



ORBA helps lead Isaiah 117 House build



Photo courtesy of ORBA

OCOEE REGION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION members were among the audience at the ribbon-cutting for the Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House. On the front row, from left, are ORBA board member Max Phillips, ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak and ORBA board member Dennis Epperson. On the back row, from left, are ORBA Immediate Past President Charles Blankinship and ORBA board member Blake Allison. See more photos on Page C3.

From STAFF REPORTS

Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House has helped dozens of kids feel cared for while they await placement with a foster family.

And the Ocoee Region Builders Association (ORBA) has been at the forefront of the community-supported construction project.

Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House

Opening its doors to foster children in October 2021, the local Isaiah 117 House was the sixth home to open in Tennessee. The original flagship house was founded in 2017 in Carter County, Tennessee.

Before the grand opening, the Isaiah House was fulfilling its mission by providing supplies for foster care children and caseworkers as often as they could. Now that the house is open and operational, the nonprofit hasn't had a need that wasn't filled by the community.

The two-bedroom, three-bathroom home features an office area for Department of Children's Services representatives that includes its own half-bathroom and volunteer check-in, in addition to a supervised visitation area with a kitchenette with its own half-bathroom as well. Upstairs is a storage area for children's clothing and supplies for foster parents, which has been organized by age group by numerous teams of volunteers. The rooms offer bunk beds and additional pull-out beds.

Isaiah 117 is a Tennessee-based organization that focuses on helping

with the foster care crisis by providing temporary housing for children entering the foster care system while they await placement while supporting foster parents with supplies for children of all ages.

The organization announced a project to build an Isaiah 117 House to serve Bradley and Polk counties in 2019, led by coordinator Renee Curry.

ORBA a leader in initiative

Coordinating contractors and sub-contractors was ORBA, which took on the project as its annual build in 2020.

From day one of Curry's request to make this a reality, ORBA was on board — 2020 President Blake Allison took the hammer and got started.

Many ORBA members who participated in the build came out for the ribbon-cutting, including Jimmy Blankinship, Charles Blankinship, Dennis Botts, Max Phillips, Blake Allison, Dennis Epperson and Joshua Rogers and Adam Lewis.

Allison said "it took all of 20 seconds" for ORBA to decide to take on this build with the Isaiah team.

"Never once have I had to beg someone to come here. Never once did we have to sit forever saying, 'We have no idea who's going to do this.' Continually, all of you out in the crowd said, 'Hey, I'll be there. And not only will I do that, I'll do it for this price, or I'll do it completely discounted, and we'll do more,'" Allison said. "There was always more, and I think that was a theme throughout this build."

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1:17



Photo courtesy of Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House

THE BRADLEY-POLK Isaiah 117 House was completed last fall, with support from organizations and individuals, including ORBA. The home offers a safe, comfortable place for children waiting to be placed into foster homes.

==== A special supplement to the **Cleveland Daily Banner** ====



Photo courtesy of ORBA

THE 2022 ORBA board of directors was sworn in by Bradley County Mayor D. Gary Davis during a luncheon in February. On the front row, from left, are President Keith Jones, Chad Dean, Peaches Searles, Jennifer Holden, Executive Officer Charlotte Peak, Vice President Dustin Wong, Mayor Davis and Tim Evans. On the back row, from left, are Jerry Franitza, Max Phillips, Immediate Past President Charles Blankinship, John Proffitt, Joe Collins and Lake Mantooth.

ORBA is the voice of the builders

The Ocoee Region Builders Association, for 52 years, has done a fantastic job in all aspects of protecting and representing the interests of the local homebuilding industry as well as the home buyer. With its membership support, ORBA will continue to be an integral part of monitoring the construction industry in Bradley, Polk and McMinn counties.

The Ocoee Region Builders Association has a long history of working

toward responsible and reasonable solutions that benefit its members, and ultimately, the community.

ORBA stands committed to work with all interested parties and to arrive at solutions for the many issues that face a growing community. ORBA has worked with numerous other organizations and educational groups, forming powerful and effective partnerships to help build homes that are more affordable, green and less energy dependent.

The builders and associates of ORBA understand how important it is to make time for our industry and association. ORBA, as a group, stands strong to represent our area of home-building. ORBA will continue to be the voice of the building industry and prepare the community for tomorrow.

For more information, call 423-667-5760 or visit orbatn.com/ contact.

