

CITY WORKS



NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE

Trend-setting: Sign Shop Sets Pace For Rest of Tennessee

Last summer, the City of Knoxville became the first government in Tennessee to start digitally printing its signs.

Knoxville at the time was one of only about 50 governments in the country to invest in state-of-the-art equipment that can design, color and print signs, rather than sticking with the decades-old technology of making cut-outs.

The \$70,000 investment will quickly pay for itself through increased efficiency; making a sign now is a lean five-step process, while the cut-and-assemble former process included a minimum of nine steps – often laborious steps.

Veteran City sign-maker Keith Black doesn't miss the "weeding" and "picking" of the outdated old process.

Previously, Black had applied reflective sheeting to an aluminum blank, made a computerized design, then cut the design into electrocut film. He would then have to manually pick, peel and pull off the unwanted pieces around the lettering, apply clear transfer tape to the picked sign, and finally, transfer the sign to the covered blank. Placing small print onto signs was maddeningly time-consuming and tedious.

"It slowed my process significantly to stop and pick an intricate sign," he says. "Before, it might have taken me an hour to make a sign if it had small lettering. With the new equipment, I can print out 50 in the time it took me before to cut and pick out five. It's really sped things up."

The whole process is streamlined – less weeding, and Black can juggle multiple projects while the ink on the new signs is drying.

"I like to stay busy," Black says. "I get an assembly line going, and I like to keep turning out completed signs."



Keith Black and Bryan Gilbert from the City's Sign Shop

Bryan Gilbert, Signs and Markings Supervisor, says the new equipment also provides greater versatility in tailoring specialty signs – shapes, colors and designs. And the printing-versus-cutting process dramatically reduces wasted material, Gilbert says.

"Before, there would be a lot of waste – all the pieces that we'd peel after cutting," he says. "Now, we print the whole sign. We use almost every inch of material. The City will save a lot of money."

Gilbert cautions that he can't operate as an immediate print shop. It may still take three to four weeks for a work order to be processed. His shop off Elm Street stays busy. After all, the City maintains 50,000 signs; they're constantly being repaired or replaced.

The new technology will help Gilbert and Black in churning out new and replacement signs at a faster clip – and also, in being able to create more specialized signs.

"We're happy to be the City government in Tennessee that's pioneering this new process and technology," Gilbert says. "It's so much more efficient."

- Eric Vreeland

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www.knoxvilletn.gov

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

10 YEARS

Steven Ronald Anderson
Kevin Lee Burris
Bonita Gayle Chamberlain
Mark Anthony Elliott
William Eugene Hinton III
Doyle Ray Hunter
Todd Lyons
Penny Owens
Joshua McKinley Roberts
Anne Wallace

Mayor's Message



**Mayor Madeline
Rogero**

Greetings and Happy Holidays! We are into one of our busiest months of the year here at the City, between all the leaf pick-up and Christmas and New Year's activities all across Knoxville. I hope you have a chance in the hustle and bustle to pause and enjoy some time with loved ones.

In this edition of City Works, you can learn about the new high-tech system at our Sign Shop, get to know a little about Katie Tanner (your friendly Benefits Manager), and catch up on news from several of our departments, including some well-deserved state and national awards.

Thank you again for everything you do. Have a wonderful holiday season!

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[Twitter.com/MayorRogero](https://twitter.com/MayorRogero)

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

15 YEARS

Alyson Dyer
Nelson Eugene Hamilton
Clayton Lynn Madison
Clinton Lee Madison
Michael Eugene Spence
Benny E. Williams, Jr.
Samuel Paul Young

20 YEARS

Chevelle Lewis
Kenneth J. Parrott
Janet Wright

25 YEARS

Wallace E. Armstrong
Dennis Bible
Christopher Caulpetzer
Mark Fortner
Kenneth Todd Gilreath
Ronald Green, Jr.
Charles Lee
Kevin Maycann
David Rausch
Robert Rose
John Shelton
Eve Thomas
Ronald Wayne Trentham
Harvey Darrell Ward
Melvin E. Williams

30 YEARS

Stephen Wayne Dyer
John R. Rosson, Jr.

