

# Pothole-ridden roads to be paved

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Warren County Highway Department braced for a bad winter and now it is coping with damage to roads.

Road Superintendent Levie Glenn has been allowed by the full Warren County Commission to transfer \$220,000 within his budget from equipment to contract services, and use that money for paving.

"We've had a bad winter and I felt like it's important to move the money around and try to do some paving," said

Glenn, to members of the county Highway and Bridge Committee.

While the area received minimal snow, it did receive recurrent bouts of freezing and thawing which creates potholes.

"I believe it's been the hardest winter we've had since I've been with the Highway Department as far as the deterioration it's done to the roads," said Glenn.

When asked by the *Standard* which roads will be given priority, Glenn said Petigap Road, Brown Prater Road, Kirby Road and Caney Branch Road are all in need of repair.

"I think that's a wise

decision," said Commissioner Gary Prater. "We've got some pretty good equipment right now. I know you know this too, but we've got some roads that have taken a beating. We had, pretty much, 30 days where the temperature stayed down to freezing. Freezing will get the roads."

The measure was approved and presented to the county Budget and Finance Committee on Friday by Prater, where



**GLENN**

its approval continued.

"After seeing some of these roads, Levie has decided to not buy anymore equipment this year and put this money into contract service which will be paving," said Prater. "That

was a good decision on his part, I thought. We approved it. The roads just have a lot of age on them and we had a real bad winter. Even though we didn't have a lot of snow, we had a lot of rain and a lot of freezes."

# Legislation allows schools to ignore TNReady scores

**NASHVILLE (AP)** — Tennessee lawmakers scrambled to pass legislation to ensure no students, teachers or schools suffer as a result of repeated failures with the state assessment test.

The legislation was passed quickly Thursday by both the Senate and House after complaints by lawmakers that students in their districts were still having trouble taking the test known as TNReady.

House lawmakers fumed and some threatened to hold up passage of the \$37.5 billion budget until they could pass a legislative fix. Much of the anger came because lawmakers kept getting text and email messages about problems after it was supposed to have been fixed. Legislators also complained of issues with the testing for the past several years.

Students, teachers and schools are partially evaluated based on the TNReady test. Several lawmakers said the test scores could not be trusted.

Both the House and Senate agreed that local school boards could decide to ignore assessment scores when they come back. However, lawmakers said if school boards do decide to use test scores, the assessment will count only a maximum of 15 percent toward a student's final grades.

Schools are now given letter grades of A-F to help parents evaluate how well they are serving students. The measure that was written and passed Thursday says test scores from the current school year should not go toward any school's letter grade.

The legislation also says none of the test scores from this current school year will factor into deciding whether the school is a "priority school," which are among the bottom 5 percent. However, if the scores look good, schools could use them to get off the list of the lowest performers.

The test scores could also not be used to make decisions about hiring or compensating teachers.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Unless otherwise indicated, county meetings are held at the Warren County Administrative Building located at 201 Locust Street and city meetings are held at City Hall located at 101 E. Main Street.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 24

The city Parks and Recreation Committee will meet at 6 p.m. to discuss location of a dog park.

The city Finance Committee will meet at 6:15 p.m. Among the items of business: 1) Discuss COLA for

employees; 2) Discuss system security; 3) Discuss new tourism marketing logo and how it could be used by the city.

McMinnville Board of Mayor and Aldermen will hold its regular session at 7 p.m. Two letter requests will be considered: 1) Leadership McMinnville requesting permission to hold the 24th annual Autumn Street Fair on Oct. 6; 2) Main Street McMinnville requesting the city's support for Main Street Live summer concert series.

# Uncertainty surrounds future of Blue Building

BY **LACY GARRISON & LISA HOBBS**  
Reporters for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

McMinnville officials created the Tourism Development Board in 2017. It works similar to the Industrial Development Board (IDB), but while IDB focuses on industrial recruitment, TDB's focus is on promoting tourism.

TDB's powers include the authority to hold title to property, to convey property, to lease property, and to sell property. Importantly, it has the authority to authorize the issuance of tax-exempt bonds in financing tourism development projects, like the IDB has the authority to authorize the issuance of tax-exempt bonds for the purpose of promoting industry.

Several years ago, McMinnville officials decided the Blue Building over to the IDB to encourage industrial development by entering into an agreement with StrategicWire to lease the property with the intent of creating 150 jobs.

The jobs never materialized and the property reverted back to the city.

Speculation is interest has been shown in the purchase of the Blue Building and its 4 acres for tourism develop-

ment. While the city cannot arbitrarily sell property to an interested buyer, TDB can.

Much like they did with the IDB, McMinnville officials could deed the property to TDB and that organization could enter into an agreement with an interested party.

According to the TDB's minutes from March 19, potential development of the Blue Building as a hotel by a development group occurred.

In this discussion, the group reiterated the need for the developer to provide an Irrevocable Letter of Credit to TDB to demonstrate to the city of McMinnville the developer had financial viability. Additionally, the board conferred the necessity of a timeline on this request from the developer to avoid further delay, which was April 15.

However, in Monday's TDB meeting, the board emphasized this wasn't a

hard, fast deadline.

"We just asked for him to give us some kind of response by April 15," said Mayor Jimmy Haley. "I don't care to write him a letter from this board saying we do exist. We are an arm of the city and the city does own the building so if he wants something in writing for the bank, I can do that."

"He knows that," said Michael D. Griffith. "He's trying to get us to commit beforehand. There is absolutely nothing that we can offer them we haven't already offered."

Other board members concurred while nodding their heads in agreement.

Griffith added, "This is just my opinion, but I think we're done. I think at this point we can pursue other options or we can move to something that's higher priority. He knows what he's doing and we've bent over backwards for him already. It's DOA. It's time to move on."



The Blue Building has been vacant since November 2009. Efforts to find a tenant or buyer for the property have failed thus far.

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MOTHER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Mail or bring photo & information with payment to:  
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