



UNDER CONSTRUCTION



STATE OF THE CITY

THURSDAY
OCT. 19, 2023



The State of the City is Growing!

Since the fall of 2019 it has been my honor to join Mayor Shull in presenting the State of the City Address. It is my hope that today's remarks, along with stories found within this document, provide you with information regarding the many outstanding things happening in Kingsport.

The theme of this year's address is "Under Construction." Kingsport is experiencing a wave of construction from residential developments, new businesses, redevelopment and public amenities, as well as critical improvements to the city's infrastructure. For example, calendar year 2022 saw the city issue 314 permits for new residential development, a 131% increase over the pre-pandemic averages, and 2023 is on pace to match the previous year.

Our proud moments are a demonstration of the pride and professionalism displayed daily by the elected officials and staff of the City of Kingsport. The Kingsport Aquatic Center celebrated its 10th anniversary. In City Hall, the Montgomery-Watterson Boardroom was officially named and dedicated to the city leaders, and their families, who blazed the trail for the future of our city.

Yet again, our outstanding city staff members were the proud recipients of multiple awards this year. To name just a few, our Economic Development team was honored with not only a state award, but a national one as well. Bays Mountain Park earned top tourism awards and the Public Information and Communications Department brought home various awards for events and public outreach campaigns.

Kingsport remains financially sound with strong revenues, conservative budgeting and sound financial management. FY23 closed with a \$25.5 million fund balance, which represents 26% of our operating budget. Our strong financial position fueled the issuance of a \$63 million bond earlier this year to fund a variety of critical capital needs.

In closing, I want to extend my gratitude to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for the work and support they have provided over the last year. Their desire to make Kingsport a better place to live, work and play is demonstrated daily. For over 106 years, the combined efforts of the elected body, our community partners and a dedicated professional staff have been the cornerstone of this great city we get to call home.

Thank you,

Chris McCartt
Kingsport City Manager

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PROUD MOMENTS

Honoring former mayor and vice mayor

Commonly known as the “BMA Room,” the space where the Board of Mayor and Aldermen typically hold meetings is now the Montgomery-Watterson Boardroom. An unveiling celebration held at City Hall in August officially renamed the room in honor of former Mayor Ruth C. Montgomery and former Vice Mayor Richard Watterson. Montgomery died in October 2020 at age 92, and Watterson died at 94 in January 2021.



The families of Mayor Ruth C. Montgomery and Vice Mayor Richard Watterson attend the unveiling celebration.

Kingsport restores original fire engine

Kingsport’s Fleet Maintenance division received a rare and unique challenge – restore the city’s first fire engine back to its original condition. Employees worked during their spare time, and the project took more than two years to accomplish.

Dubbed “Old Huldy,” the 1917 American LaFrance went into service more than 106 years ago. It had a top speed of 30 miles per hour and originally had to be started by hand cranking. The engine carried hoses, wooden ladders, axes and about 100 gallons of water. Lanterns hung from the sides, so firefighters could see to operate the pumper.

City Manager Chris McCartt greenlit the restoration project. Technician Brian Painter had a key role and fixed oil leaks and wiring issues and made the coupling for the ignition system. Tires were replaced, internal parts were purchased and through the efforts of many fleet maintenance employees Old Huldy is running again.

The fire truck currently is housed in Fire Station #1 downtown and is used in parades and special events.



Old Huldy

Kingsport Aquatic Center celebrates 10 years

The Kingsport Aquatic Center celebrated its 10th anniversary on May 25 with a day filled with outdoor games, trivia and prizes and, of course, water park fun for the whole family. The 10th anniversary celebration began with a special proclamation and comments from city officials, followed by the facility opening to the public.



Kingsport Aquatic Center

Engage Kingsport receives pandemic relief grant

Engage Kingsport has received a grant of \$272,400 from the Tennessee Arts Commission through its Tennessee Nonprofit Arts & Culture Recovery Fund - Round 2. Prior to the pandemic, Engage Kingsport was a vital partner with the City of Kingsport Cultural Arts Department in providing creative opportunities to our community.

