



# Metro Codes

E—News For Professionals

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County

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## Codes & Building Safety and Trevecca University Provide Hands-On Community Service

Our Property Standards Inspectors encounter a wide variety of situations as they respond to Requests for Service. Often, when investigating one request, the inspector will see something that warrants further investigation. That is what happened when Sandy Custode was making an inspection of a car lot near Trevecca Nazarene University. What she thought was just an abandoned vehicle in the woods, turned out to be the home of an elderly couple hidden behind years of dense overgrowth. The entire yard was filled with everything from bags of old clothes to broken down lawn mowers, and broken furniture. If you can imagine it, it was probably somewhere in the yard.

Ms. Custode was able to make contact with the owners and learned that they have lived on the property since they were married, 50 years ago. The couple met while attending Trevecca

and settled there upon graduation and they still attend church services on the campus. Our normal response to this situation would have been to issue an abate notice to remove the mountain of junk, trash and debris from the yard. But Ms. Custode realized after meeting this couple that they did not have the resources or the physical ability to clean up 50 years worth of "stuff".

Ms. Custode met with Mr. Stephen Harris, Dean of Student Development at Trevecca Nazarene University, to discuss the situation and to figure out a way to help. Mr. Harris was able to mobilize student volunteers as part of the University's community support program to help with the clean-up. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 50 volunteers arrived and began the clean-up effort.

Metro Public Works provided a 20 yard roll-off container to help remove the trash. According to Ms. Custode,

the roll-off container was filled in about 40 minutes. The students cleared a significant amount of the overgrowth, bagged trash and staged hundreds of

"My experience volunteering was fantastic. The enthusiasm of the college students was overwhelming."

- Stephanie Custode, High School student from Hume-Fogg High School

pounds of metal waste that will be recycled.

The volunteer effort was joined by seven women from the Phases Substance



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"The project was a highlight for all who volunteered. I was impressed with [Ms. Custode] and [Codes] going beyond the 'call of duty' to assist in this situation."

- Stephen Harris  
Dean of Student Development  
Trevecca Nazarene University

### Our Volunteers & Supporters

Sandy Custode - <b>Metro Codes</b>	Adam Grassman	Jonathan Duranceau	Mandy Smith	Abby Buter
Stephanie Custode - <b>Hume-Fogg</b>			Danielle Queener	Traci Uzinski
Veronica Frazier - <b>Public Works</b>	James Kramer	Robert Martinez	Liz Whiting	Elizabeth Fitzsimmons
Ricky Beshearse - <b>Public Works</b>	Clifton Smith	Hayley Hill	Chris Sutton	Caleb Gerdorn
Stephen Harris - <b>Trevecca Nazarene</b>	Amanda Mollman	Rebekah Spaur	Levi Humble	Kara Aills
<b>Trevecca Nazarene Students</b>	Lareigh Francione	Kyle Finufe	Matt Taylor	Allie Gray
Lauren Spears	Tyler Carpenter	Josh Kelley	Kathleen Dunn	Brian Wong
Tyler Walls	Nick Baldwin	Scott Ewing	Ashley Harden	
Brian Johnson	Andrew Crimmins	Morah Coxen	Sarah Thompson	

## Hands-On Community Service

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First these ladies were apprehensive, but when they learned that they would be helping college students who were cleaning up an elderly couples' yard, they too shared in the excitement. "They were amazed that so many student volunteers had turned out on a Saturday morning," said Mr. Harris.

Ms. Custode's daughter Stephanie, a freshman at Hume-Fogg Magnet School, also participated in the clean-up. She said that "My experience volunteering was fantastic. The enthusiasm of the college students was over-

whelming." She felt that "the day was very effective and everyone had a smile on their face when we finished."

"Being able to provide this kind of assistance is really important and reflects the desire and level of community service our staff strives to provide our customers," said Bill Penn, Assistant Director for Property Standards. "All too often we do not know the circumstances of the property owner until a warrant is initiated. We welcome the opportunity to assist on the front-end."

