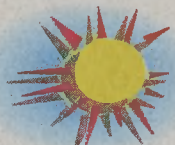




# THOMASVILLE TIMES

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## Local officials optimistic, despite trying times

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
Staff Writer

City of Thomasville and Davidson County officials alike gathered for a moment of jovial socializing, taking a brief escape from the daunting task of keeping the area afloat amidst the floundering economy and listening with at least slight optimism to the not-so-bleak city and county reports.

Police officers, com-

missioners, school board and city council members heard a brief overview from Thomasville City Manager Kelly Craver and County Commission Chair Dr. Max Walser at Colonial Country Club Thursday, as part of the Thomasville Area



Craver



Walser

Chamber of Commerce's State of the City and County.

"We're very fortunate to have leaders in our community that are passionate about our community," said Keith Tobin, superintendent of Thomasville City Schools and chamber board chair.

"I feel blessed to be in this community because of the leaders we have. I'm excited about the direction in which we're headed."

Craver took the podium with a fairly somber demeanor.

"I'd like to say I'm coming to you with all the answers to all of the questions in our community," he told the crowd. "But we're really facing the elusive question of, what is the new normal?"

'I'd like to say I'm coming to you with all the answers ... But we're really facing the elusive question of, what is the new normal?'

— Kelly Craver  
City Manager

With the hard economy marching right on the heels of the departure of Thomasville's once-thriving furniture and textile industries, the Chair City has struggled to find

an identity, to recover the thriving bustle of city life it once had.

Sales tax revenues have declined 11 percent in

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### EDC looks to a brighter economic future

BY ELIOT DUKE  
Staff Writer

LEXINGTON — With a dismal decade in the rear-view mirror, the Davidson County Economic Development Commission is focusing its sights on the future in hopes of turning around the local economy.

During the annual EDC meeting at Sapona Country Club Tuesday, executive director Steve Googe said Davidson County has taken several economic hits since 2000. A double-digit unemployment rate, a slumping housing market, high foreclosures and shrinking employment opportunities have plagued the county in recent years, but Googe said there may be signs of recovery.

"We didn't have a great year but there were some significant new and expanding industries to come to Davidson County," Googe said. "We ranked fourth in the state in jobs announced with 1,360 and sixth in job investments. We also have been in the top 10 of the 780 micropolitans in the country just about every year. Although it's a very

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TIMES PHOTO/DAVID YEMM

### RIDING THE RAILS

Several rail fans from Colorado visited Thomasville Thursday to watch the passing trains. Their guide was Bruce Faulkner from Raleigh, who had been told that Thomasville was one of the better places to watch trains in the area. Faulkner said because of the Bandstand, Depot and shade from nearby trees, it was a great place to take photos and video of the trains. Visiting from Colorado was John Parker, Doug Geiger, Bill Wood and Rodney Black.

### Police urge motorists to slow down in school zones

BY ELIOT DUKE  
Staff Writer

Getting accustomed to a new school year is difficult for just about everyone. Students have to wake up early, parents have to make sure their children get up on time and motorists heading to work have to account for the extra traffic surrounding school buses and their many stops along the way.

Schedule changes, particularly in the morning, can often lead to hurrying, both at home and on the roads. One of the biggest changes surrounding the start of school are the speed limits in school zones. Every year, for the first few weeks of school, motorists forget that going 35 or 40 mph in a school zone is speeding and will lead to a tick-

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### Sand mining threatens Rich For Creek water quality

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
Staff Writer

LEXINGTON — Despite wastewater from three cities pouring into Rich Fork Creek, Davidson County Board of Commissioners learned Thursday that the most imminent problem for the stream's water quality actually comes as a result of sand mining.

According to Tetra Tech, a third-party firm brought in to study water quality at Rich Fork Creek, sand mining has widened and deepened the stream, slowing stream flow and reducing the quality of the aquatic environment. Tetra Tech analyzed the water's dissolved oxygen levels and looked at the 79-square-mile discharge coming from Westside wastewater treatment plant.

"If we break this down, what we see is most of the time oxygen up stream of

the plant and down stream of the plant is well above state standard," said Tetra Tech Director Trevor Clements. "But all of a sudden, between Highway 109 and Middle School Road there is a small decrease, and that is significant in water quality terms."

After collecting this data, Clements and his staff walked the stream, searching for clues pointing to the decrease in water quality. What they found was sand mining at three bridges crossing over the river.

"In each of those areas, instead of the stream looking like it should, it had been carved out," Clements said. "It had extra width and the stream bank was very steep."

A normal stream boasts a bed 20 to 30 feet wide with a sloping bank and cov-

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### Davidson County Schools to pursue construction bonds

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
Staff Writer

Davidson County Board of Commissioners gave Davidson County Schools the go-ahead to apply for more Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB) to use to build a new middle school.

QSCB bonds are federal bonds that came out of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and can only be used to finance construction or renovation of public schools. Davidson County Schools applied for and received \$3 million in QSCB bonds at the end of July, but the 2010 QSCB fund had about \$50 million remaining even after all off the applicants received their bid.

School systems are able to apply for up to \$10 million of the excess, and applications must be received by Sept. 8 — the reason why commissioners approved the application Thursday rather than waiting for the next regular meeting on

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