

# CITY WORKS



NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE

## Employees Upgrade to New Public Works Service Center

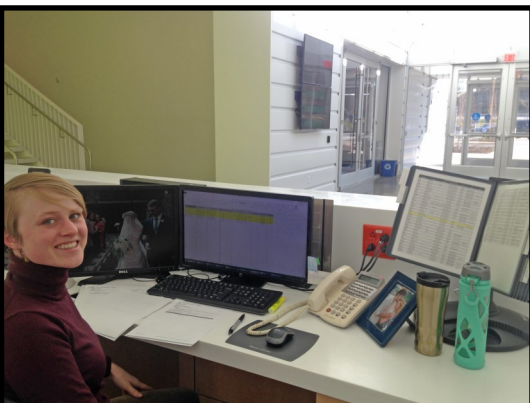
New. Roomy. Energy efficient. Lots of natural light. Great kitchen sinks!

No, this isn't a real estate listing. These are the succinct descriptions of the City's new Public Works Service Center given by City employees who now work there.

Last fall, Public Service and Engineering staff moved from their offices at Loraine Street, Elm Street, Lakeshore Park and the City County Building into the three-story Public Works Service Center at 3131 Morris Ave.

The new building includes floor-to-ceiling windows, a geothermal heating and cooling system, motion sensor lights and a green roof, among other features that are expected to reduce operations costs by at least 30 percent.

Shelby Stennes, a new Office Assistant for the Public Service Department, was hired when the building opened to serve at the public reception desk. In addition to assisting customers who come in to take advantage of all Public Works



Shelby Stennes welcomes visitors to the new Public Works Service Center



Cindy Ellison, Scott Harmon and Thomas Cook relax in one of the building's break rooms

operations now being under one roof, Stennes directs phone calls and coordinates reservations of the four large conference rooms, which are available to community groups and non-profit organizations.

The community room is the largest of the conference areas. It's complete with a full kitchen and can accommodate up to 125 people. Various City departments have already held departmental training workshops in the room.

"I didn't know anything else – I just started in November," Stennes said of the new Public Works Service Center. "But I think everyone's been really impressed with it, especially those who worked in the old building."

The razed "old building" had been located nearby, off Loraine Street, and it had likely seen its better days several decades ago,

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[www.knoxvilletn.gov](http://www.knoxvilletn.gov)

### EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

#### 10 YEARS

Bradley Bailey  
Stephen Brunson  
James Davis  
Christopher Livengood  
Davey McMurry  
Rickey McMurtree  
Rebecca Wade  
Arthur Webb

#### 15 YEARS

Mary Alarcon  
Ronald Collins  
Rickie King  
Michael Richards

#### 20 YEARS

Steven Bell  
Keith Blazier  
Larry Branam

See Public Works Page 5

## Mayor's Message



**Mayor Madeline  
Rogero**

Welcome to the February 2017 edition of City Works! It's hard to believe that the new year is already a month old.

In this edition, you can explore the new Public Works Service Center, which has provided a modern, energy-efficient workplace for several of our City departments. You can get to know Procurement Specialist Julie Smith Maxwell (including which animated character best represents her), and you can also find out what's going on in Benefits, Sustainability, Police and Fire and several other departments.

Thank you all for the hard work you do for our city residents, workers and visitors every day!

### Follow the Mayor:

 [Facebook.com/MayorRogero](https://www.facebook.com/MayorRogero)

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

## EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

### 20 YEARS

Teddy Dyer  
Gregory Lampkin  
Frank Mallory  
David McGinley  
George Parker  
James Pauley  
Mark Pinkston  
Robert Pollard  
Jody Smith  
Mayme Taylor  
Gregory Taylor

### 25 YEARS

David Shepherd  
Charles Marshall  
Debra Nuchols

### 30 YEARS

Donald Partin

## UPCOMING HEALTH EDUCATION CLASSES

**02/16/17 11 AM**, What to Eat Before, During and After a Workout at Safety Building Training Room

**02/21/17 1 PM**, Blood Pressure Basics at City County Bldg. Room 549

**03/02/17 2 PM**, Five Nutrients You Should Be Concerned About at Safety City, 165 S. Concord St.

**03/07/17 11 AM**, Blood Pressure Basics at Safety Bldg. Training Room

**03/21/17 1 PM**, Blood Pressure Basics at Public Works Service Center Community Room

**03/30/17 11AM**, What to Eat Before, During, and After a Workout at City County Bldg. Room 549.

*To sign up for classes please visit [www.knoxvilletn.gov/employees](http://www.knoxvilletn.gov/employees) and click on "Class Signup" or call The Center at 215-6150.*

## Department News & Notes

### BENEFITS

For the 2017 annual enrollment, City employees were required to log into PeopleSoft and update their benefits elections. Without making an election, an employee could lose his or her medical and prescription drug benefits for the year.

