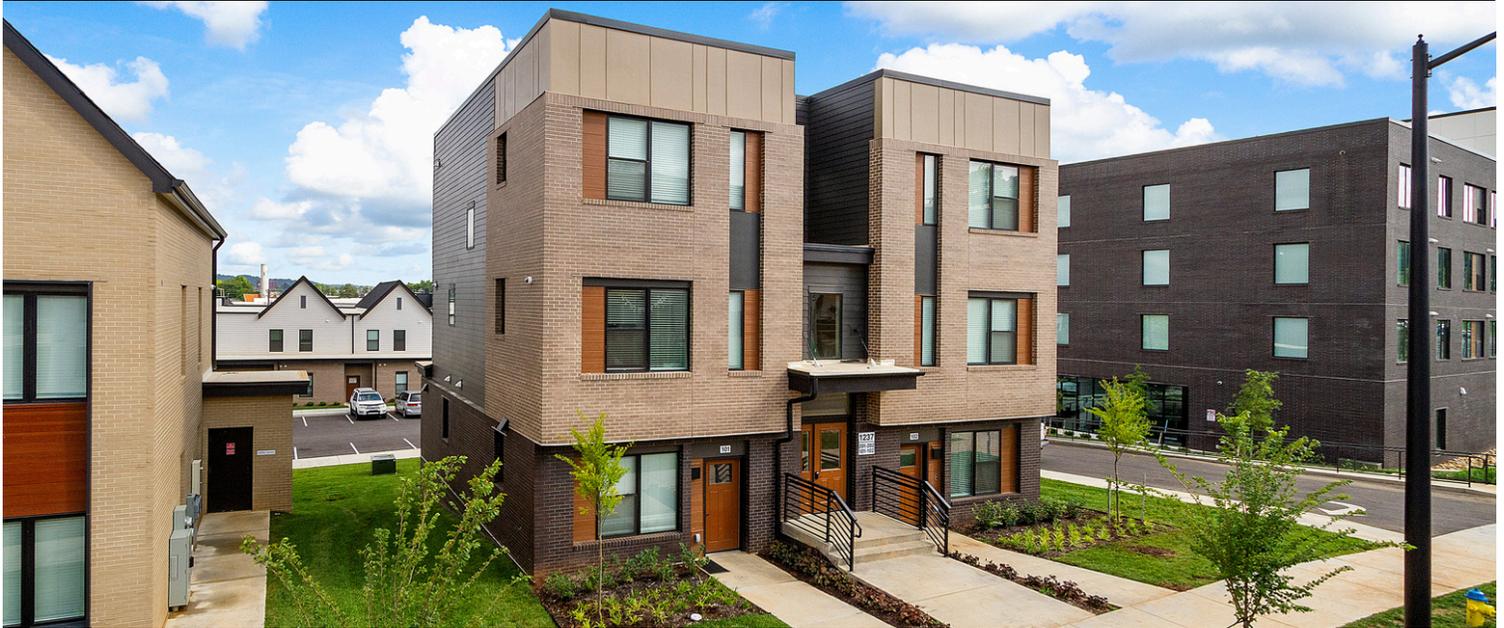


# The Bulletin

MARCH-APRIL 2024

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## KCDC named Tennessee's Best THDA presents award for First Creek

Tennessee Housing Development Agency recognized Knoxville's Community Development Corporation with a Tennessee's Best Neighborhood Stabilization Award for its work improving access to quality affordable housing in inner-city Knoxville.

KCDC received one of four Tennessee's Best awards given during the 2024 Tennessee Housing Conference, which was hosted by THDA Feb. 29-March 1 at the Music City Center in Nashville. Other categories included the Director's Award, Regional Impact Award and Legacy Award.

Tennessee's Best awards are given to individuals or organizations whose work makes a meaningful impact on the state of affordable housing in Tennessee.

THDA Executive Director Ralph M. Perrey said KCDC's work on its First Creek at Austin development has helped strengthen the neighborhood where it is being built.