Mr. Harris, also participated in the event and was instrumental in organizing the student volunteers.

"The homeowners were beaming because they had visitors and enjoyed talking to the young people." Ms.

Custode, went on to say that, "My daughter Stephanie even got a lesson on the harmonica." Ms. Custode was especially appreciative of Ricky Beshearse with Public Works whose department provided the use of the roll-off container.

The Codes & Building Safety department is committed to improving the lives of our citizens through effective and proactive code enforcement. Mr. Harris's comments summed up everyone's feelings, "I am very thankful that I live in a city and am part of a community where assisting those in need is a priority."



"Saturday was a great success, thanks to all the students from Trevecca and the ladies from Phases who volunteered their time to help this older couple and their community."

- Sandy Custode, Property Standards Inspector

## Volunteers from Trevecca Nazarene, Hume-Fogg and Phases provide a Much Needed Helping Hand



"This event has made me rethink going to a large university because of the unity and closeness of the students from Trevecca."  
- Stephanie Custode Hume-Fogg Student

These photos show just some of the 50 plus volunteers who helped improve the lives of members of their community.



## Home Builders Association Welcomes New President

Terry Cobb, Director, Department of Codes & Building Safety, attended the Home Builders Association of Middle Tennessee (HBAMT) banquet and participated in the swearing in ceremony of the new HBAMT President Mike Arnold.

untary non-profit trade association, HBAMT is dedicated to promoting the American dream of homeownership in Middle Tennessee through affordable, quality housing.



Terry Cobb, Director of Codes Building & Safety installs incoming HBAMT's President, Mike Arnold.



New HBAMT Officers (L to R): Mike Arnold: President, Peggy Krebs: Vice-President, John Sheley: Executive Director, Mitzi Spann: Past President, David Crane: Secretary/Treasurer

Founded in 1941, the Home Builders Association of Middle Tennessee (HBAMT) is an affiliate of the [National Association of Home Builders](#) (NAHB). A vol-

## Installer's Seminar 2008

Location: Metro Public Health Department  
311—23rd Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37203

Dates: January 17, 2008 and January 30, 2008

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on both days  
Coffee and donuts will be served starting at 7:30

Certifications for all installers of sewage disposal systems in Metro—Davidson County, Tennessee, will expire on January 31., 2008. Therefore, the Metro Public Health Department is holding two seminars to assist installers in maintaining their certification. **Attendance and a passing grade of 85% or more on the examination will be required to update your installer's certification.** The updated certification will expire January 31, 2010.

Please note that the seminar will be offered on two different date for your convenience. Installers interested in attending will only need to attend one of the dates to keep their certification. Reservations are required and can be made by contacting the Health Department at 340-5604. Reservations should be made early.

## Directors Attend Small Business Summit At Local University

Mayor Karl Dean's Small Business Summit brought together a standing-room-only group of business people from all parts of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County providing useful information for all types of small businesses.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy," Mayor Karl Dean said. "This event provides small business owners and entrepreneurs with information that will help them stay and grow here in Nashville."



The summit, held on Dec. 11 at the Ezell Center on the campus of David Lipscomb University, included presentations in three main categories: State to small Businesses, Access to Capital and working with Metro Government, via panel discussions with representatives in the finance industry and representatives from Metro Government departments. A 30-minute question and answer period followed each segment to allow for discuss of the points presented.



Terry Cobb, Codes Director, Richard Bernhardt, Planning Director and Davidson County Clerk John Arriola each presented how businesses interface with their areas as well as what services are available for business people.

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce reports that 93 percent of their member companies employ fewer than 100 persons.

"The mission of the Metro Codes and Building Safety Department is simple: to provide permitting, inspection, enforcement, and information products to the Nashville community," Cobb said. "With this mission, the citizens of Nashville can experience safer buildings and an improved quality of life."

