Cookeville’s fifth interchange hits temporary roadblock

JAY ALBRECHT
CBJ Staff

Crye-Leike launches Cookeville commercial division

COOKEVILLE – Citing positive signs of improving real estate conditions in the region, Crye-Leike Realtors has launched a new Commercial Division based in Cookeville. “Crye-Leike Commercial has placed great confidence in the Cookeville/Middle Tennessee market,” said Bill Monday, managing broker of Crye-Leike Commercial, Cookeville. “Our company is putting its money where its mouth is based on many positive indicators on the outlook for the region and commercial real estate as a good investment.”

The new Crye-Leike Commercial, Cookeville division has four licensed business brokers offering auction and real estate sales services. The team currently serves the 14 counties of the Upper Cumberland region in addition to Bledsoe, Morgan and Trousdale counties.

Cumberland County Chamber provides high-speed Internet access to workers

CROSSVILLE – In conjunction with the Tennessee Small Business Development Center at Roane State Community College, the Crossville-Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce will be a recipient of a new dedicated computer workstation with high-speed Internet access. The workstation will be accessible to and will facilitate businesses who only have analog connection. The computer has been ordered and is expected to be available for use beginning in the first quarter of 2010.

U.C. retailers see strong year-end results

BEVERLEY NASH
CBJ Staff

Retailers in the Upper Cumberland experienced better-than-expected year-end sales, with increases reported in all sectors surveyed by the CBJ. Putnam County saw a 0.7 percent increase over last year’s numbers in the most recently published sales tax figures for November 2009. “This was the first year-over-year increase since March 2008,” said Henry Bowman, senior analyst for the Upper Cumberland Development District, “and is representative of the region as a whole.”

DeKalb and Overton counties reported greater than 15 percent year-over-year increases, though according to Bowman these numbers are “probably an anomaly.” Other counties in the region that reported positive sales were Fentress at 4.2 percent and Warren at 1.5 percent. The region as a whole saw a 0.9 percent rise in sales. A slight increase of 5.4 percent

Nominations needed for third annual Ovation Awards

BEVERLEY NASH
CBJ Staff

The Cumberland Business Journal is now accepting nominations for its third annual Ovation Awards special section scheduled to publish in July. The Ovation Awards honor businesses, organizations and individuals in the Upper Cumberland region for excellence in several categories, from manufacturing and retail to individual philanthropists and governmental officials.

“It is our pleasure to recognize the outstanding people and businesses of the Upper Cumberland region every year,” said CBJ publisher/editor Jay Albrecht. “These are the leaders that help make our communities such a great place to call home.”

Deadline for submitting nominations is Monday, May 3. Nominations may be sent by e-mail to news@ucbjournal.com or by mail to Cumberland
planned, this fifth interchange wrinkle impacts park accessibility. "The business park will survive without the fifth interchange, but it will impact the marketability of the park land," said Joe Albrecht, former Chamber board member and current Highlands campaign chairman. "As a community, we need to do everything we can to support this interchange being built."

The Highlands Business Park is a joint effort of the city of Cookeville and Putnam County, consisting of nearly 300 acres and marking the first major property development to aid jobs creation in Putnam County in many years. Officials have indicated initial bids for infrastructure could be issued in a couple of months.

Halford cites the recent Hemlock (Clarksville), Wacker Chemie (Cleveland) and Volkswagen (Chattanooga) deals as a prime reason for Cookeville to be moving forward quickly with the Highlands Business Park. According to Halford, Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers for these industries have been and will be looking at Cookeville’s central, easily accessible location.

"We have people looking now," said Halford. "We need developed sites ready to go."

Local officials close to the project say they are now reevaluating efforts to find out what changed and what needs to be done to get the project back on track.

"The project is not dead," said Albrecht. "It’s just a road block that we’ve got to overcome."

Sometimes it seems our government, especially federal government, can’t quite see the forest for the trees.

The latest case in point centers on the snag affecting Cookeville’s fifth interchange project – and the related Highlands Regional Business Park.

At a time when our local region needs jobs and a general boost in economic development more than any other time in memory, we get hit square between the eyes with another sour dose of politics and poor decision making. Local officials don’t yet know what happened – or why things changed – but they do know they thought they had everything worked out regarding the fifth interchange plans until someone, somewhere changed the game.

Maybe it’s a case of poor communication between governmental entities or just politics as usual. Whatever it is, we need something to change quickly!

The Highlands Business Park is critical to this region’s future growth. Once developed, it will provide industry-ready land in a way Putnam County has not had available in many, many years. That equates to jobs – plain and simple!

Let’s be very clear – the business park is progressing as planned, with or without the fifth interchange. But common sense tells us the business park will not be nearly as attractive to prospects if it doesn’t have easy access to Interstate 40. Without the fifth interchange, the only access will be a less-than-attractive route that involves South Willow Avenue – a road that doesn’t need more traffic, especially truck traffic.

When considering the number of jobs that will be created by the development of the Highlands Business Park, one would think that would more than provide the "validity" asked for by the Federal Highway Administration to justify the fifth interchange. A northern connector to Highway 70 seems far less important at the present time.

So, what needs to happen?

