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Lakeland currents

Bi-monthly news magazine

Meet The Man Behind The District

page 3

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Yehuda Netanel

His Projects, His Pet Rescue

Yehuda Netanel is passionate about The Lake District, a complete lifestyle project from early childhood care to retirement living, and so much more. He is planning this Lakeland development to replace the Factory Outlet Mall near I-40 and Canada Road. Start date could be early next year, with demolition of the existing Mall to be the first activity.

He is equally passionate, if not more so, about Wings of Rescue, a non-profit he started in 2009 to help shelter dogs and cats find permanent homes around the United States and Canada.

This year he expects to almost triple the number of dogs rescued last year, from 6,000 to 16,000, creating a second chance in life for the pets and allowing them, as he says, " to hold down a couch."

He hopes a similar program can be started in the Memphis area to rescue dogs from shelters and save them from ultimate euthanasia. All it will take, he said, is volunteers willing to help organize here. "This is a challenge to your community," he said, "to make resources available in the Lakeland/ Memphis area. I encourage individuals to come together as groups and email me." Yehuda@wingsofrescue.org .

Mr. Netanel didn't always know he would rescue dogs or develop projects, but he has loved aviation since he was four years old growing up in Israel. After serving a compulsory three years in the army, he came to the

United States to study architecture at the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

After graduation, he worked for a large firm but realized he had the ability to initiate his own projects. So at the age of 27, he became a developer, starting with a small six-unit condo building. Within 15 years, he was developing apartments, retail, office and mixed-use. He had 50 projects going in the Los Angeles area. "I went after opportunities, initiating negotiations," he said.

"There was one particular area in Lakeland for sale and I thought it would be a good opportunity," he added. So in 2008 he bought the 35 acres of the old outlet mall. But the economy hit, no one was leasing and construction came to a complete halt, he stated.

"Then the economy recovered and I resurrected the project, refined the design. I was starting to get the leasing under way.

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About the Cover:

Rendering for the mixed use development, The Lake District to replace the Factory Outlet Mall.

Courtesy of A2H

LAKELAND CURRENTS

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Then word got out about a Tanger Outlet on the other side of town (Southaven). It made it very difficult for us to continue the leasing.

"I went back to the drawing board and developed The Lake District on 35-acres. But that project was actually too small. I thought the market was looking for something more. So I was able to negotiate the purchase with the neighbor next door and 60 days later, presented it." He expects to close on the additional acreage from Belz Enterprises before the end of 2016, he said.

Mr. Netanel said a lot would be the same, but not the same. "This makes for a more complex project. We will have a child learning center, a retirement community and congregate care, hotels, restaurants on the lake, retail, a preforming arts center and more. This is a complete lifestyle project. All facets of life will find a place here. There will be substantial shopping experiences, fine dining on The Lake District, a safe, wonderful place to live, little traffic and high architectural details."

He hopes the City will be finished with its processes in late summer or early fall so the project can start in 2017. "The first thing is to demolish the mall. We should be able to start that early next year. It will be a joyous moment. We wish to make it a community celebration."

Through his company, Gilad Development Corp., the District will encompass 160+ acres. It will replace the former factory outlet mall and will be completed in one phase, providing a town center and added tax revenue for Lakeland, said Jim Atkinson, Lakeland city manager.

Mr. Netanel and his wife have a daughter and live in the Los Angeles area. His hobby, of course, is flying, something he aspired to do but could not afford right away. He said he obtained his pilot's license when he was 32-years-old and has been flying ever since. He thought flying would give him a different perspective on things and would allow him to get from point A to B quickly.

After the excitement of flying to the $100 hamburger (the cost to buy a hamburger including a short flight), pilots look for a good cause to apply their flying skills, he said. He initially worked with Angel Flight, providing free air transport for charitable medical needs.

He then learned of the plight of hundreds of dogs who are euthanized each year but instead could be ferried to forever homes. He developed Wings of Rescue https://www.wingsofrescue.org/ and it has grown and evolved into a network of pilots and planes. He hopes Tennessee will be the fourth state to participate.

He explained there are "sending shelters" that have a surplus of pets that are euthanized in quite large numbers. And there are "receiving shelters" in places such as British Columbia and Canada which are looking for pets. " You have to synchronize the timing, the type of dogs, where they are going and the paperwork when landing at the receiving shelters," he said. "It is a seamless operation for pilots who just fly the planes. Wings of Rescue takes care of all the logistics."

Today there are 30 pilots and planes flying from 15 to 100 dogs per flight. For transporting larger numbers of dogs, donations are needed to charter cargo planes and carry up to 180 dogs at a time.

"Since I will be spending more time in Tennessee (because of The Lake District), I hope to save some Tennessee dogs," he said. "I encourage people to join Wings of Rescue on the webpage and Facebook page. If someone locally is interested in helping local pets, they can get a group of volunteers and we will help you," he said. There is a constant shortage of dogs in some parts of the country. With a recent transport of 160 dogs from Oklahoma, all were adopted in three or four days. "It's really important to take to heart the plight of dogs in Tennessee," he said. "Get a local community organized so miracles can start in Tennessee. Give these dogs a new life and cut down the euthanasia.

"My goal this year is to fly 16,000 pets to their new lives from 6,000 last year," he added.

He has a new plane this year because of a tragedy with his plane last year. "There was a routine test flight for my plane and it crashed, killing both pilots." After that tragedy, he bought a larger plane, a Pilatus PC-12 turbo prop, which can carry four times as many pets.

Mr. Netanel expects to immerse himself in the Lakeland project, visiting every two-three weeks and meeting with a newly formed community advisory committee. "We have a lot to do and a short time to do it."

Photo by Wesley Wright.

The Lake District Announced to Big Crowd

Jim Willis

California developer Yehuda Netanel's concept for The Lake District development at Interstate 40 and Canada Road is that it will become a focal point for Lakeland and a gathering spot for people in the surrounding area.

Mr. Netanel, president of Gilad Development Corp., told more than 100 Lakeland residents April 6 at Stonebridge Golf Club that the development will include restaurants, a grocery, an open-air farmers market, boutique retail stores, a performing arts center, two hotels and about 600 upscale rental units on about 160 acres.

The project, also involving A2H Inc. in Lakeland, was presented to the Lakeland Board of Commissioners in April which began the process to gain the necessary approvals to start construction. Mr. Netanel said he anticipates construction can begin in about a year and will take about two years to complete.

The Lake District project evolved from the original plan to renovate and reopen the former Lakeland Outlet Mall when Gilad purchased that 35-acre parcel eight years ago. Mr. Netanel said economic upheavals thwarted that project, but saw that as an opportunity to make something bigger. He said he has been working hard to make a project happen on the property since then.

