



Holiday lights are coming on all around the County, even at the Cove. The ice skating rink is open downtown, and tonight Santa Claus will make his way down Main Street. We are entering that season of peace and brotherhood. An interesting example of that came this week with the completion of the first year of our supplier diversity mentor-protégé program...large, already successful companies providing guidance to small and minority-owned businesses.

Also this week, we had the opportunity to hear our school superintendent offer his vision for our County schools, which encompassed a report on his first 100 working days. I urge each of you to read his report and to support him as he endeavors to move us from a very good school system to a great school system.

Mike Ragsdale

First Six Companies Graduate from County's Mentor-Protégé Program

Program aims to support local small businesses



Six local companies received the first certificates of completion from the County's Supplier Diversity Mentor-Protégé Program this week. The companies who graduated from protégé status are: Lucas Drywall Inc.; Andrews Electric; Rich Construction; Spratt Construction; Shanklin & Sons Carpet; and Turman Enterprises. The Mentor-Protégé Program was launched in December 2007 to match small and minority-owned business owners with large company owners and/or managers who would provide various forms of assistance to help the protégé company improve its



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Vision for Knox County Schools

Superintendent Jim McIntyre presented his vision for Knox County Schools on Wednesday, December 3. The full document.

"Building on Strength: Excellence for All Children," is available from the Schools' website at knoxschools.org.

ability to successfully compete for contracting opportunities.

The mentor-protégé program attempts to bridge the gap by helping small companies build relationships with large ones. The four mentor companies (J. A. Fielden Company; Johnson & Galyon, Incorporated; Merit Construction; and Messer Construction) are large, well established business that stepped up last December to become the program's first mentors.

Under the terms of the mentor-protégé program agreement, mentors may help their protégé companies in either technical or business management areas. For example, Merit Construction provided one of their protégé companies, Pratt Construction, with guidance in marketing and bookkeeping procedures. Messer Construction took advantage of the program's option to provide subcontracting work to the protege, using that to mentor Turman Enterprises step-by-step through construction project bidding and management.

Applications for the program are available [online](#) or through the Knox County Purchasing Division, Supplier Diversity Coordinator, Robert Minter, 1000 North Central Street, Suite 100, Knoxville, Tennessee 37917, 865-215-5756.

Regional Senior Summit at Healthy Living Expo

Summit Moves to January Timeframe

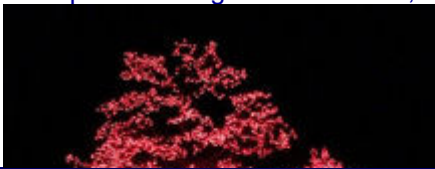
The third annual Regional Senior Summit on fraud and abuse will be a part of the Blue Cross Healthy Living Expo this year. The Senior Summit will open the Expo on Thursday, January 22nd, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Knoxville Convention Center and will again be FREE for seniors, their families, and caregivers.

The Regional Senior Summit has been a great success the past two years as our Mayors, District Attorneys, and Sheriffs have worked together to educate seniors, their families, and caregivers on fraud and abuse. Over 4,000 citizens from 17 East Tennessee counties have received crucial information that will protect them from predators and empower them to take charge and live better. The theme for the 2009 Summit will again be senior health, fraud and abuse with a focus on financial fraud, identity theft, crime prevention, and more of the other types of issues covered the past two years at the Summit. More information will be available soon on the [Regional Senior Summit website](#).

Holiday Festival Lights Up the Park

Free Carriage Rides Dec. 19-20

It's almost time for the Holiday Festival of Lights at The Cove at Concord Park. Again this year, the Festival will begin with complimentary horse drawn carriage rides on the first two nights when it kicks off on Friday December 19th at 6:30. The complimentary rides will last from 6:30 until 9:00 p.m. on both the 19th and 20th. The Cove, located at 11808 Northshore Drive, will be decked for the season with hundreds of thousands of lights, which will continue to sparkle through December 28, (excluding Christmas Day) for pedestrian traffic. The carriage rides are sponsored by Pimento's and Lenoir City Utilities Board.