"The efforts of Knoxville's Community Development Corporation to improve the quality of housing in Knoxville's former Austin Homes community has been transformative and will have a positive impact on the community and its residents for years to come," Perrey said. "First Creek at Austin has and will continue to improve the neighborhood where it's located and we are glad to recognize them as one of Tennessee's Best."

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NEW HIRES / HR UPDATE

First Creek at Austin is a three-phase redevelopment that serves as Knoxville's first mixed-income, affordable housing community. The three phases of the project utilized over \$100 million in funding through THDA's Low-Income Housing Credit and Community Investment Tax Credit programs.

The site, formerly named Austin Homes, was established in 1941 on nearly 23 acres just east of downtown. The newly redeveloped site will include 446 units of new affordable housing when complete, including a multi-generational building with dedicated supportive housing for seniors.

"The transformation of First Creek at Austin has created a diverse neighborhood near the heart of downtown Knoxville and adds more affordable housing at a time of critical need in our community," Ben Bentley, KCDC executive director and CEO, said. "Residents have outdoor green space, indoor community spaces, a fitness center and walkability to the city's core, including downtown and the Old City, for access to jobs, nearby parks, restaurants and other amenities."

KCDC partnered with its design team of Gensler, a global architecture firm based in San Francisco, and Knoxville-based Johnson Architecture for the master planning process that was developed based on months of dialogue with residents, stakeholders and community members in interviews and public meetings.



The efforts of Knoxville's Community Development Corporation to improve the quality of housing in Knoxville's former Austin Homes community has been transformative and will have a positive impact on the community and its residents for years to come.

*- Ralph Perrey*

Johnson Architecture provided architectural services for KCDC for Phase I, with Southeast Venture and Johnson Architecture both providing services on Phase II.

The Tennessee's Best awards honor outstanding individuals and organizations whose contributions on behalf of affordable housing – whether producing, designing, developing, financing or promoting housing policy – inspires others to serve Tennesseans' housing needs.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Award is given to an organization that has significantly contributed to the stabilization of a neighborhood through their use of THDA programs or orchestrated the use of THDA programs with other housing agencies.

The awards are presented during the Tennessee Housing Conference. The conference is held annually to bring together housing professionals from across the state and country to discuss important housing issues and their impact on Tennessee.

*\* News release courtesy of Tennessee Housing Development Agency.*

# Resource Fairs

By Christina Slabinski

Several properties beginning this month through May will have numerous partner agencies on site for KCDC community resource fairs (CRFs). This year's slate includes 44 partners signing up for at least one property.

For those impacted, what can you expect from these resource fairs? AmeriCorps VISTA Christina Slabinski, who's been working hard to get everything lined up, hopes to give you some insight into what they are and why we do them.

## What are community resource fairs?

Resource fairs are a collaborative effort with KCDC's strategic partners across Knox County. For at least three years we've invited local nonprofits, government entities and service providers to showcase supportive resources, services and programming they offer to residents. CRFs are hosted on site to introduce our partners to these communities in a more personal manner and for residents' ease of access. CRFs are meant to be informational and enriching, as they give residents an opportunity to connect with our partners, property management staff and neighbors in a low-stakes, informal environment.

We provide refreshments and a speaker for music throughout the event. Partners are invited to bring interactive games and practical giveaways for residents to use, like household supplies. We hope these incentives bring residents out and allow partners to share their resources in a fun and informational way.

Unlike before, this year we decided to purchase our own tables and chairs for the CRFs and other KCDC events. Our hope is this will be more cost-effective in the long run as opposed to rentals.

## When are they occurring?

We first decided how many fairs to host, ultimately picking communities with a leasing office on site and pairing the smaller locations with ones closer to them. Other than the one at Nature's Cove, which was adjusted to accommodate Good Times' distribution availability, fairs will occur on Tuesdays and Fridays. Family communities are slated for 3-4:30 p.m. Tuesdays. This should allow residents more flexibility to attend with the rush of getting kids from school and getting off work. Elderly or Disabled communities are set for noon-1 p.m. Fridays, which we hope is the best time for partners to reach residents. By choosing these times, we hope it better accommodates our partners and prevents them from working overtime.