He now plans to expand the footprint of the project by adding the adjacent 127-acre tract where the former Lakeland drag strip was located and where approval previously was given to Belz Enterprises by Lakeland to build about 650 apartments.

While there was support expressed by many in the audience for The Lake District project, there also was some concern about the large number of rental units involved. One resident said many are concerned the rental units would not be well-maintained and could eventually become Section 8 housing.

Mr. Netanel said that would be a problem for him as well as Lakeland in that low-end rental units would not attract the kind of upscale retail, the hotels and the restaurants needed to make the project work economically.

Mr. Netanel and his colleague Maggie Gallagher said the concept of a walkable community surrounding a four-to-five-acre lake, boardwalks, park areas, walking and biking trails is attractive to people who work from home and to older citizens who want to downsize to a one-story living space still close to their children. The Lake District

also would include a fitness center, a child learning center, a 500-seat arts center and an open-air farmers market.

"People will pay for quality," Mr. Netanel said. "This will be like what you see downtown, but without the downtown issues."

Asked what kinds of retail, hotel and grocery outlets Gilad hopes to secure for The Lake District, Ms. Gallagher said the wish list would include a grocery such as Whole Foods or Fresh Market, hotels such as Marriott and Hilton, and retailers such as Restoration Hardware, Pier 1 and Crate & Barrel. They said there also would be out-buildings available for a Starbucks or a Freshii location.

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NEWSWORTHY AROUND LAKELAND

Lakeland resident and AHS senior **Catherine Miller** competed in the Junior Olympics in Colorado Springs in April for air rifle and small bore rifle. Out of 194 competitors, mostly from colleges, she finished 44th in air rifle and 33rd in small bore. She has also been awarded a rifle scholarship to Texas Christian University where she plans to study finance and business. She is the daughter of Jim and Janet Miller.

Catherine Miller

Cub Scout Pack 455 and Den Leader Dave Kraehmer walked the yellow trail at IH Park, picking up bottles, glass, fishing trash and paper. A week later they returned to clean the blue and red trails.

Lakeland Elementary School (LES) was among hundreds of schools across the state which had **TN Ready Testing** suspended April 27 because of repeated delays and uncertainty. The Education Commissioner announced the end of the contract with Measurement Inc., noting all testing in grades 3-8 was suspended statewide. Dr. Ted Horrell, Lakeland School System (LSS) superintendent, said, "We want to emphasize--our teachers and administrators were more prepared than ever for this year's testing and we are so proud of the incredible learning that has taken place and continues to take place in our classrooms."

Kelsey Crunk

Lakeland resident **Kelsey Crunk**, left, and her partner Georgia Peeler are the 2016 Division 2A West Region Doubles Champions for tennis. Both high school seniors (Evangelical Christian School) were to be the number one seed in the TSSAA (Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association) state tournament last month in Murfreesboro. Kelsey is the daughter of Jim and Charlie Crunk.

Are you an artist, a gardner, a do-what-it-takes worker? If so, the **KLB** is looking for your talents to be part of a cleaner and more beautiful Lakeland. The Keep Lakeland Beautiful (KLB) Board is seeking volunteers to take on Canada Road medians with mulch, and City Hall --- with mulch, plantings and maybe brightly painted benches and flower pots. Give a lot of time, give a little time. But give of yourself. Contact chair (and volunteer) Asya Bradley bradleyasya@gmail.com - 847-909-3517 with your name and contact information. You will be notified for upcoming work days. Others on the Board include Alison Ely and Sherrye Willis. Sherri Gallick is the Board of Commissioners liaison. Make your City more attractive to citizens and guests. Do it today, and tell your friends.

The official name of the event stage at IH Park is **"The Lamp,"** an acronym for Lakeland Amphitheater.

The biannual **City Community Clean Up Day** was April 30 with awesome turnout despite the rain, said Rhonda Fink, community services representative. Seventy-eight unloads were performed by seven city staff volunteers and two Republic employees. The totals are: metal – 23,854 lbs.; Trash – 14,140 lbs. and EWaste – 4,440 lbs. THANK YOU LAKELAND for such a successful day. Thank you City staff and Republic for your participation. The next clean up day will be in late October or early November.

Three Lakeland residents have joined the **Lakeland Currents (LC) staff** to help with advertising sales and coordination.

Asya Bradley, a Canadian native, moved to Lakeland in March and says she is "Loving it." She and her husband Matthew have a five-year-old son Dean and a baby son expected in July. She is a stay-at-home mom, having recently resigned as a regional sales manager. Already she is chair for the Keep Lakeland Beautiful Board along with her LC duties. She is a kettle bells instructor and enjoys yoga, barre, body butter/scrub making, essential oils and reading.

Kim McKeller is a native of Little Rock and moved from Mansfield, TX to Lakeland in 2008 "... for the schools," she said. She is married to Doug and they have three children: Samantha, a seventh grader at Arlington Middle School; Connor, a fourth grader at Lakeland Elementary School (LES); and two-year-old Mia. She is a group fitness instructor at the Bartlett Recreation Center. She has undergraduate and graduate degrees with a background in technical writing and corporate training. "I am proud to have volunteered on the LES PTA Board of Managers since 2011."

Krista Pearce was born and raised in Memphis with an undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She and husband Blair moved to Lakeland in 2004 and have

Continued on page 7

WHAT A YEAR

Kevin Floyd
Chair, Lakeland School Board

Wow! What a year it's been for the Lakeland School System. The school year has come to a close, and it's truly been a remarkable year. We have seen unprecedented academic achievements. Lakeland Elementary School was named a **Reward School** by the Tennessee Department of Education, which means it was in the top five percent of elementary schools in academic achievement in the State (Lakeland Elementary was actually in the top two percent!). Additionally, Lakeland School System was named an **Exemplary School District**. This remarkable designation was granted to only 12 of the 142 school systems in Tennessee. The Exemplary rating recognizes school districts across the state that significantly improved student performance and narrowed achievement gaps under Tennessee's accountability system. Our School System TCAP scores ranked number **one** in the State in both math and reading/language arts, and ranked number **two** in the State in science.

None of these achievements would be possible without the unbelievable support we have received from our community. I continue to be amazed by the overwhelming amount of support our parents, residents and local businesses have shown for Lakeland Elementary and the Lakeland School System. The Lakeland Elementary PTA and the Lakeland Education Foundation have raised over $70,000 this year. This impressive fundraising directly impacted our students and teachers by increasing the number of digital devices in the classrooms, funding an upgrade to the sound system in the LES gym and awarding teachers a wide variety of educational grants, along with countless other gifts for the benefit of our teachers and students.

I am proud to report that the Lakeland School System has operated under budget for the second consecutive year. We have accomplished this while increasing funding for teacher compensation, continuing to build our reserves and funding our OPEB liability at a level that exceeds state recommendations. As you can tell, the school system is doing remarkably well financially and academically thanks to the hard work and dedication of our parents, residents, faculty, teachers, staff, and local businesses. We look forward to continuing the Lakeland legacy of excellence in education at Lakeland Middle Preparatory School, which will be opening in August of 2017.

