



Metro Codes

E—News For Neighborhoods

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County

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Property Standards Inspectors Receive Air Cards

Real-time access to RFS Database a reality

Six years ago Metro Codes Property Standards Inspectors made the switch from Polaroid photos to document violations to digital photographs. The immediate impact was a cost savings of several hundred dollars each month on Polaroid film. Digital photography also allowed the inspectors to be

able to share their pictures via email, they could be easily archived and the pictures could be printed in color or black and white in any size necessity.

The next major technological step in terms of hardware was the acquisition of Tablet PC's. These mobile devices would give our inspectors the ability to access and post the KIVA Request For Service (RFS) tracking system in the field, greatly improving our production. Unfortunately, while the wireless module of the KIVA system worked well for trade inspectors in the Building division, it was not sufficient to meet the demands of the Property Standards division.

Two solutions were readily available. Tethering the laptop to a broadband enabled cell phone or direct access using a dedicated broadband device. Both options provided the speed and ease of use we were looking for, but the tethering option meant the inspector was out of direct communication when the cell phone was being used as a modem. In the end, Metro went with the dedicated "air card" broadband device.

Now our inspectors can truly work in-



dependent of the office. They can post their results to the RFS database real-time. They can also query the system to check permits, case history, and email, all from the field, without the need to locate a WiFi hotspot. The air cards allow our inspectors to enter Metro's network and offer the same security and functionality as they have when they are connected to the network by wire in the office. Metro has adopted an automated voicemail system, and this system is available to the inspector in the field as well.

Another advantage of the air card is that it allows for our inspectors to post their court results the day of court. Before, they would have to wait until the day after court to post their results and create their orders. Posting court results was consuming a significant portion of the morning following court.

All of these improvements in technology have resulted in cost and time savings for the department. They enable our inspectors to be more proactive and help them spend more time in the field conducting inspections, rather than being tied to the office.

Inspectors Electronic Toolkit

Inspectors with the Property Standards and Building divisions of Codes have transitioned from a paper-based information management system to one that is fully automated. They are now equipped with tablet-PC's, GPS mapping and routing devices, digital cameras, and portable printers.



Improvements in Technology have provided the codes department inspection staff with a number of advantages:

- Air Cards give Property Standards (PS) inspectors real-time live access to the KIVA RFS database. They can initiate new requests on-site or post the results of inspections on-site.
- PS inspectors can also now check permits and other historical data on properties in real-time.
- The conversion from "Polaroid" photos to digital photos allow for much better documentation of violations and it provides a medium that can be shared electronically, without the need to print hard copies.
- All inspectors carry a NEXTEL push-to-talk enabled cell phone. This allows secure, point-to-point communications in the field and allows the inspector to communicate with citizens to better coordinate their inspection activities in the field.
- Trades inspectors in the Building division can provide contractors with an itemized list on-site of any deficiencies noted in their inspections. Instead of hand writing an inspection tag, the inspectors can use their portable printer to print the tag in real-time. And an email is also sent to the contractor to alert them that the inspection has been made.
- Tablet PC's offer GPS capability that improves our ability to accurately locate violations. This feature will also be used for inspector routing within their assigned territories.



One of the Sprint Mobile Broadband Express Wireless network cards now in use by Metro Codes Property Standards Inspectors.

National Night Out Against Crime Celebration A Success Nashville Communities Celebrate 15th Year In National Observance

Thousands of Nashvillians filled the streets on for our community's annual observance of National Night Out Against Crime (NNOAC) on August 4.

According to event organizers, Nashville again proved that neighbors are solidly in support of each other and their neighborhood when it comes to crime and public safety.

"It was a spectacular night for all of us," Billy Fields, special assistant to the Director of Codes and Building Safety, said. "As always it was hot, but it didn't keep folks inside. They were out all over town together celebrating."