First, all of our local officials have already begun working diligently to find out how to overcome this obstacle. No one has worked harder to date than Cookeville City Manager Jim Shipley, Putnam County Executive Kim Blaylock and Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce CEO/President George Halford (and other past and present key chamber leaders) to make this project come to fruition.

Now, however, our local leaders may need some outside funding solutions to help move this forward, assuming plans for the northern connector route remain a necessity. That’s where our state and federal officials must step up and help where possible. Surely there’s some of that federal stimulus money lying around ready to be put to good use. Let’s find money, put the plan together, and finish what we’ve started.

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McMinnville spec building may soon have tenant

BEVERLEY NASH
CBJ Staff

The Warren County Commission and the Industrial Development Board (IDB) are nearing completion on lease negotiations for a 50,000-square-foot spec building in Mountain View Industrial Park. Three companies expressed an interest in the building, according to County Executive John Pelham. One of those companies, called Project Y to protect the confidentiality of the deal, moved ahead in the negotiations, prompting the IDB to request $500,000 in funds at its meeting in December to make the structure more suitable. The building is a shell that can be modified to fit the needs of interested industries.

“I appreciate the commissioners for unanimously supporting this project in these tough economic times,” said Pelham. “The commissioners and Jeff McCormick, IDB director, have worked very hard to get us where we are.”

The county has also had the support of the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development in attracting the new company and new jobs for the region.

“We are close,” said McCormick. “But the lease has not been signed, and we are still not ready to announce the name of the company.”

Though the appropriation for the funds was approved, the money will not be released until a lease agreement is signed. Modifications to the building, which include office space and other features specific to the needs of the manufacturer, will begin once the lease is in place.

Approval was also given by the commission for the IDB to request assistance from the Tennessee Department of Transportation to pave an industrial access road into the project.

Development of the spec building and maintaining confidentiality on negotiations is representative of other successful bids for large manufacturing projects in Tennessee in the past year. Several community leaders have echoed two mantras that describe how industries – and more importantly, jobs – were attracted.

First, readiness is key. Municipalities must have sites that are “shovel-ready,” with infrastructures in place. Secondly, “loose lips sink ships,” County officials who sealed deals with Hemlock in Montgomery County, Volkswagen in Chattanooga and Wacker Chemie in Bradley County indicated that maintaining confidentiality for the client was critical to their success.

Warren County averaged double-digit unemployment rates in 2009.
Educational Affiliates acquires Putnam’s MedVance Institute

BEVERLEY NASH
CBJ Staff

Baltimore-based Educational Affiliates Inc. recently acquired MedVance Institute’s Cookeville campus and its nine affiliate campuses in Nashville, Florida, Louisiana and Texas.

MedVance provides training in allied health professions such as medical assistant, billing and coding specialist, pharmacy technician, radiologic technologist and surgical technologist. It is a state-licensed and nationally accredited post-secondary institution. Programs range from six to 24 months in length, with tuition costs from $5,500 to $27,000.

The Cookeville campus was founded in 1970 as Cumberland School of Medical Technology and acquired in 2000 by KIMC Investments, which resulted in the name change to MedVance. MedVance is headquartered in West Palm Beach, Fla. Generations Partners became the company’s first private equity investment firm, and its CEO, Debbie Schwartzberg sold a portion of the company for $9.5 million in 2004 when then-MedVance CEO and largest institutional investor in West Palm Beach, Fla. Generations Partners, a private equity investment firm, and its CEO, Duncan Anderson.

John Hopkins, chairman/CEO of MedVance, was quoted as saying, "The merger makes perfects on many levels due to geographic overlap, a nice complement of program offerings and resources." Simultaneous to the sale of MedVance, Schwarzberg established GlobalHealth Education & Training that will act as an intermediary between colleges and medical companies to train employees and management. She also announced her intention to acquire a regionally accredited university to provide an in-source for educational content and provide access to a variety of programs.

Crossville Memorial Airport to receive $1.6 million TDOT grant

BEVERLEY NASH
CBJ Staff

The city of Crossville has announced a $1.6 million aeronautics grant for improvements to the Crossville Memorial Airport.

“We had a very good year in 2009,” said Mayor J.H. Graham, "highlighted by the 75th anniversary celebration of the airport. The future looks bright, and we want to continue. We know the first thing industries judge a community on is their airport.”

The future looks bright, and we want to continue. We know the first thing industries judge a community on is their airport.

J.H. GRAHAM
Crossville Mayor

The grants were made available through the Tennessee Department of Transportation’s Aeronautics Division and will be used for pavement rehabilitation. Sen. Charlotte Burks and Rep. Eric Swafford helped secure the airport grant funds.

In announcing the grant award, Gov. Phil Bredesen said, "Our local airports are vital to the economy and travel system of Tennessee. Investing in our airports helps keep them competitive and efficient at meeting the needs of businesses and travelers. I’m pleased to support continued improvement at Crossville Memorial Airport."

The TDOT Aeronautics Division has the responsibility of inspecting and licensing the state’s 126 heliports and 75 general aviation airports. The Division also provides aircraft and related services for state government and staffing for the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission.
McAfee County looks for boost with Cobb-Vantress’ 70 new jobs

BEVERLEY NASH
City Staff

City officials are optimistic that plans by Cobb-Vantress Inc. to employ 70 workers at its soon-to-become-a-reality hatchery in Lafayette may signal the start of a bounce back into single-digit unemployment for the county.