Thank you for your support. Go Lions!

Continued from page 6

two sons, both at LES: Elliot, a fourth grader and Beckett, a kindergartener. She has been a volunteer with the LES PTA since 2012 when she was secretary for two years, then president for the last two years and she will be vice president of Ways and Means for the next school year.

Wanda Terral, instructional technology specialist for Lakeland School System, was chosen as one of only 52 lead digital innovators in the nation by PBS Learning Media. The announcement came May 13 from U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander. She receives an expense-paid trip to Denver at a digital summit and conference.

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Inside the BOC (BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS) Meetings

The City of Lakeland is planning to sell two properties on Memphis-Arlington Road to fund a new community athletic complex on U.S. Highway 70. A resolution was approved May 12 to sell a rental house at 9996 Memphis-Arlington Road and the 100-acre property on the same street at the corner of Canada Road. The City is also talking with the Lakeland School System about utilizing some of the middle school land for the athletic complex.

The 29-page 2016-17 budget consumed a lot of commissioners' time in April and May when the BOC decided they needed another budget meeting to review the figures line-by-line. Jim Atkinson, city manager, provided slides showing expenditures and areas of growth. He said one of the goals of the budget is to add value to City staff where it is most needed, and that is out in the field, not at City Hall. He explained the budget is balanced to the dollar: $12,095,054. "I felt pretty excited about that," he said.

Categories questioned by commissioners:

• Streets are in very bad condition. Can't reserve money go directly to street repairs?

• Travel expenses for staff should be scrutinized.

• Perhaps hire a full-time person to staff both the Lakeland Senior Center and a recreation coordinator, instead of two part-time positions.

Mayor Wyatt Bunker said suggestions like travel and one staff position over a year do not represent millions of dollars, but every dime counts.

Commissioners asked about putting permanent restrooms for the IH Event Stage in the budget, which will be added in the next version.

Link to the first reading, budget 2016-17:

http://lakelandtn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5388

Other business conducted at spring BOC meetings:

The first reading on two ordinances pertaining to residential sewer user rates passed unanimously. One ordinance deals with households whose wastewater is treated by the City of Lakeland. The second ordinance pertains to residents in certain parts of the City whose sewer system is owned and maintained by Lakeland but wastewater is treated by the City of Memphis.

In a four-to-one vote, commissioners approved on final reading a zoning change for five acres owned by Chris and Cindy Choate at 10494 U.S. Highway 64 from AG to C2. Mayor Bunker cast the dissenting vote. The business to be relocated to the property is Choate's Heating, Air Conditioning and Plumbing.

A resolution passed for street repairs and installation of a 1-½ inch asphaltic concrete surface course on roadways in The Preserve subdivision when there is a 75-percent build out. The City will not provide on-going street maintenance in The Preserve. David Carlson represented the HOA, asking the City to pick up the tab. It is estimated by the City to be $250,000 and by the HOA about $100,000 less. Construction was started on the subdivision in 2006 but the economy stalled the project, the developer eventually went bankrupt, which left homeowners without their final lift of asphalt. The common practice at the time was for the calculation of security for a development to include public improvements only.

In his monthly reports, Mr. Atkinson said the June BOC work session was to be May 31 from the usual first Thursday in June; the IH Park construction will likely start in June and be finished by July 1. Mr. Atkinson said he and the code enforcement officer went to court about an exposed dumpster at the Shell Station.

Mr. Atkinson shared conversation details with TDOT (Tennessee Department of Transportation) in April. Neighborhoods built after 2005 are not eligible for sound walls and likely would not be effective very far even if built. TDOT does not have a budget to plant trees or shrubs. They will inspect the area on Huff N Puff to replace the dilapidated fence, if warranted. And they will clean the litter on the TDOT right-of-way.

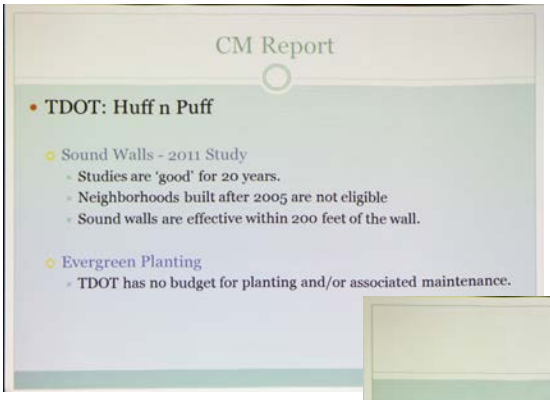
Mr. Atkinson did a drive-through with MLGW in April and they will clean Seed Tick Road and Huff N Puff again. Regarding "ugly trees," they said owners have to give permission to remove the trees and they are being contacted. MLGW does offer a free Trade a Tree program that will benefit the City, said Mr. Atkinson.

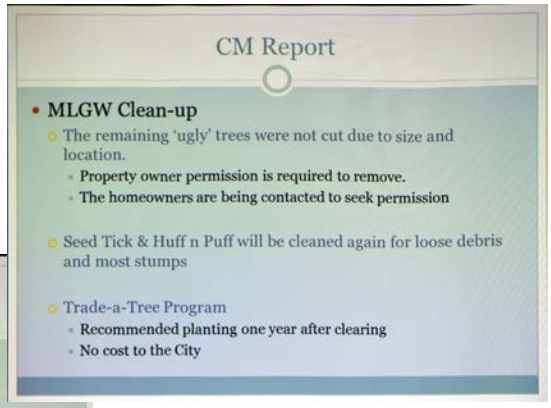
Commissioner Clark Plunk reported the Municipal Planning Commission is interested in a joint meeting with the BOC to continue the revision on the signs ordinance. Commissioner Michele Dial expects to have a report in June about parks to be closed.

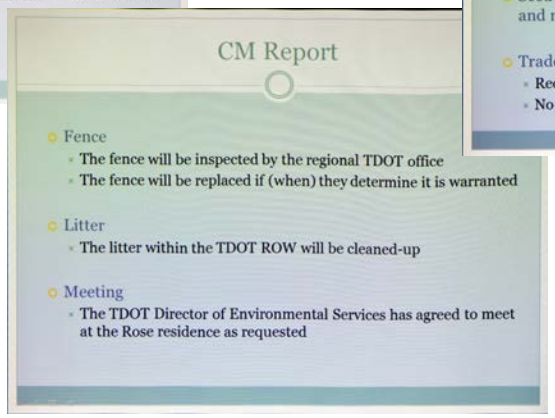
David Lenoir

David Carlson

John Dudas







At the April 26 special meeting, John Dudas with Belz Enterprises asked the City to extend four components of the Lake Forest project by six years: the sewerage concept plan, the Preliminary Development Plan (PDP), the development contract and the Secondary Detailed Development Plan (SDDP). The multifaceted project was first proposed 10 years ago, he said and consists of 12 phases of commercial, residential and mixed use.

