



DAILY NEWS CLIPS

GOVERNOR'S COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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FRIDAY, JULY 08, 2011

Library for the Blind Commemorated in Tenn. (Associated Press/Johnson)

Gov. Bill Haslam praised the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped for the thousands of people it has helped with audio books. The Republican governor and other state officials commemorated the 80th anniversary of the National Library Service on Wednesday. President Herbert Hoover created the service, which includes 113 libraries across the nation and roughly 800,000 patrons. Tennessee's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped opened in 1971 and currently has about 8,000 registered users. "I'm pleased to celebrate what this organization has done in our state over the past four decades," he said. "This program has allowed ... citizens to read, when otherwise they wouldn't be able to." Secretary of State Tre Hargett agreed. "Their free audio books and media devices have helped to educate and connect the blind community for decades," he said.

<http://www.memphisdailynews.com/news/2011/jul/7/library-for-the-blind-commemorated-in-tenn/>

Talking Books Program Celebrates 80th Anniversary (WPLN-Radio Nashville)

Governor Bill Haslam and other state officials gathered today to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the National Library Service's Talking Books program. The program provides audio and Braille books to people who can't read regular print. Franklin resident Marty Blackford receives audio books from the program. She has a genetic disease that caused her to lose her vision about 10 years ago. "When I couldn't read even large print anymore, Talking Books was there to help me. It's just been wonderful." The program was started by President Herbert Hoover as a way to provide reading materials to blinded World War I veterans. But, it isn't just for people who are blind. Ruth Hemphill, the director of the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped says 10 percent of Tennessee users have other disabilities. <http://wpln.org/?p=28596>

Haslam: Online sales tax legislation may scare off Amazon (Tennessean/Sisk)

The lawmaker who proposed taxing online retailers with facilities in Tennessee says he would consider phasing in his plan, but Gov. Bill Haslam says even that could hurt plans for Amazon to build more distribution centers in the state. State Sen. Randy McNally said Wednesday that he plans to reintroduce legislation that clarifies when online retailers would have to collect sales tax from customers, and he would be willing to delay the bill's effective date for two years or more if it will ease passage of the measure. But Haslam told reporters the idea would discourage Amazon from announcing more distribution centers in Tennessee, in addition to the two centers under construction in the Chattanooga area. The governor instead called on the U.S. Congress to implement a nationwide policy for online sales taxes. "It has to be addressed that way on a national level, or we're going to keep playing these kind of move-around games," he said. "The governors are all feeling the pressure. Local government is feeling it, too."

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110707/NEWS0201/307070054/Haslam-Online-sales-tax-legislation-may-scare-off-Amazon?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|News>

Haslam willing to take lead on Internet sales tax (Commercial Appeal/Locker)

Gov. Bill Haslam said Wednesday that untaxed Internet sales are eroding Tennessee's tax base and said he's willing to take a leadership role among governors in urging Congress to pass a national approach to collecting sales taxes on goods sold over the Internet. He said Tennessee is already losing between \$300 million and \$500 million a year on untaxed Internet sales --- a growing number since the states and Congress have been unable for more than a decade to agree on a "streamlined sales tax" process enabling online retailers to collect taxes easily for the nation's thousands of state and local taxing jurisdictions. "It's not going to begin eroding the state's tax base; it already is. Something has to happen nationally. The whole streamlined sales tax is a big deal, and I'm more than willing to play a leadership role," Haslam said. "It has to be addressed on a national level or we're going to keep playing these kinds of move-around games."

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/jul/06/haslam-willing-take-lead-internet-sales-tax/>

Haslam Calls for Federal Action to Tax Online Retailers (WPLN-Radio Nashville)

Today Governor Bill Haslam renewed his call for national action to make online retailers collect state sales tax, saying he's willing to take a frontline role pushing the issue. Amazon.com made a deal late in the administration of Haslam's predecessor, Phil Bredesen – a deal Haslam has said the state should honor. It lets Amazon set up shop in Tennessee without having to collect sales taxes from customers here. Haslam says he's concerned what effect such deals have on eroding the state's tax base. "It's not going to begin eroding the state's tax base; it already is. We're losing – I don't know if it's – you see \$300 million, you see \$500 million in sales tax on Internet goods that we're losing right now." Haslam says he's more than willing to "play a leadership role" on pushing the issue to the national level, where he says it's ultimately up to Congress to act. <http://wpln.org/?p=28602>