35 YEARS

Zephyree D. Porter

Department News & Notes

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Urban Forestry tree truck equipment operator Randal Martin, the first recipient of the City's new Employee of the Year award. Mayor Rogero presented it to him on Oct. 19 at the City's annual Employee Appreciation and Benefits Lunch.



L to R: Former Mayor and City Councilman Daniel Brown, Public Service Director Chad Weth, Randal Martin, Mayor Madeline Rogero, Vice Mayor and City Councilman Duane Grieve and City Councilman Finbarr Saunders

The Employee of the Year program was created for non-uniformed City employees by the City Ambassadors, an internal group with representatives from multiple departments

focused on customer service and employee engagement. (The Police Department and Fire Department each have their own employee recognition programs.)

Other employees nominated by their departments were:



Bryan Berry, Policy & Redevelopment; Justin Bradley, 311; Karen Briggs, Parks & Recreation; Whitney Crowe, Employee Benefits/Risk/Civil Service; Mark Elliott, Engineering; Tatia Harris, Community Relations/Mayor's Office; Brandon Littlejohn, Plans Review & Inspections; David Massey, Community Development; Tony Spoon, Fleet; and Lewis Whisnant, Information Systems.

See Department News Page 4

10 Questions with Katie Tanner

Let's meet Katie Tanner, the City's Benefits Manager!

Katie is passionate about promoting a culture of wellness at the City and loves motivating others to be their best. Since improved health leads to greater happiness, she wants to encourage employees to lead a healthy lifestyle.



Katie Tanner
Benefits Manager

She earned her Personal Trainer Certification through ACE Fitness several years ago and well understands the struggle that working parents face when trying to carve out time for themselves. Between circuit training, hiking and camping, Katie has a hard time finding room to train for all the half marathons she chases.

Katie is lucky enough to be married to her high school sweetheart, have two great kids, and adopt an Australian shepherd named Boomer. She's made Knoxville her home for the last 20 years and is proud to work for the City of Knoxville.

1. You've been with the City for four years now, but you've worked in employee benefits for 16 years. Do you recall a single experience that solidified this career path for you?

Yes. That single experience was Sept. 11, 2001. I was working at a financial institution, First Union Securities, with a husband-wife stockbroker team. That's actually where I first met Christine Fitzgerald, now the City's Director of Benefits and Risk Management. She worked there, too.

After the 9/11 tragedy, the markets tanked, and Christine and I found ourselves out of a job. Our bosses were great, though, and helped us in our job search. It seemed that everywhere we interviewed, there happened to be two positions open. We both hired on at Willis, an insurance brokerage, as client managers for employee benefits. It was there that I learned all about employee benefits.

We worked with companies all over East Tennessee, consulting their HR and benefits departments. After 10 years at Willis, Christine left to come to the City, while I stayed at Willis for two additional years. It just so happened that when I was ready to leave Willis, there was an opening at the City for Benefits Coordinator. So, if you are following along in the story, this is

actually the third job where Christine and I have worked together. We obviously work very well as a team.

9/11 changed the lives of many people, myself included. If I had not lost my job then, I'm not sure I would have found the world of employee benefits later. And now that I'm here, I can't imagine doing anything else.

2. What is the most rewarding aspect of implementing and administering benefit plans?

I truly enjoy helping employees understand and use their benefits. When someone doesn't understand how a benefit works, it ceases to be a benefit to them.

3. What has been the biggest challenge of your position?

Perhaps the biggest challenge is communication throughout all of our departments, especially with employees spread out in different locations across the City, and not everyone has an email address. Employee benefits are important, and we want to make sure our message reaches the various departments in their preferred method of communication. I wish I could call everyone personally, but obviously that's not possible.

