

Our County
D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

New Year New Hope – January 3, 2017

Happy New Year. I hope that you are succeeding in keeping your New Year's resolutions and that they soon become a habit and then become "second nature" and therefore part of your everyday routine. It is at this time of year that many of us stop to not only reflect back, but to also look forward to the future. A successful planning process involves many items, but one of the greatest is the understanding and internalization of the concept of HOPE.

I find many different types of music enjoyable, but few can seemingly correlate every day, and everybody's, emotions as well as the lyrics of Country music. A few that have tried to encapsulate the brevity of our time on this earth are Kenny Chesney's song "Don't Blink" and Alan Jackson's "Remember When". You tube is a great place to visit if you would like to hear these artist's exclaim "Don't blink, life goes faster than you think" & "30 seemed so old, now it's just a stepping stone" respectively. You may even notice a tear, or two, if you start relating to either of these songs. They seem to be using contemporary terms and language to explain another Biblical truth that is found in James 4:14 that states "whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." The loss of loved ones, relatives, friends and even celebrities, that we do not even know personally, help to teach us that none of us are guaranteed the next breath, much less the next year.

So, what are we supposed to do with our brief time, on this celestial globe? I think that we are to be thankful for each gift received, understand that we are not here for ourselves only, but to help each other along the way. And to help others understand the gift of HOPE that is available to each of us. In doing so we find not only a purpose to our daily lives but also a reason as well as a goal to achieve, each and every day.

As I have said many times before in this column, the efforts of our ancestors that many of us never got the opportunity to know personally, have given the gift of our present day community for us to enjoy. But we are not to only enjoy this gift, but we are to continue working together, to achieve even more for our descendants, that we may never meet either.

This past month, Bradley County's unemployment rate has now dropped below 4 %. Let that "set in" for a minute. This now means that 96% of all of our available work force, that wants to work, now has an opportunity to have a job. This will continue to bring not only income, to families, but also the ability for those who seek to provide a better life, to not only dream of, but to now achieve this goal.

Exceptional natural resources, abundant supplies of regional growth, multiple educational facilities, developing recreational facilities combined with numerous methods of contributing all

work together to ensure success for those who are blessed to call Bradley County and this region their home. "Educated people, with good jobs living in a great place" has become the regional vision expression of choice for Thrive 2055 and Southeast Tennessee, working to build upon our current successes to implement long term prosperity for our region.

Success, by itself, is a lonely achievement. But when combined with the knowledge of provision for family, a greater good for our community and the lasting achievements for eternity it can and does supply not only individual hope, but increases the opportunity for us ALL.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to represent you as your County Mayor. It is my continued goal to work with others to build upon our recent successes to Protect, Preserve and Provide for our current and also our future generations. This ability to help provide the framework for future growth, is yet another reason for hope, and for Bradley County to continue to be Tennessee at its BEST!

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State of the County Speech - January 10, 2017

We are now 10 days into the New Year. I hope that this year so far, has proven to be a year filled with promise, hope and opportunity. I have been visiting local Civic Clubs, speaking about the "State of the County" here in Bradley County. This time of great fellowship is one that I look forward to each year, and this year has proven to be no different. I truly enjoy my time spent with local businessmen and businesswomen who are doing their part to contribute to our local economy. Many of the crowds also have a few men and women who have "retired" from active employment, but who still contribute greatly to make our community the special place that it is known to be to each of our citizens.

This past week was a little different, in a new way. I arrived at the Cleveland Kiwanis Club, that I have been a member of for 30 years, after having attended a funeral for a local businessman, former Bradley County Commissioner, community volunteer and family man extraordinaire, Mr. Bill Creech. I have spoken many times about the blessings that we ALL enjoy today, were worked for, and fought for, by many who have gone before us. This thought process is not just mere words, but truth that I have personally witnessed just in my lifetime.

Bill Creech was not only a man of integrity, but he was a man who lived his life in such a way as to display his faith in God above. By daily treating his family, friends, and community with respect, honor and dignity he was able to preach a wonderful "sermon" without having to say a single word. May we all strive to do likewise and in doing so, may we experience the results of this type of servant leadership that is missing in many places on this earth.

My assistant, Lindsay, and I were discussing the number of those "who have now gone before us", the list is growing. Commissioners like Roy Ragsdale. Jack Kirkpatrick, Roy Smith, and longtime commissioner Bill Ledford. Each person had different personalities, gifts and abilities, but they each had one thing in common and that was their love for their family and this community. May we all continue their legacy by remembering them, their many contributions and by also doing our best to not only maintain their gift of our home, but by also striving to continually improve community, for others yet to come.

We have all probably fallen short in keeping at least one of our goals for this New Year's resolutions by now. But if we remember that each and every New Day is another gift, we may soon learn that any goal is achievable and any work toward self-improvement, education, and career opportunities not only helps us individually, but also makes our community stronger! Thank you Mr. Bill Creech, and ALL who have, in the past and presently, give of their time, talents and their selves to improve each and every one of us. This type of dedication replicated many times over is what continues to help make Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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Attitude Construct – January 17, 2017

Success. The striving and the efforts given by many in pursuit of this worthy goal are legendary. While the term may be simple, the path followed in search of this achievement is not only difficult, but also may be different for all of us. Some may know of this "word & number" equation but I have always found it not only interesting but also effective in understanding the many paths followed in search of success.

If one were to take each letter in the English language and then assign a corresponding numerical factor in the correct ascending order, one would have the following: A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z. These letters would then have the following number assigned: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26. Using the above items in combination, one could then conclude that:

H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K or $8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$

K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E or $11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96\%$

A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E or $1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100\%$

The ability to achieve more, is not only given to those who seek ways of improving, but also to those who, in the process of improving themselves and their families, also freely help others along the way in the process. This week we ALL will be given that opportunity many times, but one of the most needed times for our Nation will arrive on this Friday. May we each use this inauguration to spend time in activities and efforts aimed at strengthening our families, friendships and our communities. Doing so will help to improve our attitude, and in the process help to ensure the continued success of our nation, also.

For over two Centuries our Nation has not only been given the sacred gift of Liberty, but we have displayed this gift to the rest of the world by the ability to transfer power peacefully. Our first President is said to have responded to a question when his term of office was closing in such a manner. "What is most important," Washington asked, "of this grand experiment, the United States?" And then Washington answered his own question in this way: "Not the election of the first president, but the election of its second president. The peaceful transfer of power is what will separate our country from every other country in the world."

We may find a difference of opinion at many locations, but we must never lose sight of the fact that no matter what the opinion is, we can disagree without becoming disagreeable. This simple "attitude adjustment" may be a needed filter for us ALL to apply for this week, and every week that we are given along this gift called life.

Thankful, appreciative and kindness are attitudes that will not only work in Bradley County, but will also help our Nation as well. Please know that I appreciate each and every one who does their part (and beyond) in helping to make our community successful and Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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New Habits and Path – January 24, 2017

We are fast approaching the end of this first month of 2017. Many of us may have tried, once again, to become more organized and to keep better records, better lists of needed items to complete and even better regularity of our exercise routines. If you have continued these from the beginning of the year you are well on your way of making this not only a "part of your life", but after more than 21 days it is becoming a habit, as well. Three weeks, 21 short days of a consistent behavior has hopefully helped in making changes that will positively influence your life for the better.

I have often been reminded that the problem that many of us face in making changes in our lives, is that life is so "daily". The minutes, hours and even the days, have a way of passing us by without us noticing that we have forgotten to include our new ideas, exercises, routines and even studies into a part of each new day. Many people have developed wonderful plans and ideas over the years to help in making incremental changes in ones life that help to bring about positive changes and results. Today I would like to discuss three that have helped me over the years.

Start small. Any change that is too drastic, or too lofty, usually becomes a discarded memory rather quickly. If you can be consistent with a small change to your daily routine, this helps to inspire a person to continue in a desired change of their daily routine. This is proof positive that success does indeed help to instill the will to continue to achieve even more success.

Stay focused. A map does not help anyone if there is not a desired destination that one wants to travel towards. And it is also true that to arrive to a new location that may be found on a map, you also have to know of your present location, or situation, as well. Once the true identity of a person's current situation is known there can be changes made that will help to not only motivate towards a goal, but to also make incremental changes that will help lead to the desired location, or changes.

Stop negativity. The human mind is a complex organism that has amazing capacity to retain information for use later. It does not filter if the information is good, or bad, but equally files information away for use later. I have always found it interesting that the average bumblebee has scientifically been proven to have wings that are entirely too small to provide the lift necessary to give it the gift of flight. It is a very good idea that the average bumblebee has never been told of this fact, or if it did hear this "factual" information, that it never allowed this fact to stop it from flying.

Thank you to ALL who have chosen a path of improvement for this New Year. I hope that you are successful now, and in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. This ability not only helps individuals, but it also has an added benefit in helping and strengthening our community as well. This new year has wonderful po-tential and I hope that many use the gift of each day to not only help themselves, but to also help others in their community as well. In doing so, each and every day, we continue to help keep Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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ABC & 123 – January 31, 2017

At the risk of placing a song in your head for the next two days, many of those who were born in the 1950's and 1960's remember the Jackson Five's song "ABC". Now, that was as easy as 1, 2, 3 and helps lead into this week's article concerning the progress being made within Bradley County government, namely in Accessibility, Budgets and Computing upgrades.

A. D. A. compliance is not only an idea whose time has come, it is the law. Bradley County government strives to do our best for all of our citizens, residents and each visitor to our multiple buildings. In an attempt to meet the requirements of the section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 we are constantly looking at ways of improving our facilities within budget constraints. I have named Dr. Lindsay L. Hathcock as our ADA Coordinator and as such, he is the initial and primary local contact for information, and notification of possible concerns. During this month, the parking area for adaptive mobility access has been upgraded, and with the wonderful help of the Cleveland City Public Works Department, improvements were also made to allow much improved, safer and more gradual accessibility from 2nd Street to the ramp system of the West side entrance to the Bradley County Courthouse.

Budgets are always on my mind, but unlike Elvis Presley, I work with others to develop, implement and then follow a budgetary process. This past week the Bradley County Commission voted in a work session to adopt a budget calendar for our local Government to follow. This allows for the orderly progression of requests, analysis and then possible amendments to be made in such a way to not only keep them on time, but to also help each of the more than 70 different departments to each have their time in the overall process. I look forward to working with each person involved in the process to not only provide the best possible services to our community, but to do so in a responsible, efficient and effective way.

Computers have become an integral part of each of our lives. This can be seen as a blessing and also a curse. The blessing is that many processes that used to consume multiple hours of each workday are now transformed into brief segments of our day, and along with the increased productivity the invariable mistake that may occur has also been reduced in its frequency. The curse may be that while those who seek the good part of the process of improving work are now more susceptible to those who seek to cause harm and disrupt common business practices. It is now possible to rob and steal identities (and more) from the comfort of a thief's home, library or their favorite place of choice as long as they have Internet access. Bradley County, and many other local and regional governments, have seen an uptick in both the frequency and the sophistication of those who seek to do harm, electronically. There are many more ways to help prevent attacks and protect your personal, home and business computer systems than I could possibly mention here but please at least incorporate these 5 items to your personal routine.

Update your operating systems regularly. Backup your information and files and preferable keep in a separate location. Create difficult passwords, change them regularly and please do not use the same password for every account. Control access to your machine. It defies logic to develop passwords and security profiles and then leave a computer unattended, logged on and in an unsecure location. Ignore unsolicited emails and be very wary of free downloads from freeware and shareware sites. Each of these 5 items, and many more are used each and every day across Bradley County Government systems to minimize the possibility of nefarious access to our citizens data needed for local government to function.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Bradley County Mayor, not only in the past, but also during this exciting time of change and what seems like an information avalanche, at times. The ability to navigate successfully during this time is definitely a team effort and I am honored to serve each of you with an amazing team of elected, appointed, employed and volunteer members. This method of service has not only served us ALL well in the past, but is another reason that the future is full of Great Promise for us all. Bradley County, truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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Groundhog Day Hero Celebrity – February 7, 2017

This past week, Punxsutawney Phil, predicted that we are still in for six more weeks of winter after he was able to see his own shadow. This has been both verified, and also contradicted, by multiple professional weather personalities, and other Groundhogs, across the nation.

To help prepare for the possibility of a prolonged winter weather mix, I wanted to pass along some facts from the Local Government Insurance Pool's Safety newsletter that may help in preventing a cold temperature related illness or injury. Either inadequate or even damp clothing can increase the risk to becoming injured in colder weather. It is best to avoid drugs, alcohol, caffeine and cigarettes when working outside in colder conditions. Medical conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, diabetes, atherosclerosis and other health compromises may have a detrimental effect with the combination of colder weather. Males have a statistical higher death rate in cold conditions than females, as well as older, overweight persons who could find that activities that require exertion in the cold, may constrict the blood vessels of the heart to such a degree as to increase the chance of injury or even death that would not be as prevalent in warmer weather. If one must be outside and you find the temperature colder than usual please proceed with caution and ask for help or assistance before reaching a disastrous outcome.

With colder weather over a period of time, many people will use differing types of heating systems to help remain both comfortable and warm. If any of these require electricity please check plugs and cords for any signs of frayed wiring or worn insulation. Do not overload circuits, fuses, motors or even the outlets. Make sure that there is at least 2 feet of space IN ALL DIRECTIONS from a heat source away from any combustible materials and do not use extension cords to provide electricity for heating units.

Groundhog Day also helped me remember that classic movie that many may remember, in which the same 24 hour period was repeated and this allowed for many different outcomes each day due to the ability of using each day's allotted time differently. In this movie, it became evident that with perseverance and dedication new skills could be learned and used to benefit not only the lead character, but also those who were around him each and every day. This could also very easily be used to either help or hurt the same people. My Assistant's wife, Peggy, recently taught a class describing the difference between a "Hero" versus a "Celebrity". A Hero is one that seeks to serve others in their time of need and never seeks credit or approval from others for their actions. They usually do this by choosing the "path less traveled" and sometimes even make their own path. A Celebrity is one that usually has achieved fame by portraying another person, or event, in life with the ability to replicate what has made someone else independently memorable. They usually do this by "losing themselves" in the character that they are trying to portray and gain a semblance of fame by "being someone else". Some then use this

notoriety to try and influence others opinions, actions and beliefs, as we have seen in recent weeks.

I am proud that the majority of Bradley County's past, current and hopefully future, resides more with the definition of a hero. Those who bravely worked to give us the opportunity to live, work and continue their efforts and enjoy the freedoms that have been freely given to us, but were not purchased without a cost. May we all seek to be safe. Thank you to those who continually seek to help, serve, protect and provide whether the weather is colder or not. This helping attitude and continuing to look out for others without seeking any recognition of self, for the next 6 weeks and beyond, describes the real heroes that are daily at work to keep Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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Valentines Day & SBA Financial Help Instructions – February 14, 2017

The nursery rhyme that most know as: Roses are red, Violets are blue. Sugar is sweet, and so are you, will probably be remembered today as many will celebrate Valentine's Day. The ability to find someone to share this life with, is indeed one of life's greatest gifts. Sonya, Thank you for being my Valentine today, and always!