Haslam to discuss data from TN Comprehensive Assessment Program (AP)

Gov. Bill Haslam and other state education officials are scheduled to discuss preliminary results of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program on Thursday. Discussion of the state proficiency test achievement data follows education reform legislation signed into law by the Republican governor. The tenure law, in particular, requires a teacher to be on the job five years instead of three to get tenure and creates a way for job security to be revoked for poor teaching performance. Critics of the law say the evaluation system to be used is suspect and that it hasn't been determined how best to rate educators whose subjects aren't covered by the state's value-added test scoring program.

<http://www.greenfieldreporter.com/view/story/995efdbac1ba456a812417d05b6b48bf/TN--Test-Scores/>

Haslam may seek 'No Child Left Behind' waiver (Knox. News-Sentinel/Humphrey)

Acknowledging the "very real possibility" that most Tennessee schools would fail federal "No Child Left Behind" standards when they are raised, Gov. Bill Haslam said Wednesday that his administration may seek a waiver from federal officials. Haslam told reporters he is "in the middle of a lot of discussions" on what would be involved in seeking a waiver. He said in an earlier interview that U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander is working closely with him on the matter. "So many schools are not going to meet the standards that something's going to have to be done," said Haslam. President Barack Obama has asked Congress to overhaul the law, but there has been no action. Haslam said in the interview that Alexander, who earlier was part of a "working group" on issues involving the current law, has recently indicated that a stalemate is likely in Washington. Under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, enacted at the urging of former President George W. Bush, schools are measured by the progress students make on state tests. <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2011/jul/07/haslam-explores-no-child-waiver/>

State considers asking Obama to waive some NCLB requirements (CP/Woods)

Tennessee is considering asking the Obama administration to waive some of the requirements of the No Child Left Behind law for this state's schools, Gov. Bill Haslam said Wednesday. President Obama has asked Congress to reform parts of the law, which can limit funding to schools failing to meet student achievement standards. According to some estimates, up to 80 percent of the country's schools soon could be classified as failing if accountability standards aren't changed. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has said he will waive some of the law's requirements for states that request it. Many states are expected to do so. "We are in the middle of a lot of discussions about what we should do about that," Haslam told reporters, adding that he doesn't think Congress will reform the law soon.

<http://nashvillecitypaper.com/content/city-news/state-considers-asking-obama-administration-waive-some-no-child-left-behind-requr>

Haslam Has New Legislative Head (Metro Pulse)

It was a bit of a surprise to legislators last year that incoming Gov. Bill Haslam named rural West Tennessee Mayor Dale Kelley, who is in his 70s, his director of legislation for this past session. Kelley had state government experience, but it was during the administration of Gov. Lamar Alexander and with the turnover in the past decades few legislators remembered him. Haslam named Leslie Hafner as Kelley's deputy. Hafner is an experienced lobbyist who has worked for Bass Berry & Sims law firm and for Corrections Corp. of America. With the end of the session, Kelley has announced he is going home and will work on special projects for Haslam in West Tennessee. Hafner will take over as director of legislation.

<http://www.metropulse.com/news/2011/jul/06/haslam-has-new-legislative-head/>

Haslam at Northfield today to discuss TCAP (Daily News Journal)

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam is set to attend a news conference this morning at Northfield Elementary School to discuss statewide, preliminary results of student achievement data, according to the governor's office. Haslam and Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman are slated to talk about information released from the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program. The event is set to start at 10:30 a.m.