The key is incorporating important benefits information into their current strategies to reach all of our employees successfully. In addition to email, we post information on both the intranet (Inside Knoxville) and the Internet sites.

4. What kind of day-to-day issues can fellow employees approach you with?

I am happy to help employees with any issue they are having – from the most basic questions to complicated claim issues. Whether it's a Wage Works issue or a medical claim that was denied, I'm certain I can help get it resolved quicker than calling the 800 number. My hope would be that employees find me approachable. I really am here to help.

5. You keep busy with a son in 7th grade and a daughter in 2nd grade. What kind of extracurricular activities are they involved in?

Oh yes, we stay pretty busy with kid activities. My son is involved in Scouts, basketball and youth group. My daughter has gymnastics and tutoring. I'm always rushing from work to one activity or another every evening.

UPCOMING HEALTH EDUCATION CLASSES

12/07/2017, 1 p.m., Safety Building - Training Room; Deciphering Home and Auto Insurance: Are You Properly Covered? by Kirk Riden, Risk Analyst

12/12/2017, 11 a.m., City County Building - Room 549, Deciphering Home and Auto Insurance: Are You Properly Covered? by Kirk Riden, Risk Analyst

12/14/2017, 2 p.m., Public Works Complex - Community Room, Deciphering Home and Auto Insurance: Are You Properly Covered? by Kirk Riden, Risk Analyst

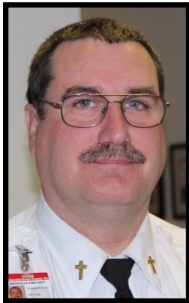
12/21/2017, 1 p.m., City County Building - Room 549, Navigating MyFitnessPal Nutrition Tracker by Ashlee Harb, EP-C, CHC

To sign up for classes please visit www.knoxvilletn.gov/employees and click on "Class Signup" or call The Center at 215-6150.

Department News, from Page 2

FIRE

Over the years, hundreds of Knoxville residents have come to know first-hand Capt. Paul Trumpore's compassion and understanding. But recently, he received national recognition for his work as a fire chaplain.



Capt. Paul Trumpore

Congratulations to Capt. Trumpore, the Federation of Fire Chaplains' 2017 Chaplain of the Year.

OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE

Patience Melnik, who served 2½ years as Executive Director of Keep Knoxville Beautiful, has joined the City as the new Solid Waste Manager.



Patience Melnik

Patience succeeds Rachel Butzler, who was promoted to Deputy Director of Public Service.

"I love Knoxville, and I want to be a part of making the city better – and greener," Melnik said. "It's a privilege to serve the people of Knoxville."

Welcome aboard, Patience!

PUBLIC SERVICE

Some call it "leaf season." Others call it "Christmas in the City craziness." This is the time of year when Public Service employees are seemingly everywhere, doing it all: Collecting the first of 7,000 tons of leaves from the front yards of 59,000 households. Planting more than 1,000 trees on public property. Building the ice rink on Market Square (which will be enjoyed by about 15,000 skaters) and stringing 100,000 holiday lights that will twinkle throughout Christmas in the City.

"Public Service carries the ball a lot this time of year, but our employees wouldn't want it any other way," Director Chad Weth said. "We take pride in what we do, and we get a lot of satisfaction in downtown looking festive for the holidays and homeowners getting help keeping their neighborhoods looking great."

Nice write-up – <http://bit.ly/2y7qoPl> – saluting the work of Mark Karnes, the City's Public Service Maintenance Coordinator, and his crew, Nick Andreasen and Thomas Fisher. This is the hard-working trio that keeps downtown clean and looking sharp!



Mark Karnes, Thomas Fisher and Nick Andreasen

Urban Forester Kasey Krouse and his wife, Beth, are the proud parents of their first child – Eleanor Claire Krouse. She was born Oct. 18. Welcome, Eleanor!