There are many differing ideas, concepts and even theoretical discussions on the concept of St. Valentine. Was he a "real" person, what he was able to accomplish and the multiple versions of how he died. One included the giving of a card to one of his jailer's daughters, who had been healed, with the signature of "from your valentine"! The history may be uncertain but the current impact of this national holiday is indeed one of significance. The National Retail Federation relates that in 2017, Valentine's Day will contribute \$18.2 Billion, but will be less than the all-time high of \$19.7 Billion spent last year. They theorize that only 54 percent of the population will be celebrating this year, again down from the record setting 63 percent from back in 2007. The average American who does celebrate this holiday will spend \$136.57 on various items such as Chocolate, Flowers, Meals, Jewelry and Clothing. If you are among those who will be Celebrating this day (or week) please remember to always "shop local" and help our local independent and corporate retail businesses across Bradley County if at all possible!

This past year has also given many across Bradley County, and our region, reasons to be thankful to even be alive. The Severe Thunderstorms, Tornadoes, Wind, Hail and even the prolonged Drought have left many of our citizens and residents in Bradley County in desperate need of help. We have been given information from our Cleveland Bradley County Emergency Management Agency concerning the designation of our area as an U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster and Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program eligibility. These loans are available in response to a letter from Gov. Bill Haslam, requesting a disaster declaration by the SBA. The drought that began on June 28th, 2016 and the severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, wind and hail on November 29 – 30, 2016 are qualifiers for this assistance opportunity. Eligibility, application deadlines and other information may be found by contacting the SBA's Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (1-800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard of hearing) or by emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov

The ability to help one another in their time of need is something that we all should be working to make part of our daily routine. This is important for us all to remember on Valentine's Day, and always. We never know when the next "disaster" may strike, who will be effected, and for how long. In being prepared as a community and helping us all during the recovery, this helps to keep Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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President's Day – February 21, 2017

Presidents' Day is an American holiday that is celebrated on the third Monday in February of each year. This time of celebration was originally established in 1885 in recognition of President George Washington, who was our first President, over 100 years earlier. Those who believe that "gridlock" and the "wheels of government" moving slowly are a new phenomenon, and something that has recently been added, are mistaken. It is still officially called "Washington's Birthday" by the Federal Government, and was originally celebrated on February 22, which was President Washington's actual day of birth.

In 1971 it was moved to its current third Monday in February location as part of 1971's Uniform Monday Holiday Act. This was an attempt to create more three day weekends for the nation's workers. Many individual States still have individual holidays honoring the birthday of Presidents Washington, Abraham Lincoln and other figures, but Presidents Day is now popularly viewed as a national day to celebrate ALL U.S. Presidents past and present.

At the time of the official recognition of Washington's Birthday, or President's Day, being federally recognized it joined only four other nationally recognized federal bank holidays. These were Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Independence Day and Thanksgiving. It was also the first to celebrate the life of an individual American. The second would be to honor and establish Martin Luther King Jr. Day that was designated and signed into law in 1983, almost 100 years later.

I hope that you and your family took some time yesterday to reflect, and also remember, that the wonderful Nation that we ALL enjoy today, was envisioned literally less than 250 years ago. It was prayed for, fought for, and untold numbers of patriots, have also died for us to have the right to be able to be known as AMERICANS. Are we perfect? No, many of us, and the places that we may live, are far from it. But do we have a better opportunity to change our outcomes, directions and "lot in life?" Most definitely! We are still the place where dreams are not only possible, but that they come true for those who work for it and apply themselves, each and every day. ALL of us may occasionally need help and assistance, and Bradley County is blessed beyond measure with Faith based, non-profit, individuals and government programs that strive and succeed in helping those who are in their time of need. But no one, locally or across the nation, should confuse the generosity of those who are trying to help, with an idea of CONSTANT help with no end in sight if they are able to work and contribute themselves.

Thank you to each of those who invest in our community daily to make it a better place. This continued effort not only helps those who may be a part of our individual family's but also helps to make our community a stronger, safer, secure and thriving place to call home. Your efforts of remembering with reverence also helps to move us forward in faith together. These actions also help to keep Bradley County Tennessee at its BEST!

Our County
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Nixel – February 28, 2017

It has been said more than once, that if you do not like the weather in Southeast Tennessee, just wait a few hours and it will change. Our geographic location helps ensure that we get to experience each of the four seasons of the year, and this includes sometimes winter and spring within a few days of each other. While we have NO control over the weather that we each get to experience, Charleston, Cleveland, Bradley County and our region are blessed with many terrific professionals who strive to keep us informed, and safe.

The Cleveland Bradley County Emergency Management Agency understands that a disaster may strike at any time. Tornadoes, floods, hazardous spills, fires, acts of nature, acts of terrorism or many other means of disaster may occur at any time. Each year, millions of Americans face disaster and its terrifying consequences. And according to the CBCEMA webpage, Bradley County residents may also become victims of these events.

The mission statement of the Cleveland-Bradley County Emergency Management Agency is to provide the highest level of emergency preparedness to the citizens of Cleveland and Bradley County as they face the challenges in the 21st century. As an inter-agency coordinator that partners with local, state, federal and private entities, and their respective professionals, they seek to provide a comprehensive approach to emergency response, hazard planning as well as disaster mitigation procedures throughout Cleveland and Bradley County.

Many of their procedures, plans and training are not for the average citizen's participation, but one of the "crown jewels" of their combined efforts and planning that we ALL can now enjoy is the NIXLE system. This is an Emergency Alert Notification System that has proven its extreme value time and time again. Local television, local radio, and the vast array of available methods of citizen notification continue to be very important methods to inform and keep us all safe during times of emergency situations. We in Bradley County always try to also learn from our experiences. One important thing learned from the tornadoes of 2011 was that we needed a better way of communicating with our local citizens. NIXLE is yet another "tool" that is now used to provide an additional layer of local information conveyance to each and every citizen during times of need.

Messages are categorized as Alerts (weather warnings, severe storms), Advisories (school closings, missing persons), or Community (Smoke testing, Block Party street closings). These messages may also include other relative safety and community event information. These messages can be sent specifically to residents who have registered within a ¼ mile radius of an event. Subscribers may also choose which type of messages are received, as in text message, email or voice message.

The Salvation Army provided the original funding to provide the NIXLE public notification system and has been a proud partner in our local emergency preparedness history. The residents of Charleston, Cleveland, Bradley County, and those of neighboring communities can immediately begin receiving pertinent information via text message or email by texting CBCEMA to 888777 or registering at <http://www.nixle.com>

I remain thankful for the many who stand ready to help us all in our time of need. If it is scheduled for us to enjoy an early Spring, or if Winter has a couple of more days of brutal cold, snow and ice in store for us, please remember that it is up to each of us to prepare and protect our family, our friends and our community. So, please if you have not yet done so, sign up for your NIXLE notification system subscription, at no cost to you. With your ability to receive timely, and specific information and help from our always prepared Emergency Responders, Law Enforcement, Medical Professionals, Fire Professionals, Faith Community and Volunteers we remain the example of Bradley County, Tennessee at its BEST!

Our County

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May and Spence Awarded by GVSA – March 7, 2017

We, who have seen a few seasons come and go have been given the blessing of experience. This gift is one that literally keeps on giving throughout one's life. It helps to guide, protect and also give meaning to our brief existence while on this earth. One of the observations that this group of people, myself included, are allowed to experience is that there are two distinct groups of people. There are those who seek to give and then there are those who seek to take. Bradley County is not immune from this diversity of viewpoints either, but we have many more "GIVERS" than "TAKERS".

Bradley County has been blessed with those across our community that have graciously given of themselves, to help ensure that their family, their place of worship, their alma mater, their place of business, their community or even the people that they will never meet or personally know will have a better life. They literally have left "their mark" on our community and we are all better because of them.

This past month, two from our community were chosen and honored by the annual Tennessee Governor's Volunteer Stars Award at their Statewide Gala event in Franklin, Tennessee. Stephen Connelly May was chosen as our youth volunteer (under 25) nominee and Carol May Spence was posthumously recognized as our adult volunteer nominee.

Stephen Connelly May has maintained a 4.0 grade point average, while remaining very active in his Church, playing tennis and also volunteering to serve people in his school and also across our community. Many community service groups have been a part of his volunteer service but one that he has taken to heart is that of founder and leader of Live Drug Free (LDF). This group has taken the message of hope and the ability to Live Drug Free across school campuses. An upcoming video project will benefit from his script being used in the production process. The drug awareness message is being taken by the students who have partnered with him to be showcased across the middle, and even elementary schools throughout the district. His passion, to help and save others with the live drug free message has been joined by many, including Churches, to help deliver this powerful message.

Carol May Spence was one of those rare souls who literally made it her life's work to serve, protect, care for and usually feed those whom she was given the opportunity to help. For literally DECADES, it was not unusual for her home to find the driveway lined with police cars, fire trucks, EMS trucks and various other Emergency Service vehicles around supper time. She took time to invest in those who "protect and serve" us all. Her husband, and 3 sons were each involved in the local emergency services work, and she supported them, as well as those who worked, and volunteered, with them always! Her love for her family, and extended family of emergency services workers, literally knew no end and we are all eternally grateful for her contributions that improved us all.

The time spent on this globe is irrelevant. It is where our focus is and where our hope is found. Those who are beginning this race like Stephen May, or those who have successfully finished it like Carol Spence have many things in common. They care about others, they act upon their beliefs to make life better for others and they have an unending faith and hope that is contagious. I am glad that they have received some recognition by those across our community and state, but I also know that they are not motivated by "taking credit" but by "giving hope" to those they each found in need. This week may we ALL take the time to find the many like them across our community who truly make a difference and audibly say, Thank You. Let them know that they and their service are appreciated. In doing so we continue the process that keeps us known as Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

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Spring Forward with Hope – March 14, 2017

Local Government is alive and well in Bradley County. It has been said that very few people would find it a welcoming statement to hear the words "I'm with the government and I am here to help", but I would say that those people have not been in Bradley County for a while, either. There is no way for anyone, or any government office, to please everyone. Trying to please everyone has a direct correlation to pleasing no one. However, there is a way for us all to work together for the common good and that is practiced each and every day across our community.

Bradley County Government is composed of numerous professionals, employees, elected officials and volunteers across more than 70 different departments. From Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management, Road Department, Parks and Recreation, Education, Court Systems, Archives, Probation, Planning, Building Permits, Tax Assessments, Tax Payment, Finance, Legal, Rehabilitation, Commission representatives, myself and approximately 650 of the best employees anywhere work each day to serve the best citizens on the face of the earth. Bradley County Schools, and their 1130 + professional employees at all levels also work each day to provide an educational experience filled with opportunity in a safe environment all across our County and their employees are in addition to the 650 + mentioned previously.

Many times the idea that those "in government" are immune from the people that they represent and that they do not know what is happening on a daily basis in their community. Local Government, in my opinion, is one of the few places where this concept is not possible. We all, live and work in the same community and are accessible to those that we all serve. As our community has now exceeded 100,000 in population it may take a little longer to be reached, but we each strive to not only be accessible, but to also be available to help others in their time of need.

In our ever changing environment of information that is needed from local government and also to local government we strive to make this process as easy as humanly possible. The addition of payment options, credit card acceptance, U.S. Passport processing, kiosk availability are all now readily available. But as great as these options are, in my opinion, they will never take the place of human interaction. Please know that we look forward to not only meeting your expectations, but hopefully exceeding them, all across the many locations and departments of Bradley County government.

Some also find great pleasure in trying to divide, instead of unite local governments. There are a few places where the priorities of Bradley County, and the City of Charleston and the City of Cleveland may have different ideas and legal obligations to their respective charters and foundational documents, but the VAST majority of the time we are not only in agreement but also work together for the betterment of all of our citizens. This was probably most easily recognized this past year when our region earned the recognition of the number one place in the nation for job growth and creation.

This past weekend we all collectively set our time forward, one hour. This is necessary to not only keep us all on the same appointment schedule, but to also help in getting ready for the upcoming spring and summer increase in activity and schedules. This "spring forward" is another reminder of the bright future that we all have by having the opportunity to work together to ensure the continuation of Bradley County remaining Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Budget Process Progressing – March 21, 2017

Many Bradley County citizens pay their taxes by the end of the year so they may deduct applicable amounts from their federal income taxes. All Bradley County citizen should have paid their taxes by the end of February to remain current on their property taxes locally. This process is just one of the many ways in which local government is funded to provide the needed, and also the expected, services for each of our citizens. Thank you for doing your part to keep Bradley County productive and funded.

Please know that we also are doing our part to not only provide the best possible services in the best possible way but also at the best possible value for each dollar entrusted to our care. This week starts the beginning of departmental budget documents being sent for review from over 70 different departments within Bradley County Government operations. Not only are they each evaluated on the merit of their service, but on their ability to provide their service in the best possible way at the least possible cost. This process is one in which each and every department knows that they are not only justifying their service, product or actions but that they are also justifying their request of taxpayer funds.

The ability to have this process work correctly takes many people working together with a common goal not only "in mind" but also with one purpose of providing the best possible use of each dollar. One of my main requirements of serving as Bradley County Mayor is the fulfillment of the Chief Financial Officer duties. This involves many aspects of my daily activities, but is most consuming during this time of year. Not only are we required to fund many items and budgets, but unlike Washington D.C. we have to do so while simultaneously producing a balanced budget each and every year!

The vast majority of departments within Bradley County government always work with us to produce not only a balanced budget, but also one in which needs are prioritized and then are met on a schedule that is within budget constraints. Each year there are exceptions, and I am sure that this year will not be any different. Every home budget also has unforeseen expenses that even with the best of planning seem to arrive at the absolute worst time for a financial plan.

But please know, and understand, that each department is working together to ensure that every dollar is invested to not only produce exceptional service, but to also be done so in a way to maximize results while minimizing cost. This process of working together has produced one of the longest records of community growth without a property tax increase across the state of Tennessee. And is yet another reason that Bradley County is truly Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Caveat Emptor After Storm Hail Damage - March 28, 2017

Caveat Emptor. These two words are always important to remember. After a natural disaster or event like this past week's hail storm they are extremely important. According to Merriam – Webster the definition of these two words are: a principle in commerce, without a warranty the buyer takes the risk and is a reasonable approach for many consumer products.

Years ago when Bradley County was much smaller, the local marketplace was one in which the majority of the people not only knew each other, but they also knew most of everybody's family as well. This knowledge was not only nice, but it was essential to know who would provide quality work when hired, and also those who would pay an invoice on time. With over 108,000 people now residing within the borders of Bradley County this concept is still known to a few longtime residents but many who have just moved here may not know who to choose for quality work, and those whom need to be investigated before hiring to do work.

Let me be clear, the role of government is not to provide an influence toward any individual or group, but to also help to enforce a "level playing field" for all to compete to achieve success or failure from their own work or lack thereof. I am not recommending a business, an individual or trying to influence choices, but I am trying to remind each of our citizens and residents of a simple fact. If your home, automobile or property was damaged in the recent hail storm, PLEASE research whom you are considering to help repair or replace the damaged items! There are federal, state and also local regulations and laws that were put in place to help avoid misinterpretation and misrepresentation of any expected results. These protections are in place to help provide protection when you give your "hard earned" money to those who claim that they will fix the damage. But the final decision is still one in which the owner must decide and is also responsible for making the correct choice.

Talk to your neighbors, friends, coworkers, fellow Church members and others to help in the process of finding who they might recommend. Most will give an honest assessment of those who may have worked on their home, car, or property in the past. Seek references from those on the list that you have narrowed down to two or three choices. Make sure that they have CURRENT licenses, insurance and bonding if necessary and then ALSO call and verify that each of these represented documents are true. Ask for previous names and locations of similar work that they have completed for others and then call them to check on the work completed and if they were also satisfied with not only the work but the process involved to complete the work. There are numerous licensed, bonded and insured professionals in Bradley County to choose from for work that may be needed. I cannot guarantee that everyone will do a fantastic job, but I can guarantee that if you choose a local contractor that pays local taxes, and buys local products, and employs local people that they will usually still be here if and when you have a problem or concern with their work and you need to seek further help.

