



VOL. 1 ISSUE 2 • MAY 2019

Pittman Center Times

Official Newsletter of the Town of Pittman Center

Dear Subscribers,

Thank you for the tremendous support for the newsletter project! Approximately 75 people have signed up to receive the PCTimes, with a few still trickling in each week. We have heard that some people did not receive the initial mailed version and apologize! Please let us know if we missed someone, or if you know of someone who would like to receive the newsletter. Having never done this before, we are learning as we grow, and will just keep getting better!

Along those lines, we are still ironing out a few wrinkles, and apologize for the delay in delivery this month. In the future, we are going to try to get the newsletter delivered by the second Saturday of the month. This will allow time to gather minutes of the previous month from the various boards and get them published prior to the meeting coming up - in case there should be citizen interest relating to an agenda item on any of the boards and they want to attend that meeting.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to call Town Hall at 436-5499 or you can email us at astownhall@gmail.com.

Your PCTimes Volunteers

MESSAGE FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

I want to first of all thank the citizens of Pittman Center for how welcoming everyone has been! It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to serve as the City Administrator. I absolutely love coming to work every day in a unique and beautiful community with amazing citizens. I look forward to continuing to meet everyone. We have an absolutely fantastic team of employees working in the Town and it is growing!

We have recently hired Mr. Matt Holt for the position of Police Officer. His first day is May 13th. Matt previously worked for the Sevier County Sheriff's Office for over a decade. Matt began his career as a jailer, moved to patrol and ended his career with the SCSO as a K9 officer. Matt has a passion for community policing and looks forward to meeting the citizens of Pittman Center.



The Town will soon be interviewing and hiring a Maintenance Supervisor. The Town would also like to thank everyone who came out for Heritage Day! It was a wonderful event and we look forward to next year. Please feel free to stop by City Hall and say hello, I look forward to meeting you.

Michael Borders
Town Administrator

MEET OUR CITY EMPLOYEES!

Born and raised in the Maple's Branch area of our community, Tammy Watts Rochester can be found in the comfortable seat of the familiar tractor she has driven since she was a child, cutting hay or tobacco on the family farm... WHEN she is not tending to the affairs of Pittman Center! By day, Pittman Center is privileged to have Tammy tending to all our records and being "the other friendly voice on the phone" helping our citizens, and by evening, she proudly tends the family farm as a third-generation farmer.

What do you do?

My official title is Court Clerk. All of us here at City Hall wear many different hats. As the court clerk I process all citations through the court and report all payments and judgements to the State. Once a month we hold traffic court and I prepare all citations and documents for the Judge to preview, then sit alongside of the Judge during court. One of the other hats I wear is Property Tax Collector. I prepare property and personal property tax statements, collect and report delinquent taxes and handle the property tax relief program. Also, I prepare the monthly billing on our dumpster rentals and our lodging tax, issue building permits, process payments and answer the phones. I attend and assist in taking minutes at the Board of Mayor and Alderman meetings. One of the fun things I get to do here is be a member of the recreation board that plans and organizes our Heritage Day and Yule log festivities.



What do you like about your job?

The best part about my job is getting to talk with people from different areas and learning about the different cultures. I enjoy helping the community and seeing that smile on someone's face that originally may have been upset.

What do you like about Pittman Center?

My favorite part is that Pittman Center is not commercialized. I love being able to walk out the door at City Hall and see the creek running and hear birds chirping. You never know what you may see when you go outside. There's been bears, turkey, coyotes, deer, eagles and several other animals in the yard here numerous times. It's so peaceful you forget you're working sometimes. Taking a walk-up Webb Creek is better than any drug a doctor could prescribe for stress or anxiety.

Where is your hometown?

I was born and raised in Sevier County. I have lived here my entire life except for 3 years in South Carolina. There's no place like the mountains!

Anything Else?

I'm the daughter of a 3rd generation farmer. I grew up hanging on my Daddy's heels working in the fields and driving tractors. My mom tried to get me to do other things but farming and being outside was my passion. I lost my Daddy 3 years ago, but I'm very fortunate to still have my mother and my 23-year-old son Jake. I enjoy spending time at the lake, camping, hunting and fishing with my boyfriend Mike, his son Cooper and my son Jake. There's never a dull moment when Mike and I are together!

TOWN MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

All town meetings are open to the public, and members of the community are encouraged to attend! Complete minutes are, or will be, available on the Pittman Center web site. Below, is a brief overview of each board.