Kasey and Beth Krouse with baby Eleanor

MAYOR ROGERO

Also in October, Mayor Rogero was honored by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, receiving the National Award for Outstanding Elected Official Leadership. The Mayor was nominated by the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization and the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

FITNESS CLASSES - CITY COUNTY BUILDING

MONDAYS

- 12:00 PM Body Strengthening w/Kent - FREE
- 1:00 PM Line Dancing Aerobics w/Kathy \$10 month/\$3 class
- 3:00 PM Open Group Class DVD - FREE
- 4:40 PM POUND® Class w/Ginger

TUESDAYS

- 12:30 PM Vinyasa Flow Yoga w/Leslie - \$8
- 1:30 PM Group Class Biggest Loser DVD - Free
- 3:00 PM Group Class 21 Day Fix DVD - FREE
- 4:00 PM Vinyasa Flow Yoga w/Leslie - \$8

WEDNESDAYS

- 11:30 AM Open Group Class DVD w/ Carol - FREE
- 12:30 PM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/Leslie \$25 per 40 min.
- 1:30 PM Group Class Biggest Loser DVD - Free
- 3:00 PM Group Class 21 Day Fix DVD - FREE
- 4:40 PM POUND® Class w/Ginger

THURSDAYS

- 11:30 AM Open Group Class DVD w/Carol - FREE
- 12:30 PM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/Leslie \$25 per 40 min.
- 1:30 PM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/Leslie \$25 per 40 min. Session
- 3:00 PM Open Group Class DVD - FREE

Holiday Safety Tips from Risk Management

As you're decking the halls and heading full throttle into holiday mode, be sure to take a few common-sense precautions to keep everything safe.

- Never connect more than one extension cord together. Instead, use a single cord that is long enough to reach the outlet without stretching, but not so long that it can get easily tangled.
- Never run electrical cords through doorways or under carpets and rugs.
- Always use the proper step ladder; don't stand on chairs or other furniture when decorating.
- "Angel hair," made from spun glass, can irritate your eyes and skin. Always wear gloves or substitute non-flammable cotton.
- Plants can spruce up your holiday decorating, but keep those that may be poisonous (including some poinsettias) out of reach of children or pets. The national Poison Control Center can be reached at 1-800-222-1222.

10 Questions, from Page 3

6. When your daughter was born 16 weeks early, she weighed only 1 lb. 9 oz. at birth and spent more than four months in the hospital. What was that experience like? Tell us about how you remember the medical staff on your daughter's birthday.

That was a very scary time, not knowing if she was going to make it or not. She came home from the hospital with a feeding tube and a heart monitor. But to look at her now, you would never know she was a preemie. She's a happy, healthy 7-year-old.

I am forever indebted to the doctors and nurses at East Tennessee Children's Hospital. While I can never repay them for saving my daughter, I like to take cupcakes to the NICU on her birthday as a celebration and a way to say thank you to all of the NICU staff.

7. When you aren't resolving issues at work, or helping your children with homework or activities, what do you like to do in your down time?

That's hilarious. What is down time?? If I had down time, I would probably enjoy reading a book or even watching the latest Netflix series.

- Decorate the tree with your kids in mind; move ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks toward the top.
- Be aware of dangers associated with coin lithium batteries; of particular concern is the ingestion of button batteries.
- Refrigerate food/leftovers within two hours. Leftovers are generally safe for four days in the refrigerator.
- The holidays do not need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep your commitments and spending in check.
- A real tree should not lose green needles when you tap it on the ground and cut one inch off the trunk to help absorb water. Leave the tree outdoors until you are ready to decorate.
- Hard candy and nuts are often left on tables for guests to nibble, but kids can quickly choke. Keep them out of children's reach.
- Do not post your holiday travel plans online! Be careful what is placed on social media. Do not post where you're going, when you are leaving, or when you will be back. Wait and post after you return.
- Do not use water to extinguish a grease fire – instead, douse the fire with baking soda.