Bill Penn, Assistant Director in Codes assists a young lady with her building project at the Lowes Kids booth at the Dickerson Road Merchants Association's Night Out Against Crime celebration at Schwab Elementary

Fields, who serves as event co-chair, said more than 50 events were held involving an estimated 75 neighborhood and community organizations.

NNOAC has been extraordinarily successful in promoting involvement in crime and drug prevention activities, strengthening police-community relations, and encouraging neighborhood camaraderie as part of the fight for safer streets. Since 1984, "National Night Out - America's Night Out Against Crime" has grown to involve over 30 million people from more than 9,000 communities.



Billy Fields, Special Assistant to the Director of Codes, addresses the Glengary Neighborhood Association at their Night Out Against Crime celebration that featured a pot-luck dinner.

Nashville Public Television Receives National Award from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting



Nashville Public Television (NPT) has received a *My Source* Community Impact Award for Engagement from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) for the station's *Next Door Neighbors* project.

The *My Source* Community Impact Awards for Engagement were created by CPB to give well-deserved recognition to public television and radio stations for their commitment and responsiveness to their communities, providing innovative services- on-air, online and on the ground with measurable results and benefits for the community.

NPT's *Next Door Neighbors* highlights Nashville's status as a destination city for immigrants and refugees who have made the city their home over the last ten years. Through a series of four documentaries, a project website, community forums, screenings and literacy outreach, NPT seeks to provide Middle Tennesseans with a wide-ranging view of the region's rapidly growing foreign-born communities including Kurdish, Somali, Hispanic and up-coming, Bhutanese, immigrants.

The first documentary, "Little Kurdistan, USA," profiling Nashville's Kurdish community won a Mid-South Regional Emmy for Best Cultural Documentary. At

the Next Door Neighbors website (<http://wnpt.org/productions/nextdoorneighbors/>) all documentaries are available for viewing along with expanded video content and an online discussion forum.

"Now more than ever, communities are relying on local public broadcasting stations for information they can trust, for connection to community that matters and for a safe place where children can learn," said **Pat Harrison**, president and CEO of CPB. **Nashville Public Television** (NPT) has received a *My Source* Community Impact Award for Engagement from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) for the station's *Next Door Neighbors* project.

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Energy efficiency efforts on display at MDHA's "green reopening"

A New geothermal heating and cooling system was just one of the energy-efficient innovations on display when the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency hosted a "green reopening" at Parkway Terrace Apartments on Thursday, July 23.

As residents move into Parkway Terrace, the most significant improvement is one that's not even visible. The geothermal energy system, the first of its kind in Tennessee community-owned housing, utilizes the ground as a thermal energy source to generate heating and cooling. A consistent temperature is maintained inside the apartments, allowing the electrical system in place to operate more efficiently to heat and cool the units. It's estimated the geothermal system will reduce heating and water heating costs by 70 percent, and cooling costs by 30 percent.

"MDHA's property management group has systematically pursued energy and water conservation since 1997," said MDHA



Attending the grand opening are, from left to right, Phil Ryan, Director of MDHA, and Ann Davis with her husband, Mayor Karl Dean.

Executive Director Phil Ryan. "We are now taking it to a new level with geothermal, solar, VRV, lighting and water conservation technologies. Our customers save money and it's good for our beautiful Middle Tennessee."

MDHA is implementing energy-saving strategies system-wide, with a particular emphasis on its high-rise properties for the elderly and disabled. Water conservation measures, including new fixtures, commodes, shower heads, faucets and aerators, are expected to result in 50 percent less consumption. Heating and cooling upgrades in the high rises European-style variable refrigerant volume (VRV) heat pump systems that utilize outside air to control indoor temperature. Photo-voltaic solar panels will be installed on two high rises, ultimately generating 160,000-200,000 kilowatt hours of energy annually — enough to power 12 or 13 typical households in a year.