Kingsport pump track opens

The newest addition to the Brickyard Complex is now complete – a 2,000-linear-foot pump track located adjacent to the Scott Adams Memorial Skatepark. The \$1.3 million project includes an asphalt pump track, addition to the paver plaza, additional seating and parking, central plaza area and Musco lighting.

CITY AWARDS & HIGHLIGHTS

City earns national planning award



The City of Kingsport earned an award from the American Planning Association's (APA) Economic Development Division for the redevelopment of the greater Kingsport Press site and nearby properties.

The Innovation in Economic Development category is reserved for projects or programs that are creative and establish new pathways in addressing unique economic development needs. The award was presented at the APA's annual conference in Philadelphia last spring.

Kingsport received the award for its work on the redevelopment of the Dobyns-Taylor warehouse and the greater Kingsport Press property, including the Food City shopping center, Kingsport Farmers Market, Kingsport Carousel and nearby Town Park Lofts.

Kingsport receives development and revitalization recognition

As a result of efforts to focus on local assets, the City of Kingsport received the Excellence in Economic Development and Revitalization award from the Tennessee Municipal League at its 83rd annual conference last summer.

The award recognizes the work done by city and elected officials to improve the economic viability of the Model City, starting with the creation of a full-time economic development office and database of existing and available properties.

These steps allowed Kingsport to better work with developers, brokers, property owners and business owners on a variety of commercial and residential projects.



From left, John Rose, Alderman Darrell Duncan and Steven Bower.

Kingsport organizations win tourism awards

Kingsport was well-represented among the recipients of the 26th Annual Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association Pinnacle Awards from partnerships to campaigns to attractions.

Visit Kingsport Partnership of the Year – Kingsport Public Works

In 2022, Visit Kingsport hosted more than 30 youth and collegiate sporting events, three festivals and multiple special events. The Kingsport Public Works Department contributed more than 4,000 hours toward events in partnership with Visit Kingsport.

Best PR Campaign – Bays Mountain Park Bobcats

In 2022, Bays Mountain Park provided a new home to two bobcat kittens, Carter and Cash. The bobcat habitat had been empty since the previous inhabitant, Kirby, passed away, and the park received an outpouring of support from the community to acquire a new bobcat. To raise awareness and excitement, a campaign followed their progress on their journey to the park and was documented on social media.



Roll With It – Gingy-Christmas Connection Ambassador

In its 43rd year, Christmas Connection is one of the largest and most well-attended craft festivals in the region. For the previous 42 years, it has been held at the Civic Auditorium; however, in 2022 Christmas Connection moved to the MeadowView

Convention Center. To let the public know about the location change, Gingy the gingerbread man was featured in a video and other social posts.

Attraction of the Year – Scott Adams Memorial Skatepark

In June 2022, the grand opening celebration for the new Scott Adams Memorial Skatepark drew several hundred people from Tennessee and five neighboring states. The event included professional skate demonstrations, a skate jam, music and prizes, open skating times, park tour and skate clinics. Professional skaters Kanten Russell and Brandon Turner attended the opening celebration.





From left, Matthew Lane, Sara Nowell, Grayson Marshall, Maxine Poole, Adrienne Batara, Kristie Leonard and Alderman James Phillips.

Public Information and Communications Department earns awards

The City of Kingsport's Public Information and Communications Department earned two Kaleidoscope Awards in 2022 from the Southeast Festivals & Events Association (SFEA) for Christmas in Kingsport – third place for Best Social Media Campaign and the Green Initiative Award, which highlighted the process of disposing of Christmas trees by feeding them to the beloved goats on Cement Hill.

Kingsport earns venue, entertainment and senior services awards

Kingsport Times-News Readers Choice awards allow citizens to vote on the best of everything in the region.