The City had an all-time high of 97 percent of City employees making their elections on PeopleSoft this year, it was announced at the Benefits Advisory Committee meeting. Additionally, participation in the City's My Health Wellness Program jumped from 69 percent at the end of 2016 to 81 percent at the beginning of 2017.

"I could not be more proud of our employees," said Christine Fitzgerald, City Benefits Manager. "We could never have achieved enrollment numbers this high without the support of the administration, department heads, and our Benefits Advisory Committee, and for that I am truly grateful."

New voluntary benefits will be effective March 1, 2017. For help with your voluntary benefits, call 215-2111.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Congratulations to Sustainability Director Erin Gill, a member of the Knoxville Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Class of 2016.

This 10th class of young leaders is showcasing its professional, artistic and philanthropic passions through a myriad of contributions. In



**Erin Gill with her proud parents Tom and Joan Burns**

Gill's case, that means implementing programs and policies that advance energy efficiency, recycling, urban agriculture and better infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Since 2007, the city's Energy and Sustainability Initiative has been working to reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020.

"Erin has made us more efficient and more environmentally responsible, and she's helping make Knoxville the kind of city we think most citizens want it to be," Chief Policy Officer and Deputy to the Mayor Bill Lyons told the Business Journal for its profile of Gill.

**See Department News Page 6**

## 10 Questions with Julie Smith Maxwell

Julie Smith Maxwell doesn't bother to keep track of the number of 5K and 10K races she's run over the years. There are just too many. She'll run her 35th and 36th half-marathons in February, and that number is likely to change again soon after.

Maxwell, a married mother of two, holds a graduate degree from the University of South Carolina and started with the City of Knoxville five years ago at the Knoxville Police Department, where she was an NCIC operator. Three years ago, she was promoted to Principal Secretary for Purchasing. And how's this for coincidences: Maxwell graduated from the same South Carolina high school as Brian Blackmon, Project Manager in the Office of Sustainability, although they were only acquaintances at the time.

We took her recent promotion to Procurement Specialist in the Finance Department as an opportunity to get to know her better.

### 1. What is a "procurement specialist"?

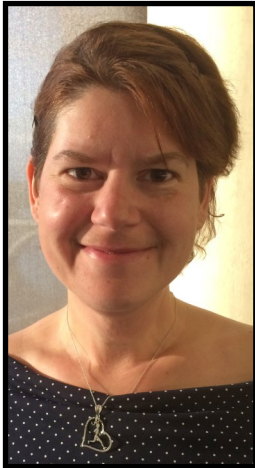
I've told my friends it's like being a personal shopper, except instead of buying cute clothes for movie stars with an unlimited AmEx, I'm buying fire trucks for firefighters with City tax dollars on a well-maintained budget.

### 2. You recently traveled to Los Angeles. What did you do there?

I went to California to run the Disneyland Star Wars – Dark Side races. I participated in the 10K on Saturday morning and the half marathon on Sunday morning. But I'm not one to waste my travel budget, so my husband and I used the time I wasn't running to explore. We visited a few hot spots in L.A. like the Hollywood sign, drove north to see the Sequoia trees in Kings Canyon National Park, and took the Pacific Coast Highway south to San Diego and visited several beaches along the route. I certainly returned to work with tired legs, but the trip was very rewarding.

### 3. Why do you run races?

I love it. I enjoy the excitement along the course, the spectators cheering you on with funny signs and cowbells. I love the exhaustion my body can endure. I love testing my own



**Julie Smith Maxwell**  
Procurement  
Specialist

mental strength along with my physical ability. I love the bling at the finish line. I love watching someone cry when they cross the finish for the very first time. The running community is one of the most embracing communities I have ever been a part of, and it's simply a part of who I am now.

