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Travis McKinney named Rookie of the Year

It's true that everybody loves a rookie. They are usually young, energetic and have spent years coaching and training for their big moment to shine.

Well that is the case for local entrepreneur and Real Estate Agent Travis McKinney of Keller Williams Realty. This 33-year-old energetic real estate professional was recently named the Keller Williams Realty International Rookie of the Year given to the agent with the most production in their first year. This accomplishment came as a huge honor for Travis

as he put his expertise as an investor and appraiser to use and decided to help others buy, sell and invest in real estate. This led to over \$12 million in first year sales, an accomplishment only a select few agents do after years of experience.

Travis is no stranger to real estate. He has spent the last eight years as a real estate investor and his company T&T Real Estate Investments has rejuvenated over 100 homes in East Tennessee. They continue to rejuvenate Knoxville and increase values all across

East TN neighborhoods. Travis is also a state certified appraiser and has been licensed for eight years completing hundreds of appraisals for lenders.

"When I was told I had won this award I had no clue what it really meant," McKinney recalls. "Once I arrived in Anaheim, California for the annual conference and there were thousands of agents and industry experts it all hit me. I am very honored and humbled to have won this award. This is not just my award. None of this would have been possible

without the support of my lovely wife and best friend Emily McKinney and business partner Tanner Davis. I look forward to a very big 2018 and helping people and families all over East TN and the US fulfill their real estate dreams.

"We want our clients at the center of our attention and service. It is all about serving them - Helping them find the perfect home for them or getting them top dollar for their house quickly. We always want to be reminded that they are why our heart is in it."



Travis McKinney

Wetlands being planted at Fountain City Lake

Last week, contractor crews began planting two wetlands at Fountain City Lake - one of the last steps in the City's ongoing commitment to improve the lake's water quality.

Once the plantings are completed, the spring-fed lake will refill and saturate the new beds. The fast-growing plants - including cardinal flower, blue flag iris, button bush, soft rush and wintergreen - should fill out the new wetlands beds by this summer.

For years, thick algae has overwhelmed the lake. The City's aim has been to repair the lake's infrastructure so that the ecosystem can regain its long-term balance.

"Restoring Fountain City Lake to better health and beauty has required persistent effort and a lot of patience," Mayor Madeline Rogero said. "But we knew from the beginning it would take time to correct problems that were decades in the making."

David McGinley, Stormwater Engineering Manager, said the new wetlands plants will be attractive, but their main purposes will be to enhance the lake's water

quality and discourage algae growth. The wetlands do that two ways.

1. There's now better water circulation in the lake, because the most shallow, stagnant areas - conducive to the formation of thick algae - have been converted into the wetlands wildlife habitat, and,

2. The wetlands plants absorb nutrients that otherwise would promote the growth of algae.

"These wetlands plantings were selected because they'll do well and require little maintenance," McGinley said. "They'll grow to between 2 and 4 feet tall. These will be controlled wetlands - not jungle, but not manicured."

Late last fall, the wetlands contractor, Ronald Franks Construction Co., finished building the gabion baskets, which were then filled with more stones and soil. The contractor also removed more muck (contributed to by the feces of overabundant ducks) from the lake's bottom. Once the plant material became available, subcontractor Landscape Services Inc. in late February initiated the plantings.



State Senator Becky Duncan Massey and Knox County School Board Vice Chair Amber Rountree join the news staff during the ribbon cutting of the new library at South-Doyle High School.

21st century library dedicated at South-Doyle High

By Mike Steely
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South-Doyle High School has a new library that will be the envy of every other school in Knox County. The new facility, complete with a coffee and snack shop, movable furniture to fit any function, a media studio and, of course, books, was officially opened Friday in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Two years ago asbestos was discovered in the library. Several people thinking "outside the box" came up with a unique library suited for the 21st century. Involved with planning the new library were Buzz Thomas, then

Interim Superintendent of Schools, Superintendent Bob Thomas, school board member Amber Rountree, and Principal Tim Berry.

The plans were presented to Senator Randy Boyd, a graduate of the old Doyle High School who has helped the school out before with the Career Academy and the Boyd Tutoring Center there.

Boyd and wife Jenny agreed to finance the new library and told the gathering of public officials, teachers and students that the library "exceeded my expectations." He said that when he was in high school the library

was his "hangout" and added "Jenny and I are proud to be a part of it."

Berry said the plan began by asking students what they wanted. He said the planners also went to the Apple Store in the mall to get ideas. He said that led to the amount of glass portions in the new library and they added a café there, ran by students, much like a Starbucks or Panera. A media room was added where students now broadcast good news items to the classrooms.

"We wanted to make a 21st century library that will be the hub of the school," Berry said.

County commission moves to control subdivision regulations

By Mike Steely
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In a 10-1 vote the Knox County Commission voted to support a state legislative proposal to return much of the Metropolitan Planning Commission's powers to the county. Only Commissioner John Schoonmaker voted against the resolution.

The legislation would require county commission approval for the

adoption of subdivision regulations or to amend existing subdivision regulations recommended by the Metropolitan Planning Commission. The idea surfaced last year when Gerald Green, MPC director, notified the commissioners that, under state law, the planners can establish regulations for new developments that could include sidewalks when the development is within a school zone or the main street has sidewalks.

Jack Woodall of Westland Drive spoke against developments being designed by a vote of the commission rather than by the MPC. Woodall said that some developers were upset and lobbied the state legislature.

The issue of sidewalks, Woodall said, "is not a reason to stick a hand in the middle of subdivision regulations."

"School buses don't normally

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Jack Woodall speaks to the Knox County Commission in opposition to a resolution calling on the state legislature to give the commission more power over the planning commission and subdivision regulations involving sidewalks.

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