2022 ORBA Executive Committee members

- President: Keith Jones — KACE Construction & Developments
- Vice President: Dustin Wong — Riverstone Construction, LLC
- Executive Officer: Charlotte Peak — KACE Construction & Developments
- Immediate Past President: Charles Blankinship — CC Blankinship & Sons
- Secretary: Jerry Franitza

2022 ORBA Board of Directors

- Blake Allison — Epperson Allison Homes LLC
- Chad Dean — Dean Custom Homes, LLC
- Charlotte Peak — KACE Construction & Developments
- Clay Cochran — Jody Millard Pest Control
- Clint Taylor — KACE Construction & Developments
- Dennis Epperson — Epperson Homes LLC (2017 HBAT president)
- Dustin Wong — River Stone Construction LLC
- Jennifer Holden — Lowe's Lighting Gallery
- Jerry Franitza — Epperson Homes
- Joe Collins — Bank of Cleveland
- John Proffitt — Advanced Energy Services
- Lake Mantooth — 4 Star LLC
- Max Phillips — Crye-Leike, Realtors
- Peaches Searles — American Portables
- Tim Evans — Hiwassee Building Materials

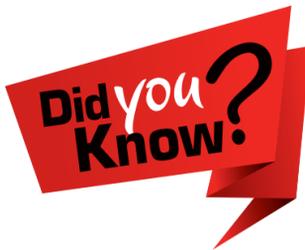


Sharing ORBA's mission

The Ocoee Region Builders Association is a not-for-profit organization that represents the building industry in Bradley, McMinn and Polk counties.

Our mission and priority at Ocoee Region Builders Association is to advocate for our members through legislation, clear communication and ongoing education.

It is the local chapter of the state and national associations. The National Association of Home Builders is one of the nation's largest trade associations with more than 140,000 members, whose mission is to enhance the building and housing industries. NAHB is known as the voice of the housing industry.



Certain home improvement projects are more complex than others.

Projects that involve working with gas lines are among the most complicated and risky undertakings, and even seasoned do-it-yourselfers are urged to leave such tasks to certified professionals.

According to Angi, the average cost to move a gas line is between \$15 and \$25 per linear foot, and homeowners can expect to pay an additional \$1 to \$10 per linear foot for pipe materials. A natural gas plumber can install, extend and repair natural gas lines and ensure that the project is completed safely, on time and within homeowners' budgets.

Angi notes that the average cost to move a gas line is between \$250 and \$750 for the whole project. However, if a buried line must be excavated, that cost could run into the thousands of dollars.

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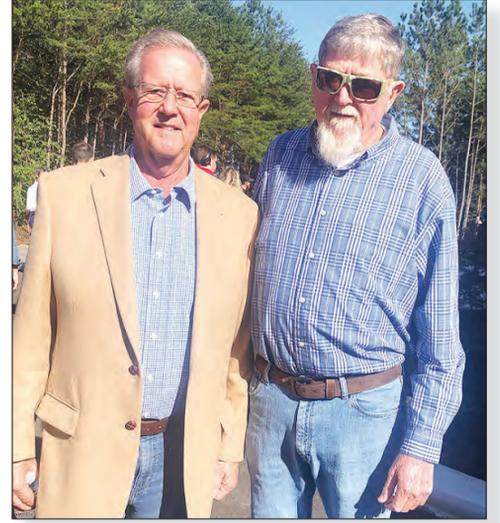
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ORBA helps lead Isaiah 117 House build



Photos courtesy of ORBA



ORBA board member Max Phillips, left, and Immediate Past President Charles Blankinship were among the organization's representatives who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

DOZENS OF PEOPLE attended the ribbon-cutting for the Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House last fall.



AMONG THE ORBA MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House were, above, from left, Dennis Botts and Jimmy Blankinship; and below, from left, Joshua Rogers and Adam Lewis.



THE COMMUNITY CELEBRATED the opening of the Bradley-Polk Isaiah 117 House.



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On-target at annual ORBA Clay Shoot Tournament



In June, ORBA held its annual Clay Shoot at Benton Sports Clays. Station sponsors were Lowe's Lighting Gallery, Drain Right Guttering, Acme Brick Tile & Stone, WCA Certified Public Accountants, Hiwassee Builders Supply, BH & K P.C., Right Way Media, SRM Concrete, American Portables, Max Phillips - Crye-Leike, Realtors, Dean Custom

