

NEWS

Free Entrance Saturday, April 16, at Point Park, on Lookout Mountain, in Celebration of National Park Week.

Fort Oglethorpe, GA: Point Park, atop Lookout Mountain, part of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, is waiving the entrance fee on Saturday, April 16, 2022, to celebrate the first day of National Park Week. National Park Week is a presidential proclamation that provides the public a time to explore and discover the natural and cultural histories of our nation’s valued treasures. From Saturday, April 16 to Sunday, April 24, national parks throughout the country will provide special programs, events, and digital experiences. There are 423 units in the National Park System. Take this week to discover a national park, im-

merse yourself in the resource, and find where your personal story lies within it. Visit Point Park on this fee free day to indulge in the views and scenery of the Chattanooga Valley from 2,100 feet above, hike the natural and wild-life-abounding Lookout Mountain Battlefield’s 30-miles of trails, while learning the historical significance of this area during America’s Civil War in what became known as “The Battle Above the Clouds.” During the day, park rangers will provide programs at 11am and 2pm and will also be available at the Lookout Mountain Battlefield Visitor Center from the hours of 8:30 am to 5 pm to

answer questions and provide information about the park and the Battles for Chattanooga. For more information about programs Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, contact the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center at 706-866-9241, the Lookout Mountain Battlefield Visitor Center at 423-821-7786, or visit the park website at www.nps.gov/chch



Historic image of the gates of Point Park, which were constructed in 1904 and modeled after the US Army Corps of Engineers Insignia. | Image from Library of Congress

Experts: County-Level Disparities in TN Child Incarceration

By Nadia Ramlagan Children living in certain counties in Tennessee are more likely to be arrested and jailed, and experts contended they are not seeing signs the state is serious about taking steps to reduce the number of children behind bars. Josh Spickler, executive director of JustCity Memphis, said there is a lack of data, consistency and accountability at the state level when it comes to the issue. He argued the laissez-faire approach of lawmakers leaves Tennessee’s juvenile court judges with wide discretion. Spickler pointed to Judge Donna Scott Davenport in Rutherford County, who announced her retirement after investigative reporting shed light on the shocking numbers of children jailed and arrested under her jurisdiction. “It’s what gives a person like that, a judge like that, an opening,” Spickler emphasized. “It’s what gives a judge like Dan Micheal in Memphis an opening to transfer more children, almost all of them Black, than all other juvenile court jurisdictions in the state.” According to a report from the Sentencing Project, grasping the true numbers of children behind bars is difficult because youth incarceration is typically

measured via a one-day count which takes place once a year. The report’s authors estimated at least 80% of incarcerated youths are excluded using this metric. Spickler added it is not only up to lawmakers to come up with healthier solutions to keep kids out of the criminal-justice system. “Our communities can make a difference by putting people in power who reflect their values,” Spickler observed. “And I just don’t think we’ve done that either very well. But when it happens, like it has in Nashville, you see a difference.” He added the problem goes beyond detention facilities, handcuffs and police. “It’s about, how does a child move from the cradle into adulthood with the opportunity that he or she deserves,” Spickler contended. According to the report, Black and brown youths encounter police more often than their white peers and are disproportionately arrested. Racial disparities, particularly between Black and white children, widen with each point of contact with the justice system.

Pinnacle Commits \$5 million to Brightbridge Inc

Funds will support small businesses, affordable housing and development throughout region CHATTANOOGA, TN, April 12, 2022 – Pinnacle Financial Partners is presenting \$5 million to BrightBridge, Inc. a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) to support economic outcomes throughout southeast Tennessee and Georgia. BrightBridge, Inc. intends to deploy the funds over the next nine months through lending and advisory services to small business and startups. Funding will be provided through market rate or below market rate loans. BrightBridge will use the funds to lend to small businesses and non-profit organizations located in Investment Areas (economically underserved communities) in Tennessee and Georgia. The loans will be made to companies unable to secure conventional financing and can be used to start and/or grow their operations, create jobs or to provide affordable housing stock. The typical use for this type of funding is for nonprofits that provide affordable housing or necessary goods and services for low-to-moderate income individuals, small businesses in need of affordable debt and for-profit housing developers providing affordable housing. “Partnership is one of Pinnacle’s values, and we know it’s what helps grow and strengthen communities,” said Craig Holley, Pinnacle’s chairman in Chattanooga. “As a CDFI, BrightBridge is well equipped to grow economic outcomes and improve the quality of life throughout our region. We’re grateful for the opportunity to contribute in some small way so we can build a more inclusive economy where everyone has a chance to take part.” Bill Pollard from BrightBridge noted, “The funding provided by Pinnacle will be transformational for small businesses and entrepreneurs throughout Tennessee and Georgia. We take great pride in the success stories of our clients and the impact their success has on our shared economy. We are honored to accept this investment and look forward to putting the dollars to work.”