Mr. Atkinson noted that the property is under contract for The Lake District (Gilad Development Corp.). "If they acquire the property, it will be a whole different plan," he said. Mr. Atkinson added it is important to bridge the gap. "There should never be a time when there is no plan in place for that property," he said.

Mayor Wyatt Bunker said if Yehuda Netanel (with Gilad) buys the property by the end of the year, this is a moot point. The BOC approved a four-year extension, starting April 26, 2016.

A popular resolution on the April work agenda was discussion on a special permit for the newly announced The Lake District Planned Development on the old outlet mall property. Yehuda Netanel, developer and owner of the property, enthusiastically spoke to the commissioners and audience about his vision for the project. (See story on page 4)

Residents were selected to the Keep Lakeland Beautiful Advisory Board: Alison Ely to a one-year term and Asya Bradley and Sherrye Willis to three-year terms. There is a vacancy on the Board for another one-year term.

David Lenoir, Shelby County Trustee, presented his semi-annual report to the BOC. He noted the economy in Shelby County is at a steady pace and has rebounded. In Lakeland almost 95 percent of realty taxes have been collected for 2015 for a total of $12,745,083. For personalty taxes, the total is $134,423 or 89 percent.

All revenue types allocated to the Lakeland School System through February 2016 is $2,519,816 compared to $2,347,204 a year ago.

Commissioners approved a new meeting format, allowing public speakers at the beginning of each meeting and also approved an ordinance requiring property owners to pick up litter from the right of way adjacent to their property.

Two resolutions dealing with parks maintenance and Plantation Hills Park improvements were referred back to the Parks and Recreation Board, via a resolution by Commissioner Michele Dial.

A resolution to authorize a contract for football uniforms and equipment passed April 7 but with much discussion from the public and among the three commissioners present.

Six residents approached the commissioners, saying they just learned about this expense and asked why was the City funding youth football uniforms and equipment.

Vice Mayor Josh Roman said the BOC had already approved this expense and the cost was even under budget. The issue was to approve a contract with the specific vendor, All-American Sports.

Robbie Spencer, director of the Parks and Recreation Department, said revenue will cover all of the money ($23,875) and would subsidize other sports programs. He said this is seed money for the contract.

Jessica Millspaugh, City finance director, said the resolution to support the program was presented in December and authorized seed money up to $25,000. The money will come from the general fund.

Chris Choate and Clinton Smith

City Budget Highlights

As of the writing of this article, the City is in the process of approving the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Lakeland's fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30, and the budget is anticipated to be approved by ordinance on June 9th, 2016.

The City is in good financial health and in the coming fiscal year will be able to increase attention to needed capital projects, general maintenance, and improvements of city assets.

In FY 2016 (current year), the city realized a surplus of approximately $2.5 million, resulting in an estimated reserve balance of close to $10 million dollars at the close of this fiscal year. This is a healthy balance and could allow for additional capital improvements outside of the annual operating budget. The city is currently working towards adopting a comprehensive reserve policy that will identify appropriate reserve spending and set minimum fund balance thresholds.

The following four areas are highlighted and described in this article:

- Debt Service & Capital Projects
- Athletic Facility
- Sewer System Improvements
- Street Improvements

Debt Service & Capital Projects

The FY 2017 budget includes the first debt service payment for the capital outlay notes funding Lakeland Middle Preparatory School. The debt service payment is $2.2 million and is funded by the $0.55 tax increase that was implemented last year.

There are also two significant capital projects that will begin in FY2017. Beverle Rivera Road will be extended from where it terminates near Windward Slopes Park and connect to Huff n Puff Road. Separately, Huff n Puff Road will be reconstructed and improved.

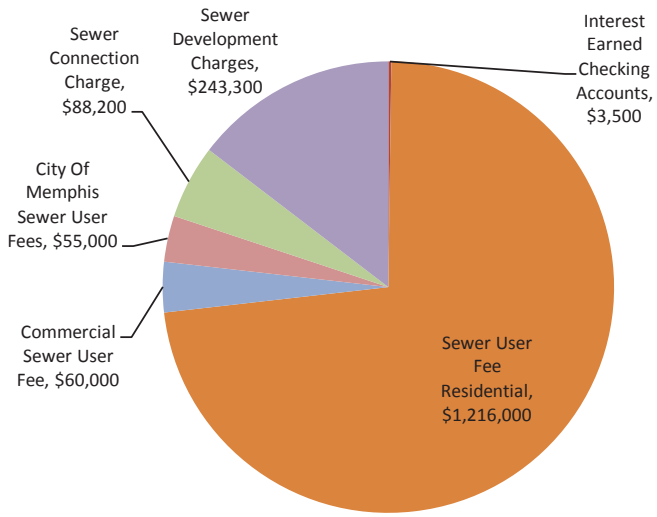
Sanitary Sewer System and Sewer Fees

The city will begin design work in the upcoming fiscal year for the much-needed Clear Creek interceptor. This would serve as a trunk line along the eastern portion of the city connecting to the existing treatment plant near the Loosahatchie River.

The Sanitary Sewer System currently consists of a wastewater treatment plant, eighteen lift-stations, and 62.4 miles of sewer pipe (gravity and force main). There is also a portion of the system in the Stonebridge area that is currently owned and treated by the City of Memphis, but the assets and maintenance will be turned over to Lakeland within the next few years as specified in a years-old contract. The wastewater treatment plant, constructed in 2006, functions well and operates at about 40% capacity and will continue to serve the city for many years, even as the city grows through new development over time. Construction of the plant in 2006 was funded through a loan and the city continues to pay the debt on the loan.

While the wastewater plant has plenty of capacity for continued growth, the main trunk line feeding the plant, Scott's Creek Interceptor, is on the verge of reaching full capacity. Given existing development, and approved development that has not been constructed, the city will be unable to approve additional development without relieving capacity on the interceptor. There are multiple development projects that have recently been approved, and several more that are in the early stages of the development process. This development activity includes new neighborhoods surrounding the Lakeland Middle Preparatory School campus

Figure 1. FY17 Sewer Fund Revenue



driven by construction of the school.

The solution to the capacity issue is to construct a new interceptor on the east side of the city near Clear Creek. This line has been contemplated for years as part of long range system plans. The City is proposing to begin the design process in the upcoming fiscal year, with start of construction anticipated in the next three to four years.