According to Macon County Mayor Shelby Linville, the company will open construction bids the first week of February, and hopes to begin construction as soon as weather permits. The company hopes to begin operations at the new hatchery in September 2010. Only a few management workers have been hired thus far, including Randy Yates as plant manager.

In addition to the 70 initial hatchery workers, it was reported last year by The Macon County Times that an additional 130 jobs could be generated by Cobb’s plans to potentially build a company farm in the county.

The rate of unemployment for Macon County decreased slightly from 11.3 percent in October 2009 to 10.9 percent in November. “I am anxious for the Cobb-Vantress Hatchery to be built for two reasons,” said Linville. “First is to provide much-needed jobs to the citizens of Macon County, and second is to put to rest the negative speculation surrounding the project.”

Though the prospects for the hatchery have not always been popular among all county residents, Cobb is slated to bring millions of dollars in capital investment and much-needed jobs into the region. Local residents have expressed, sometimes heatedly, concerns over the hatchery’s potential impact on public health, property values, the water supply and overall quality of life in the county.

Cobb is named as a defendant in a longstanding lawsuit brought by the state of Oklahoma against 11 poultry companies in 2005. The state claims that the chicken waste runs off farm fields and into area lakes and streams, posing a health risk to residents in the area.

Macon County leaders voted down environmental restrictions that would have prevented the hatchery from opening in March 2009, which paved the way for the company’s plans to move forward.

Cobb-Vantress is the world’s oldest poultry breeding company. It began operations in 1916 in Massachusetts and currently operates in more than 90 countries and employs 1,700 globally. The company is now headquartered in Siloam Springs, Ark. It distributes products through either direct Cobb-Vantress commercial operations or through the company’s partnerships with over 50 distributors worldwide. The company is a subsidiary of Tyson Foods Inc.

Attempts to obtain a comment from officials at Cobb on the start of Macon County operations were unsuccessful at press time.

All U.C. counties are participating in state’s Three-Star program

All 15 counties of the Cumberland Business Journal’s coverage area are participating in Tennessee’s Three-Star community development program.

The Three-Star program helps urban and rural communities create and implement strategic economic and community development plans that meet the needs and challenges of an ever-changing economic environment. It helps communities preserve existing employment, create new employment opportunities, improve family income and develop a strong leadership base for economic development.

More than 340 Tennessee cities are represented in the Three-Star program, with designations earned by 88 Tennessee counties and one city. It has set high standards and incentives like no other state-run program in the nation, according to state officials.

Gov. Phil Bredesen’s five-year, asset-based economic development strategic plan is the cornerstone of the program.

In 2005, the Southern Growth Policies Board, a bipartisan public policy think tank devoted to strengthening the South’s economy, recognized the Three-Star program as a best practices program and a Southern leader in community certification programs.

Communities progress through three levels of benchmark requirements from creating a committee and developing a five-year community and economic development strategic plan to measuring success and sustaining growth. The benchmarks were changed in 2009, with requirements for attainment made more challenging.

Several communities that were previously at a higher level dropped to level one under the new guidelines, and one is being recertified under the new benchmarks.

Upper Cumberland counties have reached Three-Star certification in the following benchmarks:

- Cannon
- Clay
- DeKalb
- Fentress
- Jackson
- Macon
- Overton
- Putnam
- Smith
- Trousdale
- Van Buren
- Warren
- White

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Upper Cumberland counties have reached Three-Star certification in the following benchmarks:
Pharmacist views work as a triad partnership:  Alan Tatum, owner, Payless Pharmacy

BEVERLEY NASH  
CBJ Staff

“Triad: a chord of three harmonic tones” aptly describes Alan Tatum’s 32-year partnership approach to pharmacy and also describes the interest that fills his leisure time as a member of Mastersingers community choir.

“I view pharmacy as a triad that includes the patient, physician and pharmacist,” said Tatum. “The patient tells the physician what is wrong, the physician provides the diagnosis and the pharmacist adjusts the dosage for the maximum benefit.”

Tatum is the owner of Payless Family Pharmacy in Sparta and one of 10 owners of Pharmacist Home Medical in Sparta and McMinnville. Until recently, he was also a partner of MedPlus Pharmacy in Cookeville.

Originally from West Tennessee, Tatum grew up in Chicago. He and his wife, Joyce, also a West Tennessee native, chose to live in the Upper Cumberland region because of its quality of life. They married during Tatum’s sophomore year at the University of Tennessee in Martin, Tenn., and later moved to Memphis where Tatum earned his pharmacy degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

“After graduating from pharmacy school in 1977, I knew I didn’t want to move back to Chicago, so we started driving across the state looking for where we wanted to live,” explained Tatum. “We fell in love with this part of the state and just never went any further.

“The people are so wonderful and friendly. You have four seasons, a rural lifestyle, yet it is within 90 minutes of Knoxville, Nashville and Chattanooga. We are big Titans fans, and we are close enough to attend games, the theater or visit the [Chattanooga] Aquarium.”

After becoming a licensed pharmacist, Tatum was recruited by HCA to work as chief pharmacist at White County Community Hospital. He later worked for several hospitals and nursing homes in the region. Then in 1986, he began working for Walmart Pharmacy in Sparta.