Family Entertainment, Local Tourist Spot and Fun for the Whole Family – Bays Mountain Park

Bays Mountain Park opened the doors to the Nature Center in 1971 and has welcomed generations of Kingsport families into the park ever since. With a focus on education, preservation and outdoor fun, the park has become a staple attraction for the region, often referred to as Kingsport's crown jewel.

Best Birthday Party Venue – Carousel

The Kingsport Carousel just celebrated its eighth birthday, has been featured nationally in Reader's Digest, averages about 120 birthday parties and private rentals annually and has about 60,000 riders a year. This is the fourth time it has won the Readers Choice award.

Best Event Venue – Farmers Market

The Farmers Market Pavilion houses the Kingsport Farmers Market from April to November and is also a rental facility. The Farmers Market is used for large events such as Racks by the Tracks, car shows and about 100 annual private events such as church gatherings, weddings, family reunions and more.



From left, Vice Mayor Colette George, Kristie Leonard, Heather Buckley, Jay Church and Aldermen James Phillips and Betsy Cooper.

Senior Services – Kingsport Senior Center

The Kingsport Senior Center offers various programs, including pickleball, arts, crafts and woodworking, and continues to be a leader across the state with an all-time high membership of 4,653 in 2023. The center also used a digital literacy grant for virtual programs to train more than 150 seniors on how to use the internet and provided them a device to use.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Pedestrian Bridge planning underway

Planning and design work for the Pedestrian Bridge project continues, including coordination to place signage that describes the historical significance of the freight terminal adjacent to the proposed bridge. The project also will require the removal of a portion of the existing concrete loading dock between Centennial Park and the railroad tracks.

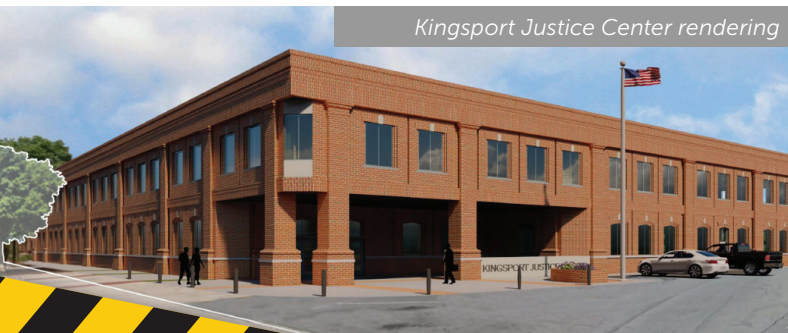
The City of Kingsport currently is working with CSX railroad on an agreement to allow the pedestrian bridge to cross the railroad right-of-way. Due to pedestrian safety issues, the at-grade vehicular crossing will not remain.



Pedestrian Bridge rendering

Justice system investments provide safety

Kingsport, in partnership with Sullivan County, has made significant investments in consolidating, securing and modernizing the court system. Additionally, a much-needed expansion of the Kingsport Police Department is planned to provide the space needed to protect the community going into the future.



Kingsport Justice Center rendering

New recycling center awaits TDOT permit

The city is currently waiting for the Tennessee Department of Transportation to issue a permit for the driveway connection for the recycling convenience center. Once that is issued, bond money can be appropriated, and the project can be solicited for bids by the end of the year. The new full-service drop-off site on Industry Drive will accept recyclable materials, along with household and yard waste.



Recycling center

Paving plans set for 2024

The City of Kingsport anticipates paving approximately 15 miles in fiscal year 2024, including finishing in the Skyland Drive area, starting in the Fairacres area and working on the 0-30 worst-rated streets.

From July 1, 2022, through June 30 2023, 9.48 miles were paved by a contractor and 8.24 miles by city crews. The fiscal year 2023 tally was \$3.7 million with \$3.8 million set for fiscal year 2024.