<http://www.dnj.com/article/20110707/NEWS01/107070314/Local-briefs-Haslam-Northfield-today-discuss-TCAP>

State program assists entrepreneurs (Daily News Journal)

Gov. Bill Haslam has asked Michael Burcham, CEO of The Entrepreneur Center in Nashville, to lead Startup Tennessee, a public-private partnership designed to connect and align entrepreneurial efforts across Tennessee. The plan for Startup Tennessee includes the creation of a website to connect entrepreneurs with training opportunities, mentors and investors across the state who could potentially provide capital to early-stage companies. Startup Tennessee will regularly convene business accelerators from across the state to share best practices and will provide entrepreneurs with access to free or low-cost resources from companies such as Hewlett-Packard, IBM and SalesForce.com. These latter benefits are possible thought Startup's Tennessee's partnership with Startup America, a national public-private partnership focused on growing entrepreneurs across the nation.

<http://www.dnj.com/article/20110707/BUSINESS/107070307/Briefly-Free-seminar-starting-own-business-today>

UTM alum sworn into state claims commission (Weakley County News)

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam this week swore in Robert Hibbett for the Tennessee Claims Commission, replacing Middle Tennessee Commissioner Stephanie Reeves, who served on the commission since January 2004.

Commissioners hold eight-year terms, and Hibbett's term will be up in 2019. The Tennessee Claims Commission is attached to the state Treasury Department, and it adjudicates claims involving tax recovery, state employee workers' compensation and alleged negligence by state officials or agencies. "As an active member of his community, Robert has a distinguished military and legal career, and I'm pleased to swear him in today as the newest member of the Tennessee Claims Commission," Haslam said.

<http://www.nwntoday.com/news.php?viewStory=57954>

UT-Knoxville students can't class-shop till they drop (Tennessean/Andrews)

Universities are facing an increasing number of class-shoppers — students who routinely sign up for more classes than they plan to take, then drop the least desirable. The University of Tennessee-Knoxville is countering the trend with a new policy this fall. Undergraduates can drop up to four classes as they earn their degrees, and they have 10 days to decide whether to drop. After the four-drop limit, they'll get an "F" if they quit showing up to class. At the other extreme, several private universities encourage two-week "shopping periods" at the start of each semester. Brown, Stanford, Harvard and others tell students to sign up for as many classes as they'd like to explore, then drop the ones they don't like and add others they do. After the shopping period, they get a "W" on their transcripts for withdrawing — but that isn't a factor in grade point averages. "We want them to really find out what they're interested in, and the open curriculum really encourages students to be adventurous in that way," said Stephen Lasonde, Brown University's deputy dean of the college. "We want students to be architects of their own education."

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110707/NEWS/307070056/UT-Knoxville-students-can-t-class-shop-till-they-drop?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|News>

Chattanooga medical program's use of live pigs spurs complaint (AP/Poovey)

A physician's group said Wednesday that the University of Tennessee College of Medicine at Chattanooga is breaking the law by having students use pigs in surgical training instead of working on human patient simulators like most other medical schools. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine asked District Attorney Bill Cox in Chattanooga in a letter to investigate and stop violations of Tennessee's animal cruelty statute. The Washington, D.C.- based physicians group promotes alternatives to animal research. "Of the 177 accredited medical schools in the United States and Canada, only three use live animals to train students in surgery clerkships," according to the letter. It was signed by Dr. John J. Pippin, the committee's director of academic affairs, and two Tennessee physicians, Dr. Robert Burns of Memphis and Dr. Jennifer Ellis of Clarksville. The letter contends that using pigs in the training violates Tennessee's animal cruelty law but Cox said the state statute excludes livestock.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/jul/07/chattanooga-medical-program-use-live-pigs-complain/?local>

THP crash example of why you 'Move Over' (Johnson City Press)

A Wednesday morning rear-end traffic crash that injured a Tennessee Highway Patrol trooper is an example of the dangerous situations law enforcement face on the area's busy roads, according to a crash investigator in Johnson City. "When we're out there, we're surrounded by traffic and we're in a vulnerable position because we can't always get our vehicle off the road," said Johnson City Police Lt. Larry Williams, who heads the police department's traffic crash team. And while Williams didn't know all the details involving the crash that injured THP Sgt. Diane Mays, he said being hit from behind is always a possibility for officers parked at a crash site. The accident involving Mays happened around 10 a.m. on U.S. Highway 11E in Washington County near the Greene County line while she was investigating another wreck, according to Dayla Qualls, public information officer for the Department of Safety.