Property Standards Production Report July 2009

New RFS Cases Received **1,210**

RFS Cases Closed in July **280**

Why We Train

Codes Safety Inspectors Receive Training Update on Accessibility Standards

Tennessee requires that all codes inspectors and plans examiners, employed in the state, be tested and certified to demonstrate their knowledge of and proficiency in the building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical and fire prevention codes. Through this testing and certification, codes personnel also qualify for inspector licensing by the State Fire Marshal's Office.

The reason for the testing, certification and licensing requirements is to establish a uniform minimum requirement designed to increase the level of competency and reliability for code enforcement personnel who are protecting the public safety, health, and welfare. Codes inspectors are required to be certified in specific area they are employed.

In addition, they are also required to attend a minimum number of continuing education classes each year in order to maintain their certifications and licenses.

Director of Codes, Terry Cobb, said "training is a part of the everyday life for employees of the Department of Codes & Building Safety and is a critical part of service delivery to our citizens and customers". According to Cobb, Metro Codes Inspectors are required to have more certifications and are provided more continuing education hours than the state-required minimums. "In order to provide a quality service, we have to train regularly and at a high level," said Cobb.

Cobb said that the certifications, in his opinion, are simply, "banners of credibility", adding that "through training, testing and certification, the department achieves independent verification of the proficiency of its personnel. This independent verification proves what we believe to be true...we have a very knowledgeable and professional staff working for the citizens of this community."



Terry Cobb, Director of Codes, addresses the inspection staff at their most recent training session covering the International Building Code's accessibility requirements and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A117.1 standards.

Most recently, Metro Codes Department inspectors spent time training on the International Building Code's accessibility requirements and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A117.1 Standard on Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities as well as related federal laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

Good Fences Make Good Neighbors

Fences serve a wide variety of functions. They can offer protection of our property or they can add a distinctive decorative element to the landscape. What ever your reason for having a fence, there are a few things that one needs to keep in mind.

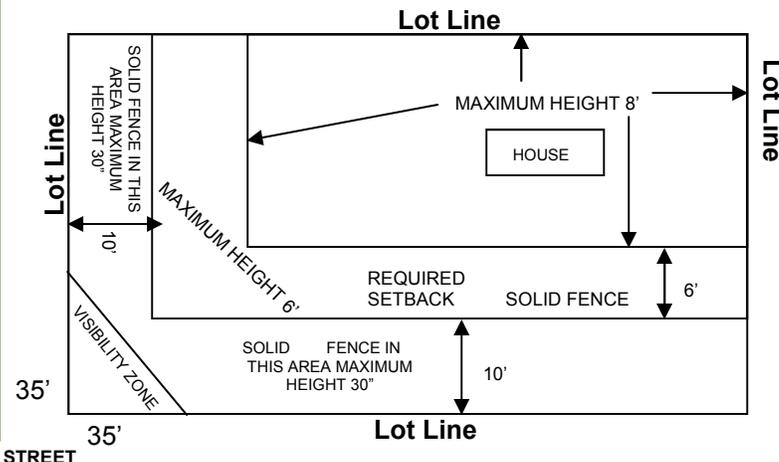
Fencing falls under section 16.24.330(L) of the Property Standards Code. Fences are considered an “accessory” structure and must be maintained and installed according to the manufacturers specifications. Only material designed to be used in fence construction can be used. Pallets, loose boards, barrels, rubble or debris cannot be used to create a fence. Approved materials include:

- Woven wire or chain link
- Wrought iron
- Wood, vinyl, steel, or aluminum slats of no more than one inch by six inches in width hung vertically, horizontally, or diagonally between steel, wood, or vinyl posts no further than ten feet apart.
- Masonry consisting of brick, concrete block, spit-face block, dry-stack stones, or stones and mortar
- Plastic or other synthetic material treated in a manner with an appearance that is aesthetically compatible with the type of fence it represents
- Decorative-type spit rail or dry-stack stone may be used for decorative fences.

Metal fences shall consist of materials manufactured and / or treated in a manner to prevent rust or corrosion. Wood fences shall be painted, stained or preserved in a manner to maintain the fence in good structural condition.