To get the word out to residents about CRFs, the KCDC AmeriCorps team will flyer door to door at each property. One week before, I'll send out reminders to each partner agency that's scheduled to attend.

## Day of the fair

On the day of each fair, the KCDC AmeriCorps team will get to the property a couple hours before it starts to ensure everything's set up correctly. We hope to get all the tables, chairs and parking spots ready for partners (hopefully, with the help of the maintenance staff on site) so they can just show up and set up their own booth with as little confusion and effort on their part as possible. We'll try to wear AmeriCorps-branded gear because partners will know to talk to us if they need any help. I'll also have my work phone with me, so they can contact me that way, too. Once partners are settled, we'll hop in wherever we're needed to ensure the event runs smoothly. In the past, this has included making and handing out popcorn/cotton candy.

Once the fair ends, the KCDC AmeriCorps team will put the tables and chairs away and make sure the property looks as good as it did when we first arrived.

## My takeaways

Event planning is a lot of work! There are so many moving parts to keep track of that it'd be immensely difficult to tackle it all by myself. Thankfully, I didn't have to since I had more experienced people to lean on for support and advice.

There are so many cool nonprofits here in Knoxville doing meaningful work. I know I've only encountered a small handful of everything out there, but it's so nice to see local organizations come together for such wholesome goals: social support and community building.



## Upcoming

### **Western Heights**

3-4:30 p.m. March 19

### **Isabella Towers**

Noon-1 p.m. March 22

### **Nature's Cove**

3-4:30 p.m. March 27

### **North Ridge Crossing**

3-4:30 p.m. April 2

### **Cagle Terrace**

Noon-1 p.m. April 5

### **Montgomery Village**

3-4:30 p.m. April 9

### **Lonsdale Homes**

3-4:30 p.m. April 16

### **Love Towers**

Noon-1 p.m. April 19

### **Five Points**

3-4:30 p.m. April 30

### **The Vista**

3-4:30 p.m. May 7

### **Northgate Terrace**

Noon-1 p.m. May 10

### **First Creek**

3-4:30 p.m. May 14

*\* Autumn Landing rescheduled day TBD.*

# On Location



## City receives \$42.6M from feds to reconnect communities

The City of Knoxville and Knoxville's Community Development Corporation have been awarded a [\\$42.6 million grant](#) from the U.S. Department of Transportation to implement a civic infrastructure plan intended to begin the restoration of cultural and economic opportunity to communities impacted by urban renewal initiatives. [The seven-phase project](#) will create nearly 10 miles of connectivity improvements to link East Knoxville residents to economic, cultural and recreational amenities.

"This is the largest federal grant award in Knoxville's recent history, and it will make a significant impact by prioritizing disadvantaged communities, allowing residents to move safely to jobs, schools, health care and parks," Indya Kincannon, Knoxville mayor, said. "This is an example of the transformative effect of President Joe Biden's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the tremendous impact it has on local communities. The City of Knoxville and KCDC are committed to historical investment in an area that historically has been deprived of sufficient economic opportunities to thrive."

The DOT's Neighborhood Access and Equity Program funds plans that reconnect formerly displaced communities, improve access to daily needs and foster equitable development and restoration.

The grant will significantly expand the greenway system to link East Knoxville, Morningside Park and the Old City to the Urban Wilderness, Baker Creek Preserve and neighborhoods of South Knoxville that were separated by past infrastructure projects, including the James White Parkway, that affected predominantly Black neighborhoods in downtown and East Knoxville.

"The greenway expansions funded by this grant will offer residents of East and South Knoxville sustainable connectivity to improve overall quality of life," Ben Bentley, KCDC executive director and CEO, said. "The civic infrastructure also will reestablish critical links that improve access to education, economic mobility and recreation. The improvements made possible by this grant will enable the creation of multi-modal transportation pathways that reconnect underserved communities and form the foundation for increased walkability and non-vehicular development patterns for the next hundred years of Knoxville."

The massive undertaking includes several phases and segments. A greenway will begin at the Old City and end at the Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum, traveling through neighborhoods and Harriet Tubman Park.

