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The Dual Purpose of Parks and Recreation Departments

by Steve Fritts, ASLA, LEED AP BD+C,
Vice President, Barge Waggoner Sumner &
Cannon, Inc.

Parks across Tennessee play a vital role in sustaining not only the quality of life of our communities but also providing economic value. This dual purpose has evolved throughout the country. Many factors such as property value, tourism, and health are now considered when local municipalities evaluate parks and recreation activities.



Steve Fritts

These factors have direct appeal when businesses as well as sports organizations seek to take root inside a certain region. During almost any season in Tennessee, roadways are busied with caravans filled with athletic equipment and suitcases. Nationwide, 53 million youth travel to participate in sporting events that generate an estimated \$7 billion of economic impact, according to *Sports Travel Magazine*. The publication also states that 27% of all trips taken last year were for the sole purpose of attending an organized sporting event.

Built in 2009, one of the state's sport facilities became such a destination—the *Summit of Softball* Complex in Chattanooga. Summit was designed to return the city to the big leagues of tournament play and bring revenue to the city. It succeeded on both fronts. The first event, the National Softball Association's Eastern World Series, drew 232 teams and an estimated \$3.6 million in visitor spending. According to the Chattanooga Sports Committee, since 2013, Summit, along with Champions Club and Warner Park,

strongly impacted the surrounding community with nearly \$32 million in estimated economic impact.

Tennessee, viewed as a first-class sports venue, is home to a number of high quality tournament-level athletic facilities like Summit of Softball that serve as a local economic engine. These facilities add value to a community's quality of life and are significant contributors to economic growth and stability. Visitors become consumers in nearly \$32 million in estimated economic impact.

Ellie Westman Chin, President and CEO of the Williamson County Convention & Visitors Bureau, says her tourism office first met with the City of Franklin's Parks Department as well as county parks representatives to understand both entities' programming. "It was critically important for us to understand the other's offerings and plan a partnership to maximize the county's full potential," says Chin. In 2013, Williamson County received more than \$380 million in economic impact from tourism. (2014 numbers yet to be released).

(Continued on page 2)



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A Steep Hill to Climb

by Thomas L. "Chuck" Saunders, PE
 President of ACEC of Tennessee

Some roads are indeed paved with good intentions. Some ten months ago, I stepped in to the role of President with the intention of



Chuck Saunders

making a difference in the engineering community. In mid-April, I joined over 1,400 conventioners, including a dozen from Tennessee, who ascended upon Washington, DC representing ACEC from all over the US. For the tenth consecutive year,

Tennesseans stepped up to meet the State's annual PAC goal by April's convention, led by the efforts of Jerry Stump. Tennessee is one of seven states that met their PAC goal by the Annual Convention. At the forefront of the banners carried by the ACEC was again infrastructure funding and a message of urgency for a long-term solution.

Upon reflection of the proposals at hand, I pondered what can you buy anywhere in the country for six dollars a month? Two gallons

of milk, maybe, or possibly two loaves of bread perhaps? Six dollars provides sustainable funding for the federal Highway Trust Fund. That's it, six dollars. For a driver using 50 gallons of gas per month, six additional dollars in user funding would shore up the coffers to get the country's highway system back on track. There's a lot of debate and hand wringing over a mere six dollars a month. And, it only applies if you drive, making it a true user fee.

This Council President is committed to keeping the debate at the forefront. I have included the subject of infrastructure funding in seven of nine articles. Tennessee lawmakers deferred any funding initiatives for transportation until next year. I do plea that Council embraces the importance of the Tennessee Engineers' PAC and participate in the mission of the ACEC more than ever. The hills we are climbing are indeed steep and inaction simply is no longer affordable.

In just over a month, I will pass the gavel. Under the guidance of a new Executive Director and President, I hope that the Council will continue holding vigil over the issues that face its members and the public it serves.

Dual Purpose (cont. from page 1)

A community's identity is either enhanced or developed, in part, through an essential service - parks and recreation. The National Recreation and Park Association believes that communities must have a prospering, active parks and recreation system of programs in order to pride themselves on their quality of life. Public perception is powerful. These perceptions frequently develop into a sense of pride that eventually attracts an outside audience.

Across the Volunteer State, each community has a unique identity with outstanding pride. Municipalities and counties have an opportunity to capitalize on such pride with continued support of their parks departments. A community's quality of life is only as valuable as the stewards who take care of it.

As the firm's Parks and Recreation discipline lead, Fritts' 35-year career has been dedicated to planning, development and design of parks, recreation, trails, streetscapes and tourism enhancement projects for communities of all sizes. He has extensive experience conducting community input and visioning sessions, and helping translate the results of those sessions into a plan and design that meets the needs of both the community and the client.

Member News

- CDM Smith has added Brandie Cookston, PE, CPESC, CPSWQ to their Chattanooga office with her expertise in transportation and environmental engineering background.
- Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon, Inc., announced that Jeff Weis, PE, joins the firm as Director of the Industrial and Building Services Business Unit. A 22 year veteran of engineering and construction management, Weis is responsible for the development of growth strategies and business opportunities within the unit.

