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BOB THOMAS
Knox County Mayor
Paid for by Bob Thomas for Mayor Campaign, Mike Pace Treasurer

Celebrate Earth Day Saturday at EarthFest

Rain or shine, the 19th annual EarthFest will be held on Saturday, April 28 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum, 2743 Wimpole Ave. This year's theme is Make Your Mark featuring the local "makers community" and, as always, it's a free, zero-waste event for the whole family.

During the event, attendees can learn about sustainable living while enjoying environmental exhibits and attractions, an interactive education expedition, keynote speakers, and a youth area with free activities for kids of all ages.

EarthFest is excited to celebrate Earth Day at the same venue as last year, the Knoxville Botanical Gardens, which offers plenty of green space, views of the mountains and access to public transportation.

Onsite events and activities include:

- Keynote Speakers whose topics include Microplastics, Bats, Energy, and Plants
- Exhibits hosted by local environmentally-friendly businesses, organizations and non-profits, many with live demonstrations

For a detailed list of activities, sponsors, parking info, scavenger hunt prizes and more visit www.knox-earthfest.org.

Cruisin' for Tom Spangler

Candidate for Sheriff Tom Spangler had the wedding of his daughter to attend two Saturdays ago but it didn't curb the enthusiasm of his supporters. They created a "Cruise" down Kingston Pike from Northshore to Farragut showing their support for Spangler. Left: Tiffaney Lawson, Sheila Palmer and Tricia Roberts put the finishing touches on a VW Camper. Top right: Jim and Tanya Smith decorate their Corvette preparing for the "Cruise for Spangler" down Kingston Pike. Right center: The group is ready to go cruisin'. Bottom right: The VW Camper led the way during a recent "Cruise for Spangler" down Kingston Pike. Photos by Mike Steely.

Old Supreme Court Hotel taking shape

By Mike Steely
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Developer Rick Dover and his partner, Charles Carlyle of Boston Development, shared their tentative plans for the redevelopment of Knoxville's former State Supreme Court building with city council members Thursday afternoon.

Empty for years the complex takes up a block of downtown between Henley, Cumberland, Locust and Church Streets, opposite the Knoxville Convention Center. Deputy Mayor Bill Lyons spoke to the council's special work session about the project last Thursday.

Lyons detailed the building's history beginning in 2006 when the state agreed to work with the city for the municipality to acquire the building. He said two previous proposals fell through for development before the city finally acquired it in 2015. Last year

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Councilman Finbarr Saunders, Deputy Mayor Bill Lyons and Developer Rick Dover chat during the preview plans for the former Tennessee Supreme Court Building during a special City Council Thursday.

Twin Creek Road neighbors want the road open

By Mike Steely
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Plans to close Twin Creek Road in South Knoxville may be changing following the pleas by local residents. The narrow road cuts between Martin Mill Road and Governor John Sevier Highway but is the site of a massive illegal trash dump.

The Knox County Commission, prompted by 9th District Commissioner Carson Dailey, has been talking about the dump and the road. Tonight the matter comes up again. Dailey, in last week's work session, at first moved to close the road permanently and then changed his motion to discuss it without a recommendation.

Rev. Jerry Harris, pastor of Harris Chapel Baptist Church, asked the commissioners to only close the road long enough to clean up the hillside dump. He said that if closed it would put the historic rural church at the "end of a dead end road" and in jeopardy of vandalism. He also pointed to emergency services, like ambulances, being able to quickly access the homes there.

"It's an old wagon road, one of the oldest in Knox County," Harris said, adding, "We just want the dump cleaned up."

Juanita Bright told the commissioners that the neighbors there were surprised when the matter came up and included a permanent closure of Twin Creek Road.

"People in the area depend on the road," she said.

"You don't live out there, we do. We want it back open," she said.

Until the dump is cleaned up a temporary barrier has been placed on the road just above the church. If closed the county would install an earthen wall and stop maintaining the route.

PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Rev. Jerry Harris pleads with the Knox County Commissioners to clean up the Twin Creek Road but then open the road for local use.

Commissioner Evelyn Gill noted that 19 residents have signed a petition to reopen the road after the

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Summit Hill bus stop, Fort Dickerson and mayor portraits

By Mike Steely
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Handicapped and elderly residents of Summit Hill Towers may actually be getting something promised two years ago. The Knoxville City Council is being asked Tuesday to authorize $213,828 in a contract with Design and Construction Services, Inc. to build the Summit Hill Transit Stop Project.

The Towers residents had been accustomed to trolley service every 15 minutes but that was cut to once an hour in 2016. A stop was promised at the bottom of the hill below the apartment complex and, finally, it looks like the project is happening. It includes a new sidewalk as well as a sheltered stop.

The council may also discuss a gift from Asian Foundation to contribute matching funds of $330,000 toward construction of Augusta Avenue entrance to Fort Dickerson Park. The historic Civil War fort, just off Chapman Highway, could

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Focus reporter Pete Gaeda has written a book about people, politics and life in the small town of Okeechobee, Florida, where he worked for the local newspaper. The author tells "the rest of the story" and gives his opinion on many memorable events he reported on and photographed for the Okeechobee News.

The book costs $15 and information about purchasing it can be obtained by emailing pjgaeda@yahoo.com or calling (863)776-3413.

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