At the April 8th **Planning Commission**, officers were elected by the Commission. Jay DeFoe will be the chairman, with Dan McMahan as the vice-chairman, and Kris Johnson was elected as secretary. Building permits were issued to Gary Wade and Alex Davis for additions to their homes. The footbridge for the Logan Coykendall property has not yet been approved by TDEC. Audie Kear presented a plat for a subdivision on his property, that did not meet regulations. After discussion, it was decided that the plat would be approved, after a modification to create a “flag lot”. This discussion created an additional discussion of easement subdivisions occurring, and the potential consequences of those actions. The general consensus was to not allow easement subdivisions. The meeting on April 13th will include training on TN state law regarding the authority and functions of the Planning Commission.

At the **BOMA** meeting on April 18th, Ordinance 286 was passed on the second hearing; a motion and approval for a Grassy Branch Bridge Committee was granted, with Alderwoman Judy Tucker named as the person to appoint the five person committee; the Town Administrator presented options for the Board relating to the authority and process of reviewing site and subdivision plans. The Board voted for further discussion as to hiring a building inspector full time, or as a contract position; a form from the State of Tennessee was reviewed by the Board, and is required prior to the Town taking on any debt; it was requested, and the Board consented, to a public meeting for those interested in establishing us as a Firewise Community; a citizen also requested the Board draft an ordinance regarding golf cart operation that would mirror the State laws regarding such.

At the April 24th **Tree Board** Meeting, the Town Administrator pointed out the need for revision of some of the language in Ordinance 217. He will review and revise some of the details and will prepare to have ordinance passed at May or June BOMA meeting. Kathy Brooks has completed preparation of the landscaping information packets. These packets contain information regarding types of preferred vegetation recommended for planting in our area, including invasive and non-invasive species, and are available to anyone, at Town Hall, and will be distributed to local landscapers and residents applying for building permits. Jody Trammell and Michael Borders have prepared and sent a letter to Sevier County Electric to open a discussion on herbicide use and other vegetation management options for power line rights of way. The Board then began the process of individually wrapping, soaking, and bagging the 200+ American Plum seedlings to be given away at Heritage Day.



TREE BOARD VOLUNTEERS PREPARE AMERICAN PLUM SEEDLINGS TO BE GIVEN AWAY AT HERITAGE DAY.

The Planning Commission will meet on Monday, May 13th, at 4:30.
The Board of Mayor and Aldermen will meet on Thursday, May 16th at 4:30.
The Tree Board will meet on Wednesday, May 29 at 3:30.

INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

Grassy Branch Bridge: The Grassy Branch Bridge project is a TDOT managed project that involves both State and Federal dollars. There is a small match of approximately \$7,000 that will come from the Town. There are not many details available for the project at this point. TDOT is currently working on a timeline for this project. The TDOT current estimated time for completion is three to four years. TDOT's Stacy Weaver will be present at the upcoming BMA meeting, 5/16/2019 at 4:30pm at City Hall, to discuss the general process and scope for this project.

Hills Creek Road: Is currently slightly behind due to a backorder of timber guardrails. The project lacks the guardrails and a layer of blacktop.

Old Hills Creek Road: The Old Hills Creek road originally washed out in February and was repaired. We have been working with Robert Campbell and Associates to find a solution to hopefully keep the road from washing out in the future. Earlier this week we have decided on a course of action and are moving forward. We hope to have this project completed in the coming weeks at which point we will reopen the road.

321 Widening Project: TDOT presented information on a possible 321 widening project several weeks ago. TDOT has provided a preliminary plan that shows possible future right of ways and the approximate position of 321. The preliminary plan is available for review at City Hall

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Residents of Pittman Center have a potentially very useful benefit thanks to the town's Municipal Site Plan agreement with AirMedCare Network: an emergency air ambulance transport. The helispot is located at the corner of Highway 416 and Highway 321. Under terms of this agreement, any resident of Pittman Center who can provide billable insurance can be transported free of charge on the first leg of any transport out of Sevier County. Typically, patients are transported to University of Tennessee Medical Center via LifeStar, but special medical situations may go elsewhere. AirMedCare will not charge the patient even if their personal insurance denies the claim; if a patient has no insurance, they will be charged at the Medicare billable amount. The medical transport includes conditions such as transplant surgery in addition to other emergencies. AirMedCare also offers a reduced rate to Pittman Center residents for service throughout their network which includes 38 states and 320 aircraft through a membership fee, which is currently \$45. For more information contact Daniel Willis with AirMedCare at 865-343-1329.

HERITAGE DAY!!!

The weather could not have been more perfect for our Spring Heritage Day, and the turn out proved that to be true! All the hard work and efforts of the volunteers to put this event together really paid off, as seen on the smiles of the revelers in attendance! To see our Heritage Day photo album, go to the website, and click on "Newsletter". You will probably see a familiar face or two!