<http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/News/article.php?id=92181#ixzz1RPocHsHz>

State funding for planning cut (Times-Gazette)

The South Central Tennessee Development District could be providing planning services for Shelbyville and Bedford County following the elimination of state planners for small communities. In late May, the state announced that it was doing away with state planning services provided under contract to local government. Local governments paid a fee for those planning services, although it reportedly wasn't enough to cover the full cost of the service. State planner Art Brown worked with the City of Shelbyville, while Bryan Collins was assigned to Bedford County. Both city and county officials say the state planning help has been invaluable. During Tuesday night's meeting of Bedford County Planning Commission, chairman Kennon Threet thanked Collins for his work, while Collins noted that he was building on the work of colleagues who'd been assigned to Bedford County in the past, including Angela Fernandez, Pat Schipani and the late Mike Wood. Wood worked with Bedford County for a number of years at a time when the county was just setting up its planning and zoning program.

<http://www.t-g.com/story/1742006.html>

McNally Seeks Compromise on Amazon Deal (TN Report)

Sen. Randy McNally, R-Oak Ridge, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, is suggesting allowing Amazon.com a two-year "grace period" on collecting Tennessee sales taxes as a possible compromise on the issue of the state's arrangement with the Internet sales giant. McNally still prefers his original proposal — forcing Amazon to collect sales taxes like other retailers in the state. A recent opinion by the state attorney general gives McNally what would appear a green light for his legislation, which is carried by Rep. Charles Sargent, R-Franklin, in the Tennessee House. But McNally, recognizing the political obstacles of getting the legislation through, sees putting off the sales tax collections as a possible way to help solve the matter. Lawmakers interested in making Amazon collect the taxes put their legislation on hold this year, pending Attorney General Bob Cooper's opinion, which came down last week in their favor.

<http://www.tnreport.com/2011/07/mcnally-seeks-compromise-on-amazon-deal/>

Feral Hogs No Longer Big Game in Tennessee (WPLN-Radio Nashville)

Wild pigs are no longer considered big game for hunters, under a new state law taking effect this month. Officials say they're hoping the move will make it easier for farmers and landowners to keep Tennessee's feral hog population in check. Feral hogs are basically escaped farmyard pigs that have turned back into wild animals, with longer teeth and tails. They're considered a major nuisance in parts of East Tennessee because they're insatiable eaters as well as prolific breeders. State Representative John Mark Windle compares them to small bulldozers. "They'll just make row after row after row through the woods and through the pastures, and it looks like somebody's taken a submarine and driven through the ground, or a giant mole or some other type of disturbance." Windle sponsored a new law which paved the way for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to change its rules on killing wild hogs. Chief of Wildlife and Forestry Daryl Ratajczak (RATTA-chak) says what they had been doing — issuing hunting licenses — was making things worse. <http://wpln.org/?p=28573>

District 6 Candidate Showdown (Metro Pulse)

At some point during last Thursday's debate/forum/what-have-you at the Expo Center on Clinton Highway there were over 200 people in attendance. But by 7:30 p.m., when the debate for the Tennessee state Senate District 6 seat started, the crowd had dwindled by two-thirds. It's true that three hours of watching candidates answer questions from audience members about campaign issues that may or may not be particularly important makes for a really long evening. And it's true that the next mayor of Knoxville is likely to have a greater impact on most area residents' lives than one state senator. Still, to see the dozens of Madeline Rogero's maroon T-shirted supporters

all leaving, presumably because they don't care about which Republican gets elected to the office? Well, there's a reason no Democrat bothered to run for the state Senate seat being vacated by Jamie Woodson. But if watching Marilyn Roddy, Becky Duncan Massey, and Victoria DeFreese answer questions last week proved anything, it's this: Not all Republicans are the same, even if they're all white middle-aged women.