A paving crew works on a residential street.

Bays Mountain Park to undergo improvements

Phase one for improvements at Bays Mountain Park is underway in the main lobby of the Nature Center and includes expanding the footprint of the gift shop, renovating and right-sizing employee offices, replacing the carpet in the lobby with vinyl flooring and creating a new, more pronounced entrance to the planetarium.

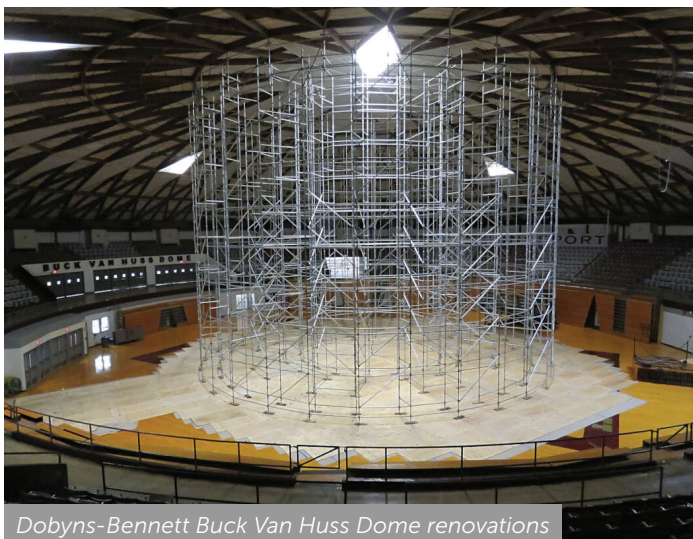
Other first phase work includes covering the gallery walls on the main floor with drywall to create a better sound barrier between the hall and the planetarium.



Bays Mountain Park nature center renovations

Renovation work to start at Dobyns-Bennett Buck Van Huss Dome

The Kingsport Board of Education approved in September a bid for extensive renovations of the Buck Van Huss Dome at Dobyns-Bennett High School, including steel supports to the existing gymnasium Lamella roof structure, seating, HVAC, electrical, floor, activities office, lobby, locker room upgrades, entry plaza, rear entrance, parking and scoreboard. Renovation work will begin this fall with completion set for March 2025.



Dobyns-Bennett Buck Van Huss Dome renovations

Residential development coming to Brickyard Village

The partnership of Edens Investments and Humabuilt Development, under the name Brickyard TN, LLC, recently executed the Master Developer Agreement for Brickyard Village, a proposed 464-unit residential development in the heart of downtown. The project became possible through the support of the Sullivan County Commission, Kingsport Board of Mayor and Aldermen and Kingsport Economic Development Board (KEDB).



Brickyard Village groundbreaking

Main Street rebuild makes progress

Work continues on underground utilities in the area between Sullivan and Cherokee streets for the Main Street rebuild project. The water mains and sewer mains and laterals have been replaced, while storm drainage work continues, and communications, internet and underground power conduits restarted in October.

Contaminated soils have slowed progress, but the project is on track for completion in summer 2025.



Main Street rebuild

QUALITY OF LIFE



State-of-the-art IMAX theater coming to Kingsport

IMAX Corporation and NCG Cinemas are bringing a state-of-the-art IMAX theater with a next generation 4K laser projection system to Kingsport. Construction is expected to start in the first quarter of 2024. The standalone theater will be built next to Fort Henry Mall, which has a NCG Cinemas complex, and is expected to open in March 2025.

The advanced theater experience is immersive by design, as the IMAX with Laser system delivers crystal clear, lifelike images and precision audio for a moviegoing experience unlike anything else. The 4K laser projection system features a new optical engine, custom designed lenses and a suite of proprietary technology that delivers brighter images with increased resolution, deeper contrast and the widest range of colors exclusively to IMAX screens.

