



Knox County has plenty to be thankful for in the coming weeks. We've launched our **knoxAchieves** program in some senior assemblies at our local high schools and are celebrating the achievements of one of our own Elementary School Art Teachers. We're calling on for volunteers for our Citizen Review Panel and still need volunteers for Read With Me. Also, both the Knox County Public Library and Young-Williams Animal Center have some exciting events coming up in the near future. You can read about all that and more, below.

Knox County is counting its blessings and I hope you are too. Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday!

Mike Ragsdale

## County Seniors Celebrate KnoxAchieves Day

### **Communtiy College Tuition Assistance Program presented to graduating seniors**

Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam and Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale jointly proclaimed Friday, November 21, 2008 as "knoxAchieves Day" in the city and county. KnoxAchieves, a special program of the East Tennessee Foundation, is a workforce development initiative that will provide tuition assistance for to up to 500 Knox County high school seniors who enroll in one of the region's three community colleges. Funds for the tuition assistance have been privately raised by the **knoxAchieves** Board of Directors.

KnoxAchieves seeks to promote college attendance among all graduating Knox County seniors, with an emphasis on first generation college students. The program will pair participating students with a volunteer mentor who will assist with the college application process and serve as an advocate for the student.

KnoxAchieves representatives recently visited a class at West High School to get help coming up with a list of frequently asked questions about the program. These representatives are prepped to answer questions ranging from "What is **knoxAchieves**?" to "What if I graduate early?" and "What will my mentor do?" Several area high schools hosted student assemblies today to have these, and other, questions answered. Those schools included Austin-East, Carter, Halls, Karns, South Doyle and West High Schools. A **knoxAchieves** representative gave students an



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## Knox County Calendar

**Today**  
knoxAchieves Day

**November 22**  
Vintage Film and News

overview of the program at each of these schools and then took questions.

For more information, please visit [www.knoxAchieves.org](http://www.knoxAchieves.org) or call 215-4754.

## Carter Teacher Named Tennessee Elementary Art Educator of the Year

**Jackie Spaulding-Wright honored with 2009 Award**

Katherine Anne Porter, a novelist and short story writer, once said, "Human life itself may be almost pure chaos, but the work of the artist is to take those handfuls of confusion and disparate things, things that seem irreconcilable, and put them together in a frame to give them some kind of shape and meaning." Carter Elementary School Art Teacher Jackie Spaulding-Wright has inspired this in a number of students and was honored with the 2009 Tennessee Elementary Art Educator of the Year Award.



Jackie graduated from East Tennessee State University with a BA in Art Education when art programs were being cut from school curriculums. Because the job market was bleak, she took a job in retail--where she worked for 15 years--instead of completing her student teaching. After the birth of her children, Jake and Justin, Jackie began teaching preschool at Seymour Community Christian School and after-school art classes in Knox and Sevier Counties. Easing back into her chosen field, Jackie decided to return to school, complete her student teaching requirement, and work to pass the teaching certification exam. Since this time, she has taught art for six years.

Jackie's nomination for this award came from Carter Elementary School Principal Thompson who said she nominated Jackie because she does things above and beyond what's expected. Thompson also cited Jackie's contagious enthusiasm. A passionate art teacher, Jackie has spearheaded the "Stand Up and Speak Out for Art Education" Campaign in an effort to get the word out about the importance of art education in schools. This campaign is being considered as the statewide theme for 2010 Youth Art Month.

Knox County is lucky to have educators like Jackie who understand the value of education to students. Congratulations Jackie! Keep up the good work.

## County Offices Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving Holiday

All Knox County government offices will be closed Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 in observance of Thanksgiving Day. The Knox County Convenience Centers will also be closed. Normal business operations will resume for all government offices on Monday, December 1. However, the Convenience Centers will be open on Friday, November 28.



Screening  
7:00-9:30 p.m.

**November 27**  
County holiday

**November 28**  
County holiday

**December 1**  
Citizen Review Panel  
Applications Due

**December 8**  
New Library Schedule  
Begins

**Can you spare one hour a week?**  
**Eastern County schools most in need of volunteers**

Our first and second grade teachers still need you to come in for one hour a week to read with their students. The greatest need is in the following schools, all but one of which are in the eastern part of the County:

- Bonny Kate
- Corryton
- East Knox County
- Gap Creek
- Sunnyview
- West View

To volunteer, call 215-4770 or fill out an application online at the [County website](#).

**Suggestions or comments?**

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

For more information, please contact the Knox County Solid Waste Department at 215-5865.

## County Calls for Citizen Review Panel Volunteers

**Community Development Department asks for help reviewing grant applications**



For the second year, Knox County's Community Development Department will ask citizen volunteers to review grant

applications and make recommendations to County Commission on amounts of award for the annual community grants. Last year, 36 volunteers worked through the complete process, forming five panels that reviewed 143 applications and ultimately allocated \$2 million. Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale applauded last year's panelists for participating in their government in this way, saying, "Those who volunteered made a great contribution. Their efforts were very much appreciated."