### 4. Describe your ultimate travel adventure.

My husband and I have hunted hummingbirds in the Dominican Republic. We literally jumped off Mount Alyeska in Alaska with a parachute. We've been abandoned in the middle of the ocean in Hawaii in search of a dolphin pod. But I'm not sure my ultimate adventure has happened yet. National Geographic Expeditions hosts a two-week trip to Antarctica to observe penguins. When this trip gets checked off my bucket list, I think my ultimate travel adventure will have occurred.

### 5. It's Friday afternoon. What are you looking forward to doing over the weekend?

Spending time with my husband. We work opposing shifts, so our communication during the week is very limited. The weekends are the only time we have a chance to enjoy each other's company. I value those moments together no matter if we are traveling or just grocery shopping.

### 6. If you made a mix tape for your husband, what would the first three songs be?

"The Day Before You" by Rascal Flatts; "Work From Home" by Fifth Harmony; and "True Colors" (performed by Justin Timberlake and Anna Kendrick in the movie Trolls).

### 7. Which animated character do you most relate to?

"Joy" from Inside Out. I think I'm always trying to make the best out of every situation. No matter what life tosses in my path, I'll still find a way to enjoy the life I have in that very moment.

### 8. Did you make any resolutions or set any goals for 2017?

I'm not one for New Year's Resolutions, but I somehow jumped on board a "challenge" my friend posted on Facebook. The challenge asks you to log one mile every day of 2017, by walking, running, swimming, biking, or whatever method you chose. So far, I've stuck to the challenge, including a walk around the LAX airport so I wouldn't break my "streak."

## 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

### TUESDAYS

- 11:30 AM Open Group Class DVD - FREE
- 2:30 PM Vinyasa Flow Yoga w/Leslie - \$8
- 4:00 PM Vinyasa Flow Yoga w/Leslie - \$8

### WEDNESDAYS

- 11:30 AM Open Group Class DVD - FREE
- 12:30 PM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/Leslie \$20 per 40 min. Session

### THURSDAYS

- 11:30 AM Open Group Class DVD - FREE
- 12:30 PM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/Leslie \$20 per 40 min. Session
- 1:30 PM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/Leslie \$20 per 40 min. Session
- 3:00 PM Open Group Class DVD - FREE

### FRIDAYS

- 11:00 AM One-on-One Thai Yoga w/ Leslie \$20 per 40 min. Session
- 12:00 PM Vinyasa Flow Yoga w/Tiny - FREE
- 3:00 PM Open Group Class DVD - FREE

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

## Neighborhood Conference March 11

Mark your calendars and get ready to join Mayor Rogero at the Neighborhood Conference on Saturday, March 11!

Watch your inbox for an email from the Office of Neighborhoods with info on registering for the event, which will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Knoxville Convention Center. In addition to 20 workshops on subjects like making your home more energy efficient, how to start a neighborhood group, and ways to fight blight, this free event also includes a continental breakfast and lunch, more than 80 information booths, a photo booth, a slideshow of neighborhood photographs,



Connecting Neighborhoods  
Building Community

## The Neighborhood CONFERENCE

door prizes, and the presentation of the Good Neighbor of the Year Award.

Registering helps event organizers anticipate the number of attendees and make plans accordingly. Visit <http://bit.ly/KnoxNeighbors> for more information, and tag your social media posts with #KnoxNeighbors.

### FITNESS CLASSES - PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE CENTER

#### TUESDAYS

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

#### THURSDAYS

5:15 PM Get Fit  
w / Shelby Stennes,  
FREE

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

### WINTER SAFETY TIPS FROM RISK MANAGEMENT

**1. Layer up!** Wear layers of lightweight clothing to stay warm. Gloves and a hat will help prevent losing your body heat.

**2. Remember the Three Feet Rule.** If you are using a space heater, place it on a level, hard surface and keep anything flammable at least three feet away – things such as paper, clothing, bedding, curtains or rugs.

**3. Cover your hands for warmth.** But think twice before walking outside with your hands in your pockets. Why? Keeping your hands in your pockets increases the risk of you falling or losing your balance.

**4. Mittens vs. gloves.** Gloves sure look fashionable, but donning mittens can actually save your life. With your fingers touching each other inside mittens, they generate more body heat than when they are inside gloves.

**5. Rock salt + kitty litter = safer walkways.** Keep some in your car for emergencies.

**6. Warm up before shoveling.** Before you get rid of all the snow and ice, do some stretching exercises first. You can also march in place or walk for a couple of minutes.