Cobb reported that for the third consecutive year, the department has experienced a record year with respect to the value of the permits issued. He said more than \$1.8 billion in permit values will be issued by the end of December.

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## Technically Speaking

By  
Manley Biggers, Assistant Director

Under the 2000 International Residential Code for 1 & 2 Family Dwellings, Sections R302.1 and R302.2, exterior walls of homes built less than 3 feet from the property line were required to be constructed as 1-hour walls with no openings allowed in the walls. Walls 3 feet or more from the property line were not required to have a rating and were not limited in the number and size of openings allowed in the walls. Section R302 of the recently adopted 2006 International Residential Code has some significant changes from the 2000 version of the code.

On May 1, 2007, when we began enforcing the provision of the 2006 International Residential Code for 1 & 2 Family Dwellings (and Townhouses) these changes went into effect. The 2006 International Residential Code now has Table R302.1 which says that building walls 0 feet to less than 3 feet from property lines must be 1 hour rated with fire exposure from both sides. In addition, no openings are allowed in this wall. These provisions are the same as were in Section 302 of the 2000 IRC. Although neither code requires walls to be rated once they are 3 feet or more from the property line, the change in the 2006 code is that from 3 feet to less than 5 feet from the property line Table R302.1 allows only a maximum of 25% openings in the wall. Under the 2000 code once a wall was 3 feet or more from the property line there were no restrictions on the amount of openings in the wall. In the 2006 code, as was also in the 2000 code, once a wall is at least 5 feet from the property line no rating is required and there is no limitation on openings.

These changes should have little effect in the construction of single family homes since the most common minimum side yard set back requirement in residential zoning is 5 feet.

However, construction of exterior walls for townhouse developments regulated by the provisions of the 2006 International Residential Code might prove to be more restrictive under these new provisions. There are times that multiple townhouse buildings are constructed on a single parcel of land.

Although zoning regulations will have set back requirements for buildings from the property lines there might not be any requirements in the zoning regulations for separation of buildings from each other.

In these instances, for the purpose of determining the required rating of the exterior walls and percentage of openings allowed, property lines are assumed to exist one-half the distance between the facing walls of the two buildings. For example if the side walls of the two buildings on the same property were constructed 8 feet from each other a property line would be assumed to be 4 feet from each building wall. Under the new code each of the building walls would be limited to a maximum of 25% openings because they fell into to 3 feet to less than 5 feet from property line distance. Under the 2000 code since each wall was more than 3 feet from the assumed property line there would have been no limitation on the amount of openings that could be in either wall.

## Christmas Tree Lighting In Public Square

The Public Square in front of the Metro Courthouse is beginning to look a lot like Christmas as a blue spruce standing over 35 feet tall was delivered for preparation for the tree lighting ceremony.

Over 2,000 colored lights will illuminate the tree when they were turned on during the city's annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony on December 6. Mayor Karl Dean and his family flipped the switch at about 5:20 p.m., lighting both the tree and six wreaths decorating the Historic Courthouse and Founders Tower.

Vice Mayor Diane Neighbors joined in the festivities. Rick Marion, morning show host for country radio station 103 WKDF, emceed the event.



Photograph provided by Metro  
Photographer Gary Layda

*"Christmas has always been a special time of year for my family. It's also a special time for our city," Dean said. "Nashville was founded on Christmas day over 200 years ago. This is a time to reflect on how far we've come as a city and where we are headed in the future. It's also a time to simply enjoy some of the best parts of the season—music, food, and of course, the lights."*

## Pre and Post Planting Tree Care: Recommendations

Most trees experience shock after transplanting because of disturbance to the root system. In balled & burlapped (B&B) plantings, very little of the original root system remains from the tree farm. On its own, trees will try to maintain a balance between the crown and the remaining root system. Once the tree is dug from the nursery (and is missing most of the original roots), it will either be stimulated to regenerate additional roots to balance the top, or the top partially dies back, or both so that the shoots and the roots establish equilibrium.

