

NEWS in a NUTSHELL

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF MARYVILLE



Volume 40, Number 3 | Spring Will Be Here Soon Edition

March 2020

Ralph's Game Plan

Ralph Goodson, Service and Collection Supervisor in the Finance Department, and long-time employee of the City attended William Blount High School in the late 1980's. A lover of all things sports, he played football, basketball, and ran for the track team. He graduated in 1987 and headed to Roane State that fall where he continued to play on flag football, basketball and softball teams. After two years, Ralph recognized that college was not for him and he told his Dad and Mom that he didn't want to return in the fall. Together they agreed that he didn't have to go back, but he did have to work 40 hours or more per week. Ralph had been working part-time for a couple of years by then, but that wasn't going to be enough if he wasn't a full-time student.

At the time, Bill Bryant, former Assistant Director of Public Works, attended the same church as Ralph's family, and their neighbor Steve Martin, (who recently retired from the Electric Department), were both happy to give Ralph a good recommendation for a part-time position opening soon at the City. In 1989 Ralph joined the Grounds Maintenance team, full-time, keeping the Greenway Trails in good shape, picking up trash, mowing, and weed eating throughout the city. When another job in Public Works opened up about six months later, Ralph was ready to move on. He applied for a position in the Sanitation Department. His first day on the back of a garbage truck was July 1, 1989, a hot and rainy

summer day. Ralph remembers the date because he was humbled on that very day. He no longer saw himself as the popular, carefree young man he once was in high school. Furthermore, he wasn't predestined to have an amazing future with a big house, a beautiful family, a three-car garage, and fabulous vacations either. Instead, he realized he was just like everyone else who has to work hard and make sacrifices if he wanted to get ahead. When Ralph went home that night, he did some soul searching and made up his mind that he could have all those things, but it wasn't going to be as easy as he thought it would be. It might even be difficult, but he came up with a plan that night. He would work harder than all his co-workers, do the work that no one else wanted to do, show up every day, start early and stay late. He would prove that he would be the best man for the promotion.

When a job in the Sewer Department with the Construction team opened, he began implementing his plan. This time Paul Gilley and Dave Boring, both currently Water and Sewer Utility Crew Supervisors, were his mentors. From there, Ralph became a Meter Reader in the Finance Department, walking from house to house to read 4-500 water meters a day, turning services on and off, completing disconnections, and re-connections. In 1993 another chance to advance his position with the City presented itself and again, Ralph was promoted to the Customer Service side of Finance. In his current position, Ralph is the Service and Collection Supervisor. He supervises 13 people and he handles complaints and difficult calls from customers. He works to arrange individual payment agreements, approves information prior to distribution of bills, oversees the cut-off process for non-payment accounts, approves leak adjustments and meter reading reports for



Ralph receives his five year service award from Gary Hensley

billing as well as operator adjustments. In short, Ralph's job isn't always easy, but being surrounded by the supportive, hard-working people on his staff makes it a lot less demanding.

1993 was a busy year for Ralph, shortly after his promotion, he also married his wife, Amy. (They have three children, Hogan, 26, Nena 22, and Blair, 13). With a wife and a family to support, Ralph was even more driven to be successful. Because he had participated in sports all his life, naturally he wanted his children to do so too. So for the next 18 years he was in the bleachers and along the sidelines watching as his son Hogan followed in his footsteps. When that all ended with his son's high school graduation, Ralph found himself missing the kids and the games. While his main focus was always his son at the games he had attended, he had also been watching the refs. With Hogan off to college, Ralph had lots of extra time. He decided to get back in the game. Ralph became a referee.

These days, eight years later, Ralph refs as many as 19 – 20 games per week in the evenings and on the weekends. He officiates both basketball and football games for kids ages seven and eight

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Applause Please



Retiring 3/13
Jack Bryant
EPW
26 Years of Service



Retired 2/7
Ed Lindsey
Electric
43 Years of Service



Retired 2/20
Steve Martin
Electric
44 Years of Service



New Employee
Dylan Burchfield
W&S
Utility Construction Worker I

2020 Employee Meetings

All employees are encouraged to attend one of the meetings listed below. This is a great opportunity to hear news concerning the City, ask questions of City Manager, Greg McClain, and learn about our Benefits Open Enrollment for 2020-21.