**Remember: Everyone is a risk manager!**

## Mardi Growl Set for March 4



Each year, hundreds of dogs converge on Downtown Knoxville to prance in the Mardi Growl parade and show off their stylish costumes. It's a wildly entertaining event for dog owners and dog lovers. This year's parade starts at 11 a.m. on March 4. The canines will march down Willow Avenue,

then turn right on South Central Street, then left on West Jackson Avenue, then left on South Gay Street, and then right to Market Square. Awards will be presented for Best Costume, Best Dog Couple, Dog/Owner Look Alike & more. Learn more at [www.MardiGrowl.org](http://www.MardiGrowl.org).

### 10 Questions, from Page 3

#### 9. What's your favorite holiday?

As a teen, my favorite was Halloween. I loved dressing up and being something unique each year. My teen years celebrated some very fun Halloween parties. But as a mother, I have loved Christmas and watching the excitement of presents and memories of leaving oatmeal on the patio for reindeer. But now that my children are much older, I would have to say Memorial Day. It's the day that says "summer has arrived," and our family returns to boat life on the lake.

#### 10. What causes are you most passionate about?

Cancer research and funding. Equal rights and the support for all persons to live in a judgment-free and equal-opportunity world by embracing the parts of each one of us that make us uniquely "who we are."

**Public Works, from Page 1**

when it was first used by the original owners, Foote Mineral.

Many parts of the former building were not ADA accessible, were behind the times from a fire code perspective and it lacked space for break rooms and meetings.

In fact, break rooms and kitchens are among the more popular features of the new building.

"We didn't have kitchen sinks in our old building," said Doug Cagley, Equipment Operator II for the Public Service Department. "We had to use bathroom sinks to wash our dishes beforehand."

Other employees commented on the open space as their favorite aspect of their new digs.

Every day, each of the City's 18 crews muster into its own new meeting room to receive assignments before heading out to work throughout the City. At the end of the day, they return to their station room and make their reports before clocking out.



**Horticulture Zone B convenes to report on the day's work**

"We have more space and nicer restrooms," said Rick "Pickles" Gerken, Public Service Worker II. "We aren't sitting on top of each other in our meetings anymore."

Chad Weth, Public Service Director, said he's already noticed improved efficiency in operations that he attributes to the new facility's design.

"It's also improved morale, thanks to better light and less crowding," said Weth. "Everyone seems to be more efficient since we've moved into the new building. It's also important from a culture perspective. Openness, transparency, light and a professional work environment all matter from a leadership perspective."

Public Service works on the new building's main floor (actually indicated as "Level 2" on the elevator). The top floor, or Level 3, is occupied by the Engineering Department's Traffic and Civil Engineering divisions.

"It's rejuvenating to be in here," said Robin Tipton, Construction Project Engineer for Civil



**Robin Tipton meets with Pete Gerlach and Martin Bradley in her new office**

Engineering. "We have new life here and that's always a good thing!"

The open layout for the Engineering floor was designed to enhance workability between staff, while providing easy access to site designs and legal documents in the nearby draft room.

Civil Engineering's surveyors and the traffic engineers and technicians are on the eastern end of the third floor with a similar open-floor plan.

"We're going to have all of Traffic Engineering in the same building for the first time to my knowledge, which is a huge plus," said Zach Roberts, Traffic Engineer III.

The first floor (or Level 1 if you're on the elevator) will soon be home to Traffic Engineering's Sign Shop, Signal Shop and Parking Systems sections. Those divisions have yet to move from their long-time location at Elm Street.

The City's Health Center has already opened on the first level, as has the brand new physical therapy room.

Once Traffic Engineering completes its move into the first floor, the building will be housing about 325 employees. Those employees now have access to showers, three kitchens, four break rooms, ample locker space and two outdoor eating areas.

"The work environment matters from a professionalism standpoint and that benefits everyone," said David Brace, Senior Director of Public Works. "Investing in this building means investing in our organization – and that's the right thing to do."

**TAX FILING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

John Brown, VITA volunteer, will be available to help City employees file their 2016 tax returns electronically, beginning now through April 13, 2017.

Mr. Brown will only be offering a drop off service and will only be available to assist those whom he did taxes for last year.

Appointments will be scheduled at the Public Service Department on Morris Avenue, two mornings per week, mainly Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning on January 31st through April 13th. Each appointment should last approximately 15 minutes.