<http://www.metropulse.com/news/2011/jul/06/district-6-candidate-showdown/>

Favors says Thurman should step down (Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Garrett)

State Rep. JoAnne Favors is calling for Hamilton County school board member Rhonda Thurman to step down over what Favors is calling Thurman's "overtly racist" comments in the Sunday Times Free Press. Favors spoke at a news conference at the schools central office, flanked by the black members of the school board and county commission and surrounded by other black leaders, teachers and community members. She's said she's gotten an enormous number of calls from teachers, parents and others over Thurman's assertions in the Sunday newspaper that suburban schools had been neglected while inner-city schools got extra resources. In a front-page quote, Thurman said: "What do they want? I don't think suburban students have been treated fairly. Poor people learn. Slaves learned to read. I don't know why poor people can't learn to read and write. I have a lot of poor people in my family, but they are still expected to learn."

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/jul/06/chattanooga-favors-discusses-school-board-members-/?local>

Davidson County clerk will no longer pocket \$40 wedding 'gratuity' (TN/Haas)

Davidson County Clerk John Arriola will no longer pocket a \$40 "gratuity" he has been collecting from people to oversee weddings. Arriola, anticipating that a TV station was going to broadcast a story about his office's policy on marriage ceremonies, said Tuesday he would instead donate the money to charity. He released a statement saying it had been his practice to "accept a modest gratuity of \$40" for officiating marriage ceremonies. He said he has paid taxes on those gratuities. Arriola said he will continue to officiate weddings and accept the gratuity, which will go toward scholarships or some other charity. He pointed to a Tennessee Attorney General opinion as evidence that the practice is legal.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110707/NEWS0202/307070026/Davidson-County-clerk-will-no-longer-pocket-40-wedding-gratuity-?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|News|s>

Cleveland wins sales tax dispute (Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Higgins)

A dispute between Cleveland and Bradley County over more than \$845,000 in sales tax revenue may be settled. Lawyers are studying a Chancery Court ruling released Wednesday in which Chancellor Jerri Bryant ruled the city need not share with the county revenue generated by a city sales tax increase between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010. That money is outside a sales-tax sharing agreement dating to 1967. City and county voters approved separate half-percent sales tax increases in 2009. "The court holds the city did not have to share any property taxes with the county until such time as the county passed its own referendum," Bryant's ruling states. "At that point in time, pursuant to statute, the city was allowed to collect its own sales tax through that current fiscal year which ended June 30, 2010. After that appointed time and absent any agreement between the parties, the statute sets the basis for which the sales tax is to be divided." She noted that the 1967 contract allowed the city and county to equally share sales tax revenue. It was amended in 1972 and 1980 to reflect new sales tax increases, but not to address the 2009 referendum.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/jul/07/cleveland-wins-sales-tax-dispute/?local>

Drug Court comes up clean in audit (Knoxville News-Sentinel/McCoy)

After judge scandal, financial review finds only 3 minor issues Ron Hanaver said he was happy for a fresh pair of eyes to look over the finances of the Knox County Drug Court. On Wednesday, the Drug Court's finances got a clean bill of health, thanks to a completed county audit presented by Knox County Auditor Richard Walls. 'It gave us some new ideas on how we can improve on the program. At the same time, I think Richard Walls and his staff were able to see just what we do,' said Hanaver, the program's director. 'I think they came out of the process more appreciative of the Knox County Drug Court. I think that's what excited us, we were able to have an outside entity look at Drug Court and then go back and report what's actually going on with the Drug Court.' Knox County Law Director Joe Jarret requested the audit after the controversy surrounding former Knox County Criminal Court Judge Richard Baumgartner, who helped found the Drug Court program. Baumgartner resigned in March after admitting guilt to official misconduct for buying pills from a felon on probation in his regular court.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2011/jul/07/drug-court-comes-clean-audit/>

Memphis City Council may revisit employee pay cuts (Commercial Appeal/Maki)

Some failed to understand that they approved salary trim during recent budget vote Memphis City Council chairman Myron Lowery said Wednesday that he thinks most council members didn't understand they approved a 4.6 percent salary reduction for city employees when they voted for the budget for the fiscal year that began July 1. Mayor A C Wharton's budget proposed reducing the number of paid holidays city employees get from 13 days to one day, a reduction that equaled a 4.6 percent pay cut. "I think most people thought they were voting on the holidays," said Lowery. "That was clear to me. We knew we were voting on either the holidays or the pay reductions." "There is a difference between losing holiday pay and reducing salary by 4.6 percent, which could affect employees' pension. It's a big distinction." As the council approached its final votes on the budget, the Wharton administration said it planned to implement the across-the-board 4.6 percent salary reduction instead of reducing the number of paid holidays.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/jul/07/council-may-revisit-pay-cuts/>