Funding the Wastewater System

All aspects of the City's sewer system are funded through an enterprise fund that is completely self-sufficient and may not be subsidized by any other fund or revenue source. The only revenue generated for sewer purposes are through user fees and development fees, and in the past, loans have been taken for major capital projects. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of sewer fund revenue is generated from residential customers. While the city has over 4,000 households, only about 2,500 households are connected to the sewer system. The remaining households are served by private septic systems and do not participate in funding the sewer system.

The current sewer fee structure has been in place for several years and has kept the fund in a break-even state. The fees, however, did not contemplate growth in the system (trunk line construction, obtaining Memphis assets, etc.) or even preventative maintenance projects to extend the life of the existing infrastructure. As of the writing of this article, the City is reviewing a new fee structure that would generate additional revenue to fund necessary capital projects, but would result in increased fees to users. All users would pay the same base rate, but would increase based on water usage for each customer.

The new fee is structured to pay for necessary improvements without the need to increase debt within this fund. This pay-as-you-go practice is part of a strategy to eliminate debt and reduce the need for increased fees.

The city is planning a mailing to residents that will provide more detail as to how fees will impact individual residents.

Athletic Facility

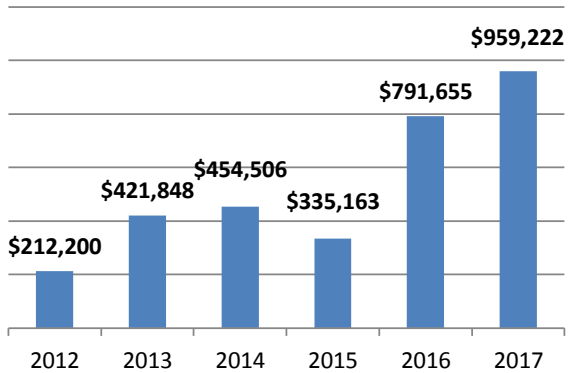
The City has been working towards the design and construction of an athletic facility to accommodate the growth in recreational programming. The city's existing programs have seen an increase in both the number of participants and the number of programs. New youth sports have been added in football and cheerleading, and adult sports, including flag football and basketball have been added. New fields would allow the city to operate a first-class recreational program to meet the demands of a growing community.

Funding for the facility will come from the sale of two existing city-owned properties. The city owns a single-family home on Memphis-Arlington Road directly behind city hall. It has been rented for several years, but now is in need of significant repairs and renovation. The second property consists of 100 acres along Memphis-Arlington Road east of Canada Road. The city has owned this property since 2004 and has not designated a use for it. The property has extreme topography and is partially located within the breach area of the Garner Lake dam, limiting its development potential for city facilities. Proceeds from the sale of these two properties would fund construction of the athletic facility without need for general fund dollars.

Street Improvements

The Public Works department is undergoing an overhaul in order to increase department capacity that will result in a dramatic increase in road and drainage system maintenance. In addition, budget increases in capital improvement spending on street improvements will allow more full paving projects. As shown in Figure 2, spending has increased over the past several years and is at the point where the increased funding will make a significant impact on the streets.

Figure 2. Street Aid Fund



LSB (LAKELAND SCHOOL BOARD) UPDATE

Jay Dorning *and* Carl Helton

Despite 16+ inches of spring rain, the site preparation for Lakeland Middle Preparatory School (LMPS) stayed on track and is to culminate with an official ground breaking in June.

Expected to attend the community event are members of the Lakeland School Board and Board of Commissioners with chairs of both groups speaking as well as Matt Adler, the newly named LMPS principal. (See story on page 19)

Jessie Rosales

The school, grades 5-8, is to be ready for the 2017-18 school year and is located near the northeast corner of U.S. Highway 70 and Canada Road. LSB closed on the $1 million 94 acres in October 2015 from Jones-Gilliland Group, LLC. The expansive, wooded site has space to add a comprehensive high school facility if and when Arlington High School can no longer accommodate students from Lakeland.

Other news from April and May LSB meetings:

• Chris Patterson of Wiseman Bray PLCC stepped aside as legal counsel for the school system, replaced by Eric Plumley with Burch, Porter & Johnson PLCC. He will be paid a monthly flat rate of $2,400, with additional legal services charged hourly but not to exceed $7,200. The agreement does not include lawsuits.

• Jessie Rosales is the new recorder and the new administrative assistant is Carrie Bawolek.

• LSB members approved a timeline for the superintendent's evaluation to begin in August and conclude by the business meeting in November.

• Dr. Ted Horrell, superintendent, advised that the 2016/2017 budget is based on an enrollment of 910 students and maintains current salaries with step increases. It includes the maintenance of central office and current staffing levels at schools. It increases teaching positions at Lakeland Elementary from 49 to 52 and increases the regular education assistants from three to six. It maintains the strategic compensation package for teachers as well as the pay move-up for advanced degreed teachers. It also makes the school nurse position a full-time position, provides $30,000 in teacher bonuses, a principal and assistant for the new middle school. The budget was approved unanimously

• Dr. Horrell stated that revenue funds would be used to hire a principal and assistant principal for Lakeland Middle Preparatory Schools starting July 1 to give them a chance to get the school ready to open in 2017. The funds would be used to make the payment to Arlington Community Schools per the Interlocal Agreement.

• The Board agreed its self-evaluation will be conducted no later than October.

• Also approved was a motion allowing Dr. Horrell to have discussions with the City of Lakeland regarding the use of part of the Lakeland Middle Preparatory School site as a city park.

• The school system will no longer use Goodwill Services for custodial and lawn maintenance due to pricing. Dr. Horrell sought recommendations from the State Community Rehabilitation of Tennessee. Cost and language will remain the same as the current agreement with Goodwill.

• There is an LSB retreat at 3 p.m. June 15 to discuss the middle school goals before the first principal begins work.

• The Lakeland Elementary School cafeteria was in the red last year to the tune of $7,771 and is now in the black to the tune of $28,662.

• Dr. Horrell presented the salary schedule for the Lakeland School staff. Link: http://lakelandk12.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-2017-LSS-Salary-Schedule.pdf

• The 2016/ 2017 Lakeland School System calendar was presented and approved.

• The HVAC installation contract was bid and the winning company was Roy May Heating and Air. Dr. Horrell noted all the classroom units as well as the four larger cafeteria units will be replaced. http://lakelandk12.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LES-HVAC-Installation-Resolution-05-01.pdf

• The substitute teacher policy was deferred to the June work session to allow more time for research.

Child Find

The Lakeland School System (LSS) participates in Child Find, an ongoing initiative to identify, locate and evaluate children with disabilities in need of special education and related services. According to Dr. Ted Horrell, LSS superintendent, the school system offers special education services for all eligible children residing in its attendance zone from three years through fifth grade. He added that LSS adheres to all federal and state requirements as outlined in the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) and the Tennessee Special Education Eligibility Standards.