“After seeing our prescription business increase more than five-fold in the five-and-a-half years I was there, I decide I needed to open my own business,” continued Tatum. “We opened Payless Family Pharmacy in 1993.”

A few years later, he joined his daughter, Jennifer Tatum Cranford, who had just graduated from pharmacy school; Clarence Smith, owner of Smith Pharmacy in Cookeville; and Tony Sells, who owns Medicine Chest in Cookeville, to open MedPlus.

“My daughter wants to get more involved in the store in Sparta, so we recently decided to sell our ownership in MedPlus to our two other partners and concentrate on the Payless store,” he explained. “I will also continue as an owner in Pharmacist Home Medical.

“In 1996 we realized we had customers who needed hospital beds, oxygen and other medical equipment and services, so we started Pharmacist Home Medical. We now have 13 locations throughout Middle Tennessee with 10 other pharmacists,” said Tatum.

Tatum has seen many changes in his 32 years in the pharmacy business. “Managed care has brought the biggest negative change,” he said. “Often we are doing things more to satisfy insurance companies than for the benefit of our patients.

“One positive change has been that we can now give immunizations, vitamin and birth control shots, and travel and flu vaccinations, in the store, which makes it more convenient for our customers,” Tatum described.

“We have seen a resurgence in requests for compounded medications,” he commented. “With compounding we can more closely match the dosage to the needs of the patient; for example, as a woman’s body changes, the strength of hormone replacement medicines needs to be adjusted.” Tatum is the only pharmacist in Sparta, and one of only a few in the area, who still compound prescriptions.

In addition to his work as a pharmacist, Tatum has enjoyed singing with Mastersingers for 15 years. He has served on its board and has traveled to many different locations, even performing on Omaha beach at Normandy on an anniversary of D-Day.

In addition to Jennifer, Tatum and his wife have two other children who are involved in pharmaceutics. Daughter Tiffany works for a compounding pharmacy in Memphis, and son Jeremy works for a generic drug company in Huntsville, Ala. The couple has five grandchildren.
Work on the long-awaited Highlands Regional Business Park west of Cookeville should begin in the next few months, according to city manager Jim Shipley.

“We recently received the final site plans from Barge Waggoner (Sumner and Cannon) and are preparing to bid out the project,” said Shipley.

The city is also awaiting federal government approval for the fifth Cookeville interchange on Interstate 40 at Mine Lick Creek Road that will provide greater accessibility to the site.

“Our original approval for the interchange was only good for eight years,” said Shipley, “and we have exceeded that time limit.”

The Putnam County Planning Commission unanimously approved changing the map of the park in early 2009 to exclude 74 acres of property that was being held up by its owners with no signs of resolving.

The business park is 292 acres and is to be developed by city and county funds in accordance with an interlocal agreement in July 2006.

Community leaders are hoping to attract second tier supply chain manufacturers from the Volkswagen manufacturing facility that is under construction in Chattanooga, and also other major manufacturing operations that will boost employment and the economy of the region.

K&K Trucking closure affects 85 workers

Nashville-based K&K Trucking Company shuttered its Gordonsville operation on Dec. 23, leaving 85 workers unemployed.

K&K submitted a WARN report to the state department of Labor and Workforce Development in early January, 15 days after it closed. Under WARN, employers are required to send a written notice to the Dislocated Worker Unit of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The DWU assists employers and employees by implementing the state’s Rapid Response System, designed to provide information quickly that will alleviate some of the anxieties and problems caused by a work force reduction.

Employees of K&K said they had no advance notice that the company was closing in Smith County, describing it as “another casualty of the economy.” K&K was one of Smith County’s larger employees, and the closing represents a significant loss for the community that reported unemployment rates of greater than 13 percent for all of 2009.

“No doubt it will affect the unemployment rate here, so it is a big deal to us,” said County Mayor Michael Neshitt.

According to Neshitt, K&K Trucking was the second major employer to shut down last year. Around 200 employees lost their jobs when Dura Automotive closed.

“We’re doing a marketing plan on these buildings, so I believe 2010 will be a better year. Hopefully we’ll be able to employ from 200 to 300 more people because of that,” said Neshitt.
NASHVILLE—Both houses of the Tennessee General Assembly have passed Senate Bill 7001, which suspends a worker’s compensation bill that would have had significant impact on small contractors in the region and across the state.

The earlier bill, which was enacted in 2008 with an effective date of Dec. 31, 2009, was intended to eliminate abuses of the worker’s compensation system and ensure that all workers on a construction site were covered. However, the resulting law was determined to put undue hardship on small legitimate contractors by preventing them from opting out of costly worker’s compensation policies. Additionally, it put property owners at risk of liability from claims against contractors who were not insured.

The bill was the subject of lively debate between business leaders and state legislators at a meeting hosted by the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce. Jim Brown, director of the National Federation of Independent Business in Tennessee, moderated the meeting, and ensured attendees that the NFIB was working toward a revision.

“Thousands of people would lose their jobs if the bill becomes effective as it currently is written,” said Brown at the December meeting. “The NFIB will (instead) probably propose raising the penalties for failing to insure workers, including imposing significantly higher fees and loss of license.”