Budget Issues Resurface at City Council (Memphis Daily News)

The Memphis City Council this week ventured back into the just closed budget season via a city charter amendment for the November 2012 ballot. A referendum ordinance by council member Kemp Conrad and council chairman Myron Lowery would require the city administration to submit a five-year operating budget plan to the council along with a five- to 10-year capital improvements budget plan and consolidate the two budgets into one presentation. The proposal would have to win the approval of Memphis voters in a November 2012 referendum. The vote on first reading was delayed Tuesday, July 5, for two weeks as a result of the renewed debate about a budget that took effect July 1. "It's so we don't find ourselves with somewhat of a hole like this year with a lot of one-time money and no plan for the next," Conrad said. "This would kind of smooth that out. ... I don't know what negative could be construed in this."

<http://www.memphisdailynews.com/news/2011/jul/7/budget-issues-resurface-at-city-council/>

Cohen, Hart, and the Schools (Memphis Flyer)

In 2006, when then state senator Steve Cohen, who represented a predominantly white and liberal Midtown district in Memphis, ran for the 9th District congressional seat vacated that year by Harold Ford Jr. (a U.S. Senate candidate that year), he benefited from the fact of a large field in the Democratic primary, including 13 African Americans, many of them known quantities. The district was predominantly black and had been represented for 10 years by Rep. Ford and, prior to that, for 22 years by his father, former Congressman Harold Ford Sr. Cohen won the primary, having fended off a late charge by corporate attorney Nikki Tinker, an Alabama transplant and former Ford campaign operative who intimated that she had the tacit support of the departing congressman. The brash state senator — a glutton during his 24 years in the legislature for outspokenness and controversy, famous for his sponsorship of hot-button issues, including the state lottery — then had to withstand one more challenge, from independent candidate Jake Ford, another son of Ford Sr., who, angered by unflattering remarks made against the Ford political clan by then Mayor Willie Herenton, a Cohen supporter, backed his son to the hilt.

<http://www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/cohen-hart-and-the-schools/Content?oid=3014581>

Higher Taxes Yield to Budget Cuts in States (Wall Street Journal)

Forty-six states began a new fiscal year Friday after lawmakers spent the spring hashing out budgets that largely avoid big tax increases in favor of budget cuts and curbs on pay and benefits for public employees. While budget woes continued to dominate statehouses, issues such as abortion, immigration and voter identification also drove legislative action. And lawmakers continued to wrestle with soaring state obligations to help fund Medicaid, which pays for health care for low-income Americans. Political winds have shifted sharply in statehouses in the wake of the 2010 election. Republicans now control 25 legislatures, the most in at least five decades. Democrats prevail in 16, down from 27 in 2009, the last time all states tackled their budgets. Nineteen states do so every two years, not annually, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Whichever party held control this year, fiscal pragmatism usually dominated. On-time budgets were turned by perennial foot-draggers Pennsylvania, controlled by Republicans, and New York, where power is split but Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo holds great sway. Democrat-controlled California also made its budget deadline, not without drama but without issuing IOUs, as it did in 2009.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303982504576427880768603822.html?mod=ITP_pageone_2
(SUBSCRIPTION)

First Study of Its Kind Shows Benefits of Providing Medical Insurance to Poor (NYT)

When poor people are given medical insurance, they not only find regular doctors and see doctors more often but they also feel better, are less depressed and are better able to maintain financial stability, according to a new, large-scale study that provides the first rigorously controlled assessment of the impact of Medicaid. While the findings may seem obvious, health economists and policy makers have long questioned whether it would make any difference to provide health insurance to poor people. It has become part of the debate on Medicaid, at a time when states are cutting back on this insurance program for the poor. In fact, the only reason the study could be done was that Oregon was running out of money and had to choose some people to get insurance and exclude others, providing groups for comparison. Some said that of course it would help to insure the uninsured. Others said maybe not. There was already a safety net: emergency rooms, charity care, free clinics and the option to go to a doctor and simply not pay the bill. And in any case, the argument goes, if Medicaid coverage is expanded, people will still have trouble seeing a doctor because so few accept that insurance.