Please email Connie Spicer to schedule an appointment at [cspicer@knoxvilletn.gov](mailto:cspicer@knoxvilletn.gov). Be sure to leave your telephone number in your request.

If you are unable to get an appointment with Mr. Brown, additional VITA sites are available.

Visit <http://bit.ly/1sNLuxU> for more information.

Bring the following items to your appointment:

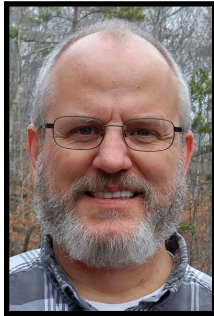
- Your 2015 tax return;
- All forms of income for 2016 (W-2s, 1099s, etc);
- Any rental property information (income and expenses);
- Investment information;
- Anything from Social Security if you are receiving a benefit; and
- If you have had any new additions to your family since your last tax return, please bring their information, including their Social Security number.

Mr. Brown will not be at Morris Avenue to file federal income taxes when the Knox County Schools are closed due to inclement weather.

- Kathleen Gibi

**Department News, from Page 2****PARKS AND RECREATION**

Welcome aboard to Tim Hester, the City of Knoxville's Parks and Greenways Coordinator. Hester, a former Norris City Manager and Norris Planning Commissioner, will be managing Knoxville's existing 100-mile greenways network as well as overseeing the most comprehensive build-out of new connective greenways in the City's history.

**Tim Hester****COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Knoxville native Kevin Perry has been hired as Community Outreach Manager in the City of Knoxville's Department of Community Relations.

Perry, a U.S. Air Force veteran, graduated from Austin-East High School and earned a Master of Arts degree in Biblical Studies and Theology from Minnesota Graduate School of Theology. In 2001, he and his wife Natalia founded Word of Life Ministries, and he has served as a chaplain for the Knoxville Police Department since 2010.

Under the supervision of Community Relations Senior Director Dr. Avice Reid, Perry will co-manage the Mayor's Save Our Sons (SOS) initiative and implement the three-year Tennessee Community Crime Reduction Program (TCCRP) grant with Tatia Harris. Harris joined the department as TCCRP Grant Manager and Title VI Coordinator in October 2016, after three years as Public Affairs Specialist in the Communications Department.

**FIRE AND POLICE**

Many communities rushed help in all forms – search-and-rescue teams, food, supplies, prayers and charitable donations – to Sevier County communities devastated by the Nov. 28 wildfires. The Knoxville Police and Fire Departments were among those lending expertise, muscle and compassion.

KFD dispatched more than 100 firefighters throughout the week as part of the State Mu-

tual Aid System to battle the wildfires and help with the search for missing persons. The first Knoxville firefighters arrived within hours of the fires reaching Gatlinburg structures. KFD also sent six pieces of fire-fighting apparatus – engines, tankers, a ladder truck and a 4-wheel-drive smaller truck specially designed to battle brushfires in hard-to-reach areas, along with 11 support vehicles.

In all, KFD committed more than 1,500 hours to battling the Sevier County fires and assisting families.

The Knoxville Police Department also sent help – fast and frequently.

Starting at 7 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29, KPD began rotating shifts of 12 to 15 officers, who initially assisted Sevier County law enforcement with emergency street closures. KPD chaplains were supporting families and First Responders. KPD's Search and Rescue Team was deployed, and KPD investigators were working with federal task forces.

A total of 200 KPD employees were on the scene in Sevier County the week after the fires, contributing more than 1,700 employee hours.

**PUBLIC WORKS**

The City of Knoxville Public Service and Parks and Recreation departments partnered with the Community Action Committee (CAC), Beardsley Farm and the University of Tennessee to build an urban agriculture education center at Beardsley Farm, bringing much-needed restrooms as well as office and classroom space to the farm.

The UT College of Architecture and Design used the project as an opportunity for its students to learn hands-on skills in the process of construction, with students laying the brickwork for the building. Public Service employees particularly put a lot of hard work into this project to make it possible.

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), the primary architectural education organization in North America, recently honored the Beardsley Farm Urban Agriculture Education Center with a national teaching award for innovation in collaborative practice.

A big thanks to our Public Service crews for making this national award-winning project possible!

**NEWSLETTER CONTACT INFO**

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

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