A Cultural Corridor will connect Summit Hill Drive, Dandridge Avenue, Hill Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to support elementary and middle school crossings, as well as churches, the Knoxville Family Justice Center and affordable housing sites.

"The connectivity will provide equitable access for East Knoxville residents to new economic centers and the downtown area," Gwen McKenzie, city councilwoman, said, who represents the Sixth District where much of the initiative will take place. "Also, we are working alongside the Beck Cultural Exchange Center to create a pathway that includes markers, maps and monuments to illustrate some of Knoxville's African American history which was impacted by Urban Renewal."

The Cultural Corridor plan outlines 10 historical sites along the greenway, including the only remaining ancestral home of renowned artists Beauford and Joseph Delaney. The plan also features curated exhibitions, which showcase digital storytelling that connects history and culture to the places that once housed a thriving Black community, complete with businesses, churches and schools.

The plan also provides a link to South Knoxville, including the Urban Wilderness and Baker Creek Preserve.

"The South Knoxville Bridge has been a critical connection between South Knoxville and downtown and East Knoxville for decades, and the Bridge Connector provides a new opportunity for safe connection for people on foot or bike," Tommy Smith, Knoxville vice mayor, said, who represents the First District. "It will connect two communities and provide highly sought amenities to more residents."

The grant funds nearly half the cost of the project, the rest of which is covered by previously expended or allocated funds. Construction will be completed in multiple phases, with phasing determined by project readiness. Work is expected to begin in 2025.



# Health & Wellness

Each of us has our own varying levels of stress that we manage every day, some better than others. With April being National Stress Awareness Month, let's investigate the causes, its impact on our health and what we can do to improve our well-being.

According to the World Health Organization, stress is considered a "state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation," and is a natural response that prompts us to address challenges in our lives. When you face a perceived threat, a part in your brain called the hypothalamus sets off an alarm in you and your body releases hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, which help you through a fight-or-flight situation. Adrenaline makes your heart beat faster, increases blood pressure and gives you more energy, while cortisol raises your glucose in the bloodstream and the availability of substances in your body that repair tissues.

This response is typically self-limiting. Once the initial "threat" has passed, hormones should return to normal levels, but certain stressors remaining ever-present could cause that fight-or-flight feeling to stay active. Too much exposure to cortisol and other stress hormones can disrupt your body's processes and put you at higher risk for health problems, including anxiety, depression, headaches, insomnia and heart-related issues like heart attack and high blood pressure. It's important to identify ways to cope with stress.

The Mayo Clinic recommends:

- Eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and getting plenty of sleep.
- Trying relaxation exercises like yoga, deep breathing, massages or meditation.
- Writing about your thoughts and what you're grateful for in life in a journal.
- Carving out time for your hobbies.
- Fostering healthy friendships and speaking with friends and family.
- Trying to maintain a sense of humor.
- Volunteering in your community.
- Organizing and focusing on what you need to get done at home and work. Remove tasks that aren't necessary.
- Seeking professional counseling if needed.

Avoid unhealthy ways to maintain stress, such as using tobacco, alcohol, drugs or excess food. For more information on how to manage stress, visit [here](#). A stress screener from Mental Health America can also be found [here](#).

APRIL  
STRESS  
AWARENESS  
MONTH



## STRESS

### 43%

Adults suffer adverse health effects from stress

### 75%-90%

Doctor office visits are stress-related ailments and complaints

\*Statistics taken from WebMD.

# KCDC Spotlight

The Spotlight aims to recognize the amazing things KCDC employees are doing to help make the community and workplace better. Email [jnash@kcdc.org](mailto:jnash@kcdc.org) if you think there's someone we should highlight.

## Tim Hatmaker Maintenance Director

Tim Hatmaker's career leading up to joining KCDC as maintenance director was marked by hard work and a passion for his desire to build.

Prior to coming aboard KCDC in September, the Anderson County native worked his way through the ranks in commercial and residential construction dating back to 1994. But construction wasn't his first career choice. All throughout his youth, Tim dreamed of joining the U.S. Army so he could serve his country, and he nearly did if life hadn't veered in a different direction. Tim signed up for the delayed entry program while attending Anderson County High School, and shortly after graduating – days before he shipped out – his path changed following a friendly game of football.