Tennessee Highway Safety Office Launches “Slow Down Tennessee” on April 15



TENNESSEE – On Friday, April 15, the Tennessee Highway Safety Office (THSO) will join public safety partners statewide to launch Slow Down Tennessee. From April 15 – 29, participating agencies will help increase awareness and enforcement to reduce speeding-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities across Tennessee. “The purpose of the ‘Slow Down Tennessee’ campaign is to address a variety of speed-related issues,” said Director Buddy Lewis of the THSO. “All we ask of the motoring public is to be considerate of other roadway users and obey the traffic laws, so everyone can make it home safely.” According to Tennessee’s Integrated Traffic Analysis Network (TITAN), from 2020 to 2022, there were over 28,000 traffic crashes in Tennessee related to speeding, racing, reckless driving, or aggressive driving. Click here to view TITAN’s crash data dashboard. This campaign includes funding provided by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), Ford Driving Skills for Life, and AAA – The Auto Club Group. These funds were used to help the THSO’s Reduce TN Crashes program create signage for teens and public citizens to display at high schools and throughout local neighborhoods. “Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, and speeding is often a significant factor,” said Executive Director Jonathan Adkins of the GHSA. “We must remain steadfast in our commitment to combat traffic fatalities and equip teens with the skills they need to be safe drivers.” Teens can request Slow Down mascot signs here: www.reducetnrcrashes.org/activities/slow-down-signs-your-school. Citizens can request Slow Down Tennessee

yard signs by visiting a nearby AAA office. Visit this link to find a local AAA office: www.AAA.com/locations. The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development will display these yard signs at welcome centers statewide to remind visitors and travelers to slow down. The Tennessee Department of Transportation will utilize the digital highway message boards to relay the same message. “Our traffic safety research consistently reveals a strong ‘do as I say, not as I do’ attitude towards risky driving behaviors – including speeding,” said Tennessee Public Affairs Director Stephanie Milani of AAA – The Auto Club Group. “Drivers know speeding is dangerous, yet they continue to do it. We’re encouraging Tennesseans to stop by their local AAA office to pick up yard signage to display in their local neighborhoods to serve as a reminder for passing motorists to slow down and drive safely.” The public is encouraged to participate on social media by using #SlowDownTN to help spread awareness. The Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) and local law enforcement statewide will increase saturation patrols, conduct high visibility enforcement, and utilize other tactics to curb speeding drivers. “The THP is combatting a drastic escalation in speeding that has led directly to an increase in traffic fatalities,” said Colonel Matt Perry of the THP. “We are asking all drivers to join us in slowing down Tennessee. If you witness dangerous driving behavior, dial *THP (*847) to alert the nearest THP District Headquarters to respond.” For more information and supporting materials, please visit www.tntrafficsafety.org/speeding.

Non-profit Organizations in Hamilton County Can Apply Now for Tennessee Arts Commission’s Arts Build Communities (ABC) Grant

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. – ArtsBuild is pleased to invite Hamilton County non-profit organizations to apply for the Tennessee Arts Commission’s Arts Build Communities (ABC) grants of up to \$3,500 for arts projects that broaden access to arts experiences, address community quality of life issues through the arts, or enhance sustainability of asset-based cultural enterprises. ArtsBuild administers the ABC grants in Hamilton County. Organizations must complete the grant application by 11:59 p.m. on July 1, 2022. Stefanie Haire (Southeast TN Development District) and Melissa Astin (ArtsBuild) will host an information session on Zoom on Thursday, April 21 at 11:00 a.m. about the grant program. Please register for the Zoom meeting

in advance. For more details about the application and guidelines for the ABC grant program, visit the Tennessee Arts Commission’s website at <https://tnarts-commission.org/grants/arts-build-communities-grant/>. For questions or access to the Zoom meeting registration link, contact Melissa Astin, Manager of Grants & Community Engagement, (423) 777-4214, melissa@artsbuild.com. Last year, eight nonprofit organizations in Hamilton County were funded, including Art 120, Scenic City Clay Arts, CoPAC, The Chatterry, Chattanooga High School Center for Creative Arts, East Ridge Creative Arts, Stove Works, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Regional Transportation Plan Open House Public Notice

The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is updating the regional plan for transportation investments over the next 25+ years. Attend a meeting to learn about project proposals and share your input!

In-Person Open House
April 27 from 3:30PM-6PM
Development Resource Center
1250 Market St, Chattanooga TN 37402

Virtual Open House
April 25 - May 6
At your own pace
Find the link at: <https://2050rtp-chcrpa.hub.arcgis.com/>

Zoom Public Meetings
April 25 7-8PM
April 28 2-3PM
Register at: <https://2050rtp-chcrpa.hub.arcgis.com/>

Contact Us
rtp@chattanooga.gov
423-643-5944

The TPO is managed and staffed by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA).