

# Bill expected to hurt local community newspapers the most, taking another swipe at local journalism

By **Deborah Fisher**  
Executive Director of Tennessee Coalition for Open Government

The Secretary of State’s Office would gain nearly \$1 million in new annual revenue under a bill that allows it to take over the business of advertising foreclosure sales from local community newspapers where they have appeared for years.

The bill also would remove requirements that banks post notices of upcoming sales in physical locations in the county where the property is located.

Instead, the Secretary of State would create a new website and charge banks and mortgage companies \$200 for each notice.

The fiscal note on the bill shows the Secretary of State’s Office will spend \$146,000 to create and operate the website in the first year and receive \$488,900 in increased revenues, netting \$342,500.

In subsequent years, costs to the state decrease and the Secretary of State is estimated to earn \$977,800 a year and, after paying for an additional employee and web hosting, net \$921,800.

The bill is expected to hurt local community newspapers the most, taking another swipe at local journalism which has suffered as giant media tech companies like Facebook and Google have created new advertising models for local businesses.

The bill is scheduled to be heard Tuesday in the Senate State and Local Committee and on Wednesday in the House Civil Justice Committee.

The bill (SB1324/ HB1355) is sponsored by Sen. Paul Bailey, R-Sparta, Sen. Shane Reeves, R-Murfreesboro, Rep. Andrew Farmer, R-Sevierville, and Rep. William Lamberth, R-Portland.

The bill passed out of the House

Civil Justice Subcommittee last week, with sponsors arguing that notices of foreclosure sales would be better on a statewide website than in local communities and in local newspapers where the property is located.

Current state law requires banks and mortgage companies to advertise foreclosure sales in local communities. Foreclosure sales are sales of property that banks and mortgage companies have taken in a foreclosure process to satisfy a debt or lien.

Lobbyists for the Tennessee Press Association have argued that it operates a public notice statewide website in which all notices of foreclosure sales that are published in local community newspapers are available. The notices are also on the local newspapers’ websites. The press association has argued that having the Secretary of State create a new website would be duplicative.

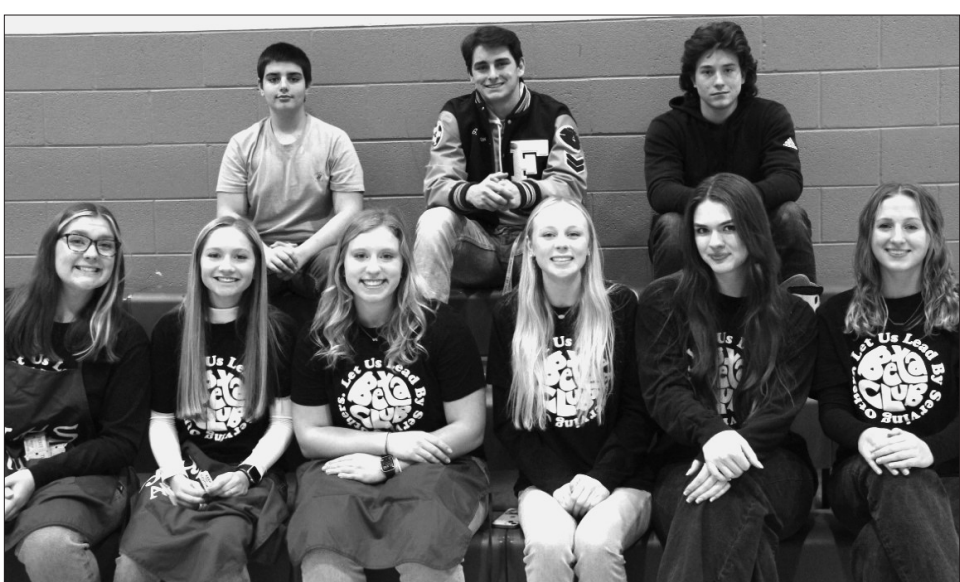
The General Assembly in 2013 passed the statute (T.C.A. § 1-3-120) requiring the press association website, putting certain parameters around its services and operations to ensure legal and public notices were free and searchable to the public and added at no additional charge to the advertiser.