“The bill went too far,” according to Rep. Charlie Curtis, D-43rd District. “Everyone agrees that we needed to make changes to help masons and other independent contractors without benefits who are not covered if they are laid off or hurt. Once it is resolved, I believe it will result in lower premiums.”

The suspension gives legislators until March 28, 2011, to modify and re-institute the law. The bill now goes to the House Commerce Committee, which is chaired by Rep. Judd Matheny, R-Tullahoma, who has promised to “tackle the changes immediately.”

### Business Personnel Solutions to open office in Cookeville

**BEVERLEY NASH**

Business Personnel Solutions is expanding into Cookeville to assist companies with their human resource administrative tasks, from payroll and worker’s compensation to health care benefits and retirement plans.

BPS is a professional employer organization (PEO) headquartered in Knoxville. Allen Snow, former publisher of Tennessee Life magazine, who has been handling payroll and worker’s compensation management for clients in the region for 12 years, will manage the local office.

“We are opening an office here because of client growth and the need for the services BPS offers,” said Snow.

PEOs have been around for several decades. They are becoming more popular, especially with small businesses that cannot afford to offer the level of benefits provided by larger companies. They are not temporary, staffing, payroll or placement agencies.

According to the company, BPS will assume liability for processing payroll and filing taxes and worker’s compensation under its tax identification number. BPS also maintains compliance with state and federal employment regulations and develops employee policies and procedures guidelines.

“We become the employer of record,” said Snow. “We don’t participate in hiring, firing or payroll decisions, though we are ready to help with consultation.”

“We take all of the responsibility and liability for employee issues and filings so owners can concentrate on their businesses. What we really provide is peace of mind.”

BPS works with both large and small companies that employ three to 30,000 workers in all categories of work except high-risk industries, such as long-haul carriers.

“We are a good fit for all types of companies,” said Joe Usher, co-founder and owner of BPS. “We work with banks, doctors, money firms, lawn maintenance, restaurants, health care and other companies.

“For example, BPS can save business owners more than 400 hours of payroll work annually, resulting in a savings of $5,600. And for a company with $2 million in payroll, we can save them as much as $90,000 annually in worker’s compensation costs.”

BPS was founded seven years ago in Knoxville by Usher and Phil Lawrence. The company currently has offices in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, Nashville, and Tri Cities in Tennessee, and in Huntsville and Mobile, Ala. In addition to BPS, the company operates The Payroll Source to provide complete payroll services as an option to full PEO services.

For more information about BPS, visit www.businesspersonnelsolutions.com, or phone Allen Snow at 931-349-9203.
Clay County started numerous improvements in 2009

RAY NORRIS
Executive Director,
Clay County Chamber

Even with the recession, 2009 was the beginning of significant improvements that will benefit residents of Clay County.

Highway Projects
The Tennessee Department of Transportation began replacing the bridge over Proctor Creek and building a wider, straighter road from the bridge to the base of Walker Hill. Each week’s progress gives a hint of what the finished product will provide all who travel here. Completion is expected in December of 2010 and will cost $5.1 million, though no amount can be assigned to the potential value of lives saved or injuries prevented by this project. The Corridor J project is underway with the letting of a $30.8 million contract for phase one. A second phase, scheduled for May of 2010 and likely also $30 million, will allow completion by yearend 2012. This project will provide a new and improved four-lane Highway 52 from the Overton County line into Celina from Cumberland River Hospital to Brown Street. The redefined route will settle along the improved route.

TDOT has repaved Brown Street from Highway 53 to the bridge over the Cumberland River and around the square, at a cost in excess of $1 million. This has provided a more inviting and safer drive into Celina, as well as fixing several low areas that accumulated rainwater. The improvements will provide new areas for economic development, as they will invite retail business to settle along the improved route.

Electric Power Improvements
Tri-County Electric Cooperative has three projects in process, one at Bakers ton Road, a second at Gainesboro Road, and another at the Celina Substation. These will improve the quality of service and reliability and also provide additional capacity to the industrial park and other areas. The three projects will be completed at a cost of $146,500.

Water & Sewer Upgrades
The Clifton Rich Road extension of water service is scheduled to begin soon and will be completed this spring. County/city leaders and residents obtained a $300,000 grant for the project.

Another water project is in process to replace lines in Celina, Williamson, MacMillan and Washington. The cost of these improvements – $500,000 – was funded by a grant. Also, a sewer project by Clary Construction of Tompkinsville, at a cost of $179,884, replaced many sewer lines in Celina.

Three-Star Certification
Clay County was certified as a Tennessee Three-Star county, a distinction shared with 90 other counties in the state. A financial benefit of Three-Star status is a 3 percent savings on many grants that require a matching portion, which is already saving Celina and Clay County thousands of dollars.

Miscellaneous Projects
Two new ambulances were purchased in mid-December with a $100,000 grant. The ambulances will provide residents emergency medical aid using state-of-the-art equipment. Finally, a new 5,000-square-foot, $500,000 facility is scheduled to be completed by mid-year on Williamson Street to house the Clay County Head Start program, which is currently in the Community Center. Once the move is complete, the county will construct an addition to the Community Center for a complete ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant court facility.