"In 1994 when I graduated high school, me and a group of friends were playing football and I broke my kneecap, so I had to have surgery on my knee two days before I was supposed to ship out," Tim said. "My recruiter was standing in my bedroom the day before I was supposed to have shipped out and told me, 'I'm sorry, you can't go,' and basically broke my heart. That was my lifelong goal, that was my only ambition. At that point I was lost."

The Army recruiter reached out to DeVry University in Florida, who then contacted Tim asking if he'd be interested in attending college, all it'd take was \$3,000. In frustration Tim hung up on the college representative because he didn't have the money. Tim got a job at a grocery store to help make ends meet and stayed there until an old girlfriend's father offered him a new opportunity in residential construction. Despite no knowledge of the profession, Tim said yes, soaked up as much knowledge as he could, and began his decades-long career in construction.

"That's what got me into construction was that guy taking me out of the grocery store because he thought if I was willing to go to work at a grocery store every day, I was at least willing to go to work," Tim said. "He thought I'd be impressionable enough to train and here I am. I owe a lot of what I have to him."

Tim first cut his teeth in construction as a laborer and worked his way up to general foreman doing turnkey homes with H&H Building. In 2004, he shifted focus to commercial construction, doing various jobs with the Carpenters Local Union 50 out of Oak Ridge. Through this he was introduced to his eventual next employer Blaine Construction, helping them for a couple years as carpenter, foreman and assistant superintendent before leaving the union and coming over full time as superintendent. He focused on commercial construction for eight years and then switched to multifamily before coming to KCDC.

Several aspects of Tim's experience in construction have lined up perfectly in maintenance. Whether it be planning and budgeting for projects, coordinating with subcontractor vendors or emphasizing the importance of safety, Tim has been able to lean



on that knowledge to help get the job done.

"Everything I've done before is applicable here," Tim said. "Of course, there'll be things here that I'm learning. You never quit growing, but I never quit growing in construction either. Once you say, 'I've got it all figured out,' that's when you've really made your first big mistake. We'll learn it together."

"... The big difference is this is continual, whereas construction your first nail you're one step closer to the end. Construction always ended; you were working towards an end date," he added. "Here I'm working towards an open end, a continuation. That's the biggest difference."

The move has gone well. Tim gets to help residents every day on the job and his colleagues are great to work with, especially longtime Maintenance Director Jack Canada – a "KCDC encyclopedia" – who has helped him every step of the way.

"Jack and I are a team," Tim said. "We work together on many aspects of the maintenance program. We have and continue to collaborate on everything from organizing new training, to coaching our maintenance teams."

### 'Married single dad'

Family is a big factor in Tim's life. When he's not at work, he's likely supporting his youngest son's extracurricular activities in karate, track and football – the latter of which in general is especially big in the Hatmaker household.

"We have every NFL channel that you can get. We have every SEC channel, every ESPN channel," Tim said. "We are a football family."

Tim's other son is 23 years old and recently graduated from college. He also has three stepchildren – all in their teens – who live in Holland with his wife, Marijke. Because of their distance apart, Tim calls himself a "married single dad." The two met in 2015 after a friend suggested Marijke, a licensed counselor, could help Tim's oldest son work through some hard times in life. Tim initially balked at the idea of speaking with someone across the

world, but that trust was soon built when his son “blossomed.” Tim kept in touch with Marijke even after his son’s mood improved, and in December 2015 he made the flight to Holland for a friendly trip.

“We went and I’ve never looked back since,” he said. “That was the day that I was hooked, and she just became my best friend. I don’t know, this lady that irritated me with my son, which was really weird, became my best friend and has been ever since.”

They married three years later. He flies to Holland typically around Christmas and she visits a few times a year when she can. For now, that’s how they make things work.

“We both have careers and don’t want to change them,” Tim said. “We don’t want to move and don’t want to upset our children and move our children.”