OUR TOWN SPOTLIGHT THIS MONTH

The Eugene W. Huskey Environmental Center



If you have never had a 6th grader in the Sevier County School System, you may not be aware of one of Pittman Center's hidden diamonds - The Eugene W. Huskey Environmental Center. Located on a hill above, and overlooking Town Hall, on Webb Creek, the Center is home to all 1500-2000 6th grade students in the Sevier County System for two days and one night, during the school year.

Conceived in 1985, Kathy Newman had an idea for a program for local children, that would involve and enhance their awareness of the rich environment in which they lived. Soon, a small center was operating in the Rocky Flats area, with Bob Durham as its first director. The building was lost in a fire in 1986, but the programs continued as day trips to the Cosby Picnic Area.

It was the gifted vision, heartfelt passion and determined desire of Gene Huskey, that the children of our community be forever assured of knowing and learning about our mountain heritage and culture, that drove and continues to live at the Center, today. During his time as Chairman of the School Board, Mr. Huskey proposed to the Sevier County School System that they build an Environmental Center in Pittman Center, being the perfect location with its rich resources for environmental education, and right next to the National Park. With the support of Jack Parton, Superintendent of Schools, the School Board agreed to the idea, and the many hours of hard work and unwavering commitment began. Present Director, Rob Younger, recalls former mayor, Glenn Cardwell, hauling a portable saw mill up the hill, and the two of them working into the dark of the evening on many nights, making the dream come true - board by board.

With bold determination, and seemingly unceasing hours of dedicated labor, the Eugene W. Huskey Environmental Center opened its doors to its first session of 6th graders in 1995.

A typical schedule begins in the morning, with the arrival of, and orientation for the students. The day will include a hike followed by lunch and then a Ranger lesson in the Greenbrier area of the Park. After a bus ride back to the Environmental Center, it is time for hands on learning, under the direction of staff teacher Tyler Jenkins, in stream ecology, and crafts, or perhaps they will learn how to play the spoons, or washboard and sing old time mountain music taught by Ruth Barber and Keith Watson. No camping experience would be complete without the traditional campfire! On weather permitting nights, the outdoor fire pit is the all-time favorite. But, for those rainy nights, the center features a huge welcoming fireplace in the main hall, where the kids gather before their bedtime movie.

On their second morning, the students are treated to an epic bountiful breakfast, prepared by staff cook Tiffany Williams. They will again interact with programs presented by Keep Sevier Beautiful, and The American Eagle Foundation - a literal eye opener for their young, excited eyes! A favorite, and equally anticipated activity by boys and girls alike, is the archery part of the program, where the students get to learn and test their bow and arrow skills. After a hearty lunch, there is discussion, fellowship and - the ultimate topping - ice cream!

During the winter months, the Center hosts a similar day program for 4th graders, on a presently limited basis. In their day long program, they will gain an insight into life before the Park and go on an interpretive hike to an old homesite in the Park where they will learn about how people lived, and see and touch a cantilevered barn, unique only to our area.

Thanks to this invaluable program, and the vision and hard work of those who made it a reality, our students are blessed to see, touch, hear, smell, and learn about the delicate balance between themselves, and nature. Through the dedicated and devoted efforts of those who continue to teach, our present generation is learning their responsibility in preserving our natural resources for our future generations.



Fireplace in main hall, with painting depicting town as it used to be, where Center is now located.

PITTMAN CENTER ... STORY, LEGEND, TRUTH

Emert's Cove Cemetery

Emert's Cove Cemetery holds the graves of early settlers to our community as well as their descendants and many loved ones of current residents. Markers tell little of their lives beyond the years, some sadly short and others remarkable long. Revolutionary War veteran Frederick Emert was buried there in 1829. Several witnesses to the years stand among the markers: three tall eastern red cedars, a large white oak and a remarkable red mulberry over 13 feet in circumference. The age of these trees can't be determined without a cross section to count rings or a written historical document or photograph. Two hundred years is certainly possible, especially for the mulberry and cedars.



The Pittman Center Tree Board is interested in any old photographs/ letters or records that may document the trees sufficiently to nominate them for Landmark Tree status with the TN Urban Forestry Council. The mulberry tree lost much of its canopy some years ago, perhaps in a storm, and may not live on. The Tree Board plans to take a few cuttings in June to grow new saplings of the old tree to plant nearby in the cemetery.

In addition to a stately, rounded canopy form, mulberry trees provide food for wildlife and for humans -- try a mulberry-apple pie sometime. The berries are rich in nutrients, including vitamin C and iron. Maybe eating mulberries helped some of our ancestors live such long healthy lives!