Although containerized trees have a complete root system when transplanted, the container has limited the volume and extent of the root system. Because of restricted root development, container-grown plants should be watered daily before transplanting. B&B trees should be sprinkled 3 or 4 times a week prior to transplanting. It is important for roots to quickly gain access to the future soil to insure long-term survivability.

**SIZE OF PLANTING HOLE** - The planting hole should be at least 2/3 times as wide as the root ball. Wide, shallow holes encourage horizontal root growth and decreases resistance of root penetration into the native soil. The larger planting hole and loosened backfill will expedite root growth. The sooner the roots are able to penetrate and grow into the native soil, the sooner the tree will become fully established after transplanting.



**SCORING ROOT BALLS** - If roots are circling around the root ball exterior, cut through the roots in a few places. Circling roots are usually found in container grown stock. Cutting helps prevent circling roots from eventually girdling the trunk. Root cutting will also initiate root regeneration and growth that increases the likelihood that roots will grow from the container medium into the native soil.

**WATERING** - Water is the most critical factor in transplanting success. Keeping the soil moist, but not saturated, is the best avenue to ensure survival and growth of the landscaping. The wide variety of tree and shrub species as well as native soil types, make overall watering recommendations unrealistic. Since transplanted trees require more water than they did in the nursery, apply enough to thoroughly soak the soil in the root zone. Frequent but smaller doses of water provides more benefit than applying large volumes infrequently because of the smaller root system. Drip irrigation systems and water reservoir devices such as "Gatorbags", can facilitate watering. Proper water management is the key for establishing transplants quickly.

**MULCH** - Applying an organic mulch to the top of the transplanted root ball will conserve water in the soil, allow better percolation of water into the soil during rain or watering, and will help to prevent weeds. Having mulch around the newly planted tree will also keep the lawn mowers from damaging the trunk. Remember to NOT place mulch directly against the tree trunk, however. This could cause decay to start on the lower trunk.

# Employee Highlights

## James “Cotton” Murray



**J**ames Murray has worked for Codes and Building Safety for nearly quarter of a century. He is a fixture in the department, known throughout the county, but most people would never know him by this name.

But, if you say “Cotton”, all the faces light up because they know James “Cotton” Murray.

Murray, Codes Electrical Division Chief, supervises the electrical inspectors within the building construction division of Codes. His expertise in the field comes from more than 27 years as an electrical contractor in Middle Tennessee before coming to Codes

Cotton grew up in Pulaski, Tennessee, graduated from Martin Methodist College and attended Middle Tennessee State University. He met his wife of 50 years (they celebrate this golden anniversary this month), Mary Eleanor and he soon joined her father’s electrical firm. The couple has three grown sons and five grandchildren. They attend Tulips Street United Methodist Church.

“This is the best job I have ever had,” Cotton says without hesitation. “Metro really has been the best thing that ever happened to me.”

As a professional, Cotton is very clear on what he sees as his role.

“We work hard to explain the electrical codes,” Cotton said. “When a customer doesn’t have a background in construction, we work a little harder to make sure they understand what is required.”

Cotton provides valuable service in a way people accept then comply. His easy-going manner coupled with a vast knowledge base means he can handle a wide range of issues by dealing in a common-sense manner.

Often called one of a kind, Cotton smiles when asked about his nickname. “Back in the old days, I had a cousin I called “Legs”. To get back at me, Legs started calling me Cotton. Since my hair has always been snow white, I guess it just stuck.”

**PASS IT ON!**



Pass the word about our newsletter! We would be honored if you would share our newsletter with your colleagues and co-workers. If anyone would like to sign up to receive it themselves, they just need to send us their email, and we will be happy to “Pass It On” to them.

**Terry Cobb and Wade Hill** welcome your feedback on our e-newsletter. Please send your comments to [Wade Hill](mailto:Wade.Hill@nashville.gov)  
Plans Examination Chief , 862-6520



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