Many who may come here after this devastating event from out of town hopefully will also do good work and repairs. But they are not a part of our community and once they "move on" to the next community may be extremely hard to find if further repairs or concerns with their work are needed.

Caveat Emptor and Shop Local are two wonderful concepts to remember when we all are trying to recover and repair what was damaged this past week. They are also two wonderful ideas that help to keep our community strong and continue to make Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Healthy County – April 4, 2017

Spring. That time of year that just beckons us all to get outside and to enjoy the beauty that is around us, in the Tennessee Valley. This process may have been slowed some due to the man, or woman, who helped to develop the Bradford Pear tree. That person, needs to be isolated from society for at least 10 years, but I digress.

Bradley County has many places to visit and areas to enjoy being outdoors. This past year members of our local Bradley County Health Department began meeting with other members of our Community to discuss items of common interest and ways in which we can all improve our health and the health of those that we care about. During this discussion the ideas began to come forward and have eventually developed into our local Bradley County Health Council subcommittee, also known as our version of a Healthier Tennessee Community. 15 members of our community from State and Local government, City and County school systems, YMCA, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, Local Hospitals and our Health Department have each agreed to serve and give of their time and resources.

Called Bradley Cleveland Champions, multiple events are planned to help in not only designating us as a community who strives to have better health but also one in which ideas are cultivated that give us all options to use in the process of making healthier choices and improving our own health. Bradley Walks, has already started but will have time for each new registrant to begin upon a healthier lifestyle by simply enjoying our beautiful outdoors and walking. This may be upon the local Greenway, or at the tracks that have been furnished, and built, at many of our local schools for use by the community, to even those who seek to improve their health by walking indoors at the local Bradley Square Mall. Healthy kids at the local YMCA continues to draw at least 750 participants yearly in improving healthy snack choices and physical activity for our local families.

Local schools Health and safety Expos are a continuing process as are local worksite "Lunch and Learns" that give better options and ideas to help one's own self and each of our family's. Workplace and also places of Worship have each continued to be areas in which there are renewed interest in healthier choices abound. Wellness awareness and continued enrollment are both encouraging aspects of this renewed sense of a healthier community.

Installing more bike lanes, Health Council attendance increasing, Gold Sneaker presentations to local daycares, Healthy Woman Expo's and many others point to a greater participation in making sure the healthy choices are not only available but also chosen. You may seek more information by contacting the local Bradley County Health Department at 423-728-7020 or our local Bradley County UT Extension Agency at 423-728-7001 for more information concerning healthy choices and Bradley Walks respectively.

These programs, and many more, continue to provide healthier options and also help to ensure that Bradley County remains Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Easter – April 11, 2017

Spring Forward. Budding Trees. New Growth. Changing Weather. These events represent an absolutely wonderful and amazing time for in Bradley County and the Tennessee Valley. This Sunday is Easter, a time for self-reflection, remembrance and celebration. It is literally a holiday that existed before the word holiday was ever defined. It is a day marked on every calendar in a country where people are free to observe it in any way they choose.

We have many restaurants, we have many banks, many pharmacies, we are getting many tire stores, but located across our community in every direction and in almost every community you will find a Church. It was said of Ray Kroc, in his early days at the leadership of his brand of the fast food giant McDonalds, that before locating a new corporate owned store in a new town that he would speak with the local people about their likes and dislikes. He would also get in an airplane and from that vantage point he would look for the Church steeples in an area and this helped him in locating his restaurants nearby areas with Churches. He theorized that Church steeples were a sign of more than a congregation, but an area where families could be found. An abundance of families usually meant a stable community and if they were there in abundance that they could eventually get hungry and hopefully patronize his restaurant business as well.

I did not know Ray Kroc, I do not know if the entirety of this legendary concept really happened, but I do know that Bradley County has a wonderful group of abundant Churches and I do know that we have been blessed with an abundant supply of amazing families that make our communities alive with hope, promise, faith and optimism. This time of renewal is not only one to be celebrated in our past but also now in the present and hopefully forever into the future.

The free gift of His promise was not without cost and it is available to everyone.

As your Bradley County Mayor, it is not my place to lead you in your choice on this day any more than on any other day. It is also not my place to restrict that choice either. Bradley County is literally blessed with many places of worship that hopefully will be at capacity crowds to hear a challenging message of hope and a future that will be and to also help to make us better than today. If you choose to go, I trust that you will be blessed by what you hear, and have an uplifting experience.

May we all stop to remember that each of us are not only placed here to receive the benefit of the amazing natural beauty and abundant resources that surround Bradley County, but that we are also placed here to contribute to improve ourselves and our surroundings. This "bloom where you are planted" philosophy is not only realistic, it also helped to keep us in a thankful mindset for where we are, and not in a constant state of day dreaming for where we want to be. This Easter may we all remember that we are blessed. We are blessed with a beautiful area of

the world to call home and we are also blessed with an amazing future filled with hope. You and each member of your family are appreciated and are a needed part of this Bradley County Community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Bradley County Mayor and thank you for your continued efforts to contribute and improve, that helps to keep Bradley County, TN at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Broadband – April 18, 2017

The information age is here and we can embrace it as a gift or despise it as a curse. Entire industries have been either changed, improved or quite possibly even eliminated. 40 years ago it would have never been imagined that film would be virtually eliminated. From regional portrait studios who were at that time thought to be "too big to fail" to processing and even nationwide membership books being made locally now are no more. One look at a "modern" office from just 25 years ago reveals ashtrays, typewriters, rolodexes, and if really up to date a fax machine and a computer monitor as large as a desk today.

The once cutting edge "dial up" connections would provide an astonishing speed of communication that is comparable to a conventional stove and Microwave. This continuing progress has also been a driving force in many areas of each of our lives. Information that was once held to be discussed without individual commentary during the noon day, evening news and our local newspapers is now dispensed without much regard to anyone mere seconds after it happens.

The Internet is truly like anything else in life. It can be used for good or it can just as easily be used for evil. The process is controlled by those who choose to use it and their thoughts and intentions. After decades of uploading a seemingly endless amount of facts, figures and concepts the ability for this information to be used in the pursuit of knowledge and education is indeed remarkable.

This past week the culmination of many years of dedicated work resulted in the passage of Tennessee legislation that will eventually provide the process for broadband Internet to be a reality to ALL throughout Tennessee, including Bradley County. Our neighbor to the south, Chattanooga, has become literally one of the first in the Nation to offer 1 Gig service to their citizens. Where their ability to receive literally some of the fastest speeds of information transfer possible, it has been a struggle for others to be denied this benefit as well. Many across almost every portion of government service, including myself, business associates, educational professionals, community volunteers and every grassroots volunteer have worked together to make this day not only possible but a reality. I thank each and every one, for the years of work and community efforts to lend their support in making the passage of this recent legislation possible.

Coupled with the state budget, the legislation makes targeted investments through grants and tax credits that focus on the state's underserved or unserved areas. It also permits the state's private, nonprofit electric cooperatives to provide retail broadband internet service – something they have been completely unable to do in the past.

The continued efforts needed to continue this process will be vital to making sure that the promise of equal opportunity for fast, reliable and affordable broadband Internet helps improve our lives each and every day. This process has been compared to the "electrification" of rural America almost 100 years ago. Who knows what "bright" idea may be nurtured in a small child that may reside even in Bradley County Tennessee as they complete their homework assignments that may be the next amazing discovery for good that happens as a result of all of this hard work. If you have labored in this effort and if you get the opportunity to say thank you to those who voted for this passage in Nashville last week, please shake their hand and say thank you for giving to our future. We hopefully may all notice this change and improvement soon across the State. And thus Bradley County will continue to remain Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Planning Department – April 25, 2017

Last week signaled the filing deadline of the federal income tax system. Some may have paid, some may have received a refund and still others may have filed for an extension after paying their calculated payment on taxes due. Wherever you found yourself upon this spectrum of possibilities there are probably many who have said that they have finally gained the resolve to improve their "plan" to achieve better success during this process for next year. This process is vital for not only individuals and families but this process is also an important part of the success of local governments as well.

Bently Thomas is the Director of Planning and Inspections for Bradley County. His departmental offices are located in the Bradley County Courthouse Annex building with a street address of 155 Broad Street NW. You may enter the main floor that is directly across from the Bradley County Courthouse and proceed down one floor, or you may enter from the door that is under the burgundy awning on the First Street side of this historic building in Downtown Cleveland. His department is involved with land use planning and seeks to preserve and enhance the quality of life for all who call Bradley County their home. He is responsible for ensuring orderly growth and development throughout the unincorporated areas of Bradley County by providing help to individual citizens, County Departments, Boards, Commissions and Zoning Appeals meetings, votes and processes. These recommendations are based on thoughtful analysis, sound research and the wise use of local resources through a combination of established and innovative planning techniques.

This extremely busy office is where a citizen would go to receive information about Subdivision Regulations, Building Permits, Stormwater Information, Zoning Maps, Inspections & Variance Applications. And if this were not enough they also are responsible for the issuance of addresses and permits for all structures in Bradley County. Our County has adopted a standard policy and guidelines to ensure consistency and efficiency in this process for all services, particularly for our emergency responders. This coordination of policy, services, administrations and each and every employee of Bradley County leads to the Ambulance, Fire Truck, Law Enforcement, Letter Carrier, and ALL other professionals being able to find your individual address quickly whether you are having an emergency or are in the mood for a great delivery of pizza.

Bently and his assembled team of professionals, work tirelessly each day to provide exceptional service. It is impossible to please every person, every day but I know that they strive to help all who call, email, fax or come by in person, find an answer to their individual question or concern. This process, and department, of planning professionals, are just one of the more than 70 different departments that make up our local Bradley County Government. If you are in need of an address, are concerned about recent land use activity close to your home or would like to become a volunteer with professional skills and a concern for our community please contact

myself or Mr. Thomas. The ability to contribute and to also serve others is alive and well in this department and also all across Bradley County. This attitude of helping others is another reason that Bradley County is Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Move Over Law –May 9, 2017

The end of this years "school year" is fast approaching. The inevitable increase in traveling, to and from far and near, will soon be a part of our region, and the entire nation. This upcoming process started me to thinking of many items, but more specifically on two items for us all to consider to help protect our family, our community and also our public service employees. One involves a State Law and another involves a State recommendation.

Tennessee Code Annotated 55-8-132 is commonly referred to as the "Move Over Law". This law requires motorists to move over into an adjacent lane of traffic, when safe to do so, or alternatively to slow down when approaching emergency vehicles. These may be recovery vehicles (tow trucks), highway maintenance vehicles, solid waste vehicles, utility service vehicles and essentially the law applies to ANY responder vehicle with audible (sirens) or visual (flashing lights) signals that drivers may see on Tennessee roadways. Since 2006 this law has helped to provide a "safety zone" for these professionals to better be able to help motorist in their time of need in a safer environment for everyone involved in the process. The current penalty for violating the Move over Law in Tennessee is a maximum fine of up to \$500.00 and also a possible 30 days in jail.

Even with the current law in place, TDOT (Tennessee Department of Transportation) experienced the death of 3 workers who were struck and killed by passing motorists in 2016. A new emphasis has recently led to the development of the "move over / slow down" ad campaign and hopefully this will help many in our community, and beyond, see the need to be even more vigilant with defensive driving techniques that help to allow ALL to remain safe on our roadways this summer and all year long.

It has been jokingly referred to as a miniscule pest. For those of us old enough to remember Rodney Dangerfield, the insect most likely to have garnered his reputation for "getting no respect" would have had to be a mosquito. Many varieties and localities have their own species that they are famous for, but one that became "newsworthy" last year, remains one in which we continue to fight today. The Zika Virus is spread by the daytime active Aedes mosquitos, such as A. Aegypti and A. Albopictus. This process was first isolated in 1947 in the Zika Forest of Uganda. These mosquitos hatch and then die in a very short time and during their brief lifetime they never travel more than 3 to 4 football fields, in any direction. The virus itself causes a relatively mild reaction and then the body appears to have returned to "normal". The lingering effects to those females of child bearing age, should they become pregnant weeks and even months afterwards, have led to children being born with cognitive concerns and diagnoses.

For the observant readers of health literature it would be difficult for a mosquito first found in Uganda to cause worldwide health concerns if they never travel very far themselves, and that

would be true. But it is also true that people now travel literally around the world each and every day and this "mode of transmission" has helped to spread this "new" concern for even our area. Last year Tennessee had a recorded 66 cases of Zika in Tennessee from travelers to other areas where the disease exists in their local mosquito populations. Thanks to many collaborative efforts, Zika so far has been contained and there has been NO localized transmission anywhere in our state in studies through 2016. I ask ALL in our County to continue to reduce mosquito breeding areas by removing any standing water sources on your property, promote "fight the bite" protection strategies and continue to assist our local public health professionals if an outbreak may occur in the future. There should also be communication and dialogue between our health department and the ministry community during the time when many embark upon missions trips to many areas around the globe that may be an area of Zika concern.

Thank you for taking the time to read my articles and especially this one. The lives we save may be some in our own family, our own community and our own nation. Your help in keeping us ALL safe, through both, Move Over / Slow Down and Fight the Bight are even more reasons why Bradley County continues to be Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Mother's Day – May 16, 2017

This past weekend many of us were blessed with the ability to express our love, admiration, thankfulness and hopefully appreciation to those who helped to give us life, our Mother. I am one who wishes that they could once again speak with their mother, either in person or on the phone and just hear her voice once more. The memories of her love for me and our family are ones that I treasure each and every day and quite honestly are some of my greatest memories and are a great comfort on certain days! Some people were not blessed to have a Mother like mine and some people had a Mother who was not the best example for their children. I feel sorry for those who did not have the unconditional love and acceptance that many in our community had in their homes. If you are able to, I humbly ask that you take the time to speak with your Mother and express your appreciation for their sacrifices made in order for their children to succeed where they may have failed. If you missed your opportunity this past weekend, there is ALWAYS today to make a renewed effort to be a better child and show the respect that they deserve as a parent and role model.

It has also been said that there are some who have been born with a face "that only their mother would, or could, love." This past week was also a "big" week for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the news cycle across the nation. But two stories from the FCW that covers the business of federal technology reveals that there are other recent stories that may be even more interesting.

Recently the FBI has expanded its access to photo databases and facial recognition technology to support its many investigations. Lawmakers are increasingly concerned as to the bureau's ability to protect those images of literally millions of American citizens and then to also follow the increasing regulations in relating to the fundamentals of transparency. Through databases, repositories and accompanied agencies more than 411 million photos of Americans, many of whom have never committed a crime, are available for review and request at a moment's notice. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chair, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, from Utah noted that "You're required by law to put out a privacy statement and you didn't and now we're supposed to trust you with millions of people's faces."

During Comey's tenure at the FBI, he often warned that modern encryption technology was often allowing criminals and terrorist to "go dark" and he argued for tech companies to provide secure backdoors and other keys for law enforcement to access devices and communications. At a recent speech at Boston College in March of this year, he stated that the FBI received 2,000 devices related to criminal cases, and that it was unable to access the data on 1,200 of them. It does not take a "rocket scientist" to determine and understand that criminals adapt and they also learn from past mistakes. With the understood need for healthcare and financial security of information circulating across the information highway they have taken advantage of the same

encryption technology to keep their communications between themselves private as well. What was once a very expensive undertaking has now become as simple as downloading an "app" on a smart cellphone for a few dollars that has the potential to bypass the premier law enforcement agency in the world, for now.