ConnectKingsport app shows high use

One of the quickest and easiest ways to report a pothole or other issues to the City of Kingsport is through the ConnectKingsport app. Download the free app at the App Store or Google Play Store and click the "Report a Concern" link.

The ConnectKingsport app allows residents to have a direct line of communication to the city to report non-emergency concerns in more than three dozen categories, including drainage issues, dead animal removal, graffiti, potholes, water leaks, renter complaints, high grass and sewer backups.

To date, more than 19,000 issues have been resolved.

Water meter replacement enters final phase

The City of Kingsport is implementing the final phase of a city-wide, \$4.8 million water meter replacement project that dates back to December 2020, when the batteries in some meters started to fail earlier than anticipated.

The city contracted with EnvoCore to begin meter replacement in the spring of 2021. To date, approximately 27,700 new water meters have been installed. Kingsport plans to replace approximately 10,000 more water meters by the end of 2024.

A base station and 10 repeaters also were installed across the water system to receive the usage information from the new water meters. Kingsport plans to install two additional base stations and 10-12 repeaters.

Water maintenance projects continue to flow

Providing clean water to a community is a capital intensive endeavor. The infrastructure network of plants, pumps and pipes needed to produce and distribute drinking water to the community and collect and treat wastewater to return clean water back to the environment is massive and aging.

The City of Kingsport Utilities Department secured more than \$11 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds from the Department of Environment and Conservation, a \$1.5 million Economic Development Administration grant and a \$500,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant.

Kingsport Dental Clinic set to open next summer

The Kingsport Dental Clinic of the Appalachian Highlands is scheduled to open in summer of 2024 and will serve patients with state-of-the-art technology. The 12-seat clinic will host students on rotation from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Dentistry.

In 2025, the College of Dentistry plans to begin Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD), a one-year residency program that will allow the clinic to see more patients, while providing a world-class education to dental residents.



Academic Village adds training opportunities

The Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Community Outreach (RCAM & CO) will bring a forklift training program, comprehensive robotics lab, carpentry and a second industrial skills lab to the Academic Village. Additionally, the newly leased building will allow for the expansion of currently offered academic programs that have reached maximum capacity.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

This is Kingsport adds Community Partners

TNT Sportsplex

TNT Sportsplex is a Downtown Kingsport recreation complex that offers much more than a gymnasium. It's a place where kids and adults can prioritize physical fitness in a way that feels social and fun. TNT Sportsplex has partnered with This is Kingsport to raise community awareness of the fitness programs that are hosted onsite, including skill workshops in basketball, volleyball, pickleball and more where local athletes can get advice from seasoned experts. TNT Sportsplex offers seasonal sports leagues for both children and adults. The complex also hosts open gym sessions and pickleball court rentals.



The Reserve Cocktail Lounge

The Reserve is a new cocktail bar located at 201 E. Center St., in Downtown Kingsport that is making a big splash in the city's nightlife. The bar offers light hors d'oeuvres and a wide variety of drink choices from wine and beer to classic cocktails and unique new favorites crafted by the team of mixologists. Open Thursday through Sunday evenings, The Reserve hosts multiple weekly events and performances featured on the This is Kingsport calendar, including cocktail making classes. The Reserve also hosts live music events and features classic pub events such as trivia and karaoke nights.



Blue Ridge Events

Blue Ridge Events is a local organization that has become the unofficial home of arts and crafts vendors across East Tennessee. The craft shows, known as Artisan Days, are held nearly every month across the Tri-Cities, with many taking place at the Kingsport Farmers Market and MeadowView Conference Resort and Convention Center. The Blue Ridge Artisan Days feature more than 100 vendors, offering handmade goods including fine art, collectibles, crafts, food and more.

This is Kingsport blog shares community stories

The city's events website, This is Kingsport, has rapidly grown over the past year to include longform blog content that showcases the best of the city. Ranging from Kingsport's early history to food and drink recommendations, to photo galleries of community events, the regular posts present stories from every corner of the Model City. To date, the blog has featured writings from different contributors, including former City Manager Jeff Fleming. This is Kingsport always seeks to expand its pool of contributors.