For more than 40 years, we’ve been the heating, cooling, refrigeration and plumbing specialist of choice in the Upper Cumberland. For your next construction project, turn to Tennessee’s award-winning contractor, CHC Mechanical Contractors. For your next construction project, turn to Tennessee’s award-winning contractor, CHC Mechanical Contractors.

What does it mean to work with a safety leader like CHC Mechanical Contractors?
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For more than 40 years, we’ve been the heating, cooling, refrigeration and plumbing specialist of choice in the Upper Cumberland. For your next construction project, turn to Tennessee’s award-winning contractor, CHC Mechanical Contractors.
Dr. Brian Gerndt
Avoiding the need for vascular surgery

Dr. Brian Gerndt loves his job. However, if he could advise potential patients on how to avoid the need for his skills, he would tell them to “choose healthy lifestyles.”

Gerndt is a vascular surgeon with Middle Tennessee Surgical Specialists working on staff at Cookeville Regional Medical Center.

“Vascular surgeons operate on arteries outside the chest,” said Gerndt. “Some of the blockages are caused by genetics; however, many are caused by smoking, high lipids (or high cholesterol) from poor diets, hypertension or diabetes. There are changes you can make to improve lifestyle risks. These conditions are often not as much about bad genes as one might think.”

Many of the procedures Gerndt performs are preventative in nature. The most common is used to prevent stroke by removal of blockage in the carotid artery, another is the repair of aneurysms, which if left untreated is almost universally fatal.

“We repair aneurysms and narrowing in peripheral arteries, such as those that carry blood to the legs, arms, stomach or kidneys,” Gerndt explained. “With vascular surgery, we are able to prevent the rupture of aneurysms, open up carotid arteries that carry blood to the brain in order to prevent strokes, and re-establish good blood flow to a patient’s legs so they can walk and continue to work.”

Recognizing the first sign of carotid artery blockage is critical in preventing strokes. Patients may experience warning symptoms called transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) that can last from a few minutes to an hour. TIAs can include a feeling of weakness, numbness or a tingling sensation on one side of the body – for example, in an arm or a leg; the inability to control movement of an arm or a leg; loss of vision in one eye or dimming of vision; and the inability to speak clearly. Even if symptoms subside, they should not be ignored since they are usually early indicators that a stroke is imminent.

Gerndt grew up in Manitowoc, Wis., and attended college and medical school at the University of Wisconsin. He completed a residency in general surgery and a fellowship in vascular surgery at the University of Tennessee Center for Health Sciences in Memphis.

“I chose vascular surgery because it was a little more technically challenging,” said Gerndt. “Vascular surgery requires more fine technical detail than typical general surgery.”

Gerndt was recruited to work at Middle Tennessee Surgical Specialists by Dr. Scott Copeland, one of the four members of the team of surgeons at MTSS, which includes Copeland, Gerndt, Dr. Jeff McCarter and Dr. Jeff Moore.

“We really work as a team,” said Gerndt. “In fact, I just finished assisting Dr. Copeland with a redo aortic procedure for occlusion.”

“I decided to move to Cookeville after receiving a letter from Copeland. Cookeville is similar in size to where I grew up in Wisconsin and I saw an opportunity to work with the team at Middle Tennessee and at Cookeville Regional to expand and improve vascular care in this part of the state.

“Management at the hospital provides physicians the freedom and resources to offer the highest quality care for our patients. The hospital has won several significant awards in the past few years.”

Recognitions include HealthGrades being ranked as one of the top five hospitals in Tennessee for overall vascular surgery from 2007 through 2010. It was among the top 5 percent of vascular surgery groups in the nation and number one in Tennessee in 2008, five-star rated for carotid surgery from 2005 through 2010, and for repair of abdominal aorta for 2007 and 2008, and carotid surgery from 2005 through 2008. The hospital received the highest possible Star rating for abdominal aorta repair in 2008, and received the Vascular Surgery Excellence Award from 2006 through 2008.

“With the services that are available here, there is really no reason for patients to travel to Knoxville, Chattanooga or Nashville for vascular care,” said Gerndt.

For relaxation, Gerndt enjoys outdoor activities, including boating, fishing and hunting, and spending time with his daughter.
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The most recently published unemployment numbers show signs of improvement in many counties across the Upper Cumberland. Declines in unemployment – if only slightly – were reported in 10 of the 15 counties in the Journal’s coverage area for November. The November statewide rate was also down slightly from the October rate. Cannon County reported the greatest decline at more than a full percentage point (1.1 percent), followed closely by Fentress and Overton counties, both with a half percent drop, and Macon, Van Buren and Warren counties with a 0.4 percent decrease. The average 15-county combined rate remained relatively constant at 12 percent from the previous month’s 12.1 percent rate.

Tennessee reported a statewide December rate of 10.9 percent, up 0.7 percent from the November revised rate of 10.2. The December county statistics were not yet available at press deadline.

MACON COUNTY
(Maconnia: 10.9/10.2/7.6
DEc ’09/Nov ’09/DEc ’08
Source: Tennessee Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development

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OVATION

From page 1

Business Journal, Attn: Ovation Awards, 705 North Dixie Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38501.

When submitting nominations, please be specific which category each nomination references, provide a short description of why you are nominating each business/individual, provide your name and contact information, and provide the nominee’s name and contact information (if known).