If you are aware of a child from ages 3 through 21 who needs assistance, please contact the LSS director of special education, 867-5406.

Meet A Lakeland Business

Steven Snow

While Lakeland is home to a wide variety of businesses, there is one that is unique. Although you might expect to find architectural firms in downtown or East Memphis, one of the leading firms in the area has chosen the peaceful but vibrant setting of Lakeland in which to cultivate their creativity. The Renaissance Group, located at 9700 Village Circle, suite 100, has been in operation since 1979 and moved to Lakeland 11 years ago for the convenience of many of their staff who are local residents, as well as the relaxed atmosphere and the interstate access.

Presided over by Sal Feraci, himself a longtime Lakeland resident, the Renaissance Group designs everything from churches to hospitals, multi-family housing and schools, even single-family residences and business warehouse facilities. In fact, they are involved in the planning of the new Lakeland Middle Prerparatory School which will begin serving students in the fall of 2017. In developing relationships with their clients (such as local giants FedEx, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Tennessee Dept. of Transportation, and the U. S. Postal Service), the Renaissance Group team offers each client architectural, engineering, planning and interior services with the principal/owner architect providing personal service through the entire project. They utilize the latest in 3-D and virtual design technology, and also rely heavily on establishing personal relationships with their clients.

The Renaissance Group is not just located in Lakeland, they are an important part of Lakeland. They are actively involved in the Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Feraci is a member of the Lakeland Municipal Planning Commission and has served for 12 years on the Design Review Committee. They extend their personal approach to their working environment which reflects their view of the importance of family. In fact Mr. Feraci is accompanied to work each day by his two Muses: his Golden Doodles, Ruby and Chester.

The Renaissance Group can be found on their Facebook page and the LinkedIn website. Phone them at 332-5533, email to info@rgroup.biz or visit their website at www.rgroup.biz. Their ad can be found in this issue on this page.

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Tenured Resident Maintains Lakeland Cemetery

Wesley Wright

After one of the rainy mornings last month, I seized the opportunity to visit a man who has lived in Lakeland longer than Lakeland has been a town. The visit was facilitated by John Highsmith, city code inspector, who shared background information about the cemetery and its long-time caretaker.

On the west side of Seed Tick not far from Lakeland Elementary School, before Louis Garner built a fun park, before all the other things in present day Lakeland, this man lived in the woods by a cemetery that happens to be one of the oldest in West Tennessee.

The man is Dalton Leake Fletcher. He is tall, industrious as you will see and has hands that seem to be made of granite because his handshake is firm. He and I share something in common. We both went to Snowden in Midtown. He is a few years ahead of me, actually a few decades but has lived for well over 40 years in Lakeland on the land Dr. James Gillespie granted him.

That is where it gets hazy. His arrival in this area is not clear, but multiple family members of Dr. Gillespie confirm his status as caretaker of what is called Beulah Cemetery. We know he was here by the mid-70s. The meeting of Mr. Fletcher and Dr. Gillespie was happenstance when both were hunting on land scattered with a few houses and a school. They became fast friends and Dr. Gillespie allowed Mr. Fletcher to stay on the land if he would care for the cemetery. That has been his role since.

It was called Log Union Cemetery for many years, the same name a local school carried as far back as the 1920s. This cemetery existed 30 years before historic Elmwood Cemetery was founded in the mid-19th Century. Some of the people buried here were born in the 1790s when Tennessee was just established as the 16th state of the Union.

Mr. Fletcher who lives alone and "off the grid" with no running water, sewer or electricity, manages quite well to care for the cemetery and surrounding property that amounts to over four acres. He lives on the edge of a meadow in a camper, with four vehicles and a motorcycle dating back to the 60s and 70s surrounding his encampment. His quarters are adjacent to the cemetery gate and he sees to it that the property remains in good shape.

Photos by Wesley Wright

LAKELAND:

Your City, Your History

Carl Helton

As I begin to dig into Lakeland's history, I first need to realize the "truth." The truth is that we are not a city steeped with rich history. There were no major civil war battles in the community and no train depot to catch a ride somewhere grand. We had no General Store anchoring a town square. Even to this day there are no businesses at Canada Road and U.S. Highway 70.

It wasn't until the 1990s that business started to pop up along U.S. Highway 64 between I-40 and Canada Road. To my knowledge, there is no old house that has been preserved and maintained that is over a hundred years old in Lakeland. One might argue that the Reed Log Cabin is well over a century old. That is true, but it was disassembled from its original location in Lexington, TN and put back together at its new foundation on Canada Road in the late 70s with a new addition. (Bam…I've set the stage for a story on that house in the near future)

Before the amusement park, race track and the Lake Land beach, we were simply a farming community. Older small farm houses dot the geographic of our community. Some houses are still standing, some long gone and forgotten. To this day, we still have a large farming community surrounding us. However, our true history lies hidden in the families long gone and stories that were passed down to younger generations and hand written in family bibles.

The "truth" is that Lakeland is a new city. We are the youngest city in Shelby County, as a baby is taking its first steps. Our history is being created now to be told later down the line.

Our first school, Lakeland Elementary was built in this century, a new millennium. In 2012, a Senior Center opened at IH Park. . The Delta Blues Winery opened in 2015. We recently broke ground on the new middle school, which is scheduled to open in time for the 2017-18 school year. In 2016, the IH Park saw the opening of an Outdoor Event Stage, which is poised to host summer concerts for our community. We are also opening up our community with a brand new bridge at I-40.

According to our first census as a city in 1980, we had 612 residents. Our last national census in 2010 shows we had a population of 12,430. It is in the here and now where our community history is to be made. It is in the people, in our community, and in our daily lives that we can and will excel and take pride in our city. Lakeland is a city that we can build a foundation of history now for the next generation to research and pass on stories and old pictures. Herein lays our new history and our current truth.

Editors note: Carl's family bought Lakeland property in 1977 and they moved to the City in 1982.

Correction

In the April issue, there were mistakes in Teresa's column through no fault of her own. Her column is reprinted here, correct, and in its entirety. Lakeland Currents regrets this error.

Teresa Henry Lakeland School Board

The Board would like to say thank you to the staff and administration for the great job they did with administering the first part of TNReady test. They were flexible with the test schedule changing and preparing the children for the change in moving from computer to paper and pencil test. Parents thank you for being patient with the school through this change. After our visit to Nashville, it was announced that Gov. Bill Haslam signed a resolution that the teachers could make individual decisions to use the TNReady results in their annual evaluations or not. The School board has approved that the student scores would not be calculated into the students' final grade for the 15-16 school year.