Walk for Wellness boosts community health

The 2023 Walk for Wellness Expo took place Sept. 23 at the Kingsport Higher Education Center to build and increase community members' interest in their physical health and mental wellness.



Healthy Kingsport hosts its free Walk for Wellness Health Expo annually. The largest health expo in Kingsport features more than 25 vetted health and wellness-oriented vendors, who provide material, handouts, items or giveaways that promote their organization and health and well-being. Vendors included Appalachian Miles for Smiles, Healing Hands Health Center, Friends In Need Health Center, Ballad Health Mobile Health Coach and Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network. Walk for Wellness also has a Kids Zone with games and activities.

The event is made possible by BAE Systems, Sullivan County Regional Health Department, Domtar Packaging, Creekside Behavioral Health, Food City and Kingsport Parks and Recreation.

World Long Drive tour tees off in Kingsport

World Long Drive, golf's most adrenaline-filled driving competition, brought its major tour event to Kingsport in August. The golf competition held at Cattails at MeadowView Golf Course at Meadowview Marriott Resort and Convention Center featured 64 of the best long drive experts from around the world.

The three-day competition featured both men's and women's divisions, with participants vying for the titles of World Long Drive Champion. Two champions were crowned with powerful drives of 316 and 401 yards, respectively, by Sandra Carlborg of Sweden and Jack Smith of Louisiana. The event attracted not only competitors, but also crowds of spectators. Kingsport also was showcased on national media, as the final day of play was broadcast on the Golf Channel.

FISCAL SUCCESS

City budget boosts employee compensation

The City of Kingsport, over the last three years, has made significant investments in our employees' compensation, benefits and culture in order to attract and retain a qualified municipal workforce to serve the citizens of Kingsport. Attracting and retaining a qualified municipal workforce is goal No. 2 of the city's strategic plan.

Budget Bites

Kingsport's budget is the guiding financial document for the city.

It must be voted on, and passed twice, by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen before going into effect.

The city's 2024 budget runs from July 2023-June 2024.

The budget includes:

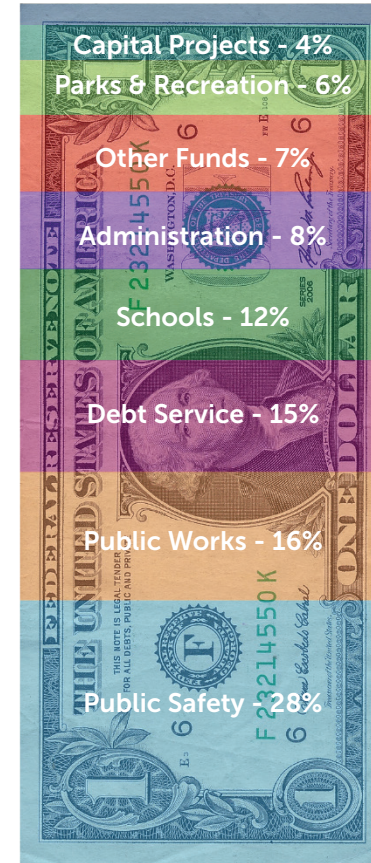
- General Fund (operating and capital funds)
- Water and Sewer Systems
- School Fund (general purpose and nutrition)
- Other Funds (such as Bays Mountain and MeadowView)



The pyramid illustrates the hierarchy of needs that city officials use to guide Kingsport's capital budget and prioritize improvements.

Where do my property taxes go?

Public Subsidies & Grants - 4%



Kingsport's 2024 fiscal year budget is the guiding financial document for the city.