Ovation Awards apply only to businesses/individuals in the 15-county CBJ distribution area of Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren and White counties.

2010 Ovation Award categories include:

• Spirit of Entrepreneurship

Honoring individuals who have made something from nothing, who have withstood the test of time and/or carved out a unique business model where none previously existed.

• Excellence in Manufacturing

Honor ing leaders who have helped pave the way through their generosity, donations or other volunteer activities.

• Excellence in Governmental Leadership

Honoring elected/appointed officials and their respective offices/entities for their overall commitment and service to promoting a strong business and economic environment in the Upper Cumberland region.

• Favorite Retail Establishment

Honor ing an effective or unique promotion of tourism related to economic development in a community or region.

• Best Individual Corporate Citizen

(Philanthropist)

Honor ing professionals who serve us well, from accountants and lawyers to plumbers and HVAC shops.

• Spirit of Entrepreneurship

Honoring leaders who have helped pave the way through their generosity, donations or other volunteer activities.

• Excellence in Manufacturing

Honoring an effective or unique promotion of tourism related to economic development in a community or region.

• Best Individual Corporate Citizen

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Laura Canada has been promoted to vice president of the Cookeville Chamber of Commerce in Cookeville, Tennessee. The move was announced by Joe Bostanger, the Chamber’s president and CEO. “Her enthusiasm, persistence and dedication have helped us make some significant strides in our community, and I am eager to meet the challenge our organization will face in the future,” said Canada. “I feel extremely honored that the Chamber has entrusted me with this new role, and I am eager to meet the challenge they have set before me,” said Canada.

In her new role, Canada will continue to serve as Convention & Visitors Bureau director and oversee the operations of the Highlands Visitor Center. “I feel extremely honored that the Chamber has entrusted me with this new role, and I am eager to meet the challenge they have set before me,” said Canada.

The Home Builders Association of the Upper Cumberland, which has been in operation for more than 20 years, is the sixth largest real estate association in the southern states. The organization is dedicated to promoting the industry and its members, and is the only way to design and build your building from an energy and cost-effective standpoint.

The addition is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2010 and will feature six classrooms and a 510-seat auditorium with stage lighting and sound. Mid-State will also construct a landscaped pavilion between the old and new buildings. Stone Steel and Cookeville Glass and Mirror will work with Mid-State on the building, which was designed by Sam Moser, a native of Sweetwater and an architect with Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon.

“We consider it a privilege to create structures that serve both the community and its children,” said Tony McCracken, Mid-State vice president. “In fact, the project itself will serve the community, because we’re introducing the services of many local area businesses and people, such as mechanical and electrical contractors, to work with us in completing it.”

Mid-State was chosen to build the recently completed Algoed Elementary School and the reconstruction of Jere Whitson Elementary School, both in Putnam County. The builder was one of nine companies to bid on the Sweetwater Elementary Project.
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home, vacation plant care. Free Consultation. Call for installation, weekly maintenance, and for your interior plants. Dr. Your Plants offers design, ENHANCE YOUR BUSINESS OR HOME with live commercial building that makes you feel right at home. With over 2400 SF of heated and cooled floor space; this building would meet the needs of many professional organizations. Spacious kitchen is equipped with all appliances, bathrooms are handicap accessible, laundry room, plus beautifully decorated and ready for occupancy. Shown by appointment only.

**1427 INTERSTATE DRIVE: MLS# 144176 $1,790,000.** Situated on 2.98 acres with a daily traffic count of over 15,000 cars per day. Property can be divided, currently features a 4875 square foot commercial building with potential of a conversion into another business opportunity. Property fenced with an exceptional location for any type of business.

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**1644 S JEFFERSON AVENUE: MLS# 142870 $320,000.** Great corner lot zoned General Commercial on Old Kentucky Road just past Kangaroo Market, BP, and Consignment Store. Commercial on Old Kentucky Road just past Kangaroo Market, BP, and Consignment Store.

**470 OLD KENTUCKY ROAD: MLS# 140006 $315,000.** An exceptionally well-constructed commercial building that makes you feel right at home. With over 2400 SF of heated and cooled floor space; this building would meet the needs of many professional organizations. Spacious kitchen is equipped with all appliances, bathrooms are handicap accessible, laundry room, plus beautifully decorated and ready for occupancy. Shown by appointment only.

**164 S SPRING STREET: MLS# 142870 $2,070,000.** Recently renovated 2-story commercial building just off Highway 111 in Sparta, TN. This property has been utilized as a medical facility with 9 offices, plus live-in ability, large parking area in front and side of building, and handicap accessible. Security system. Shown by appointment only.

**314 S SPRING STREET: MLS# 142870 $2,070,000.** Recently renovated 2-story commercial building just off Highway 111 in Sparta, TN. This property has been utilized as a medical facility with 9 offices, plus live-in ability, large parking area in front and side of building, and handicap accessible. Security system. Shown by appointment only.

**131 S LOCUST AVENUE: MLS# 142407 $237,000.** Recently renovated 2-story commercial building just off Highway 111 in Sparta, TN. This property has been utilized as a medical facility with 9 offices, plus live-in ability, large parking area in front and side of building, and handicap accessible. Security system. Shown by appointment only.