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/07/health/policy/07medicaid.html?_r=1&ref=todayspaper

EPA gets tough on drifting pollution (USA Today)

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson is expected to announce tough new regulations today that seek to significantly reduce emissions from many coal-fired power plants. The new measures will cover plants in as many as 28 states whose pollution blows into other states. They are expected to save 14,000 to 36,000 lives a year, said Janice Nolen of the American Lung Association. The Tennessee Valley Authority, which has 11 coal-fired fossil plants with a total of 59 generating units, wasn't sure Wednesday night how it might be affected. But various business groups and some congressional Republicans are calling the new measures job-killing and unnecessary. The Clean Air Transport Rule addresses the problem of coal-fired power plants in some states creating pollution that drifts into other states, which the EPA is required to address under the Clean Air Act. Under the regulation, plants in affected states will begin reducing emissions in 2012. By 2014 the new regulations are expected to reduce sulfur dioxide by 73 percent and reduce nitrogen oxides by 54 percent from 2005 levels. These emissions can form fine-particle pollution and smog, both of which are particularly dangerous to people with lung and heart disease. <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110707/NEWS08/307070041/EPA-gets-tough-drifting-pollution?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|News>

Meth lab seizures down, problem persists (WVLT-TV Knoxville)

Meth lab seizures in Tennessee took a double-digit drop so far this year. Not because cops are winning the war on drugs, rather, they're losing the funding battle for expensive cleanups. As a result, some departments opting to soften their attack on meth investigations. "They're not going to be as proactively, as aggressively seeking out these types of investigations," said Tommy Farmer, state Meth Task Force director. It costs thousands to cleanup a single meth lab, a pricetag the federal government used to pay. Last year the DEA spent a whopping, "\$4.5 million just in Tennessee alone," said Farmer. When federal dollars dried up the burden shifted to local agencies like Sevier County Sheriff's Office. It has one of few meth response units in the area. Despite the funding cut, specially trained deputies in full protective gear still respond to meth labs.

http://www.volunteertv.com/news/headlines/Meth_lab_seizures_down_problem_persists_125104759.html

Georgia: Atlanta public school exams fudged (USA Today)

A state probe has found that teachers and principals in dozens of Atlanta public schools doctored students' test papers — the latest scandal involving the high-stakes world of standardized testing in the nation's school systems. The investigation, detailed Wednesday in a report issued by Georgia Republican Gov. Nathan Deal, showed that Atlanta school administrators emphasized test results "to the exclusion of integrity and ethics." The pressure even prompted one frightened third-grade teacher to tell investigators that "there are ways that APS (Atlanta Public Schools) can get back at you" if teachers don't go along with cheating. "APS is run like the Mob," the teacher said, according to the investigation report. The results come as standardized tests generate increased scrutiny: •Baltimore Public Schools CEO Andres Alonso last week suggested that falling 2011 scores in many city schools could partially be the result of better test security. •USA TODAY last March examined standardized test scores at District of Columbia schools and found 103 public schools with high erasure rates on penciled-in answer sheets. An investigation is underway.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-07-06-Atlanta-schools-standardized-test-cheating_n.htm

OPINION

Editorial: Governor right on legislative restraint (Daily News Journal)

After nearly six months in office, we are pleased to see Gov. Bill Haslam able to get down to business. During his first few months in office, he admitted recently in an interview with the Knoxville News Sentinel, he was a bit tied up with the state Legislature, which ended its session in May. Before going home, lawmakers introduced about 2,200 bills with more than 500 going to Haslam's desk to be signed into law. He inked them all. "Did my life change a whole lot since the Legislature left? Sure," Haslam said. "The things I'm doing now are the things that I ran for governor to do." Those things include managing a state government of 45,000 employees and marketing Tennessee to business owners as a place for investment. We applaud Haslam's proposal that lawmakers show some self-restraint in their next session, limiting the number of bills they propose by about a third. He suggests cutting the number introduced by the Republican-led General Assembly as a whole to perhaps a more manageable 1,500.