Lobbyists for the banking and mortgage companies requested the bill in which they set the statutory price of their foreclosure notices at \$200.

Marshall County residents are urged to contact their representatives in the General Assembly, Rep. Todd Warner at (615) 741-4170 or rep.todd.warner@capitol.tn.gov, and Sen. Joey Hensley at (615) 741-3100 or sen.joey.hensley@capitol.tn.gov and oppose this measure which weakens the local press and funnels money from local businesses into state coffers.



**Congratulations to these lucky grand prize winners! One hundred dollar bills, \$100 gift card, and a Keurig Coffee Maker were donated by The Air Guys, Brooks Grocery, Clint’s Air Care, Little Rocket Daycare, Rocket Car Wash, the Town of Chapel Hill and Truett Construction. Thank you to all!!**



**A BIG BETA thank you to the Forrest Beta Club for providing drinks and desserts for our meal. The above dedicated group of Betas served as our assistants for the evening. Thank you, Betas!!**

## Viburnums for Tennessee Gardens

### UT Gardens’ February 2023 Plant of the Month

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Viburnums are a versatile and popular choice for use in the Tennessee landscape. These shrubs and small trees can be used in a variety of ways. They are known for their four-season interest including attractive flowers, berries and foliage.

Viburnums are also a great choice for attracting birds and wildlife to the garden. Many are easy to grow and are tolerant of a wide range of soils and environments, this makes them a natural choice for the garden.

Viburnums require minimal maintenance in the landscape and the larger ones look great in the back of a garden border. Some of the most well-known, old standby viburnums used across the Southeast are the snowball bush (Viburnum opulus), Chinese snowball bush (Viburnum macrocephalum), fragrant snowball viburnum (Viburnum x carlcephalum), blackhaw viburnum (Viburnum prunifolium), arrowwood viburnum (Viburnum dentatum) and American cranberry bush viburnum (Viburnum trilobum).

As the State Botanical Garden of Tennessee tests new plants, we have a few newer viburnums we have really enjoyed. ‘Spring Lace’ hybrid viburnum (Viburnum x ‘Spring Lace’) has been one of our favorites. You will see how it gets its name in mid-spring as it is covered in large white lace-cap-type flowers. A mid-sized plant at maturity, 5 feet wide by 5 feet tall tends to be its garden size.

Another winning new viburnum at our gardens is Pearlific® viburnum (Viburnum ‘PIIVIB-I’). This is a complex hybrid viburnum with good heat tolerance for our region. Flowers are pink in development and open to pure white. Floral scent is pleasant but not overpowering. A slightly smaller shrub, you can expect plants to reach 4 feet wide by 4 feet tall in 8- to 10-years and

top out at 6 feet tall and wide over time.

I firmly believe there is room for at least one viburnum in almost every residential landscape. We have many native species in the United States and wildlife love them. As a group, you can find both evergreen and deciduous viburnums. Some of the deciduous selections are prized for their fall color. If you are not familiar with viburnums, let this article be the start of discovering the perfect viburnum for your landscape. We invite you to come see the diversity of viburnums growing at all the UT Gardens sites across the state.

The UT Gardens includes plant collections located in Knoxville, Crossville and Jackson, Tennessee. Designated as the official botanical garden for the State of Tennessee, the UT Gardens are part of the UT Institute of Agriculture. The Gardens’ mission is to foster appreciation, education and stewardship of plants through garden displays, educational programs and research trials. The Gardens are open during all seasons and free to the public. For more information, see the Gardens website: [utia.tennessee.edu/state-botanical-garden](http://utia.tennessee.edu/state-botanical-garden).

*Submitted by Andy Pulte, Distinguished Lecturer and Director, GATOP Gardens*

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Open House for Preview of Real Estate, Friday, March 3rd, 3 PM to 5 PM.