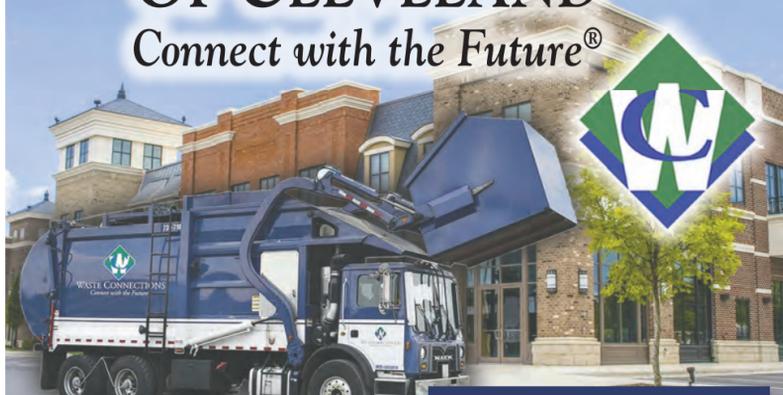
Homes LLC, The Hannah Agency, Bank of Cleveland, HBR Power-sports, River Stone Construction LLC, Wholesale Supply Group Inc., The Melody Smith Team - KW Cleveland, Boundless Moving Storage, Sherwin Williams, Coldwell Banker Award Realty - Margie Keller, Insurance Incorporated, and Superior Walls of East Tennessee.

Photos courtesy of ORBA

IN THE PHOTO AT RIGHT, Gary Farmer, left, pictured with ORBA President Charles Blankinship, won Top Gun at the 2021 Clay Shoot Tournament. See more photos on Page C5.



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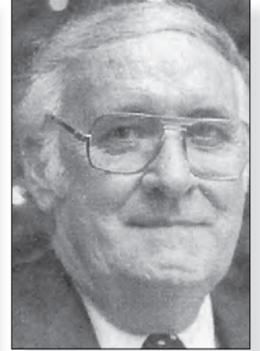
Randall Fisher
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Auston Steivson
President – 1972, 1973
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Photos courtesy
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Alvin Goodwin
President – 1980

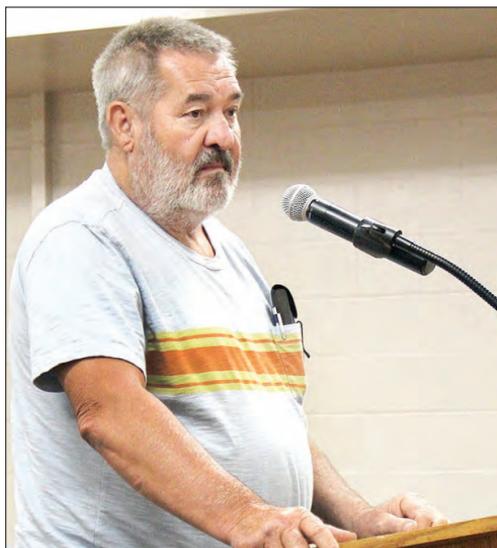
Developers give input on utilities master plan



Blake Allison



Dustin Wong



Lake Mantooth

By **AUTUMN HUGHES**
Staff Writer

Housing availability and job opportunities go hand-in-hand in terms of residential and industrial growth, according to local developers and industrial development officials.

“It all goes together,” said Doug Berry, the Cleveland/Bradley Chamber of Commerce’s vice president of economic development, regarding industrial development and housing development.

Local developers recently gave their input on the areas of Bradley County where they believe residential development and commercial growth are likely to occur, as well as challenges builders face in securing sanitary sewer service for their developments. They shared their thoughts with members of the Bradley County Commission’s Ad Hoc Committee on Drinking Water and Waste Water Treatment Services and representatives of two engineering firms working on a countywide master utility plan.

Adam Driver, president of AD Engineering Services Inc., and Gary Cosby, executive vice president of CTI Engineers Inc., gave a brief overview of the master plan’s scope and goals to the developers, and asked for their input.

Present for the discussion were Berry; developers Lonnie Setlich, Lake Mantooth, Dustin Long, Dustin Hawkins, Chad Dean, and Blake Allison; and Ross Tarver, chairman of the Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber of Commerce Industrial Development Board.

Housing shortage

Among several topics, the developers discussed the housing shortage in Bradley County, and being hard-pressed to keep up with demand.

Allison said, “having appropriate utilities would help.”

Dustin Wong, president of Riverstone Construction in Chattanooga, said workforce housing is an

important part of the local building and development industry. He said his company is looking at how to build more affordable worker housing, on a daily business.

Berry said employee housing costs in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range.

However, Wong said that is not feasible with current lumber costs.

“We’re at a crisis,” committee Chairman Dennis Epperson said, explaining why the utility master plan process is important. He added affordability of homes can’t be reached with the current infrastructure not supporting additional development.

The developers mentioned a concern about running out of land to annex for more residential construction.