<http://www.dnj.com/article/20110707/OPINION02/107070318/Editorial-Governor-right-legislative-restraint>

Guest columnist: MTSU stubs out campus tobacco (Tennessean)

University makes commitment to health on campus As Middle Tennessee State University continues to position itself for the future and approaches its centennial celebration, it will join about 250 institutions of higher education across the country by declaring itself a tobacco-free campus. Based on a recommendation by the university's Environmental Health and Safety Committee, President Sidney A. McPhee recently revised current policy to create a tobacco-free campus, effective Jan. 1, 2012. The new policy will prohibit the use of all forms of tobacco anywhere on campus except in private vehicles. Numerous reasons support enacting this policy. Most importantly, MTSU is committed to providing a healthy living, working and learning environment for its students, faculty and staff. The new policy will reduce harm from secondhand smoke and provide an atmosphere that encourages tobacco-free lifestyles. The health risks of tobacco are well-known. The surgeon general's report in 2006, which recognized that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure, was a watershed document for conversations surrounding creation of smoke-free and tobacco-free public spaces.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110707/OPINION03/307070019/MTSU-stubs-out-campus-tobacco?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|Opinion|p>

Guest columnist: Ban's real purpose is to control behavior (Tennessean)

I am not a smoker, nor do I think that smoking is a healthy habit. Smoking bans once more have made the news as Middle Tennessee State University announced they would restrict the use of all forms of tobacco products, including but not limited to cigarettes, pipes, cigars, chewing tobacco and snuff, as well as smokeless electronic cigarettes and other similar devices. The smoking ban at MTSU is part of a larger trend. During 2008, almost all Nashville-area hospitals banned smoking outdoors on their property. Saint Thomas and Baptist hospitals banned smoking on hospital grounds beginning Jan. 1. TriStar Health System hospitals followed with a ban on June 1. Vanderbilt University Medical Center started its ban by Sept. 1. The Tennessee General Assembly banned smoking in restaurants, public buildings and private workplaces, near schools, health-care facilities, hotels, motels, retail stores, malls and sports arenas. Government busybodies often propose legislation on findings that do not hold up to scientific scrutiny. This is the case with justifying smoking bans on the grounds of supposed health benefits.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110707/OPINION03/307070020/Ban-s-real-purpose-control-behavior?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|Opinion|p>

Editorial: When jobs don't show (Commercial Appeal)

The Memphis and Shelby County tax abatement program demonstrated this week how to hold a company's feet to the fire. If a recommendation by the Industrial Development Board's Performance and Review Committee is ratified, Saint Francis Hospital will lose a year's worth of local property tax breaks because new jobs promised with the expansion of its emergency department haven't materialized. Memphis BioFuels, a fuel producer now called BioEnergy Development Group, will not get two of the eight years it had been awarded under similar circumstances. The decisions by the committee reflected a tougher approach mandated in 2007 when the City Council, and then the County Commission, approved comprehensive changes to PILOT -- payment in lieu of taxes -- programs that are used to attract business relocations and expansions. Such programs are crucial to the community's economic growth ambitions because they're offered by many other state and local governments that

are courting new businesses. <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/jul/07/when-jobs-dont-show/>

Free-Press Editorial: An ObamaCare surprise (Chattanooga Times Free-Press)

In an alarming comment prior to congressional Democrats' vote last year to approve ObamaCare, then-Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., declared, "We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it away from the fog of the controversy." Well, we are painfully finding out, bit by bit, "what is in it" — things such as costly government mandates on health insurance plans offered by private companies. Those mandates have forced hundreds of companies and labor unions to seek waivers from ObamaCare, which was supposed to promote more affordable care. And another little "surprise" popped up recently. ObamaCare was supposed to be geared toward providing coverage to tens of millions of poor Americans who cannot now afford it. But in the words of The Associated Press, the law "would let several million middle-class people get nearly free insurance meant for the poor, a twist government number crunchers say they discovered only after the complex bill was signed." <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/jul/07/obamacare-surprise/?opinionfreepress>

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