All fences shall be maintained in a manner to preserve the structural integrity and appearance of the fence, including, but not limited to, the replacement of broken boards or sections and preventing paint from peeling. One of the most often asked questions about fences is which side of the fence faces out. The code does not specify which direction the “ugly” side of the fence faces. That’s up to the owner of the fence to decide. As we say in Codes, “Ugly” is not in the code. The second most asked question has to do with the use of privacy fences to screen yards that might have junk, trash and debris or inoperable vehicles parked in the back yard. If the condition of the yard is a violation without a fence, it’s a violation with a fence.

Permits are not required for fence projects, but they do have to follow some important guidelines. The diagram below shows were on the property a fence can be placed and defines the fence height based on the material used.



SAFETY CORNER

Most Skin Cancer Preventable

Skin cancer is largely preventable; however, new cases of melanoma, the most deadly of skin cancers, continue to rise at a faster rate than the seven most common cancers, according to the Environmental Protection Agency

“Any change in your skin, whether burned or slightly tanned, is a sign of ultraviolet radiation damage,” said Drusilla Hufford, director of EPA’s Stratospheric Protection Division and council co-chair. “The good news is you can protect yourself and your family members from too much sun, the main cause of skin cancer, by taking simple steps like putting on sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses and a t-shirt.”

“Many people believe skin cancer occurs after a lifetime of exposure, and yet, melanoma is the second most common form of cancer for young adults 15-29 years of age,” said Dr. Henry Lim, council co-chair. “In the last 30 years, the number of women under age 40 diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma has more than doubled while the squamous cell carcinoma rate has also increased significantly.”

“The Way We Were” Neighborhood Photographs from the MDHA Collection, 1950—1970 Ends August 28



An exhibit highlighting Nashville Neighborhoods before urban renewal, “the Way We Were” will complete its four month show on August 28 at the Main Library. The images, which include streetscapes, neighborhoods, schools, businesses and gov-

ernmental buildings, provide visitors will a real look at Nashville during the mid-20th century. For more information, go to www.Nashville.gov.

Compost Bins Available from Metro Beautification

To encourage backyard composting, Metro Beautification/ Public Works has compost bins and supplies available at the Public Works Omohundro Convenience Center.

The convenience center is located at 1019 Omohundro Drive. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Saturday from 8:30am until 4:30p.m. For directions, please call 615-880-1955

Save The Date—Codes Teeing It Up For Charity On Oct. 17

The 13th annual Metro Codes Charity Golf Tournament is set for Saturday morning, October 17th, at the Ted Rhodes Golf Course.

According to Terry Cobb, Director of Codes and Building Safety, the tournament format is a 4-man scramble (best ball), with foursomes established by “luck of the draw”.

All net proceeds will be donated through the Metro Employees Consolidated Charities Campaign (MECCC) to the Easter Seals Camps for Physically Challenged Youth, Miriam’s Promise and the Harris-Hillman School.

“Last year, with the help of more than 100 sponsors, the Metro Codes Department donated more than \$28,000 to local charities,” Cobb said. “We always have a great time.”

The individual entry fee is \$60 per player which includes greens fees, cart, lunch, beverages and door prizes. Sponsorship opportunities range from individual hole sponsors to a beverage cart sponsor or the Platinum Exclusive Hole Sponsorship.

This year, the tournament will benefit the Easter Seals Camp, Miriam’s Promise and Harris-Hillman School through the Metro Employees Consolidated Charities Campaign. For more information on how to enter a team or become a sponsor, contact Rick Shepherd at 351-9993 or Jim Winchester at 262-2999.



Ted Rhodes Golf Course



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For information regarding accessibility, please contact Manley Biggers at (615) 862-6521 or fax (615) 862-6499.



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Terry Cobb and **Bill Penn** welcome your feedback on our e-newsletter. Please send your comments to [Bill Penn](mailto:bill.penn@nashville.gov), at bill.penn@nashville.gov Assistant Director, Property Standards Div , 862-6590