Wong said another concern is if local builders can’t improve on workforce housing, national homebuilders may move in and take over.

Lake Mantooth, owner of 4 Star LLC, agreed, noting local developers “take more pride in a subdivision — if we get these big-box builders in here and they just come in and they’re cookie-cutter houses ... I just think we take more pride than some of those people ...”

“I love the land, I want to make it be as beautiful as I can — that’s what sells my houses,” he added.

Cosby said he appreciates the local builders’ efforts, adding the engineers putting together the utility master plan are trying to be sensitive to all the information they are receiving.

He mentioned opposition to the master utility plan study because of objections to high-density development in the rural areas “for fear of things like congestion, rising property values around them, which raise taxes.”

“We’re trying to be sensitive to that in extending things like sewers into areas that may be more rural, and even the planning documents were cautioning about that,” Cosby said. He asked how

developers see “helping to preserve that rural character” while meeting the demand for more housing.

“Are they conflicting, or are there ways to handle that to where we can be sensitive to residents who are concerned about high-density developing now occurring out in the rural areas?” Cosby asked.

“I think there’s a way to mesh the two worlds together and still have a rural aspect,” said Blake Allison, part-owner of Epperson Allison Homes LLC. “But if we continue down the road [path of development] currently, the people who live in those rural homes are not going to be able to afford to live in those rural homes. Because if we don’t have

more avenues for housing and workforce housing, the gentrification will take care of itself.”

Condensing the discussion, Driver said, without higher density of housing, there will be higher use of land as individual houses spread over a larger area.

Wong agreed, noting the strategic growth plan for Bradley County “took into account” that development would go mainly in specific areas.

“So you’re not going to go way out in the county anyway with sewer,” he said. “I mean, more than likely you’re not going to run 15 miles into the county to service one development ... It’s just not going to happen.”

See INPUT, Page C7

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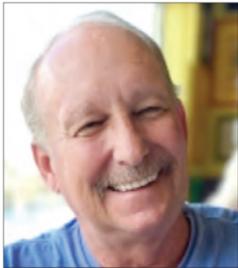
Ralph Rogers
President – 1984



Andy Hart



Gale Thomas



Paul Rice

Former ORBA past presidents pass during 2022

From ORBA

Last year we failed to mention our 2001 and 2002 ORBA President Andy Hart had passed away on March 30, 2020.

2001 and 2002 ORBA President Andy Hart

Andrew Allen Hart, 63, a resident of Cleveland for 29 years, passed away on Tuesday, March 30, 2020, at his home, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on Feb. 5, 1957, in Dothan, Alabama, to the late A.J. and Robbie Karnegy Hart. Andy was an electrical engineer at Bechtel Corporation and attended Northside Presbyterian Church. He was preceded in death by his parents; and his brother, Jerry Hart.

Andy was survived by his three sons, Travis (Katherine) Hart, Christian Hart and Kit Hart, all of Cleveland; his sister, Becky Hart of Cottonwood, Alabama; brother, Kenneth Hart of Panama City, Florida and several nieces and nephews.

1994 ORBA President Gale Thomas

Gale Albert Thomas, 76, of Cleveland, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. He was born on June 16, 1945, to the late Lee and Mary Thomas. He was the owner of Thomas Metal Supply for over 50 years. He was also the 1994 past president of what is now known as the Ocoee Region Builders Association. Gale enjoyed hunting and he never met a stranger. He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

In addition to his mother and father, he was preceded in death by his wife, Geraldine Thomas; brother, Don Thomas; and sister, Carolyn Thomas.

He leaves behind to cherish his memory his two sons, Robert Thomas and Shawn Thomas; and sister, Charlotte

See PAST, Page C8

INPUT: Developers give input on utilities master plan

From Page C6

He also added, “Sometimes the need of the county is going to have to outweigh those five people” opposing growth and development.

“I think responsible growth is going to answer that,” Wong added.

Chairman Epperson, himself a developer and part-owner of Epperson Allison Homes LLC, said in the future if a wastewater treatment plant is built to serve growth, it could be “smart growth” in a “concentrated growth area ... utilized to the best ability of the usage of the land that we developers can fit within that [area].”

Bently Thomas, Bradley County’s director of planning & inspections and a member of the committee, agreed the city of Cleveland “is only going to be able to grow out so far with the [urban] growth boundary. We’re going to have to come up with alternatives out in the county.”

“This is a good thing that we’re doing this,” Thomas said of the study and meeting with stakeholders.

Cosby asked Thomas if he anticipates any changes to the urban growth boundaries, which have been in place “for a good while.”