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CUMBERLAND Anna Ealy
IN THE UPPER EXPERIENCE AND MOST NETWORK LARGEST

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CUMBERLAND Anna Ealy
IN THE UPPER EXPERIENCE AND MOST NETWORK LARGEST
Fewest From page 14
hospital will be able to offer its patients, according to CEO John McLain.
“The new technology provides us with advanced neuroimaging, cardiac imaging and orthopedic reconstructive capabilities,” said McLain. “In addition to improved quality of the images produced, we are also able to provide improved patient safety and comfort with lower doses of radiation and shorter procedures.”

LPL Financial ranked second in J.D. Power investor satisfaction survey

BOSTON – LPL Financial Corporation has received the second highest ranking in J.D. Power and Associates’ 2009 U.S. Full Service Investor Satisfaction Study.
LPL Financial is one of the nation’s largest financial services company and the largest independent investment broker-dealer in the U.S. The company is headquartered in Boston, Charlotte and San Diego, and operates an office in Sparta managed by LPL registered principal Don Randolph. Randolph is a graduate of Tennessee Tech University. He is also an accredited asset management specialist and is Series 7, 63, 66 and 24 qualified.

“The J.D. Power results demonstrate how the delivery of investment advice is evolving away from big wire house brokerage firms toward the independent financial advisor,” said Randolph.

Putnam County among 111 receiving USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A proposed project that will link six Putnam County schools through video conferencing has received a $314,259 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The USDA awarded more than $34.9 million in Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants to 111 projects in 35 states, including four others in Tennessee in Bedford, Cooke, Maury and Sevier counties. The funds were made available as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment (Stimulus) Act.

The Putnam County schools project will create a local video interactive network that will be available as a multipurpose community resource. The project will be available to students, teachers, health professionals and adults in workforce development.

Moore named cancer liaison for Cookeville Regional Medical Center

COOKEVILLE – Urologist Dr. Lee Moore recently received a three-year appointment as cancer liaison physician for the program at Cookeville Regional Medical Center. Previously, general and vascular surgeon Dr. Scott Copeland held the position.

Moore is also a member of the multidisciplinary cancer committee at Cookeville Regional. As cancer liaison physician, he is among a national network of more than 1,600 physicians who are responsible for providing leadership and direction to establish, maintain and support cancer programs.

Cancer liaison physicians are an integral part of programs accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. They are responsible for spearheading program initiatives, collaborating with local agencies, and facilitating quality improvement goals utilizing data submitted to the CoC National Cancer Database.

The CoC contains data from CoC-accredited cancer programs that assist in the analysis of patterns of diagnosis, treatment and quality of care. The data includes patient demographics, tumor characteristics, treatment and outcome information for more than 22 million malignant cancers diagnosed and treated between 1985 and 2006.

Cookeville Regional is among an elite group of cancer programs that have achieved CoC “approval with commendation,” a status held by fewer than 40 percent of all accredited programs.

Since The Cancer Center opened in 1999, it has provided treatment for thousands of patients in 32 counties in Middle Tennessee and three counties in Kentucky. The Cancer Center program represents a multidisciplinary approach to care based on education, prevention and early detection.

The Cancer Center gives patients in the region the option of receiving vital treatment and care without the discomfort and inconvenience of traveling long distances. Services include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, tomotherapy, clinical trials, da Vinci and other surgical options, PET/CT, and a nurse navigator program.

(CMR’s Pierce relocates office to former cancer center

COOKEVILLE – Dr. Mark Pierce, infectious disease specialist with The Physican Associates at Cookeville Regional Medical Center, has relocated his office to the former location of The Cancer Center at the hospital. His office is inside the hospital’s west entrance, with parking available in Lot D at the corner of Fourth Street and Hickory Avenue.

Pierce will be adding a new service specifically for patients who need peripherally inserted central catheters. PICC-line placement is sometimes needed for prolonged intravenous (IV) antibiotic treatment or other long-term IV access, and for chemotherapy.

In addition to this service, Pierce will continue to operate The Travel Clinic, designed to provide travel advice and vaccinations for those planning overseas trips.

“Anytime you travel overseas, particularly to developing countries, it is always a good idea to take a look at your routine vaccinations,” said Pierce. “There are many countries that require certain (types of) vaccinations before you are allowed to enter.”

The Travel Clinic is the first of its kind in the Upper Cumberland region, and provides patients with one-on-one, site-specific travel advice and health tips in addition to vaccines and prescriptions recommended for the areas to which they are traveling. Available vaccines include tetanus/diphtheria, polio, hepatitis A and B, pneumonia, meningitis, typhoid, H influenza type B, rubella, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, and flu.

“Two of the biggest health dangers to international travelers are diarrhea and malaria,” continued Pierce. “We try to make patients aware of the ways that they can avoid these and other illnesses so that they can make the most of their trip.”

Pierce has extensive experience in tropical diseases and travel medicine. He founded and directed the Vanderbilt International Travel Medicine Clinic earlier in his career and spent many years doing mission work as a physician in remote areas of Africa. Pierce also worked with the National Institutes of Health as the Clinical Head of the Malaria Vaccine Development Branch.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with Pierce, call 931-520-8320.