This week may we all try our best to represent our Mother's parenting skills in the best possible light to those that we meet along life in Bradley County. May we be mindful that there are those who seek to take our identity, our communications and our data to use for various unsavory ideas and enterprises. But even with that activity being a possibility there are those who choose to be, do and become the best that they are possible of achieving. This concept and attitude is thankfully found among the majority locally and is what helps us to continually enjoy keeping Bradley County as Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Home Loan & Repair Programs – May 23, 2017

It has been said that "a person's home is their castle". This is true in the sense that a person is usually proud of what their hard work, has helped to provide for themselves, and also their family. But when the best of intentions, the best of plans and the best work that a person can do is still not enough to provide for their family, problems soon arise.

It is true that "the government" big enough to give you everything that you need, is also simultaneously big enough to take everything that you have. There is also truth in the fact that many amazing non-profit, faith based and community driven programs are also very much "alive and well" all across Bradley County. But I also wanted to speak about 2 recent programs that have been explained to me that may be of great benefit to the families across our region.

The Tennessee Housing Development Agency has awarded a \$375,000 grant to Bradley County that will be used to help individual families bring substandard homes back into code and thereby improve the safety of each resident. The funds for this program are ultimately funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered in part by the THDA. Ideally this program is designed to help very low and low income individuals who do not have the financial resources to make much needed improvements to their residences. We have plans to hold public meetings to outline the application procedures and also explain the grant guidelines. As explained at present, each home will be eligible for up to \$40,000 subsidy for rehabilitation to bring it up to code. The Southeast Tennessee Development District has been selected to administer the program under policies and standards established by the county. The deadline to apply is May 26th, 2017 and you may also call SETDD Housing Services at (423) 424-4260.

The Rural Development of the USDA also has recently reminded us of two very important and needed options that may also help families all across Bradley County. They have both, a home ownership loan program and a home repair program that are currently being offered. The family's that could qualify must reside OUTSIDE of the city limits of Cleveland but WITHIN the boundaries of Bradley County. The maximum loan at this time for Bradley County is \$152,100 with an interest rate that presently is 3.25%. The home repair program must also meet asset limitations, have an acceptable credit history and also own and occupy the property in order to qualify. In an effort to help "very low" income homeowners to be able to make the necessary repairs to their homes multiple efforts have been combined to help. On average payments should average \$5.00 for every \$1,000 borrowed with an interest rate presently at 1 % for up to 20 years. Many more options are available than today's space will allow, but for more information please feel free to call the local office of the Rural Development of the USDA at (423) 708-6785

These are just two options that are available at the present time to allow for repairs, home ownership and also the opportunity to improve the safety and indeed the health of you and your family. I remain thankful that we have developed partnerships like these that continue to produce valuable benefits for the citizens who reside in Bradley County Tennessee. These programs, and many others, continue to remind us all that Bradley County, truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Education and the Military – May 30, 2017

Bumper Stickers. They can be very effective in making us think of things in a different perspective or way. I am sure that many of you have seen the one that has been attributed to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom that states "it will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the air force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber."

During this time of year of graduation ceremonies and yesterday's Memorial Day ceremony to recognize, respect and remember our Military fallen reminded me of why we need both. An educated citizenry is needed to help ensure a viable workforce and to continually give back the necessary skills to maintain a civilized society. An active, robust and successful military is also needed to ensure that these same citizens may continue to contribute in multiple ways with the assurance that their homeland is safe from attacks of any enemy, foreign or domestic.

The local educational institutions have all been extremely active with the recent graduation exercises and of course we are all very proud of each student who has done their best to complete their chosen field of study. We continue to encourage each graduate to keep the mindset of "always learning" that will serve them well in each of their lives as they now either further continue their educational pursuits, or find successful employment in the surrounding region. The ability to successfully transition from student to employee (or employer) is not always an easy task. My desire for each graduate is that they become extremely successful and always remember to "give back" to their community in ways which bless their neighbors and community at large.

It does not take one very long at all to realize that not everyone that we meet along this journey called life is, or will even want to be, our friend. Thankfully the majority of the world's population just wants to live in peace and provide for themselves, their families and their country. There are also those who seemingly, hate to see others live in peace and want to do their best to bring mayhem, disorder, strife and terror across the globe. There is a component of combatting this ideology that in which education can play a valuable role. There is also a component of conventional combat that not only needs to, but literally has to be called upon, to ensure that we may continue to live in peace. Ronald Reagan in the 1960's once stated that "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed to them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States when we were free."

In our efforts to gain knowledge through educational pursuits, may we NEVER forget that there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. May we also remember that there is no greater sacrifice than the laying down of one's life for another. For our community to continue successfully, may we all remember that we need both educational excellence and a strong military. Bradley County is blessed to have both and is yet another reason that we are Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Budget and Murphy's Law – June 6, 2017

Have you ever been given a task to complete that consumes your every waking hour? Have you ever noticed that Murphy's Law (anything that can go wrong, will go wrong) has a way of entering in to this equation? If you have, you are not alone! Many who attempt the completion of any task soon find that there are or will be many detractions and obstacles to overcome before the finish line is crossed. How we respond to these "life interruptions" are what "makes us who we are" and either insures victory or allows us to accept defeat.

I am not immune from these "opportunities" either. Those who know me best understand that "budget time" is a time of intense debate, "conversation" and meetings that leaves little time for anything else. These 2 to 3 months are spent in finding the best use of limited funds for maximum impact. I hope that you appreciate our efforts to present not only a balanced budget to the Bradley County Commission for a vote, but one in which we continue to live within our means.

You may have read previous news articles concerning the budget for 2017 – 2018. The goals and highlights are:

- 1) No tax increase.
- 2) A 2% raise for employees, if possible.
- 3) Maintain fund balance of approximately 20%.
- 4) Capital Project Fund, with growth dollars, to pay the extra \$2 ½ million for Lake Forest (over 3 years).

As President Trump's budget director said recently when he presented the federal budget proposal, "This budget has compassion for the taxpayers." "Compassion for the taxpayers" is what Bradley County's budget proposal has had for many years and continues with this budget. Continuing to provide the level of services that our citizens have come to expect and deserve, without a tax increase!

After a very difficult budget process this year we again have one that is fiscally sound & based on conservative estimates. Most departments did as we asked & requested no increase. Some departments requested even less and of course a few requested more. I reminded our Bradley County Commission, that they asked me to put every penny possible into the "other capital project fund" for the additional \$2 ½ million for Lake Forest. Needless to say, I have made minor cuts throughout, to get this proposed budget balanced and presented to the Bradley County Commission.

The result after all expenditures in the general fund is a \$10.7 million, fund balance! With this budget, every single department in the general fund will continue to provide the level of service that our citizens have come to expect. The road fund meets the 5 year average required by law and the schools have a 2 million dollar increase, due mostly to state funding. And a 2% raise for full time employees is included in this budget proposal.

The 5 budgets with the largest increase, including raises, are: Schools \$2 million, Justice Center \$219,000, Sheriff \$180,235, 911 Center \$100,000 and Property Assessor \$85,367.

Debt Service includes:

\$3 Million Industrial Park Bonds with Hotel/Motel Revenue to cover cost.

\$2 Million in Bonds for the Work Release Addition, with revenue from operations to cover cost.

Other Capital Projects is a new fund, following the request of Finance. It was created by consolidating the General Capital Project Fund, the Education Capital Project Fund & a few fractions of a penny moved from most all others. This is what was meant when you have heard me say, numerous times, "We will re-allocate every single dollar possible to this new fund to pay for the additional \$2 ½ million that this commission approved for Lake Forest."

An over 400 page budget request document, covering over 70 departments, has now been reduced to a 100 + page budget document by the help of every department, elected official and employee of Bradley County working together to reach this significant achievement. I appreciate the opportunity to work together in our efforts to not only present this budget, but to also serve those who call Bradley County our home. This extra effort by all, and the defeat of Murphy's Law, is not only appreciated, it is one of the reasons Bradley County is Tennessee at its Best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Flood and Litter – July 17, 2017

This past weekend we experienced a flash flood in our community. We were not expecting an emergency and we, as individuals, were not prepared for it. Thankfully our emergency responders were prepared and were able to once again, as Elvis would say, "Take care of business, in a flash" flood. The seamless cooperation of services is something that we all tend to take for granted. We are truly blessed as when talking with neighboring communities and states, the response time, service done nor the coordination of multiple agencies and professionals needed are areas that I get asked about on a regular basis. This process of teamwork is not only needed, it is readily evident each and every time that our communities first responders, medical professionals, law enforcement officers, public service, dispatch, 911 and all of the professionals needed to make this machine function and function flawlessly.

The remnants of this recent flooding took a while to remove and repair. This is a normal process. This past week I also received a memorandum from the State of Tennessee Department of Transportation's launch of a new litter prevention campaign. It is one thing to have litter strewn around due to an uncontrollable event of nature that takes objects and trash to new locations across our community. This is quickly and thankfully removed by many across our community. But the voluntary, intentional and uncaring process of trashing our own community and state are attempting to be addressed by a new and multiphase approach of message communication.

Many may remember the Native American seen numerous times on a Saturday morning in-between 1970's era cartoons with a tear streaming down his face at the sight of people littering. Those who may be a little younger may remember the Chevrolet Corvair (and the later Chevrolet Malibu) being driven down a Tennessee road with the unmistakable County tune stating "There ain't no lower class than Tennessee trash" playing in the background. Since then the "Litter, Stop IT" have also been tried. Starting on June 15, 2017 the new litter prevention campaign of "Nobody Trashes Tennessee" will launch. Billboards, commercials, educational programs and anti-litter promotional items will be part of a multifaceted approach. A new website of information and ways of prevention will be visible at www.nobodytrashestn.com, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram will be accessible by using #nobodytrashestn in individual posts.

After extensive research it was found that while littering is occurring less, it is still a big problem. Research revealed that 30 percent of the state's litter is deliberate-meaning trash is tossed right out of vehicle windows. 70 percent of trash is considered negligent litter, which includes debris and trash flying out of uncovered pickup truck beds. "From the Great Smokey Mountain region, to the Mississippi River and every stretch of roadway in between, litter on our highways takes away from Tennessee's natural beauty," TDOT Commissioner John Schroer said. "It is not only an eyesore, but it costs TDOT more than \$15 million a year to clean up."

With 1,001 Tennesseans being surveyed (508 by phone/493 by web) it was found that the primary audience of this campaign will be identified as women in the 16-34 age group, with 71% of them describing themselves as litterers. This was higher than any other gender or age group. The good news from this research panel was also that 9 out of 10 Tennesseans said that once being aware of the litter problem (and the cost) they are willing to properly dispose of their trash.

The ability to plan for the unexpected is just one of the things that our local responders do extremely well. The ability to care about our community is something that we must ALL be involved in to continue to be successful. Thank you to each and every one who takes the time, the initiative and the extra work necessary to be a part of the solution and not part of the problem. This continuing effort is what sets us apart and makes Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Adults Need to Continue Adulting – June 20, 2017

This past weekend's Father's Day activities were a welcomed family time at our home. I hope that each of you had the opportunity to spend time or at least talk with your father. If that was not possible, I hope that you were able to have a time of remembrance and reflection of good times and memories of days gone by.

Thinking of parenting, have you ever had the feeling that I just can't "Adult" today? Watching, reading and experiencing the changing political climate that we are all seeing across the nation is beyond shocking, it has become scary. From national stories of literal assassination attempts last week of elected office holders on a baseball field, while practicing for a charity event due to an opposing political viewpoint to the local fallen 5 who were killed in our neighboring Hamilton County and Chattanooga. We seem to have a constant stream of 24 hour news personalities spewing forth their individual viewpoints as a substitute for actually just giving us the facts. I have faith that given, just the facts, we are all capable of making up our own minds as to what news is and how it is applicable to us as individuals, our community and our nation.

The time when we feel that we cannot take it for another day, is exactly what adults have always done, we take another step, and another and another. This action is what set us all apart from those who chose not to participate, but to be dependent on others for everything, including being told what to think. I do not have all of the answers, but I am thankful that I have been given the absolute gift of living in the greatest nation, state, county, city and community on the face of earth. This gift, along with hard work, has made it possible to achieve many, many things that I once only dreamed of as a child.

In this process of living we all have the option of our own thoughts and actions. We can build up or we can tear down. We can bless or we can curse. We can help others or we can hurt others. And one of the most important for us all to remember at this time in our history is that we can all disagree without being disagreeable. Everyone is entitled to an opinion and those who may not think the same are not mad, rabid, and evil people void of a soul, they simply disagree. In a civilized society we must find a way to live together peacefully or we will be destined to continue with even more inflamed conflict and actions.

This past week, as bad as it was, will hopefully be a "wake up call" to all of us Adults, that we truly do need each other and that an attack on one of us is indeed an attack on all of us. Had it not been for the grace of God and armed law enforcement professionals who ran TOWARD the threat while others were running AWAY, we could have witnessed the loss of multiple elected representatives lives and an indeed threat to our nation and way of life. We all need to continue to work together for the betterment of all across our nation. If you have the opportunity in the near future to see and speak with an elected office holder at any level and a law enforcement

and emergency response professional please take the time to shake their hand and let them know that you, and your family, appreciate them and their service. In doing so we recognize the benefit of their service and continue to build upon what truly makes Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Fit You to a T – July 4, 2017

We have the honor of celebrating today because, with divine guidance, men, women and children took it upon themselves to seek freedom and representation by those who understood their plight and needs. They sought this inherent freedom and the gift of self-control of their lives instead of being seen only as a number and a way of increasing revenue by taxation without representation. It is still amazing to me, that in a little over 241 years, we have been blessed to become a part of the greatest nation, with the opportunity for all to work, which the world has ever known.

The skill, dedication, devotion and intellect of the founding fathers, and their families, left as a legacy for us to follow. With sacred history as a guide they crafted for themselves, their families and their descendants what was missing during their present day struggles to live. I am sure that if they could see what our nation has become, they would have both words of praise and also words of concern.

The ability to speed along the ground in a car, through the air in an airplane and across the water in a floating city of a modern cruise ship, underwater in a submarine or through space in a spacecraft would have been unthinkable in their day. The ability to instantly communicate from telegraph, telephone, cellular devices and now social media with literally anyone in the world was not even considered in their day. The orbiting satellites that were put in place by our military, scientists and engineers have given us GPS capability for our military to place an ordinance within inches of a desired target, also literally anywhere in the world. Yet with all of this technology and seemingly endless advancements they had the wisdom to know that subsequent generations who had not fought for freedoms would not know how truly valuable it is to an individual, their family, a community and even our nation.

The quote of "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety," is attributed to Benjamin Franklin. He was a US author, diplomat, inventor, physicist, politician and printer who lived from 1706 – 1790. He was present and helped to sign the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776.

Many alive today know him as the face of the \$100 dollar bill, but have forgotten the true value of his words and contributions.

We, as a nation, are far from perfect as we have many viewpoints now striving for both attention and time, but we are STILL the BEST nation on earth. The American dream may have been interrupted for a time, but even today if you are willing to do work diligently and when others will not, you can become whatever you want and live like others can't, only in America.