Very Partial List

Antiques & Nice Furniture - Secretary/Hutch - Dining Table & Chairs - Vintage Buffet - China Cabinet - Cannon Slate Pool Table - Antique Occasional Tables - Dressers - Chest of Drawers - Night Stands - Antique Deck - Trunk - Nice Arm Chair & Ottoman - Antique Mantel - Vintage Cabinet - Bookshelves - Antique Organ - Antique Chest - Vintage Enamel Top Table

Glassware - Lots of Various Glass including: Fenton, Roseville, Waller, McCoy, Carnival, etc. - Buckeye Root Beer Vase (rare) - Crock Jugs - Oil Lamps - Lefton Tea Set - Tiffany Style Lamps - Corningware - Various Crystal - Hand Painted Globe Lamps - Collector Plates - Vases - So Much More!

Old Collectibles & Vintage Items, Etc - Antique Picture Frames - Old Wooden Horse Decor - Saddles, Brides, Tack - Wooden Dough Bowl - Browning Bow - Vintage Bicycle - Old Wash Tub - Cross Cut Saw Blade - Tonka Toys - Wrought Iron Decor Pieces - Soft Wooden Spindle Porch Rails - Old Chevy Hubcaps - Vintage Lunch Box - Enamel Pan - Single Trees - Double Tree - Old Well Buckets - Fruit Jars - Rubbermaid Water Trough - Antique Metal Wheels - Vise - Saws - Ladders - Animal Kennels-Live Animal Traps - Hand Tools - Gas Grill - Lots of Books - So Much More!

NOTE: Small Farms like this one are getting hard to come by, especially in a good location! This partially renovated, 2 story home, situated on nearly 14 acres, will have a new owner on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Make plans to bid and buy this property.

Early start at 9 AM, with the real estate selling at NOON at Absolute Auction!

TERMS: 10% Buyer Premium Applies. Real Estate = 10% Down Day of Sale with Balance Due at Closing within 30 Days. Personal Property: Cash or Good Check Day of Sale.

Go to [VanMassey.com](http://VanMassey.com) for more photos & more information.

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MARSHALL COUNTY SCHOOLS

PRE - K REGISTRATION 2023-24

The Voluntary Pre-K for Tennessee initiative is to provide for Tennessee's four-year old children, with the first priority to those four-year-olds who are economically disadvantaged, an opportunity to develop school readiness skills (pre-academic and social skills) in an environment that fosters the love and joy of learning and promotes success in kindergarten and throughout the child's life.

Parents who are enrolling children into the Pre-K program in the Marshall County School System for the 2023-24 school year should bring the following information with them to register:

• Birth Certificate for proof of age • Child's social security card

• Immunization record • Current physical examination

• Proof of residency in Marshall County • Photo identification of parent/guardian

• Proof of income • Negative TB test for students born outside of the U.S.

Children must be 4 years of age on or before August 15, 2023, in order to enroll in the Pre-K Program during the 2023-24 school year.

Please note – students must be registered by their custodial parent.

DATE AND TIME OF REGISTRATION

Monday, March 6, 2023, 3:30 till 5:30 – Oak Grove Elementary School, 1645 Franklin Pike, Lewisburg, Tennessee 37091

Guidelines for Selection into Voluntary Pre-K in Marshall County Schools

In the event a public lottery is necessary to place students in the pre-kindergarten class, the following procedures will be followed:

• Parents/guardians of students being placed in the lottery will be notified by mail at least 5 days prior to the lottery drawing of the time, date and location of the public lottery.

• All names of students eligible for the lottery drawing will be read aloud and placed in the lottery.

• The Attendance Supervisor or his/her designee will draw names to fill the specified number of vacancies in the pre-kindergarten or kindergarten program.

• Names will be recorded by Attendance Supervisor or his/her designee.

• All names will be drawn and recorded in the order drawn. Additional names over the specified number of vacancies will be placed on an alternate list.