



In This Issue

[Bond rating revised to highest in County history](#)

[Read with Me...readers needed urgently](#)

[Health Department expands annual flumist campaign](#)

[The Big Read is coming...and just in time](#)

[County celebrates smoke-free anniversary](#)

[Spotlight on Knox parks and greenways](#)

At the top of this week's newsletter, we've got some really good news about the County's bond rating. Our Read with me program is off and running, but we have a critical need for volunteers in particular schools. Read on for that information. In addition, we are getting ready to kick October off in a big way. On the very first day of the month, we are launching a big program and celebrating an important anniversary. You'll also read that we have our children's flu vaccination program under way. Lastly, we are spotlighting more of the County's parks and greenways. I hope you'll find something of interest in this week's issue.

Mike Ragsdale

Bond rating revised to highest in County history

Standard & Poor's upgrades Knox County to AA+

Standard and Poor's has upgraded Knox County's bond rating to AA+ rating from the County's previous AA rating. This represents the highest rating in the history of the County. The bond rating agency considers a variety of variables in determining how a local government will be rated, including debt levels, per capita income and area unemployment rates.

County Finance Senior Director John Troyer noted that it is important for the County to remain vigilant in observing financial restraint in managing the public's money. "I am excited about this historic first for Knox County and for the statement it makes about our economic picture," Troyer said. "However, these remain challenging times, and we will continue to restrain spending, make cuts where we can, and watch our financial situation very closely."

Read with Me readers needed urgently in 13 schools

1st- and 2nd-grade children waiting for your help

Volunteers are needed in schools across the County to support our 1st- and 2nd-grade reading programs. Following is a list of elementary schools that don't yet have any *Read with Me* volunteers, or have only a few.

- Bonny Kate * Carter * Corryton * East Knox * Fountain City
- Gap Creek * Hardin Valley * Inskip * Karns * Mooreland Heights
- Norwood * Spring Hill * Sunnyview

If there is a school where you would like to read that is not listed here, please contact the *Read with Me* office at 215-4770. You can fill out an application online at the [County website](#), or call the office to request that an application be sent to you.

Health Department expands annual flumist campaign

Daycare and Head Start students added to program

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) kicked off their 2008 School FluMist Vaccination Program this week at the Pride and Joy Children's Academy. For the first time this year, the influenza prevention program is expanding to include Head Start Students and daycare centers with

Knox County Calendar

Through October 3
Buy school coupon books!

September 29
All County splashpads close for the season

October 1
The Big Read kickoff :
Market Square *

Smokefree Tennessee celebration *

School Board Meeting

October 2
New Harvest Park Farmers Market

October 3
After Hours @ The

more than 50 children. Facilities with fewer than 50 children are asked to direct parents to any Health Department location.

KCHD has been offering FluMist vaccines to public and private schools throughout Knox County since 2004. Any child between the ages of 2 and 19 are eligible for the free vaccine. Clinics are being scheduled in schools, daycares, and Head Start facilities through October 17. A second round of FluMist clinics will be held between December 2 and 22 to provide a second dose of vaccines required for children under nine years of age who have never received a flu vaccine of any kind. Consent forms for vaccination will go out through schools and are available on the [Health Department website](#).

The Big Read is coming...and just in time

Countywide exploration of *The Grapes of Wrath* kicks off next week

Quite coincidentally to the nation's current economic upheaval, this year's Big Read is focusing on John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. The Big Read, sponsored by the YWCA Knoxville and Knox County Public Library, kicks off at noon on Wednesday, October 1st on Market Square. It is the largest reading program in American history. The program provides a community-wide dialogue designed to encourage reluctant readers to experience a literary classic and to explore racial and social justice issues in the region.

In this year's choice, the characters fall in love, go hungry, lose faith, kill, live, and die with an immediacy that makes most contemporary novels look somehow dated by comparison. The novel begins with Tom Joad's return home from prison to find his family's Oklahoma farmstead in ruins and deserted. He finds his relatives nearby, preparing to leave their land for the promise of a new life in California. But when California's agricultural bounty makes no provision for them except as occasional day laborers, the Joad family gradually comes apart.

Get ready to read!! A [schedule of Big Read events](#) is available from the Library's website.

County celebrates smoke-free anniversary

October 1 marks first anniversary of Non-Smokers Protection Act

Wednesday will mark the first anniversary of a major milestone in public health--the enactment of the Tennessee's Non-Smokers Protection Act. On October 1st of last year, the law began protecting non-smokers, families, children, white-collar employees and service industry workers from the dangerous and deadly effects of secondhand smoke. The new law gave non-smokers the right to breathe clean indoor air while on the job, at school or dining out. The Health Department will mark this occasion with a celebration on the 1st at 2:00 p.m. in their lobby on Dameron Avenue. Refreshments will be served.

Spotlight on Knox parks and greenways

Visit the House Mountain Nature Trail & the Gibbs Ruritan Park

This week, we are spotlighting a wonderful County resource, that includes 500 acres of nature land and a 5.8 mile nature trail. The House Mountain nature trail is located at 9601 Hogskin, just eight miles from Knoxville.

Also this week, we encourage you to visit Gibbs Ruritan Park at 7827 Tazewell Pike. The 30-acre park includes five baseball fields, two softball fields, two playgrounds, a picnic shelter, tennis courts and a short walking trail. The park is approximately nine-tenths of a mile past Gibbs High School.

For directions, visit the [Parks and Recreation website](#).

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!**

Library: The Bill
Scarlett Trio w/ Nancy
D'Andrea

*

Movies on the Town:
Napoleon Dynamite

October 6

Superintendent's
calendar forum: Powell
High School

October 7

DebateWatch Party at
UT University Center

October 14

The Big Read: Mayors'
Discussion Group

*

Superintendent's
forum: Bearden
Middle School

October 15-30

Early Voting

October 27

County Commission

October 28

The Big Read:
The Grapes of Wrath
film screening

Suggestions or comments?

We'd love to get
your feedback.

Send your
comments or
questions to our
[newsletter editor](#).

Quick Links

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

Sincerely,

Mike Ragsdale, County Mayor

Knox County, A Great American Community