At the conclusion of the process, the Community Development Department surveyed panelists and grant applicants. Based on that feedback, the Department has made several adjustments, including capping the request amount at \$50,000 and limiting the number of requests an agency can submit to three.

This year, volunteers will again serve on one of five panels: health, seniors/veterans; social services; tourism/culture and youth services. Based on last year's work, panel members can anticipate spending up to 40 hours for the full process, including orientation, reviewing applications, and attending panel meetings and agency interview sessions. Traci Tasse, who was a member of last year's social services panel, said the experience was an "exceptional opportunity" that was "thoroughly enjoyable and educational."

The goal of the Citizen Review Panel is to effectively and responsibly distribute Community Grant funds to support critical community programs. Panelists must be Knox County residents who are age 18 or older and who have a working knowledge of professional qualifications in arts, culture, tourism, health, senior and veteran services, youth programs, social services, non-profit management, and/or public/private partnerships. Panelists must be willing to commit time and energy to the review process and exhibit sensitivity in making constructive critical judgments.

Panelists are not compensated for their time, expenses or service. If selected to serve, panelists must attend orientation training.

Volunteer applications and more information about the process are available from the [Knox County](#) website or by calling 215-3980.

Applications must be received by the Community Development Department no later than Monday, December 1, 2008.

## Trimming Hours

### All branch libraries to remain open, no layoffs expected

Knox County Public Library will reduce operating hours by 20% at all library locations starting Monday, December 8 in an effort to tighten spending. No staff will be laid off and no branches will be closed.

This measure is prompted by a recent announcement from the State of Tennessee calling for the elimination of aid to urban libraries, which amounts to \$91,000 for Knox County. Additionally, the Mayor's office has requested plans from each department for reduced spending. Other pressures on the Library budget include an expected reduction of publisher discounts for books.

Budget reductions will be realized by continuing the current hiring freeze on staff vacancies. The Library now has 10 vacant positions, and a total of 26 lost positions since 2003. In order to maintain service, staff will be rotated among facilities.

Despite this reduction, KCPL maintains considerably more public hours per week than the average library system serving a comparable population. According to Public Library Data Service's Statistical Report for 2008, libraries serving populations between 250,000 to 499,000 are open an average of 558 hours each week. Under the new schedule for KCPL, the system will be open 708 hours each week, which is 27% more than the average.

The Administration remains committed to keeping all branch libraries operational. Traditionally, library use increases in an economic downturn. Knox County Public Library collection includes over one million books, movies, music, and audiobooks for loan. Most weekly programs such as children's storytimes will continue, though a few may be rescheduled.

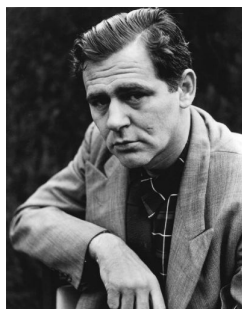
"We are pleased to have a plan that allows us to keep all of our library facilities open. As a community, we are particularly fortunate to have the vast resources of the Library available at this time of belt tightening," noted Mayor Mike Ragsdale. "Education and literacy remain an important priority for our community. Using our library is a wonderful and simple way for families to save money."

The new schedule is listed on the library website: [www.knoxlib.org](http://www.knoxlib.org).

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## David Shepard to Screen Vintage Film and News

Join noted film historian and pioneer motion picture film preservationist David Shepard, renowned film historian, in a special screening devoted to the career and legacy of Knoxville-born author James Agee (pictured right) on Saturday, November 22, from 7-9:30 p.m. at the East Tennessee History Center. Shepard will speak on his fascinating life as a film archivist and the lasting influence of the 1958 book *Agee on Film* on his career in film restoration. The event is free and open to the public.



This special program will feature screenings of original 16mm film prints from Shepard's personal film collection, and vintage news film from the McClung Historical Collection's WBIR-TV archive.

For more information, please contact Bradley Reeves or Louisa Trott at the Tennessee Archive of Moving image and Sound, 865-215-8856 or [by email](#).

## Young-Williams Animal Center Holiday Events

**YWAC is hosting some great fundraising events this holiday season**

This year, you can recognize a special person or pet while helping support the shelter with Deck the Paws. For a \$5.00 donation, the Young-Williams Animal Center will illuminate a light bulb on their special holiday tree. Red bulbs will signify a donation made in honor of a person or pet, while white bulbs will be lit in memory. A small photo of the individual being honored or remembered may also be hung on the tree (keep in mind the Animal Center cannot return photographs). All proceeds benefit the Animal Center.

Get your pet's (or children's) picture made with Santa November 22-23 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at Agrifeed on Middlebrook Pike and December 6-7 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at Young Williams Animal Center during the Santa Claws 2008 event. No appointments necessary. Staffed by experienced animal handlers and professional photographers. All proceeds buy toys and beds for shelter animals. Photo packages, holiday cards and gifts available.

For more information, contact the Center or visit their website at [www.knoxpets.org](http://www.knoxpets.org).

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*