Knox County Calendar

December 8

New Library schedule begins

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Finance Committee

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Citizen Review Panel applications due

December 9

Intergovernmental Committee

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Corryton Senior Center Christmas Potluck and Talent Show

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Halls Senior Center Holiday Potluck Dinner

December 10

Blue Grass Elementary PTA Roundtable

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Strang Senior Center Holiday Potluck Luncheon

December 15

County Commission

December 19-20

Holiday Festival of Lights at The Cove

December 25

County holiday

December 26

County holiday

Suggestions or comments?

We'd love to get your input. Send your comments or questions to our [newsletter editor](#).

Quick Links

[Knox County Office of Neighborhoods](#)
[Public Library](#)
[Public Schools](#)
[Parks & Recreation](#)
[Health Department](#)

Parks and Recreation staff erect light displays along the walking trail throughout the park. Animated displays and a giant live tree with 22,000 lights are always highlights of the event. The event is free to the public, but a contribution of canned goods is encouraged. Donated food this year will be given to the Love Kitchen.

Holiday activities, including a Gift and Craft Market, cookie decorating and bonfires for roasting marshmallows, and tasty treats like kettle corn, hot chocolate and desserts from Pimento's will be available. On the nights the carriages are running, walking and pets are not allowed for safety reasons. However, pets on leashes are welcome during the walk through nights.

Media sponsors include WVLT-TV, B97.5, The Knoxville News Sentinel and Comcast. For more information, please contact Knox County Parks and Recreation, 215-6600.

County Distributes Emergency Weather Radios

Grant monies enable wider spread of emergency notification system

Just before Thanksgiving, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) and Knoxville/Knox County Emergency Management Agency (KEMA) announced that they were preparing to distribute more than 300 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radios to organizations in need. Thanks to a federally funded grant from the Metropolitan Medical Response System through Knoxville/Knox County Emergency Management



Agency, KCHD's Emergency Response Division was able to purchase more weather radios for area daycare centers, private schools (public schools already have them), assisted living facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health care agencies, area agencies serving the homeless and high-rise senior living facilities.

"In the event of dangerous weather or another type of emergency, these radios will be able to alert some of our most vulnerable populations," said Mark Jones, KCHD director. "We are working right now to get them distributed."

The radios broadcast warnings, watches, forecasts, AMBER alerts and emergency information about natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The radios broadcast NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR), a nationwide network of radio stations airing continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. NWR works with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Alert System as a single source for comprehensive weather and emergency information. They operate on wall current with a battery backup and can be programmed to only receive alerts for a particular county, such as Knox County.

NWR is provided as a public service by NOAA and is known as the "voice

of NOAA's National Weather Service." The nationwide network includes more than 985 transmitters, covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific Territories. NOAA Weather Radios contain a special receiver, which is required to pick up the NWR signal.

Knox Parks and Recreation Asks for Citizen Input

Survey available on County website

Knox County Parks and Recreation held a community meeting to share information about plans for the new Clayton Park and extension of Halls Greenway in November. "The Legacy Parks Foundation has done a great job in acquiring land and raising funds for this new community park," said Doug Bataille, Senior Director of Parks and Recreation for Knox County. "Now we need to solicit input from the neighbors and determine our next steps," he added.

As part of those next steps, Knox County is asking interested citizens to complete a survey about their thoughts on the new park and greenway. The survey can be found on the [Parks and Recreation homepage](#).

Join us in our efforts to make Knox County *A Great American Community*. **Become a part of the conversation.** Tell us about our programs and services that are working for you, and the ones that aren't. **Support our teachers** and the great work they are doing to educate our children. **Get involved** with the workforce development effort. **Participate** in the great events our libraries and parks departments offer, like the summer reading challenge and the Second Saturday at the Cove concert series. County government starts with you, the citizen, so **join in!**

Sincerely,

Mike Ragsdale, County Mayor
Knox County, A Great American Community