City sustains fiscal success

Kingsport has:

- \$240 million budget supporting schools, infrastructure, operations and more.
- General Purpose School Fund: \$104 million
- General City Funds: \$136 million
- Tax rate: \$1.998.
- S&P Global: AA rating
- Moody's Investor Service: Aa2 rating.
- Debt: 5.6% of taxable assessed value with debt limit 4.4% below the city's self-imposed maximum and 14.4% below state's imposed maximum.
- Won Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Budget Award again in FY2023 to make 24 years in a row and the 28th overall. Only 5.4% of municipalities qualified for the award.

SCHOOLS

Kingsport City Schools earn recognition

District Recognitions

- Top composite score of five in Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) system-wide literacy; system-wide numeracy; system-wide literacy and numeracy; and overall system-wide composite score.
- Tribe Athletic Complex opened in December 2022.
- 2023 "Best Place to Teach in Tennessee" by Niche Best Schools Ranking.
- Heather Wolf of Washington Elementary: 2022 National Distinguished Principal by National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).
- Dr. Kyle Loudermilk of John Sevier Middle: 2022 Principal of the Year by the Tennessee Department of Education.
- Dr. Bo Shadden of Dobyns-Bennett High: 2022 CTE Administrator of the Year by the Tennessee Association for Career and Technical Education (TN ACTE).
- Chris Poore of Dobyns-Bennett High: 2022 4-A Boys Coach of the Year by the Basketball Coaches Association of Tennessee.

School-Level Recognitions

- Adams and Johnson Elementary: 2022 U.S. News & World Report Best Elementary Schools in Tennessee.
- Robinson Middle: 2022 U.S. News & World Report Best Middle Schools in Tennessee.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2022 U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools in Tennessee.
- Adams, Johnson and Washington Elementary: 2022 Reward Schools by Tennessee Department of Education based on results from 2021-22 TCAP assessment.
- Jackson and Johnson Elementary: Lighthouse School of Distinction by Franklin Covey.
- Roosevelt Elementary: Trauma-Informed School by Tennessee Department of Education.
- Washington Elementary: Earned five-year accreditation for 2022 Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Student Recognitions

- Sevier Middle: Student newspaper, The Sequoyah Scribe, won eight Youth Journalism International and three National Scholastic Press Association awards.
- Robinson Middle: MATHCOUNTS team placed fourth in state competition.
- Robinson Middle: Science Olympiad team placed sixth in state competition.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 14 National Merit Semifinalists and Commended Students.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 105 graduating seniors with a 4.0+ GPA and 53 graduating seniors with a 30+ ACT.
- Dobyns-Bennett: Cyber Tribe Robotics team advanced to become a third consecutive world-level semifinalist.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 Kingsport Technologies underwater



robotics team advanced to world competition for first time in school history.

- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 Future Business Leaders of America State Champions (two) in Broadcast Journalism.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 Congressional Art Competition student recognitions (two).
- Dobyns-Bennett: Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) earns 16th consecutive National Program of Distinction recognition.
- D-B EXCEL: R'Matey's underwater robotics team advanced to World Competition for fifth consecutive year, finishing 11th in the world.

Music Program Recognitions

- Dobyns-Bennett: 2022 Bands of America Class AAA National Champions.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 Winter Guard International Scholastic A World Champions

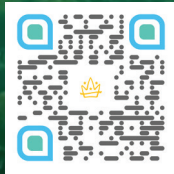
Athletic Recognitions

- Robinson Middle: 2023 softball team placed third in state tournament.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2022 National High School Strength Coaches Association Program of Excellence.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2022 individual state wrestling champions.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 state bowling championship runner-up.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 state dual wrestling third place.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 individual state wrestling champions (two) and individual state wrestling runner-up.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 track & field relay team 4x800 state champions.
- Dobyns-Bennett: 2023 National High School Coaches Association national wrestling champion.



THIS IS KINGSPORT

Keep up with all that's happening in Kingsport!



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KingsportTN.gov

 **Kingsport Alerts**

 **ConnectKingsport**
the free city app