The new Middle School is becoming a reality! At the March Board meeting, the Board voted to name the new school Lakeland Middle Preparatory School (LMPS). On Feb. 18, the contractors started moving dirt to create the Canada Road entrance to the school. The dirt work for both entrances and the building site should be complete when we are ready to start the construction of the building. The Board will start the bid process for the construction of the building in April and start construction in June. A big thank you to SES (Southern Educational Strategies), A2H, Renaissance Group and Dr. (Ted) Horrell for having the insight to break-out the bid process so that we are able to open a year sooner than originally anticipated.

There have been questions regarding the transition plans and programs that will be offered at the Middle School. Due to the way the bid process has been broken out, the Board approved to change the opening date of the school to the 17-18 school year. Although it has not been approved by the Board, the plan is for all the children in grades K-8 to be zoned to Lakeland schools without a rolling transition. All students in grades 5-8 will attend the new Middle School and all students in grades K-4 will attend Lakeland Elementary. This plan will be ratified once the negotiations for a new inter-local agreement for grades 9-12 with Arlington Community Schools is finalized.

Pending approval from the School Board, the superintendent will interview and hire a principal this spring with a July 1 start date. The teachers and staff will be hired in the spring of 2017. During this next school year, the principal will develop courses and programs using the information that was obtained during the public meetings at Lakeland Elementary last year. Students can expect to have the core course offerings as well as APEX, band, orchestra and art. LMPS will have state of the art science labs and makerspace. This will promote STEM applications and allow students to gather to create, invent and have a hands-on learning environment for a wide variety of concepts. Students will use digital devices, digital textbooks as well as having a choice of digital and physical library books. Sports programs will include basketball and cheer that will be handled by the school. Football and cheer will likely be handled through Lakeland Parks and Recreation. Depending on the budget, the principal can add additional courses, programs and sports. In the design of the building, we put student safety as a priority since the library, stage and gymnasium will be offered for community use.

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PTA Auction

A record amount of money was raised at the eighth annual Lakeland Elementary School Auction and Derby April 15 at Colonial Country Club. Tracey Jones, chair of the PTA event, said over $35,000 was raised through ticket sales and a myriad of live and silent auction items. The 2015 total was $30,000. Pictured with Tracey (center) are from left Krista Pearce, PTA president, Meredith Bunker, Monica Pitts and Rebecca Floyd. Also pictured are some of the live auction cakes and Paul Vandiver reviewing auction items.

Developing in Lakeland: Country Bridge Shopping Center renovations, Choate's Air Conditioning, Heating & Plumbing, I-40/Canada Road and Krystal.

CALENDAR: BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS (BOC), LAKELAND SCHOOL BOARD (LSB)

Youth football and cheerleading start this month.
See Parks and Recreation (page 18) for details.

JUNE

4 - Fishing Rodeo
6 - LSB work session
9 - BOC regular meeting
13 - LSB regular meeting
13-17 - City-sponsored summer dance camp
14 - P/NR (Parks/Natural Resources)
15 - Lakeland Chamber Luncheon
LSB retreat 3 p.m.
16 - MPC/Municipal Planning Commission
18 -19 - Youth football skills camp
20 - BA/S Board of Appeals/Stormwater
23 - LDC/Lakeland Development Corp.
- EDC/Economic Development Commission
27 - Keep Lakeland Beautiful (KLB) Advisory Board

JULY

2 - Children's Parade - Windward Slopes
4 - City Hall, Lakeland Senior Center closed
7 - BOC meeting
11 - LSB work session
12 - P/NR
14 - BOC regular meeting
18 - BA/S
21 - MPC
25 - KLB
28 - LDC EDC

AUGUST

1 - LSB work session
4 - BOC work session
8 - LSB meeting
First day, Lakeland Elementary School
9 - P/NR
11 - BOC meeting
15 - BA/S
18 - MPC
22 - KLB
20 - Lakeland Chamber Business Expo

Lakeland Neighborhood Crime Report - SCSO

Lt. Terry Lomax, Shelby County Sheriff's Office (SCSO), spoke at the April 14 BOC meeting and noted there were 17 incidents in February and 20 in March, including eight thefts from motor vehicles. Six of those were solved by arrest. Most frequent day for crime was Saturday, afternoons and early evenings. He also said there are a lot of panhandlers in the I-40/Canada Road vicinity. Please report to the non-emergency SCSO number, 379-7625 rather than calling 911. And specify exactly where the person is located.

The report for April 18 to May 15 showed an incident rise from nine to 12 with single digit increases in four areas: burglary residential, one to three; motor vehicle thefts, zero to one; theft from vehicles, three to four; and vandalism misdemeanor/felony zero to one. Larceny/other and thefts from buildings decreased while aggravated assaults, burglary/business, burglary/construction and robbery/individual stayed the same at zero. The most frequent day for crime was Sunday and more incidents (three) happened between 2 a.m. to 6 a.m., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Lakeland Parks and Recreation

City Hall - 10001 Highway 70

Robbie Spencer, *Parks & Recreation Director*, rspencer@lakelandtn.org - 867-2717

www.LakelandTN.gov/sports for sports; www.LakelandTN.gov/parksandrec for events and other news

ADULT FLAG FOOTBALL

Season two of adult flag football will start Sept. 12 at City Hall fields. Features again include stat keeping, website for league leaders, individual and team awards, music and more. The league will consist of a 10-game season with playoffs and a championship.

Registration – June 6 –July 31 - online www.LakelandTN.gov/leagues or visit City Hall

Fees:. Pay per person or by team. $70 per person, 12 players maximum per team. Fee includes custom Under Armour team shirt with numbers, 10 games, playoffs, stat keeping and two referees per game. First come first serve on uniform selection. $30 deposit will be held and returned at the end of the season.

Visit www.LakelandTN.gov/leagues for more information.

YOUTH FOOTBALL & CHEERLEADING

Sign-up at www.LakelandTN.gov/leagues or at City Hall.

Call the City of Lakeland office 867-2717 - 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Registration through June 24 for both activities with late registration from June 25 - 30.

**Tackle Football – Only the first 60 children will be allowed to play. Others will be placed on a waiting list.

Practices: See timeline below.

Football Age Groups: 5-6 flag, tackle 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12.

Fee: Tackle $275 . A $350 check deposit will be held and returned at the end of the season.

Flag $70. A $30 check deposit will be held and then returned at the end of the season.

Late Fee: Sign-ups after June 24 will be $350.

Cheer Age Groups: 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12.

Fee: $100. Fee includes full uniform with shoes.

Late Fee: Sign-ups after June 24 will be $150.

2016 YOUTH FOOTBALL AND CHEERLEADING TIMELINE

June 18-19 - City of Lakeland Football Skills Camp.

July 7 - Helmet and shoulder pad fitting, 6 p.m. at Lakeland City Hall.

Week of July 11 - General conditioning starts for tackle football.

July 18 - Flag football practices start

Week of July 25 - Tackle football official practices start, shirts and shorts, equipment and uniform handouts.