Three ACEC of TN member firms' projects won awards at the 2015 ACEC National Engineering Excellence Awards on April 21st in Washington, DC:

- LDA Engineering, Chattanooga, for "Founders Park"
- Ross Bryan Associates, Nashville, for "Music City Center"
- Smith, Seckman, Reid, Inc., Memphis, for "Wolf River Boulevard Connector"

Leadership PE:



The Leadership PE Class was hosted by U. S. Army Corps of Engineers at the Chickamauga Lock and Dam in Chattanooga, TN in April. Pictured during a tour of the Chickamauga Dam are (L to R) 1st Row: Patrick Massey, PE (LDA Engineering); Ryan McDaniel, PE (A2H, Inc.); Chad McMurray, PE (A. Morton Thomas and Associates); Karina Bynum, PE (TDEC); Judy Logue (ACEC of TN/TSPE); Ashley Smith, PE (Stantec Consulting Services); Carrie Stokes, PE (Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon); Andy Stoebner, PE (Gresham, Smith and Partners); Eric Mayhaus, PE (Brown and Caldwell); Chad Braun, PE (USACE); and Jimmy Waddell, PE (USACE);

2nd Row: Mike Stomer, PG (S&ME, Inc.); Trevor Cropp, PE (Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon); Sean DeCoster, PE (Civil Site Design); Kyle Horner, EI (Robert G. Campbell & Associates); Preston Hall, PE (Facility Systems Consultants); John Barnett, PE (Nashville Metro Water Services); Chris Jenkins, PE (QK4, Inc.); Kyle Peters, PE (K. S. Ware & Associates); David Morse, PE (Parsons Brinckerhoff) and Justin Eckel, PE (Volkert, Inc).

Not Pictured: Jason Blankenship, PE (TDOT); Jason Conley, PE (I. C. Thomasson); Shane Hester, PE (TDOT); and Rick Whitson, PE (TDEC).



The TN Delegation with Congressman Diane Black.



ACEC of TN's Delegation in Washington, DC. Front row (L to R) Kasey Anderson, ACEC of TN Executive Director in training; Patrick Smith, PE, Smith, Seckman Reid, Inc.; Steve Field, PE, Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.; 2nd Row: Chuck Saunders, PE, ACEC of TN President and Energy, Land, & Infrastructure, LLC; David Harrell, PE, Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers, Inc.; 3rd Row: Harold Cannon, PE, Cannon & Cannon, Inc.; Candy Toler, ACEC of TN Executive Director; and Nick Taylor, PE, Smith, Seckman, Reid, Inc.



Patrick Smith, PE (L) and Nick Taylor, PE, Smith, Seckman, Reid, Inc., accepting their award at the ACEC National Engineering Excellence Awards

CALENDAR

**MAY
25**

Offices Closed for Memorial Day Holiday

**JULY
3**

Offices Closed for Independence Day Holiday

**SEPTEMBER
17-18**

TN Engineers' Annual Conference, Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro, TN

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MAY 2015
I N S I D E

- Parks and Recreation Departments – front cover
- ACEC National Convention – page 3

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Contact:
James Lukens, PE
Email:
jlukens@lukensengineering.com

Lukens Engineering Consultants is a civil engineering design firm for commercial, residential and industrial sites.

F R O M T H E E X E C U T I V E D I R E C T O R

*by Kasey Anderson, CAE
Executive Director, ACEC of Tennessee*

I am sure there are a few of you reading this column wondering where the red head is...Candy Toler retired on April 30th after 16 stellar years at the helm of ACEC of TN and TSPE. As your new executive director, I could not be more grateful to have had two months of transition time with Candy, especially given that those two months overlapped with this year's legislative session.



Kasey Anderson

On day two of my tenure, 100 engineers descended on the state Capitol to meet with legislators about public safety and issues that affect the profession. That evening, ACEC of TN celebrated the best in engineering with a crowd of over 300 at the EEA banquet. To say that I was impressed is an understatement.

While some of my time with Candy was routine in nature, our focus on legislative issues did not lack flair. Candy and I lobbied on your behalf on numerous issues, including several attempts to weaken codes, QBS, STEM, land application of biosolids, fluoride testing, marina tax, and underground utilities. While we hoped

to secure long-term, sustainable transportation funding this year, we kept the issue out front, and will continue to have a voice in that debate. If you missed our legislative summary, let me know and I will get you a copy.

We also made the rounds in DC at ACEC's national convention, joining Tennessee's delegation for meetings with Congressmen Black, Blackburn, Cooper and Duncan and the staffs of Senators Alexander and Corker and Congressmen DesJarlais and Fincher. We were focused on four areas at the federal level: transportation funding, energy policy, tax reform, and streamlining the procurement process for design-build.

At both the state and federal levels, the voice of Tennessee's engineers is a powerful one. Elected officials value your opinion, and trust your judgment. ACEC of Tennessee remains committed to advancing the business environment for the engineering industry, but our success depends on you. Your input is important, and I encourage you to get involved. My door is always open, and my phone is always on, so please feel free to reach out to me any time. I am eager to build on Candy's legacy, and look forward to a long, successful journey with you.