Remember: Everyone is a risk manager!

8. Do you have any hidden talents?

I don't really have any talents of any kind, hidden or otherwise. However, I do enjoy photography. While I am quite the amateur, I did win a blue ribbon at last year's Tennessee Valley Fair, so that was kind of exciting. I also enjoy painting and being crafty, but I am certainly no Martha Stewart. In fact, if it weren't for Pinterest, I wouldn't be creative at all.

9. If you could have lunch with anyone, who would you choose?

Either Ellen DeGeneres or Jimmy Fallon. Someone who would make me laugh. Or Justin Timberlake would work, too.

10. Where is your favorite place to hang out at in Knoxville?

Honestly, right now I just want to hang out at my house. I feel like I don't get to spend enough time there. We just built a new back porch, so that's really where I want to be – watching the sunset.

- Communications Intern Celeste Lord

FITNESS CLASSES - CITY COUNTY BUILDING

FRIDAYS

- 11:00 AM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/ Leslie \$25 per 40 min.
- 12:00 PM Vinyasa Flow Yoga w/Tiny - FREE
- 1:00 PM Group Class Biggest Loser DVD - Free
- 3:00 PM Open Group Class DVD - FREE

All classes are at City County Building in Room L217. Classes are subject to change, please call 215-2111

FITNESS CLASSES - PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE CENTER

TUESDAYS

- 1:00 PM Line Dancing w / Kathy, \$10 month/\$3 class

Classes at Morris Ave. are held in Zone 1 Room or Community Room. Classes are subject to change, please call 215-2111 to verify schedule.

Department News, from Page 4**KNOXVILLE AREA TRANSIT**

kat
KNOXVILLE
AREA TRANSIT

Congratulations to Knoxville Area Transit, honored in October as this year's best small transit system in North America!

Evaluating KAT's emphasis on sustainability, innovation and efficiency, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) recognized KAT with the 2017 Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award for transit systems with less than 4 million passenger trips per year.



L to R: Mayor Madeline Rogero, Director of Transit Dawn Distler, KAT's Chief Administrative Officer Melissa Roberson, KAT's Director of Communications and Service Development Belinda Woodiel-Brill and Doug Burton with Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization

One of the factors that led to KAT's recognition was a series of improvements in service made to 14 of 23 routes over a three-year period, including later evening service, improved frequencies and more weekend service.

Congratulations to KAT for a well-deserved honor!

Also at the APTA annual meeting, the organization announced its new board leadership and members. Knoxville's Transit Director, Dawn Distler, has joined the APTA board and will serve a three-year term. Kudos to Dawn!



Dawn Distler

PARKS AND RECREATION

Knoxville racked up nine state-level parks and recreation awards when the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association (TRPA) acknowledged individuals, communities and organizations for outstanding achievements and projects in the last year. The awards were presented at the association's 66th annual state conference.

Joe Walsh, recently retired City Parks and Recreation Director, was honored with TRPA's Lifetime Member Award. Aaron Browning, Deputy Director, received the Distinguished Young Professional Award.

Daniel Alexander, a City Recreation Center Leader, received the Maynard Glenn Award for his programming at Inskip Recreation Center. The Inskip Recreation Center received the Donald H. Stanton Award, which is presented by TRPA's Ethnic Minority Section.

The City received a Four Star Marketing Award in the print category for its 2016 Parks and Recreation Guide.

Parks and Recreation intern Leigh Belmont, a student at the University of Tennessee, received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Other honorees are Suttree Landing Park (Four Star New Facility award); the Aslan Foundation, a charitable foundation (Four Star Benefactor Award); and Brian Hann, Greenways Commission Chair, advocate and community leader for trails and the Urban Wilderness (Four Star Individual Service Award).



Joe Walsh



Aaron Browning



Daniel Alexander

**NEWSLETTER
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If you have a story idea or an employee you would like to see interviewed for 10 Questions please contact:

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