Tuesday, April 28, 2020

7:30 a.m. – Op. Center Auditorium
9:30 a.m. – Gary H. Hensley Room

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

7:30 a.m. – Op. Center Auditorium
2 p.m. – Gary H. Hensley Room

Thursday, April 30, 2020

7:30 a.m. – Op. Center Auditorium
9:30 a.m. – Gary H. Hensley Room

Bless Your Heart!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is the cause of nearly one in every four deaths. You can take steps today to lower your risk of heart disease and prevent it by:

- Eating healthy
- Being physically active
- Staying at a healthy weight
- Quitting smoking
- Drinking alcohol in moderation
- Managing stress
- Controlling your cholesterol
- Keeping track of your blood pressure

Keep track of Your Blood Pressure

Your blood pressure plays a vital role in how your heart and circulation works throughout your body. A blood pressure reading of 120/80 mmHg is considered optimal. Unfortunately, there is often no way to know whether your blood



pressure is high or low without having it checked. Getting your blood pressure checked regularly by your health care provider is important so you can take steps to control it if needed.

Manage Your Blood Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that comes from two sources: your liver and the foods derived from animals. For example, meat, poultry and full-fat dairy. There are two types of cholesterol - HDL (good) and LDL (bad). Too much of the bad kind can lead to blood clots in the arteries causing a heart attack.

Take These Steps to Reduce Cholesterol

- Eliminate trans fats
- Eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids
- Increase soluble fiber
- Reduce saturated fats
- Exercise 30 minutes a day, five times a week

Heart Attack First Aid

What do you do if you or someone else is having a heart attack?

- Call 911 or the local medical emergency number
- Don't ignore the symptoms for more than five minutes
- Chew and swallow an aspirin – unless you are allergic or have been told not to take it by your doctor
- Take nitroglycerin, if prescribed
- If the person is unconscious, start with hands-only CPR or use an AED. Doctors recommend performing chest-only compressions (about 100 to 120 compressions in a minute).

People are the Key

Thank You Notes

On January 14, Chief Crisp received the following letter.

Dear Chief Crisp,

I am the fellow who was pulled from the pond at Asbury Place on Saturday night (January 11). I was able to call 911 as the car began filling with water and the response from 911 and the police department was remarkable.

The two officers quickly jumped into the pond fully clothed and pulled me from the car. I want to express my gratitude for their response to my situation. I do not know what their names are. (Sgt. DJ Porter and Officer Nick Crawford are the two officers who helped Mr. Fischer from his car as it was sinking). If these officers incurred any non-reimbursable expenses as a result of their soaking, I would like, if possible, to help. Please let me know if I can be of such assistance.

Again, I thank your department and these two particularly for their selfless action in helping me out. Please relay my message to them.

The crash report noted that the brakes on my car went to the floorboard, confirming exactly what happened. Fortunately, no one else was in the car. Fortunately for me also that brake failure did not happen in traffic. Things could have been much more serious.

Gratefully, Gene Fischer

And an email to Dan Cantwell concerning Matt Lafon

Hi Mr. Cantwell: I wanted to take a moment and recognize the excellent performance of one your employees. Our home is on Locha Poka Dr. We had an usually large amount of stuff this month and I was concerned about how difficult it would be to manage. I was home when the truck came thru to pick up our stuff on 02/12/2020, so I was able to observe the driver/operator. I was very impressed by the time and care he took to leave our yard clean and virtually damage free. I know you have many employees but I wanted to point out the excellent job this man performed. Again, we appreciate the service you provide and the obvious pride this particular employee takes in his job.

Cutest Criminal Ever!

National Puppy Day is celebrated every year on March 23rd. It was established to raise awareness about puppy mills and to help prospective pet owners consider adoption. In honor of puppies in shelters all over the world, we're sharing the story of this cutie. Her owner was arrested for shoplifting at a Bass Pro Shop in Florida.

He went to jail and she went to a shelter to wait for her accomplice to bust her out. If he doesn't claim her after he is released, she will be ready to start a new life, hopefully free of crime, with a new family.



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through high school age teams. He prefers to ref basketball because it's a climate-controlled environment. At all school games a uniformed policeman is always present, but at the AAU games he often officiates, there is no security on hand. You wouldn't think that security would be needed at a kid's sporting event, but sometimes the crowd doesn't agree with the calls the refs make, and it can get a little unnerving if they are too vocal. Ralph claims that the moms and the grandparents in general are the most outspoken fans, but especially at AAU games. Some coaches are well known by Ralph and his fellow referees as those who are most likely to cause problems.



Ralph and his wife Amy in 1995.

After a long day of basketball games, Ralph's fitness tracker has been known to report 26,000 steps per day. With all that activity, it seems like it might not be necessary for Ralph to hit the gym, but he does. Every day at noon you can find him in the gym at the Municipal Building. He lifts weights and does High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) to stay in shape. He says he can't imagine the results on the court if he didn't go to the gym regularly. He has no injuries that plague him, other than occasional muscle strain or fatigue which is understandable, even expected.

