANS TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

“I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT, WHENEVER PRACTICAL, WE OUGHT TO BE USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE TO OUR CUSTOMERS – THE CITIZENS OF TENNESSEE,” SECRETARY HARGETT SAID.

The Department of State’s Division of Information Systems is working on several important technology-related initiatives this year that should improve the quality of service the department provides for Tennessee residents.

For example, the division is developing an e-commerce function that will give patrons of the Tennessee State Library and Archives a secure way to purchase online copies of historical documents, photographs, images and microfilm from TSLA’s collections.

The division is working on a project to make electronic copies of election ballots available in a PDF format to Tennessee voters who are deployed overseas in the military.

The division is also developing a program that will allow people to download information from the department’s Uniform Commercial Code database, file Uniform Commercial Code documents online and perform lien searches online.

And the division is assisting the department’s Division of Business Services in establishing an Internet registry that will show the names of construction industry officials who have filed for exemptions from obtaining workers’ compensation insurance to cover themselves.

“I strongly believe that, whenever practical, we ought to be using technology to improve the services we provide to our customers – the citizens of Tennessee,” Secretary Hargett said. “In this day and age, people expect to be able to receive and transmit important documents electronically. We are working toward the goal of decreasing the volume of paper records managed by our department.”

Last September, the Business Services Division along with the Information Systems Division launched the Business Entity and Annual Reporting (BEAR) system, which streamlined the process for filing corporate records and provided the option of filing corporate annual reports online. So far this year, more than 90 percent of the 140,525 annual reports received have been filed electronically.

“The launch of BEAR was a major step,” Secretary Hargett said. “Not only does it provide greater convenience for the businesses that must file documents with us, but it saves a substantial amount of time that our employees would otherwise spend transcribing paper records into our database. That time savings translates into a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.”

TENNESSEE TRIVIA: GRACELAND MANSION



HOME OF ELVIS PRESLEY

Home of world famous singer and movie star Elvis Presley, Graceland was built around 1940 by the former Ruth Fraser Brown and her husband, Dr. Thomas David Moore. The 20-room mansion was named Graceland after Mrs. Moore's aunt, Grace Toof, whose family had built a cottage on the site earlier. Elvis bought the house in 1957, 10 years after he moved to Memphis. During the 1950s the "King" became a national and international hero of young people as rock 'n' roll's biggest star. Eventually, he sold over 500 million records and had more gold records (28) than anyone before him and also made 33 movies. Guided tours of the home feature the trophy room, Hall of Gold, automobile collection, touring bus, Conair jet (the "Lisa Marie") and the Meditation Garden where Elvis and his parents are buried. Elvis Presley died in August 1977 but his fame lives after him as thousands visit his home each year.

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