In Bradley County we understand that each and every person is important to the collective good of our communities. We continually strive to also "live within our means" as a government. An example of that process was yesterday's vote to once again fund Bradley County government for the 17th year without a tax increase. This budgeting process takes teamwork, discussions and decisions with everyone in mind, including remembering and representing the taxpayers who are also trying to live within their budgets every year as well. This process has not only worked, it has worked well and continues to give us the ability to lead. This is evident with billions of investments by corporations that choose to locate here, being recently chosen as the number 1 (for a month) and number 2 (for the entire year) location for job growth in the entire nation and also one of the lowest unemployment rates in the entire state. Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best! I hope everyone has a great 4th of July as we celebrate our Nation's birthday!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Grill Safely – June 13, 2017

The beginning of summer means many things to many people, but one "mainstay" of summertime activities usually revolves around fellowship and meals that may have all, or just a component or two, being prepared on a grill. The desire for a meal cooked over an open flame probably goes back multiple generations and is deeply ingrained in our surrounding region and culture. Sonya, and my entire family, will be very relieved that I am not going to suggest any recipes or culinary skills, but I have recently read of a few safety tips that may be beneficial to us all.

There is much debate as to the "proper" way to grill, as in charcoal, propane, natural gas, or even a process usually know as smoking. I will leave the debate as to the best to others, but please remember that ALL include one requirement, a fire. Please always have access to a fire extinguisher in case of an emergency need and follow all safety recommendations to starting your grill's fire as well. Place your grill well away from your home and keep it away from under tree branches or your home's eaves as well as remembering to check for any flammable material, such as dry leaves or debris that may be underneath your favorite grill location.

Food safety is another concern that we all need to recognize and use precautions. Many people use a grill brush to help properly clean the grill surface after each use. While this is a very good practice please be advised that it may also have a surprising downside. An estimated 1,700 Americans went to an emergency room between 2002 and 2014 (with 1 in 4 requiring admission to the hospital for further treatment or surgery) after having ingested wire bristles in grilled food according to a study published in the 2016 journal *Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery*. Bacteria are present everywhere and without constant awareness of food temperature a beautiful meal may migrate from dream status to a nightmare. I will finish with a new safety discovery that I was recently made aware of, aluminum foil. Honestly, many of us cook with aluminum foil without really giving it a second thought, even though in the back of our minds we probably vaguely remember hearing somewhere that it is not the wisest thing to do. Still, we wrap those baked potatoes, grill our fish and line pans with foil on a regular basis.

According to a 2012 study, aluminum can leach from the foil into our food. This is particularly common for spicy and acidic food and is troubling when one considers the food that we regularly grill in the summer that are drenched in spicy, vinegary marinades. There are also studies that correlate excessive aluminum intake with many health concerns, including the high concentrations of aluminum that have been detected in brain tissues of patients with Alzheimer's disease. If you simply must use aluminum, a "best practices" approach is to make sure that your food item does not come into direct contact with the aluminum foil, by lining the foil with a parchment type product first to help reduce this latest discovered risk to health.

Those who know me best, know that I am not one to become alarmed easily, nor do I want to cause an irrational concern of a "fear of everything". I also find it important to do what is possible to limit the advancement of Murphy's Law, that states that "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong" by doing our part to promote safety and also in being prepared for the unexpected. I hope that these few ideas will help us all enjoy our time with family and friends and to hopefully limit the possible negative concerns that may occur. My desire is that these ideas will also allow even more people who call Bradley County, and our region, home to be able to enjoy our great outdoor summer activities and nature that we have been blessed with, while also individually noticing that Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Security and Credit – July 18, 2017

Security. Password. Access. Continuity. These are just a few of the ideas and attributes that Bradley County professionals try to ensure each and every day. In an information rich society the balance between having a secure system of data storage and use, along with the availability to provide access to this same information from many needed points of service is a vital priority. This process is also combined with the assurance that this same information is not only backed up on a regular basis but also kept at both local and off site locations to further enhance the security of your data that is needed for Bradley County to provide services to our citizens.

Archives, Automobile, Assessor of Property, Building Inspector, Court Records, Adoptions, Marriage, Divorces, Business, Passports, Election Commission, Emergency Management, Emergency Medical, Fire, Rescue, GIS, Human Resources, Law Enforcement, Medical Examiner, Health Department, Misdemeanor Probation, Planning, Register of Deeds, Road Department, Stormwater, Trustee, Veteran's Services, 911, Recycling, Schools, and many, many other departmental records either pass through the Bradley County network or a part of the information that resides locally, across the state or even the nation. While it is impossible to stop every threat, I am very proud of our success rate of protection and security of data. A multilayered approach has helped fend, remove and protect against a monthly assault on average of over 100,000 attempts to send viruses and wreak havoc on just our systems alone.

I mention this to not invite an even greater level of attempted access, but to help remind us ALL that this is the world in which we now find ourselves in and to hopefully inspire you to take a more proactive approach toward your family's information security. The day of the word "password" being used for a password are no longer acceptable. There are many new password applications and programs that help with not only originating complex, multi-letter, numeral and symbol passwords but also remembering them in a more secure location than a post it note or piece of paper in a wallet or purse. A wallet or purse may be stolen or misplaced and the best of intentions does not help when someone else has access to your data and information. My executive assistant, Lindsay Hathcock, and his family also recently helped add yet another layer of security by gifting me with a new wallet for a recent birthday that has enclosed RFID blocking material to help prevent a person from removing credit, debit and even now gift card information by the use of a remote device that allows theft of information without even having to approach a person's wallet or purse.

Regularly update or change your passwords, monitor your credit reports and if possible invest in a service to both monitor and repair your credit if you were to be unfortunate enough to become a victim of identity theft or financial fraud. With multiple attempts made each year to steal another's identity or financial information it is not any longer a question of if, but sadly when, you might become their next victim. Even more disturbing to me is the fact that the

newest target of some of these thieves are literally the youngest in society. Children usually have excellent "credit" opportunities as they have little to no negative information linked to their social security numbers and there are very few who have parents who check their social security and credit profile on a regular basis so this gives thieves literally years to destroy their credit and financial future without even being noticed!

Thank you for taking the time to remain security conscious in each and every one of your financial interactions within Bradley County or while on the internet. This activity is one of the many places that just a little effort can bring great rewards for a more peaceful and prosperous financial future. If you or your family receive mail, phone calls, or emails that appear out of the ordinary please notify the local law enforcement offices as they are each excellent at investigating scams and similar crimes. Your efforts to protect yourself, your family, your community and our county help to ensure that Bradley County continues to be Tennessee at its best!

Our County

D. Gary Davis, County Mayor

Stay Active, Stay Healthy and Stay Local – June 27, 2017

This past weekend's Father's Day activities were a welcomed family time at our home. I hope that each of you had the opportunity to spend time or at least talk with your father. If that was not possible, I hope that you were able to have a time of remembrance and reflection of good times and memories of days gone by.

Thinking of parenting, have you ever had the feeling that I just can't "Adult" today? Watching, reading and experiencing the changing political climate that we are all seeing across the nation is beyond shocking, it has become scary. From national stories of literal assassination attempts last week of elected office holders on a baseball field, while practicing for a charity event due to an opposing political viewpoint to the local fallen 5 who were killed in our neighboring Hamilton County and Chattanooga. We seem to have a constant stream of 24 hour news personalities spewing forth their individual viewpoints as a substitute for actually just giving us the facts. I have faith that given, just the facts, we are all capable of making up our own minds as to what news is and how it is applicable to us as individuals, our community and our nation.

The time when we feel that we cannot take it for another day, is exactly what adults have always done, we take another step, and another and another. This action is what set us all apart from those who chose not to participate, but to be dependent on others for everything, including being told what to think. I do not have all of the answers, but I am thankful that I have been given the absolute gift of living in the greatest nation, state, county, city and community on the face of earth. This gift, along with hard work, has made it possible to achieve many, many things that I once only dreamed of as a child.

In this process of living we all have the option of our own thoughts and actions. We can build up or we can tear down. We can bless or we can curse. We can help others or we can hurt others. And one of the most important for us all to remember at this time in our history is that we can all disagree without being disagreeable. Everyone is entitled to an opinion and those who may not think the same are not mad, rabid, and evil people void of a soul, they simply disagree. In a civilized society we must find a way to live together peacefully or we will be destined to continue with even more inflamed conflict and actions.

This past week, as bad as it was, will hopefully be a "wake up call" to all of us Adults, that we truly do need each other and that an attack on one of us is indeed an attack on all of us. Had it not been for the grace of God and armed law enforcement professionals who ran TOWARD the threat while others were running AWAY, we could have witnessed the loss of multiple elected representatives lives and an indeed threat to our nation and way of life. We all need to continue to work together for the betterment of all across our nation.

If you have the opportunity in the near future to see and speak with an elected office holder at any level and a law enforcement and emergency response professional please take the time to shake their hand and let them know that you, and your family, appreciate them and their service. In doing so we recognize the benefit of their service and continue to build upon what truly makes Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 07/04/2017

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The skill, dedication, devotion and intellect of the founding fathers, and their families, left as a legacy for us to follow. With sacred history as a guide they crafted for themselves, their families and their descendants what was missing during their present day struggles to live. I am sure that if they could see what our nation has become, they would have both words of praise and also words of concern.

The ability to speed along the ground in a car, through the air in an airplane and across the water in a floating city of a modern cruise ship, underwater in a submarine or through space in a spacecraft would have been unthinkable in their day. The ability to instantly communicate from telegraph, telephone, cellular devices and now social media with literally anyone in the world was not even considered in their day. The orbiting satellites that were put in place by our military, scientists and engineers have given us GPS capability for our military to place an ordinance within inches of a desired target, also literally anywhere in the world. Yet with all of this technology and seemingly endless advancements they had the wisdom to know that subsequent generations who had not fought for freedoms would not know how truly valuable it is to an individual, their family, a community and even our nation.

The quote of “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety,” is attributed to Benjamin Franklin. He was a US author, diplomat, inventor, physicist, politician and printer who lived from 1706 – 1790. He was present and helped to sign the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776. Many alive today know him as the face of the \$100 dollar bill, but have forgotten the true value of his words and contributions.

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In Bradley County we understand that each and every person is important to the collective good of our communities. We continually strive to also “live within our means” as a government. An example of that process was yesterday’s vote to once again fund Bradley County government for the 17th year without a tax increase. This budgeting process takes teamwork, discussions and decisions with everyone in mind, including remembering and representing the taxpayers who are also trying to live within their budgets every year as well. This process has not only worked, it has worked well and continues to give us the ability to lead. This is evident with billions of investments by corporations that choose to locate here, being recently chosen as the number 1 (for a month) and number 2 (for the entire year) location for job growth in the entire nation and also one of the lowest unemployment rates in the entire state. Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best! I hope everyone has a great 4th of July as we celebrate our Nation’s birthday!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 07/11/2017

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Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 07/18/2017

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Archives, Automobile, Assessor of Property, Building Inspector, Court Records, Adoptions, Marriage, Divorces, Business, Passports, Election Commission, Emergency Management, Emergency Medical, Fire, Rescue, GIS, Human Resources, Law Enforcement, Medical Examiner, Health Department, Misdemeanor Probation, Planning, Register of Deeds, Road Department, Stormwater, Trustee, Veteran's Services, 911, Recycling, Schools, and many, many other departmental records either pass through the Bradley County network or a part of the information that resides locally, across the state or even the nation. While it is impossible to stop every threat, I am very proud of our success rate of protection and security of data. A multilayered approach has helped find, remove and protect against a monthly assault on average of over 100,000 attempts to send viruses and wreak havoc on just our systems alone.

I mention this to not invite an even greater level of attempted access, but to help remind us ALL that this is the world in which we now find ourselves in and to hopefully inspire you to take a more proactive approach toward your family's information security. The day of the word "password" being used for a password are no longer acceptable. There are many new password applications and programs that help with not only originating complex,

multi- letter, numeral and symbol passwords but also remembering them in a more secure location than a post it note or piece of paper in a wallet or purse. A wallet or purse may be stolen or misplaced and the best of intentions does not help when someone else has access to your data and information. My executive assistant, Lindsay Hathcock, and his family also recently helped add yet another layer of security by gifting me with a new wallet for a recent birthday that has enclosed RFID blocking material to help prevent a person from removing credit, debit and even now gift card information by the use of a remote device that allows theft of information without even having to approach a person's wallet or purse.

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Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 07/25/2017

Today, we are only 5 months away from Christmas. As shocking as this sounds, to many more it will be almost unbelievable that the new Bradley County School year begins for students next Friday August 4th. The Cleveland City Schools system will operate on an abbreviated day on the following Monday August 7th, for students. Teacher in-service is August 1 – 3, for both School Systems and their Professionals.

The ability to ride bikes across entire neighborhoods and seek summer employment seemed to last forever when we were younger, but now the summer time has been reduced to about 2 months or 8 weeks, on average. The change of family schedules will soon become a new “normal” for families all across Bradley County. New school supplies and the essential needs that every child requires to do their best during their educational pursuits are fast approaching as well.

Each and every parent should want the best for their children, but although all may want the best, not all may be able to afford the required supplies for each new class and school years list. If you have been blessed with an abundance please remember those who may not have the material means to purchase what is needed for their child. Charleston, Cleveland and Bradley County have long been known for their generosity and this time of year is yet another time that shines forth with the goodness that makes our communities special indeed.

While we all may not be able to afford the costs of the new school year by ourselves, we can ALL remember to drive safely. Many children, the younger ones especially, are so excited to begin their new school year with friends and new acquaintances that they have met, that they may not be as observant as they should. This may cause them to walk out in front of traffic without warning and if we are not paying the upmost attention it is easy to see how a tragedy may occur. I know how easy this can happen as this

past week I was crossing a street downtown and without warning a car traveling the opposite direction on a “one way” street did not see me and upon impact knocked me to the ground and proceeded to run over my foot. Thankfully, and prayerfully, I was not hurt terribly bad, but if I were a smaller person the results could have been tragic indeed.

Observe safety zones and their rules as they are there for the drivers and the student’s protection. Follow the recommendations of professionals in making sure that children get adequate rest and nutrition before each school day, if possible. We are a blessed community that have multiple excellent school choices to help prepare the next generation of leaders for our community and beyond. Thanks to ALL our teachers, administrators, cafeteria staff, and everyone involved with our education systems for your dedication. Good luck to our students: may you have an enjoyable, memorable time during your school years. Parents, please enjoy every minute of your child’s educational experience. After their graduation and they leave for college, the “empty nest” can be an empty void. With continued attention to provide for the now, but also for the future, while remembering our past and heritage, it is easy to see why Bradley County continues to be Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 08/01/2017

Competition is a good thing. One can only appreciate the thrill of victory if they have ever tasted defeat. The giving of a trophy to every participant negates the true purpose of awarding the original trophy to those who went the extra mile and through sheer determination and extra effort became victors and champions. This is not to say that participating is not a noble thing, but that, in my opinion, if everyone wins then really no one wins.

Bradley County has been well represented in recent baseball competition not only in the regular season of play but also in the All-Star teams in which 9 teams placed and were working extremely hard to represent us all throughout post-season play. Each age, team and level reached are listed:

6 year olds, Bradley County Young Guns place 5th in State Tournament; Bradley County Avengers placed 6th in Consolation bracket. 7 year olds, Bradley County placed 4th in Consolation bracket and also received the Sportsmanship Award! 8 year olds, Bradley County placed 5th in State tournament. 9 year olds, Bradley County placed 3rd in State tournament. 10 year olds, Bradley Bullets WON the State tournament and after moving on to the World Series being held in South Haven, MS they were able to finish in 6th place in the Nation on last Tuesday 07/25/2017; Bradley Thunder placed 8th in the State tournament. 11 year olds; Bradley County placed 5th in the State tournament and also received the Sportsmanship Award. 12 year olds, Bradley County placed 5th in the State tournament.