In his work at the City, he often deals with customers who are unable to pay their bill and face a pending disconnection plus the added fees they'll need to come up with for reconnection. Over the years he has learned to empathize with the single mother of three, or the elderly retiree on a fixed income who is not only scared, but angry too. When he compares that experience with being called out by an angry basketball coach, it is clear which situation matters, and which one doesn't. Regardless, he's ever mindful of the golden rule because, he says, "it could be me that needs empathy tomorrow, you just never know."

Many years ago, after Ralph started working for the City, he realized it was going to take a lot of hard work to make his dreams come true. He drew up a game plan and stuck to it. He never lost his drive, he took on more responsibility as time went on, and even started a second job late in the game. He's made lots of friends along the way, so for now he doesn't see himself slowing down anytime soon. There'll be time for that in the fourth quarter of his life.



Don't Lose It!

It's time to check the balance in your Health or Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account. Contact Patty Cox in Human Resources @ ext. 3427. Expenses must have been incurred by December 31, 2019.

You have until March 31, 2020 to submit documentation for reimbursement.

People are the Key

March Birthdays

- 2 Jason Ayers, MPD
- 4 Edmond Greene, EPW
Jason Barham, MPD
- 5 Mike Davis, W&S
- 7 Jason Chai, EPW
- 8 Jason Cable, W&S
Ron Nugent, EPW
David England, W&S
- 10 Perla Garrett, Finance
- 11 Andrea Dickens, Finance
Doug Chapman, EPW
Mike Davis, MFD
- 12 Jewell White, MPD
- 14 Caleb Smith, MFD
Jeremy Snyder, EPW
- 15 Jacob Curtis, MPD
- 17 Garrett Holloway, MFD
- 18 Stephen Jordan, EPW
Danny Wilson, W&S
- 19 Ernie Herin, EPW
Cody Herron, W&S
- 20 Adam Cook, MPD
Mike Hicks, MPS
- 21 Bobby Queen, MFD
Jane Ellis, Finance
- 22 Rickie Trentham, W&S
- 23 Ronnie Irwin, EPW
- 24 Matthew McKeel, MPD
Robert Woods, MFD
- 27 Tyler Buckingham, MPD
Andrew Payne, MPD
Heath Hampton, W&S
- 28 Kim Walker, Finance
Jack Bryant, EPW
- 29 Michael Hall, W&S
- 31 David Graves, MPD
Ray Boswell, Admin.



March Anniversaries

- Doug Strickland, EPW 37 years
- Danny Kimsey, W&S 36 years
- Joey Hartline, W&S 35 years
- Scott Poland, Dev. Services 35 years
- Mark Wheeler, Electric 34 years
- Mike Seagle, Electric 33 years
- Eric Holder, W&S 30 years
- James Bond, Electric 26 years
- Brad Poplin, Electric 24 years
- Marcus Walker, MPD 22 years
- Kevin Whitehead, EPW 21 years
- Wendy Phillips, W&S 20 years
- Keith Anderson, W&S 19 years
- Sam Newport, Electric 18 years
- Shawn Ridings, EPW 16 years
- Robert Anderson, Electric 6 years
- Jordan Marshall, EPW 5 years
- Michael Wilson, Electric 4 years
- Matthew Watson, MPD 3 years
- Bradlee Myers, EPW 2 years
- Jason Russell, W&S 2 years
- Thorn Cooper, W&S 1 year
- Cody Teffeteller, W&S 1 year
- Aaron Inman, EPW 1 year



Maryville Rebel Football Honored

On February 4 the City Council took a moment to honor Derek Hunt and his team for not only their 17th State Championship, but also for their work off the field. Mayor Tom Taylor presented Coach Hunt with a framed Proclamation declaring February 4, 2020 as Rebel Championship Football Day.



Daylight Savings Time Reminder

Don't forget to move your clocks one hour ahead on Sunday, March 8 and check the battery in your smoke detectors.

Originally enacted in the United States as a wartime conservation effort, observance of DST became federal law in 1918. It was repealed after World War I ended and observed nationally again during WWII. In 1966 some Americans were observing DST through local laws that varied from state to state. Congress ended the confusion with the Uniform Time Act in 1966. DST then began on the last Sunday of April and ended on the last Sunday of October. In 2005, the Energy Policy Act established that DST begins each year on the second Sunday in March at 2 a.m. and ends on the first Sunday in November.