Tim hobbies include building LEGO sets, cooking for his family and doing small carpentry projects.

“I built cornhole boards there for a little while, so everybody in the family has got a cornhole board that was way too expensive building them because it’s a lot more expensive than buying them,” Tim said, laughing. “I see something and say, ‘I can build that.’”

His love of cooking comes from his mother, who wanted to ensure he didn’t rely on others to eat. Tim started small, focusing on things like cornbread and beans, meat and potatoes, and

biscuits and gravy. Now he likes to venture out and try different dishes, including some European recipes thanks to his wife. Tim’s go-to thing to cook is steak.

“I can make a steak that’ll melt in your mouth, and you’ll never get one in a restaurant that tastes as good as mine. I can guarantee that,” he said. “I’ve had people say, ‘Oh, I can do this,’ and, no, I make a steak that’s hands down the best in the world. If you want them well done, go to a restaurant. If you want them right, call me.”

Building LEGO sets has recently become a hobby thanks to a playful Christmas gift from Marijke – a 2,500-piece Porsche, which is his dream car. He finally had some time to sit down and focus on it during the recent snowstorm.

“I’m kind of hooked now on them. I enjoyed just putting it together,” Tim said. “That was calm and relaxing, so we got a Ford Raptor truck, and me and my son are going to do that one together ... and then we’ll go from there and see if we buy more. The hard thing is they’re hard to store. They’re big, they’re bulky, but I’ll have to build a display case or something and hide them somewhere because I’ve got cats, and the cats like to push them.”

**Jack and I are a team. We work together on many aspects of the maintenance program. We have and continue to collaborate on everything from organizing new training, to coaching our maintenance teams.**

## New Hires

The following were recently hired through March 12 at KCDC:



**Suzanne Hatcher**

Hired: 3/12/24  
Title: Asst. Property Manager  
Place: Small Property Collective



**James Jones**

Hired: 1/30/24  
Title: Maintenance Tech. II  
Place: Autumn Landing-Nature’s Cove



**Shirley Chishanda Johnson**

Hired: 1/22/24  
Title: Occupancy Specialist  
Place: Section 8



**Pamela Dickey**

Hired: 2/19/24  
Title: Quality Assurance Specialist  
Place: Main Office



**Tatka Woods**

Hired: 2/5/24  
Title: Leasing and Occupancy Specialist  
Place: Lonsdale Homes

## HR Update

### Keep your info up to date!

*By Wendy Hamon*

Life is busy and things can change quickly! Remember to keep your information up to date. Here’s some information that sometimes is out of date:

- **Address and Phone Number:** Make sure you receive benefit statements, new insurance cards and general mail from all KCDC benefit providers by keeping your address up to date! To change your address and/or phone number information in Vista, select the Address or Phone Number bubble. Enter the updated information and update the effective date of your change. To save and update your information click the OK button on bottom right of the screen. HR will be notified of the change and update your contact information for your KCDC benefit providers.
- **Beneficiaries for Life Insurance, Retirement Plans and Health Savings Account:** Beneficiary information can be changed at any time. If you need to change who would get your life insurance, retirement plan or Health Savings Account funds should you pass away, you can complete new forms and submit them to HR or request forms from Wendy at whamon@kcdc.org. If you can’t remember who you selected as a beneficiary for a benefit plan, you likely need to complete a new beneficiary form!  
KCDC Life Insurance: [Here](#)  
Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designation Form: [Here](#)  
The Health Savings Account requires you to designate beneficiaries within the online portal at Optum Bank: [Here](#)



## Newsletter Dates

The Bulletin is scheduled to be released every two months. Unless a delay is needed, publication will typically fall on the first full work week of the month.

- **May-June Edition:** May 6-10
- **July-August Edition:** July 8-12
- **September-October Edition:** Sept. 9-13
- **November-December Edition:** Nov. 4-8



## Newsletter Ideas

Got something you think could be in The Bulletin? Email information to [jnash@kcdc.org](mailto:jnash@kcdc.org). The deadline for content will typically fall on the last Monday or Tuesday of the month before publication.

