

Anne Crais is Good Neighbor of the Year



Anne Crais of Wesley Neighborhood is the Knoxville "Good Neighbor of the Year" and was honored during a recognition dinner Thursday. Photo courtesy of Debbie Sharp.

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Drena Conn Good Neighbor of the Year for 2020 is Anne Crais, secretary of Wesley Neighborhood Community Association. The announcement was made during an Office of Neighborhoods Recognition Dinner Thursday. Normally the honors are presented in the city's annual Neighborhood Conference

which was cancelled this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Three other neighborhood leaders were in the running for the honors including Kevin Jeske-Polyak of Southside Waterfront, Jeff Johnson of Fourth and Gill, and Beata Prater of the Five Points Complex. Crais was chosen for her efforts to keep her neighbors informed, helping

those in need, picking up trash during walks, setting up the annual National Night Out, volunteering at West Hills Elementary School, and establishing a little free library. Mayor Indya Kincannon presented the honors and other speakers included Neighborhood Coordinator Debbie Sharp, Eden Slater, Charles Lomax, and Bailey Walker. Neighborhood Achievement Awards went

to Forest Heights, Historic Sutherland Heights, Oakwood Lincoln Park, South Woodawn, Wesley Neighbors and West Hills. Officer Eric Parks, who was named Police Liaison Officer the year last fall, was again recognized for his service. The event was held at the site of the former St. Mary's/Tennova Hospital just off Broadway.

Volunteer-Driven Program in Need of Volunteer Drivers

The Volunteer Assisted Transportation program, part of Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee, is seeking volunteer drivers to assist seniors and people with disabilities. Volunteers are needed for weekdays, evenings and weekends. Drivers must be 21 years of age and have at least three years of driving experience. Flexible scheduling is available so all volunteers can provide safe, accessible transportation services in organization-owned vehicles. Volunteers are very important

as they stay with riders and provide assistance at appointments, grocery shopping and other errands as well as ensuring riders make it safely to their destinations safely. Training is provided at no cost to the volunteer which includes: First Aid and CPR certifications, vehicle orientation (Toyota Prius, Ford Fusions, Wheelchair Accessible Mini-vans), and Passenger Assistance Training. Contact Nancy Welch at (865)673-5001 or nancy.welch@kactrans.org for more information on the program.

Knox County sees heavier voting than usual



By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

"We've had 14,088 early voters through the first six days of EV so that probably puts us on pace for 35,000 to 42,000. It has been a much higher turnout than expected for an August election," Chris Davis, Knox County Election Administrator, told The Focus Friday morning. "With bad weather and storms having been an issue on four of the last five Election Days in Knox County, I hope Knox residents are utilizing Early Voting and voting on their schedule while avoiding longlines on Election Day," he said. "The transition to paper ballots has been smooth so far. Most voters seem to like voting on paper. All of the Early Voting sites are reporting mostly positive comments about the ease of voting on paper," Davis said. Absentee voting so far totaled 3,701 as of Thursday. That's up from about 1,350 four years ago during the last August balloting in 2018. Early voting continues through August 1st with the General Election set for Thursday, August 6.

Tommy Bounds, husband of Patti Lou Bounds who is a candidate for state legislature, sits outside the New Harvest Market early voting precinct.

Board of Health says 'Stay the Course'

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

As COVID-19 cases continue to surge and the number of deaths climbing the Knox County Board of Health is continuing to promote its five core mandates of wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands, staying home if sick and cleaning surfaces. The mask mandate is for all public and private buildings and the board is also planning to issue a Letter of Support for the health director's work with the Knox County Schools. While Director Dr. Martha Buchanan and the board have no authority over schools, which fall under state control, Dr. Patrick O'Brien offered multiple suggestions

for COVID-19 controls in schools during the board of health's "special" weekly meeting Wednesday. As O'Brien was reading his many recommendations, Dr. Buchanan said her department is already working with the school system and didn't need the separate guidelines. The board then decided to issue a letter of support for Buchanan's efforts to advise the school system. Buchanan said she meets with the school system weekly. Parents had been given a choice by the administration and school board for students to attend in person or school online. Buchanan reported a sharp increase over

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A tour of Old Broadway's coming sidewalks



By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

In about a year or less residents of Fountain City and Inskip will be able to walk or bike all the way from the north end of Old Broadway to Mineral Springs by way of a new sidewalk project. Eventually that new sidewalk will link up with the First Creek Greenway which means you could walk all the way

downstream and back. Old Broadway has been a convenient shortcut for many local residents bypassing the busy north and south traffic along Broadway. Currently anyone walking or biking the street has few sidewalks along the brief route. Old Broadway was torn-lane a few years ago and except for traffic lights at Dutchman Road and the

Civil Engineer Shawn Fitzpatrick tells Director Harold Cannon, Jr., and Councilman Charles Thomas of plans for the Old Broadway Sidewalk Project.

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