A special thank you was given by Andy Lockhart, Bradley County Parks and Recreation Director to each and every volunteer coach and parents that make our leagues possible. They are currently signing up for our fall sports online at www.bradleyparks.com and at their main office that is located at 3110 Peerless Road for fall baseball, football and cheerleading. Coaching volunteers and umpires are also always needed.

If you are looking for a great place for your children to participate and grow in athletic skill and learn valuable lessons that only teams sport are able to teach and instill as part of their formative years, please know that I, and many more, whole heartily encourage participation in our local communities sporting and competition programs. Please know that each participant, volunteer and parent are appreciated and that Bradley County Parks and Recreation are another reason that Bradley County is Tennessee at its best.

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 08/08/2017

While discussing the daily news this past week I was informed of a person who recently had a flat tire. They started looking for the spare tire in their newer car and discovered a new, but not uncommon problem. Their car was one of the increasing number of automobiles that in the process of manufacturing have taken it upon themselves to decrease overall vehicle weight, production costs and have discontinued the process of providing a spare tire, of ANY type. They simply did not have a spare tire. While there are numerous forms and types of information available I found an article published by Shell that referenced 10 essentials to improve the outcomes of any situation that a good driver should keep in their trunk.

1) Jumper Cables: The benefits of which are not known unless needed and not having a set of quality, heavy gauge, jumper cables. Proper instruction and use are also vital in an effort to protect from further injury due to improper placement during use. 2) Flashlight: Most “smartphones” have a flashlight capability but a true, standalone flashlight will usually provide a brighter light for a longer period of time and also preserve your smartphone for calling for help in the case that it might be needed. 3) Triangle Reflector: The ability to be seen and to remain seen during an emergency event may literally be difference in surviving an episode of car trouble and becoming the victim of an automobile accident if you are on the shoulder of the road while awaiting help or also repairing your car. 4) Spare tire: Make sure that you have one and its location. Remember to periodically check each tire for proper inflation, including your spare and know the location and use of ALL devices needed to change a tire on your individual car. If your spare tire is older than 10 years old, please consider replacing it due to the possibility of it becoming susceptible to dry rot and making its use a danger. 5) Self Fusing Silicone Repair Tape: This is a “step above” Duct Tape but it is true that it can fix almost anything, even if only temporarily. A cracked radiator hose or exposed wiring are excellent temporary uses of this item to get you to a safer place to perform a permanent fix and or repair. 6) Gloves: A good

pair of work gloves will help to protect your hands while working on a hot engine bay, changing a blown out tire or working around sharp metal parts of your car. 7) First Aid Kit: A burn, cut or damage sustained by an accident of any type will benefit from first aid supplies, and knowledge, until other help or emergency responders arrive. 8) Distilled Water: From emergency drinking water to adding water to your car's radiator, storing an unopened gallon of water in your trunk may come in very handy. Please remember to secure, occasionally check and replace this addition to your trunk supplies. 9) Fire Extinguisher: Automobile fire are a rare occurrence, but when they do happen they have the tendency to escalate in severity quickly. When purchasing one make sure that it is rated for a Class B and a Class C, good for flammable liquids and also electrical fires respectively. Be sure that it is also securely stored in your vehicle. 10) Blanket: This addition may help to provide warmth if you were to get stuck in the cold or either to insulate you from the heat of the sun soaked asphalt while working on your car.

Hopefully these items are in your trunk as well to help protect you and your family if you are on a long trip or just across town. With many new drivers entering the roadway to travel to and from their schools it is also a good idea to make sure that their cars are also supplied and that they know how to use products to help themselves. The addition of an auto club like AAA might also be a benefit to consider. May we all remain safe, courteous to each other and be prepared while on each and every one of the approximately 760 miles of roadways of Bradley County. This process will help us as we enjoy being Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 08/15/2017

This past week I was checking some of the new links that are now available at the State of Tennessee website that is accessed by visiting www.tn.gov. The portion of State government known as the TN Department of Safety and Homeland Security, like many others, have added to their previous listings even more valuable information. You can find information concerning the new laws that are currently effective, best practices to help improve your ability to survive an active shooter scenario, procedures to follow if you were to receive a suspicious mail or package, actions to take if you, or your company were to receive a bomb threat along with many more. The one that I would like to discuss today caught my attention due to its title listed as: The Top Ten Traffic Safety Laws for TN Visitors

10) Open Container Law TCA 55-10-416 Drivers shall not consume or possess an open container of an alcoholic beverage or beer while operating a motor vehicle in Tennessee. 9) Motorcycle Helmet Law TCA 55-9-302 All motorcycle operators and passengers are required to wear a helmet and they must meet federal vehicle standards and be certified by the Department of Transportation. 8) Child Restraint Devices Law TCA 55-9-602 ALL child passengers through the age of eight (8) must be secured in a Child Restraint Device with placement in a vehicle varying by age, weight, size and age of a child being further explained within the law. 7) Maximum Length of Recreational Vehicle Combination Law TCA 55-7-201 The maximum length of this type of vehicle is sixty-five (65) feet. Any towed vehicle must be securely attached to the pulling unit and also be equipped with functional brake and signal lights. 6) Tennessee's DUI Law and Penalties TCA 55-10-401 and 55-10-403. Individuals are presumed to be under the influence of alcohol with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of .08%. First time offenders are subject to a \$350.00 minimum fine and 48 hours in jail. Enhanced penalties and sanctions will result if BAC is greater than the legal limit or if children are present at the time of arrest. 5) Handgun Carry Permit Law TCA 39-17-1351 Tennessee allows out-of-state

residents who possess a legally issued Handgun Carry Permit to bear a handgun: Tennessee laws regulating the use and carry of a handgun shall take precedence. Other specifics and a listing of states with reciprocity agreements are available online. 4) Speeding in Construction Zones Law TCA 55-8-153 Drivers are required to obey speed limits at ALL times, especially when workers are present in a construction zone. Violators are subject to a minimum \$250.00 fine. 3) Seat Belt Law TCA 55-9-603 Tennessee is a primary Safety Belt State. Drivers are required to wear a safety belt at all times when operating a motor vehicle in Tennessee and are also responsible to ensure that ALL passengers are also wearing their safety belt while in their form of transportation. 2) Move Over Law TCA 55-8-132 When approaching a stopped emergency vehicle with visual emergency lights being activated, drivers are required to yield the right-of-way to the vehicle by moving into the closest available lane away from the emergency vehicle, whenever possible. When not possible drivers are then required to slow down and provide as much space as possible to protect emergency vehicle operators in action. 1) Texting While Driving Law TCA 55-8-199 Texting while driving a vehicle in Tennessee is ILLEGAL.

I enjoy a good time as much as anyone else, but this top ten list is not a laughing matter. These laws, and many others, are needed to help keep the majority of us safe as we go about our day's activities. If everyone thought of others first and how their individual actions might effect others, there would not be a need for most laws and their consequences for not following them, Please know that I appreciate those who strive to do their best each and everyday across our community. They help to keep Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 08/22/2017

The idea that 41 years have passed since our Nation's Bicentennial in 1976, seem hard for me to believe. This time was one of many celebrations and also a time that movies were in high demand. One movie that became popular was "All The President's Men" in which we first learned of the phrase "just follow the money."

In a simplified way of explanation, this is just one portion of a professional auditors job requirements. Many complex algorithms and formulas are used to determine if 'the books' are being kept properly and if not, how could a person, business, corporation or government improve their systems. Bradley County has not only complied with a stringent requirement we have received accolades as to how well the budget process and money rules and safeguards are not only followed but also in how our process may hopefully motivate others to do likewise.

In a recent correspondence I was informed by Todd Buikema, Government Finance Officers Association's Acting Director, that we have for the 12th year, received The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

The receipt of this earned reward is more than just another plaque to hang on the wall. The Government Finance Officers Associations sent a letter explaining their hope and desire that "our example will encourage other government officials in their efforts to achieve and maintain an appropriate standard of excellence in financial reporting."

It almost always seems that the news is seemingly reserved for the most outrageous, outlandish and degrading headlines and then goes from that to worse each and every day. What gets lost is that the vast majority of those across the Nation, just want to go about their day, provide for their family and seek to improve the place that they call home.

Bradley County truly is blessed with a majority of people who seek to always do their best no matter where they find themselves living and working. This is not only true now, but will also hopefully be true for 59 more years until we celebrate our Nation's Tri-Centennial in 2076. We also do not seek attention nor notoriety but simply do our daily best to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us!" We are thankful for this amazing award and recognition, now for the 12th time, but I am most grateful for our People & our Community. This reminds me of the multiple reasons that Bradley County is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 08/29/2017

WORK, is not a 4 letter word! Well at least by some definitions. There has been much written about the subject of work and how it pertains to us ALL in our daily walk. A quick “google search” of the word work in the BibleGateway web source yields an astonishing 555 results. Other historical documents reveal a vast history of deeds accomplished by those persons who placed work, high on their list of things to accomplish each day. It can honestly be said that without work, nothing will ever get done!

The idea of work is so ingrained in our culture and American values that this next weekend we will all celebrate the one individual who has always been diligent in caring not only for themselves, their family, their community and their nation, the American worker. The 1st Monday in September, Labor Day, was commonly attributed to an idea of Peter J. Maguire, a labor union leader who in 1882, proposed a celebration honoring the American worker, that lead the way for its founding and passage as a legal holiday. Legend also has it that the date was chosen out of convenience by Maguire, as he felt that it was halfway between the 4th of July and Thanksgiving holidays and celebrations. The day’s focus on organized labor may have faded some over the years, but this legal holiday, for many, still marks the end of summer and the traditional time for children to return to school.

If you will have the day off to enjoy time with family and friends please do so. If you find yourself having to work on this holiday, please try something novel and may we all just take some time to be thankful for our job, and the income that it provides us and our family. This gift of thankfulness is, and always has been, the door through which blessings enter into our lives. We all have the same 7 days, 168 hours, 10,080 minutes & 604,800 seconds available each week. And many of us have the ability to take advantage of these prospective times to join those in the Labor Force locally. This not only provides for our individual needs but the collective efforts of many

being involved helps promote our community and brings us all a better standard of living within our community.

Wherever we find ourselves this day, I ask that we each take the time to remember, respect and reflect on those who have gone before us and given us the Charleston, Cleveland and Bradley County that we now enjoy. All it takes is just one drive through any street in our community and it is evident that nothing happens without effort and without work to achieve any of our plans and dreams. The existing places of worship, educational institutions, businesses, industries, emergency services, physicians' offices, hospitals, roadways, government entities, etc. all started as a wonderful plan. But without the efforts, skills, determination, energy, and positive actions of those workers involved, they would have remained as just plans.

Please join me in allowing the thoughts (and actions) of gratitude to be extended to those who may share our path on this Labor Day in Bradley County. Without them, I am sure that our success and community growth would not have been possible. Happy Labor Day and a hearty Thank You is extended to each and every worker who has made, and continues to positively impact, the progress made possible that keeps Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 09/05/2017

Many people across our community, and even the entire country remember where that were on certain dates in time. December 7th 1941 is “a day that will live in infamy” and we just recently celebrated July 4th as our “Nations birthday”. This next Monday will be another day to remember. It will be September 11th, or better known as 9-11. The greatest loss of lives by a single terrorist attack on American soil occurred on September 11, 2001. While we still grieve for the almost 3,000 people who lost their lives on that day, we have had many decisions to make since that day.

Many people remember hearing about this event and then watching the replays of the event over, and over and over. The thoughts of how this could be happening here in our nation seemed like such an impossibility until that day. Even in such devastating loss, there can be found one thing if we look hard enough, and that is an emotion and a word called HOPE.

We watched as people who had no reason to even notice another, stop and provide help. They did not stop and ask about their race, their political affiliation nor even their ability to pay them back, they just helped one another. We have seen this same spirit of hope this past week in Texas. Once again those who constantly seek to “divide and conquer” us all were nowhere to be found, but those who seek to “mend and restore” were there with one thing on their mind and that was to help others in their time of need.

We can all learn a valuable lesson from this activity and display of what is best in our “human race” and that is that each of us need to know that we are needed, we are important to someone and that with this assurance we have the ability to call upon our God given emotional, physical and mental reserves through HOPE.

The concept of striving for something better in the future is something that the wonderful citizens of Bradley County have always been able to do. We have many across our community who are presently serving others that they do not know, nor may ever meet again out in the vastness of Texas where there is a need. And many others who serve their neighbors here at home providing help and giving hope in ways that are too numerous to even try to describe with the written word. To each of you who take it upon yourselves to not wait until somebody asks you to help, but that when you see a need you volunteer to help please know that you are appreciated.

This volunteer spirit is alive and well across all of Bradley County. May we always remember, always help, always give and always care. This helps to produce hope, and is one of the many other reasons why Bradley County is Tennessee at its best!

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to serve the wonderful people of Bradley County as you Mayor!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 09/12/2017

This past week Cleveland City Mayor, Tom Rowland, and I were honored to sign a “Joint Proclamation” lending our combined support to the cause of bringing increased awareness during the entire month of September for the continued excellent work of many for our residents during what has been designated as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Throughout Tennessee suicide is the 10th leading cause of all deaths in our state and is now the 2nd leading cause of death among people from the age of 15 to 24, according to the Tennessee Department of Health. As one of the most disruptive and tragic events that a family and a community can experience, more than 950 lives are lost throughout Tennessee each year. There are also up to 25 attempted suicides for each suicide death also reported. Tennessee Veterans, Active Duty Personnel and National Guardsmen face a disproportionate risk as compared to the general population of Tennessee, with more dying from suicide than combat.

Tennessee is a national leader in the effort to prevent suicide as we are one of the first states to develop a suicide prevention and evaluation plan covering the lifespan of its citizens and residents. Public awareness of this terrifying problem is a key to preventing further suffering and loss of life. The risk for human self-destruction can be reduced through awareness, education and treatment. This approach is also vital in reaching the high risk group of people who are the survivors of those who have died by suicide or those who have attempted suicide.

The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network is a grassroots collaboration of Tennesseans and organizations who are diligently working to eliminate the stigma of suicide, educate the community about the warning signs of suicide and ultimately reduce the rate of suicide throughout our state.

The Governor of Tennessee has appointed a Suicide Prevention Network Advisory Council to coordinate the implementation of the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Many across our community, region, state and nation have been touched by this tragic event and the devastating loss of life.

In our busy lives that we all are a part of today, I just wanted to say THANK YOU to those who make it a mission throughout their day to actually stop and spend some time with those that they come in contact with each day. It has been said that kindness costs nothing, but is truly priceless to those who receive it. We do not know what others are going through each day but a kind word, a sincere gesture of help, and a true question asking "how are you today" may just be the answer to someone's prayer. Please join with me, Mayor Rowland, and each professional, and faith based center involved in this valiant effort as we help bring awareness and an improved dialogue as how to best help those in need. In doing so we may become the "hands and feet" of the many prayers said by those who have dealt with this tragic event. This will prove once again why Bradley County is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 09/19/2017

Recently I was given the history of Mr. Philo Farnsworth and how he became the forgotten inventor. His story is one of determination and invention but also one of being overlooked by society. In a San Francisco laboratory 90 years ago, on September 7th, 1927 Mr. Farnsworth and a team of assistants placed a slide containing an image of a triangle in front of a machine that he had named, the Image Dissector, and then gathered around a receiving tube on the other side of a partition. As they watched, one line of the triangle appeared in a small bluish square of light on the receiver. At Farnsworth's instructions, someone rotated the slide. As if by magic, the image of the line on the receiver turned as well.