Week of August 1 - Tackle football helmet-only and cheerleading practices start.

Week of August 8 - Tackle football full pads practices start.

August 15 - Flag football games start.

August 20 - Tackle games start. Location will be on schedule.

YOUTH FOOTBALL SKILLS CAMP

The Football Skills Camp will be June 18-19 through Lakeland Parks and Recreation Department. This Camp will teach the basics and advanced skills and will be taught by former college D-I and professional football players.

Registration: through June 18.

How: In person at Lakeland City Hall.

Online at www.LakelandTN.gov/leagues

Call the City at 867-2717 - 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Register the day of the camp at City Hall Fields

When: June 18-19 – 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. 5-8 years old; and 3-6 p.m. 9-12 years old.

Fees: $60 Fee includes camp T-shirt

Children play in the Youth Soccer Program at City Hall fields last month. Photo by Kim Odom

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Happening In Lakeland

The Lakeland Annual **Children's Fishing Rodeo** starts at 8 a.m. June 4 at IH Park, 4523 Canada Road for children ages 4-12 accompanied by an adult. Registration starts at 7:15 a.m. if the children are not pre-registered. The Rodeo includes seven 15-minute sessions. Victors will win a prize at every session. Trophies also will be given for the longest fish, most fish caught - boy and most fish caught - girl. Lakeland appreciates the First Baptist Church of Lakeland for allowing participants to park in the Church parking lot for this event. For more information, call City Hall at 867-2717 or kodom@lakelandtn.org. Bring a pole and bait to participate.

The 20th annual **Children's Independence Day Parade** will begin at 9 a.m. July 2 in the Windward Slopes neighborhood. Children, adults and pets on bicycles, scooters, wagons and strollers will start on Cutter Lane, to Leeward Slopes, Lighthouse Lane, Windward Slopes to end at Trustmark Bank. Refreshments will be served at the end of the parade, compliments of Trustmark. Organizers are Veronica (286-1210) and Curt (286-1750) Wennekamp. The parade is open to all Lakeland children.

The **Lakeland concert series** at IH Park may start the first of August with three events by the end of the year, according to Jim Atkinson, Lakeland city manager. Construction at the Park is to be completed by July 1. However, additional construction may be scheduled, which might alter the state date of the concerts.

Look for these new **Do Not Litter signs** to appear in Lakeland this month. Jim Atkinson, city manager, said 25 signs will be posted on major roads first and then put in other areas around the city.

Founding Principal Named for LMPS

A Lakeland resident and assistant principal at Bolton High School, Matt Adler, is the new principal for Lakeland Middle Preparatory School.

Dr. Ted Horrell, Lakeland School System (LSS) superintendent, announced the selection May 16.

Mr. Adler previously served as the coordinator of the school's International Baccalaureate Program, a Master Teacher and chairman of the science department where he taught standard, honors and AP Chemistry.

Mr. Adler received his bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina and has earned master's degrees in both curriculum and instruction and educational leadership.

Dr. Horrell said Mr. Adler impressed the principal selection committee with his combination of experience, warmth and commitment to student success. "I believe Mr. Adler's skill set and personality will be a great fit for the kind of culture we intend to build at Lakeland Middle Preparatory School," Dr.Horrell stated.

Mr. Adler said, "Developing a school that continues the exemplary standard set forth by Lakeland Elementary School is one of my top priorities as LMPS principal."

Mr. Adler will begin work for LSS on July 1 and will have more than one year to prepare for the opening of the new school for students in grades 5 through 8. The school, which will be located north of Highway 70 and east of Canada Road, will open in August of 2017.

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Lakeland Senior Programs 55+

Lakeland Senior Center (LSC): 4527 Canada Rd.; IH Clubhouse: 4553 Canada Rd.
746-8195 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. M-F. M–F; 8; 867-2717 after hours

Lakeland welcomes all local area adults 55+ to the Center, located on the grounds of IH Park. It is a gathering place for friends to enjoy camaraderie through games, programs, seminars and special events. Enjoy Bunco, dominoes, Mah-Jong, Silver Sneakers and other activities like coffee and chat, piano and popcorn and bingo. Link to daily activities at the LSC, watch Comcast channel 19 or visit the Center for a monthly calendar.
http://www.lakelandtn.gov/index.aspx?NID=208

The Lakeland Senior Center had a Variety Show April 8 at the IH Clubhouse with dancers and singers. Photos by Casey Condo.

SENIORS CELEBRATED ARBOR DAY APRIL 29

Kim Odom

Seniors gathered at the Lakeland Senior Center (LSC) for tips on tree care, free trees and pastries and coffee to celebrate Arbor Day and Lakeland's recent recertification as a Tree City USA.

Dr. Chris Copper with the UT Shelby County Extension Services, shared tips about tree care and clay soil in the Memphis area.

Tom Skehan, city planning director, brought a truckload of persimmon, shiny sumac and red oak trees to give to those attending. The trees were among a variety of 300 trees received by the City from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Also attending was Jim Atkinson, Lakeland city manager.

The event, organized by LSC regular Betty Ratcliff, was moved inside at the last minute due to rain.

Clockwise from top left, Mr. Skehan, Dr. Cooper and Mr. Atkinson. Photos by Kim Odom.

Tour de Lakeland

SPRING FESTIVAL

Steven Snow

Hundreds of bicyclists participated in the inaugural Tour de Lakeland bike ride though Lakeland May 14. It coincided with the Lakeland Spring Festival, all at Delta Blues Winery in Lakeland. Pictured bottom right, are Alan Johnson, left, who organized the event, along with assistants Steven Snow and Steve Laster, and Mayor Wyatt Bunker, second from right.

They wheeled out of the front gate of the Winery, 270 strong, and onto one of three courses (50, 25 or 5 miles) on their way to a scenic ride through Lakeland and the adjoining countryside. The riders ranged in age from 7 to 78 and came from as far away as Tupelo, MS and the Bootheel of Missouri. After the cloudy, windy start officiated by Mayor Bunker, and several hours on the road, the riders returned to the winery to find sunny skies and a festive atmosphere at the Chamber of Commerce's Festival, featuring a silent auction, sponsor exhibits, face paintings, inflatables and live music by Ted Horrell & the Monday Night Card.

While the main goal of the event was to highlight Lakeland as an attractive location for business and family living was achieved, there was also a more practical and financial purpose to raise money for the Lakeland Education Foundation. With the approximately $6,700 in entry fees and $4,800 in sponsorships, the event was successful both on the road and in the accounting books. The field of both serious cyclists and weekend peddlers completed in excess of 8,000 miles while enjoying some of the natural beauty and historic highlights of Lakeland including IH Park, the new middle school site, Chris Leigh Farm, upcoming subdivisions, Trinity Farms Equestrian Center and Garner Lake.

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