According to Bill Bennett's "Daily Almanac", "That's it, folks!" Farnsworth exclaimed. "We've done it! There you have electronic television!" As Farnsworth refined his device he surely thought that fame and fortune awaited him. It wasn't to be. Russian immigrant Vladimir Zworykin, who had also been trying to develop a television system, claimed that he was the true inventor of TV. Zworykin worked for the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) which began to sell television sets and then to broadcast programs.

Years of legal battles followed, and though the U.S. Patent Office sided with Farnsworth, he lost other lawsuits, and years past before RCA paid him for his work. Farnsworth NEVER received much public recognition for his world changing invention. Ironically he appeared on national television only once. In 1957 (30 years after his invention) he appeared as a mystery guest on the TV game show "I've Got a Secret." Multiple celebrities of the time asked him questions about his secret and even they failed to guess his secret of "I invented electronic television." His prize for stumping the celebrity panel was a grand total of \$80.00 and a carton of cigarettes. It was indeed a different time!

Hearing about his life changing invention and then the subsequent lack of accolades and recognition helped relate to me that to some of our local citizens and residents who may think that our emergency providers, law enforcement, medical services, dispatch, utility and public service professionals just “happened” without much effort. This past month has seen the “true colors” of our local community shine brightly as we have stepped up once again to the challenges and gone well above what the ordinary people of even this great country would do. We have seen our emergency responders travel to Texas and other locations to help those whom they will probably never again see in this lifetime. We have seen our first responders run toward danger when the majority of people would run away. The coordinated training, communication skills and preparedness of all, across the city and county departments, agencies and professionals combine to rival the best of the best anywhere.

These professionals are never ones to seek the spotlight but are always ready to step up and help others in our community and beyond. May we all NEVER forget those who help to provide safety, security and a hedge of protection for all in our entire community. This attitude, this skill level and this cooperative spirit is another reason that Bradley County is truly Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 09/26/2017

For the past few years, September has been designated as National Preparedness Month. In my recent memory, I cannot think of a more appropriate time of the year than now to help encourage us all to become more prepared. We have heard of hurricanes, flooding, earthquakes and then also local weather and episodes that have caused us all to ask questions and to seek answers.

As I have said on many occasions it is impossible for most people to comprehend the constant training and the communication, equipment and cooperative spirit that is required of each of our communities' first responders, law enforcement, fire, rescue, medical, dispatch and the hundreds of professionals that are daily involved in helping to keep us all extremely safe. This is their job and their chosen career. But it is not their job alone, it is ALL of US working together to help them and protect our individual family and to not only have a plan, but to know how to use it and to even practice it on a regular basis with our family and also our local community.

Many helpful ideas, checklists, toolkits and even family emergency templates to give useful advice on how to help prepare for yourself, family and possibly even for your neighborhood. We ALL have witnessed the extreme weather that has devastated entire counties at a time this past month. The ability for local responders to respond to this level of a disaster is, for a time, overwhelmed. With time, mutual aid and the efforts of volunteers each community has, and will, make a comeback and life will return to normal. But in the meantime each person needs to know what to do and how best to keep us safe as possible.

As in most things, information is key. Add to this that the information needs to be accurate and also local. To that end our Cleveland Bradley County Emergency Management Agency has a communication service that has

proven itself very useful. Nixle helps to describe the situation, what emergency responders are doing to help in the situation and what each citizen, resident and visitor needs to do to stay out of the incident or what they might be able to do to help in the situation. Residents of Cleveland/Bradley County and those in neighboring communities can immediately begin receiving pertinent information via text message and email by texting CBCEMA to 888777 or by registering at <http://www.nixle.com>

Another extremely valuable website is <http://ready.gov> Here you will find information to help encourage family discussions that literally may help to save your life in a disaster. The help is not only for humans, but there are many topics on how to help pets, livestock and other animals that are also caught in the chaos of the moment when disaster strikes. If a family member may need special help or specific care now is the time to also make a plan to provide such services if needed while away from your home or natural environment.

We are all creatures of habit. And when this time of year is over and the need for further planning is past, we usually just wait until the next year to once again even think about this topic. I am asking that we all change the usual habit and begin the conversation and dialogue necessary to help make sure that we are all prepared, even at our homes. This new approach, with the continued help and consistent excellent care from the professionals stationed all across our County will combine to make us even more prepared for the next season and emergency situations. This combination of care, preparation and cooperation proves once again why Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 10/03/2017

October is the 10th month and the beginning of the season called Autumn or Fall. A time of harvest for those in agriculture and a time of contemplation for those who are beginning to develop a plan for next year. A time of cooler temperatures and shorter times of daylight. All of this is the subject of many discussions at the dinner table not only across America but also across our community.

The vast splendor of our local region's natural resources come alive with color as each tree begins the annual loss of leaves and time of restoration for the next year's Spring. Few places on the planet can even begin to compare with our mountains and with the palate of colors that will soon be visible in the forest. We are truly blessed with a distinct and equally beautiful seasonal change 4 times each year.

The ability to discuss the outdoors and the good across our community is sometimes lost when we listen to those who see a problem with every solution and a way to divide when many want to bring a community together. I am not naive enough to believe that we all will never have a disagreement, but I do believe that adults can, do and have had disagreements without becoming disagreeable. We all can remember the child who did not get their way and then tried to make everyone miserable in the process. It is up to every one of us to take the time to listen and then to make an informed decision. We all have been given the ability to reason and develop an opinion. The 24 hour news cycle will try their best to spin events of every situation to fit their narrative. It is up to us to make a rational decision without fear of retribution from either side.

We have all heard the phrase "a house divided against itself will not stand." This is very true.

This week may we all just take the time to get outside. To look around and to take an inventory of our lives, and the blessings that we have ALL been given. As you are reading this you are hopefully exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide in a process known as breathing. You are circulating blood throughout your body by the contracture of cardiac muscles. You are using the strength obtained by the nutritious (or maybe not so nutritious) meals that you have eaten. And you have the ability to decipher the symbols on this page into words and then understand the thought that are conveyed therein. You may also think that this is a foolish remark, but please understand friend, there are many who did not get this gift today and would gladly ask to be able to just achieve one of these blessings listed above.

Thank you Bradley County citizens, residents and tourists for seeking ways to work together to help each other and to exemplify the best of southern hospitality. May we never lose sight of the fact that we are all truly in this together and may we always seek to build up and to not tear down. When we practice this idea each and every day we begin to take an inventory of our lives and we realize that what we sow, we also reap. A good crop or an overgrowth of weeds are both possible with the same amount of work. We just have to decide how to spend our time allotted on this earth. Thank you for keeping Bradley County, Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 10/10/2017

It has often been said that “behind every cloud lies a silver lining” and this past week the Bradley County Government found this often quoted saying to be true. A fire started in a portion of the building and during its ignition and subsequent burn the Bradley County Courthouse was severely damaged.

The first thing to be thankful for was that nobody was present during the fire and therefore no employees and/or citizens were injured in the fire. Buildings are replaceable, people are not.

Secondly, with the Bradley County Courthouse being the center of the City of Cleveland and the Courthouse block in downtown Cleveland, the Cleveland Fire Department was dispatched to intervene. With decisive, brave and a coordinated fire suppression activity was successfully undertaken. While the damage was extensive, it could have been MUCH worse without their help and professional skills being utilized.

Third, the HVAC systems were operational and therefore instrumental in taking the smoke, soot and damaging residue from burning materials across every floor, each office, each room and all contents contained throughout the courthouse. This has necessitated the required use of multiple professional agencies to help in the process of removing burned items that have been damaged and are now involved in the tedious process of trying to sanitize and salvage items that are not only needed for governmental offices to be able to perform their jobs, but are in some cases, indeed priceless.

Fourth, the Elected officials, employees, administrators and literally everybody who is involved in ensuring the success of the Bradley County Courthouse work flow has not only seen the damage, but they have also been instrumental in the cooperation displayed in working to find ways of

reopening each office during the lengthy process of repairing and rebuilding the “people’s house”, the Bradley County Courthouse.

Fifth, our wonderful and amazing community has shown that we are indeed a city with spirit and a county with hope. I have been the recipient of numerous offers to help by providing temporary office locations, food and supplies for the workers and the family members of our employees that have been instrumental in the success of the operation to reopen for business as soon as humanly possible.

The Bradley County Courthouse is home to approximately 75 workers and each day approximately 1500 people walk through the doors. At certain times of the month, and year, this number may even triple to 4,500 each day. I appreciate each person’s consideration and understanding during the process needed to be able to return to our Courthouse being open. It is impossible for me to name each person, department, agency, office, citizen, first responder, law enforcement professional, official, citizen and employee that has been a part of this team effort. But, please know that this process has indeed strengthened my spirit, my hope and our commitment to seek ways in which we can continue to serve the public during this rebuilding process. All that have been involved in this process have chosen to have a “can do” attitude and for that I think that they are better than silver, they are as good as gold! Being able to serve alongside them is an honor and each and every one of them are more reasons why that Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 10/17/2017

At this time of year we are in the process of welcoming cooler weather and the many festivals that are part of our Community. This is also a great time to remember that to have a harvest, one must first apply some effort and make the changes necessary to plant the seeds for what type of crop one might want to grow. This is not only present in the life of each farmer, but it is also true for each person and their individual, family and community's life.

Many can now credit Vanna White with helping to teach us all our vowels, but it is up to us to determine where we place each vowel. A setback and or difficulty has an equal opportunity to make us either bitter or better. The choice is up to us and how we react to each situation.

The recent fire at the courthouse, a recent illness in a family, the loss of a job, the "not so great" grade that you now find on your grade card or the feeling of betrayal each have their triggers that are part of the human emotions that we all have. The benefit that has been given to each of us is that we have a choice on how we react to each and every situation. This ability is not one that just happens but that has to be cultivated by use. This process that the ability to not only transform lives but to help improve the process of improving faith.

I hope that this season is the beginning of a great time for you and your family. If it is not, may you take the initiative to make the changes now, to ensure that by this time next year you will hopefully see a change in your situation. This is not only an idea that works personally, but is also very effective for businesses, governments and communities.

Earlier this month our community suffered a great loss with the subsequent damage to our community's courthouse by fire. There was no way to plan for this devastation, but we can all deal with the results of what we were dealt. Within reason we will continue each and every community event that is usually held at the downtown Bradley County Courthouse and plaza. This will occur with the removal of damaged portions of the building, cleaning, rebuilding and the entire process of making the building able to be occupied again. Once again we had the option of being bitter, but we will choose to have a better attitude and be able to better plan for the future.

If you have the opportunity to spend time with family and friends this season, consider getting outside and enjoying our amazing and beautiful natural outdoor surroundings. And if possible I invite you to also consider coming to the downtown area for the many scheduled events for you and your family to enjoy around the Courthouse and the plaza. Keep in mind that you may encounter some detours and restrictions during this time and the process of rebuilding for an even better future. The people, places, personalities and the process involved during this time, and always, are what helps to make Bradley County Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 10/24/2017

This past week I was trying to find a phone number of someone and noticed a peculiar fact. There are no more “phone books” to be found. I was trying to call a person that I had not called in a few months, and their contact information was not in my personal cell phone memory. This caused me to look for a local phone book and I realized that it is no longer, neither updated nor available.

While this was a minor inconvenience, I was able to call a friend and they had the phone number that I needed and were able to share the needed information with me. This scenario was brought to light in a different aspect during a recent meeting of the Homeless Coalition this past week. During this meeting, it was relayed to those in attendance that our community’s local 211 phone service will be transitioning into The Ocoee Connect phone service. This amazing service is another program of the United Way of the Ocoee Region that provides an excellent resource in connecting you to community resources. Their phone number is (423) 800-8008.

With a directory of items that range from clothing, crisis & emergency, education, employment, faith based, family & specific groups, finance & legal, food, government programs & services, health & wellness, housing & homeless services, seasonal assistance and transportation they truly are a “one stop shopping” source of information and resources to help those who are in need and seeking who and where to turn to for assistance.

The recent change in format was to provide this valuable service for those throughout Bradley & Polk County by a wonderful group of professionals each Monday through Friday from the hours of 9am until 5pm. The previous service was good but relied on a contracted service that had the information “on a screen” that operators used to relay information to those who called requesting help. While the phone may now be busy and you may be asked to provide a phone number to have the customer service

professional call you back, you will have someone on the phone who knows locations and the ability to give accurate directions to those in need. After an extensive process of calling EACH member included in their directory and verifying contact information and current ability to provide services they are “up and running”. They are looking forward to providing information to those who may find themselves in need of assistance throughout Bradley and Polk County.

For customer service that truly cares, please remember the fine people of Ocoee Connect as they strive to help those in our local area. If you are a citizen who has been here for decades or days, please know that this single contact number of (423) 800-8008 is indeed here to help provide local information by local professionals. Local people helping local people is just another reason that Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 10/31/2017

When reading of the 30th anniversary of this evenings MainStreet Cleveland "Block Party", I had to read the portion about the 30th anniversary twice. Could it possibly be that we have enjoyed this fun filled, family centered afternoon and evening for such a long time? This is no trick, but a wonderful treat to those who take the time to be involved in our community.

Starting at 5 pm and continuing until 10 pm there are many scheduled events, locations and activities for EVERY age group. Vendors will be at their usual places, the Church Street Treat Street will open at 6 pm and become the location for various inflatable jump houses and slides. The Back Alley Stage will feature Covertibull beginning at 6:30. The Fun Stage, at the Courthouse Annex loading dock will host the costume contest at 6 pm and transition to the Velocity of Sound DJ's Electronic Dance Music. The Courthouse Stage timeline of events will highlight the Cleveland Dance and Performing Arts Center talent at 5 pm, The Sullivan Band from 6 pm until 7:30 pm and will conclude with The Answer Band from 8 pm until 10 pm.

Please visit the MainStreet Cleveland website at www.mainstreetcleveland.com or call them at 479-1000 for more information concerning this annual event. The list of sponsors of this event continues to grow and it contains some of those who are not only concerned about our community now, but contains those who have been extremely generous with their dollars, and their care, of our community for decades. If you have not previously ventured to the downtown Courthouse Square for this event please consider this an invitation to come and be a part of our community festivities. If you have been in the past, please accept my thanks for your past support and know that I look forward to seeing you "downtown" during this and the many more events that will be held in the historic, downtown district over the next couple of months. And

also consider this an invitation to visit their website and look for the list of sponsors. If you know anyone at the listed companies or at MainStreet Cleveland, please relay a thank you and let them know that they are appreciated for providing events that enrich our community and help to keep it a vibrant place to enjoy for all.

It seems that when we are younger we dream of “growing up” and becoming older, and when we are older we experience the sometimes harsh realities of a new location of pain or another lost loved one and then we immediately wish that we were younger and could turn back time. It is at these times that we realize that time waits for no man, or woman. May we all learn to enjoy each day as the gift that it truly is, and in doing so may we realize just how blessed that we truly are. One of these gifts is the ability to live, share and become involved locally from this day forward and in so doing understand that this process of giving is just another reason that Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best!

Have an enjoyable and safe Halloween!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 11/07/2017

Veterans Day is this Saturday. This day that is set aside is not to be confused with Memorial Day. Veterans Day is a day in which we celebrate ALL United States Military Veterans. Memorial Day is a day of remembrance of the men and women who gave their lives and those who perished while in service to our great Country. While it is easy to understand why some may get the meaning of these two special days confused, may we never forget that without God's grace and our Military's protection we would not have the many rights that are given in this nation. While most citizens appreciate them, there are some that tend to take for granted that they will always have the liberty to impugn the very ones who helped to give them their rights.

This year's ceremony will be held at the usual 11:00 but at a different location. Please travel approximately 2 blocks east from the Bradley County Courthouse and you will arrive at the 1st Street Park that is immediately east of the 1st Street and Church Street intersection. This location will allow for the anticipated crowds to assemble without interference from the current Bradley County Courthouse work that is ongoing presently.

It is important to remember, respectful to honor and necessary to always give thanks for those to whom it is due. Military service is currently voluntary. This means that those who serve have chosen this path of service. This has not always been the case as many previous generations had this path chosen for them. There are benefits of both and this is beyond my weekly article's scope to discuss, but it is safe to say that without our brave men and women's service to their country and self, we would not have the ability to enjoy our current blessings and abilities.

I know that paying respect is something that cannot be legislated and that some find it fashionable recently to avoid, but I also know that for as long

as I have time on this earth, I will give thanks and also show respect to and for those who have helped give me, my family, our community and our nation freedom and liberty.

I am asking those who are able, and may have the time, to join with myself and the many others who will be attending our local Veterans Day ceremony to say thank you to our local Veterans. This year we may be at a different location but may our time of honoring and paying respect be always present. If you cannot attend the local ceremony please try and find a Veteran, shake their hand, look them in the eye, and say Thank You! In doing so you will let them know that their service was, is and always will be appreciated. Thankfulness is yet another reason that Bradley County is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 11/14/2017

There have been many quotes penned over time that have been worthy of remembering. Murphy's Law states that "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong" and is hailed as a rallying cry from pessimist around the globe. At the other end of the spectrum you will find optimists and realists that have developed their own strategy to deal with life's unplanned difficulties that states "Two is One, One is None".

This advice has been used by law enforcement, military, survivalist and preppers for many years and it speaks truth that is needed to prepare to counteract the effects of Murphy's Law and life's necessary obstacles. With redundancy at the core of its meaning you will find that if you have two objects and one were to break, fail, become unusable or have a need for rest that you will have the capability of an immediate and also an instant replacement. If you only have one object and were to suffer the same fate, instead of the ability to have an instant replacement you will find yourself with "none".

This advice has MANY applications for personal, business, community, regional, national and also local government to learn from the successful application of this concept. This past month we witnessed the culmination of many across our community to add even further capabilities to ensure the protection and safety of all who are blessed to call Bradley County their home, with the opening of the Bradley County 911 Emergency Communications District Backup PSAP or Public Safety Answering Point.

The addition of this monumental improvement is literally the culmination of years of planning, design and many multitudes of meetings. This facility can now serve as an overflow for our primary operations, as a command post for a specific planned event, a large scale emergency or as a stand-

alone center should the primary PSAP become inoperable. With transmitters now at both locations, connected by fiber networks, there are options available to further improve our community's safety and help to ensure our security.

With planning that has always included primary, secondary and even tertiary power supply and communications at the original location on Guthrie Drive, this would be negated if this area were to see the devastating effects of a natural disaster such as a tornado, fire, or other means of disrupting this one facility's ability to receive and send information to those who depend upon dispatch and 911 capabilities. Now with another EXACT replication of the equipment, capabilities and facility at a secondary location within the Cleveland Police Department we have been able to ensure the seamless continuity of service that not only can, but will be available within an instant of it being needed.

There are many "service minded" individuals across our community who gave countless hours of their time and went "above and beyond" the call of duty to make this plan a reality. These would include EMA Director Troy Spence and the Staff of the Cleveland-Bradley Emergency Management Agency, Cleveland Police Chief Mark Gibson, and City of Cleveland government, the multiple vendors involved in the process, Director of 911 Joe Wilson, the entire Board of 911 and ALL who took part in this process.

It is impossible to plan for every event and obstacle that "Murphy" can place in our path each day, but with planning, working together and a cooperative community of professionals we have indeed succeeded in minimizing our reaction time along with ensuring our communication capabilities due to another devastating emergency. Yesterday we celebrated the 20th Anniversary of "going live" at our primary center on Guthrie Drive. Today we celebrate the expanded abilities that are now available due to continued cooperation. This ability to work together for a common goal is yet another reason that our Community and Bradley County truly is Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 11/21/2017

It has been said that only in America can you find millions of people searching for the best deals available on items during “Black Friday” shopping expeditions, literally the day after expressing thanks for all that they supposedly have on the Federal Holiday that we all know as Thanksgiving. It is impossible to legislate morality and the idea that we can also legislate the ability to be thankful is also suspect, at best.

One can travel the entire world, or even within the borders within Bradley County, and find those with many possessions who are miserable. The same locations will also usually have those who many would think are in need but want to share with others from their abundance. It is true the world is full of givers and takers. It is also true that those who give will find the ability to continue giving from their abundance and that those who take will find it necessary to take even more as they are never satisfied.

I am glad that our ancestors took the time to set aside a time to show respect and to give thanks to God for all that we have been blessed with. This path of giving THANKS has led to our Nation becoming blessed beyond any nation in the recorded history. In 241 years we have gone from travel by foot or horseback to car, plane and have even visited the moon. We have gone from wood for heat to coal, gas, and electricity and now even solar power. We have gone from speaking to each other in one room to communications across communities by telegraph, then telephone and now wireless products that make it possible to have instant communications across the globe. We have not only participated in this history but we have also invented the majority, if not all, of the technology to help make these advancements even possible. We have gone from feeding our family from an individual farm to providing food for our nation and helping to feed many other locations across the globe.

You will have some who want us to cast doubt upon the greatness of our Nation as they, themselves seek to diminish what it means to be an American. To deny our founding families and the Faith that they had to seek a new land with the freedom necessary to honor their Creator as they saw fit, while also ensuring the same freedoms for their future generations. Were they perfect? Probably not. Are we perfect? Probably not and I know that I am far from this standard, as we are all human. But we can all take some time to honestly, truthfully and with meaning, say Thank You for the gift of life that we have all been given.

Please join with me in the process of taking the time necessary to not only say Thank You, but to also remain Thankful for this weekend and always. Many across our region have reasons to be concerned. Some may have received a tragic diagnosis for themselves, a family member or a friend. Some may have an empty chair at their home this Holiday due to a family member's military service abroad, a child at a distant educational facility or even a death of a family member. Some may have no food, or lack the funds necessary to "make ends meet" at this time. Some may have been involved in "taking" so long that they lack the ability to look outside their own circle of family or friends to see the others in need.

Please seek to honestly give thanks for what you have received this year, and when possible seek to also help a neighbor, friend or even someone that you do not know yet to share your time, your resources and your abilities to help someone else in need. We don't need to shop for items on Friday when we already have the greatest gift of all. This simple act gives credence to the quote by Dr. Seuss that says "to the world you may be just one person, but to one person you may be the world!" This emotion of being thankful and the action of caring for others, being practiced by many across all of Bradley County is what keeps Bradley County as being Tennessee at its best. On behalf of my entire family, I wish you and your family, a Happy Thanksgiving Holiday!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 11/28/2017

The ability to “time travel” has not been attained as of yet, but time, sure does travel fast, especially during this portion of each calendar year. It literally seems that we arrive at one holiday and then the next one is awaiting our participation immediately thereafter. I hope that you, and your family, have been able to enjoy a Happy Thanksgiving and that many wonderful memories were made to share through the years. This weekend there are many more opportunities to spend time together as a family and help to create lasting memories.

This weekend is literally “jam packed” with many events that are sure to be enjoyed and are once again the result of the hard work of MainStreet Cleveland, their wonderful members and the many amazing sponsors who help to make these events not only to be available but also possible for our community to enjoy.

Friday, December 1st at 6:00 pm will have the lighting of the Community Christmas tree ceremony. This legendary tree was originally planted by Mr. Bob Easterly when he was our local United States Postmaster. You will find this event at the intersection of Broad Street and 1st Street and will also hear many wonderful, local members of various Church choirs singing songs of the Christmas season at various historic Churches and other key sites in an event known as “reverse caroling” in which you visit them instead them visiting you. Visits with Santa Claus are scheduled to be available from 6:15 pm until 8:00 pm at the Bandstand area of the Bradley County Courthouse Plaza. You are encouraged to bring your camera for another great photographic opportunity. And if this was not enough, there will also be free horse-drawn carriage rides in the historic downtown area until 8:00 pm as well.

Saturday, December 2nd at 6:00 pm will be the date and time of one of Cleveland's most popular traditions, that is known as the MainStreet Cleveland's Annual Christmas Parade. The route will continue to be the same and will have many locations for people to find their favorite viewing location as an "ever-increasing" list of participants will look forward to participating. Arrive early, enjoy the fellowship with others and help to support those across our community that participate in this wonderful Christmas event.

Sunday, December 3rd at 3:00 is the time scheduled to enjoy the 28th annual Classic Christmas Concert at Lee University's Conn Center. As always this event is a FREE event but tickets are REQUIRED in order to attend and to be admitted into the building. Please call (423) 614-8240 for ticket information.

It has been said that this time of year is one of drastic emotions as many are celebrating but some may not feel like participating. This may make them have various thoughts that they otherwise would not have the time to entertain. I would ask that we all look around, and especially among our own "circle of influence" to seek those who are feeling left out, alone, lonely and who may just need someone to listen to them. You do not have to have an answer, although if you do that might be helpful, but to just take the time to truly CARE about another human being, just might be the "gift" that they need. I promise that in doing so, you will receive far more of a reward in knowing that you have experienced the true meaning of the season, by helping to give the gift of HOPE to those who may have recently lost theirs.

Thank you for taking the time to read my articles, and for also putting your community first each and every day. This process is what makes, and keeps, Bradley County as Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 12/05/2017

Advertising is both a skill and an art. The fundamentals of both the skill and the art can be taught to a student that is interested in this as a profession. Many will go on to much success but a few are destined to make advertising history and have even been able to have their work become a part of the “fabric” of our nation. I am sure that there are more than a few who are reading this article today that can finish the entire sentence when hearing the four words “Two all-beef patties”. Then there was another that used the four words, “Plop Plop, Fizz Fizz” to utilize name recognition with a certain product. Two recent additions to the American language landscape are the terms “Black Friday” and “Cyber Monday”.

These two new additions are not product specific, but have helped produce an avalanche of interest and also the “need” to seek wonderful deals this time of year when we generally are buying Christmas gifts for family and friends. This can be a wonderful thing that helps to save “hard earned” dollars. This activity may also help to stretch each family’s budget even further as we all are trying to be aware of the many pitfalls of over spending.

I hope that we all use this time of year to also remember two more very important words, “SHOP LOCAL”! I know that every item on each family’s wish list may not be found within the confines of Bradley County, but I also know that MANY not only can be found, but they are readily available for purchase from our diverse and prolific array of businesses across Bradley County.

Each dollar spent here, has its value increased as you are helping local entrepreneurs, business owners, and industries not only stay in business, but also to possibly increase their “market share”. This activity helps to

increase local production, pay local employees, pay local utilities, pay for local supplies, pay for local shipping across town or across the nation, pay for local advertising, pay for local mortgages, pay for local travel, pay for local maintenance and also to pay their federal, state and local taxes.

In my opinion we all pass many super-heroes each day when we meet a person who gets up early, each and every day, with the mindset to make a product, fulfill a need, and provide a service. In doing so this tenacity and determination, provides others with the opportunity to have not only a job, but a future while in their care as an employee. The late nights spent trying to figure out how everything, and everyone, will be paid and that they might have something left over for themselves and their family is something that is not for the faint of heart or those who are easily sidetracked. These men and women are some of our best Local Heroes!

May we all join together and look for even more ways to buy local goods, products and services. In doing so we not only are helping local business, but we are helping our local community as well. It might be possible to find a few products that are less expensive elsewhere but without the needed revenue to continually provide local services, the possible savings may not truly be worth the "cost". I hope to see you soon in a local establishment, on a Friday, a Monday and actually even on the "Amazing Any Day" in that we all shop locally for that perfect gift. In doing so we will not only enjoy the aspect of knowing that we are helping our local business owners, but we are also insuring that Bradley County continues to be Tennessee at its best!

Our County
D. Gary Davis
County Mayor

For Tuesday 12/12/2017

Seasons of life and also the seasons of the year are all to be enjoyed. This time of year has many people out and admiring the beautiful lights and Christmas decorations that are available all across Bradley County. These decorations are a reflection of each person's creative abilities and are EQUALLY impressive whether they resemble "Charlie Brown" or "Clark Griswold".

Many improvements have been made over the years. Today we have LED lights and the ability to broadcast moving images across our homes or office buildings, and even the ability to employ a remote control to turn the lights on or off. These improvements may have happened without a few mistakes but I am sure that some of the Christmas decorations from years past were a valuable part in improving the history of decorations from just a few short decades ago.

I remember the use of real trees being placed in a tree stand that held about 2 cups of water. This inevitably led to the tree dying quickly. Then we placed large Christmas tree lights on it that literally within 15 minutes were extremely HOT to the touch. And if this were not enough, most of us placed strips of metal (conductive) objects that were known as icicles on the tree. This combination was "the standard" for years and required that your Christmas tree could only be lit for about 30 to 45 minutes each evening as the majority of us understood that all of this combination, within our single largest possession, our home, and the possibility of a fire was not a good thing. The advent of the metallic tree was seen as an improvement to some and this could then be reused for numerous years with very little set up required. A few of these fortunate families had the "Fab" tri-colored wheel that made their entire tree change colors every 5 seconds. But even these had their drawbacks, as once again over time, the light strands would

become brittle with age and the thought of a metallic tree with an exposed electric current making contact with a metal tree was found to be a rather shocking experience.

We ALL have come a long way over the years and many advancements have made this season not only beautiful, but also considerably safer. If you and your family have Christmas decorations, an extra heater or two, and might use a combustible source fireplace for heat, PLEASE also invest in a portable fire extinguisher.

Many can identify a fire extinguisher, but less may know the 5 main types and the general guidelines as to their proper and successful use. For further information and also recall listings please visit the website of <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/extinguishers.html>. A general guideline would be to remember the acronym of PASS. This is to help us remember the proper sequence to insure the best possible outcome. Pull the pin that unlocks the handle. Aim the extinguisher product to the base of the individual fire. Squeeze the lever to discharge the agent. And to then Sweep the nozzle or hose from side to side, and if your individual safety is maintained, continue to do so until the fire is extinguished or the extinguisher is empty. In general a Class A fire involves ordinary combustible materials of cloth, wood, paper and many plastics. A Class B fire involves flammable gas such as gasoline, alcohol, oil based paints and lacquers. A Class C fire involves energized electrical equipment. A Class D fire involves combustible metals such as magnesium, titanium and sodium. Multipurpose extinguishers are available for purchase, but please double check with a reputable professional before purchasing one to help protect your home or business to make sure that it is a suitable choice for your safety needs. Please do not use extension cords for use with ANY additional heater within your home and please have your flue or chimney inspected and also cleaned on a regular basis

Improving the appearance of our community and providing for the comfort of all of those within your home, and doing so in a safe manner is a choice that helps us all. With some of the best fire, rescue and emergency professionals on the planet as close as a phone call, it is also wise to do our part to help remain as safe as humanly possible within our home and business settings. This practice helps to make this season safe and is just another reason that Bradley County remains Tennessee at its best!