“No, and the process to change them is extensive,” Thomas said. “The county, the city [of Cleveland] and Charleston all have to agree; you have to get a coordinating committee together. We did one in Polk County that took four or five years to get completed, so it’s a big process.”

Job opportunities

“We have to have people. We have to have housing or we are going to stall out, quite simply,” Berry said, adding Bradley County needs new people moving into the community in order to fill the available jobs.

Discussing workforce needs, Berry said local leaders are looking out 50 years, not just focusing on the near future.

After company officials re-

view potential sites, they bring in spouses to review schools and quality-of-life aspects like shopping opportunities, restaurants and entertainment.

“Quality of life is the main topic of discussion [after facilities availability],” Berry said. “We’ve got to address all of those.”

Ross Tarver said the chamber has been successful with industrial recruitment and quality of life. Incentives are important, because the decision of whether an industry locates here often comes down to quality of life and affordable housing for employees.

“Our residential housing inventory is almost nonexistent,” Tarver said, adding houses are being sold while they are still under construction.

Tarver said he understands obstacles developers are facing, specifically that they can’t reach inventory density to create value to get housing to an affordable price. He added if something isn’t done quickly, “we will stall out.”

“I think we have the right partners. We just have to come together as a unified front to meet the requirements, the needs of our community and continue to grow,” Tarver said.

He added he appreciates the efforts of the local residential and commercial development industry to share information.

“I’m just glad we’re having this opportunity to talk about these things and address the concerns [and] get all these answers out there about things that aren’t necessarily true,” Bradley County Commission Chairman Johnny Mull said. He used the example “that we’re trying to take over ... we’re trying to provide sustained growth in a practical way that meets everyone’s benefit — builders, developers ... homeowners, industrial development, people coming in.”

“We need to have these

conversations. It’s nice to have these talks, but at some point we’re going to have to come up with a plan, begin to move forward and actually do some things instead of talk about it,” Mull said.

Commissioner Kevin Raper, a committee member, said officials have “got to make sure support is in place,” meaning jails, schools and infrastructure of roads, sewer and water are sufficient to support the anticipated growth.

“When those start breaking down, growth will plateau and then it will start the other direction — downward,” Raper said, adding it is important to have a vision toward keeping support services working.

Driver added “some sustained growth” will help keep Bradley County’s tax base steady; it behooves everyone to look at these issues. He noted the master utility plan “will have the thoughts presented on actionable steps” and there will be a discussion on funding options for the future of sewer and water extensions.

“It won’t be a complete, full, comprehensive [plan] that says here’s exactly what needs to happen and here’s what it costs ... but it will give the initial framework for that, so everybody knows what possible directions we could head to take actions,” Driver said.

Cosby said the engineers are still gathering information, which has been delayed due to COVID-19, but “we’ve already drafted a good bit of the report” and maps and preliminary layouts for utility lines are being developed.

“There will be further opportunities” for the public to review information and share input, Cosby noted.

Note: This article was originally published in the Cleveland Daily Banner on Sunday, July 4, 2021.

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Ed Allen
President – 1985



Danny Marr
President – 1986



Sam Humbar
President – 1987



Joe Owenby
President – 1988

ORBA members attend HBAT Spring Legislative Meeting



Photos courtesy of ORBA

OCOEE REGION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION members met with legislators earlier this month, at the HBAT Spring Legislative Meeting. From left are ORBA board member Dennis Epperson, state Rep. Dan Howell, ORBA board member Chad Dean, ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak, state Rep. Greg Vital, ORBA board member Max Phillips, state Rep. Mark Hall, and ORBA board member John Proffitt. See more photos on Page C9.



ORBA BOARD MEMBER Max Phillips, left, and state Sen. Mike Bell were among the guests at HBAT's Spring Legislative Meeting.



STATE REP. GREG VITAL and ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak were among the guests at HBAT's Spring Legislative Meeting.



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PAST: ORBA past presidents pass during 2022

From Page C7

1995 ORBA President Paul Rice
Paul Edward Rice Jr., 60, of Cleveland, passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022. He was born on July 19, 1961, and he was a lifelong resident of Cleveland. Paul was an extremely hard worker and he loved boating, fishing and skiing.

He was preceded in death by his father, Paul Edward Rice Sr.
He leaves behind to cherish his memory his mother, Barbara Rice; and two sons, Will Rice (Shannon) and Ben Rice; and brother, Brian Rice (Becky) of Naples, Florida.

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J.W. Kibble
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L. Kent Berry
President – 1990



John Eldridge
President – 1991



Bill Monaghan
President – 1992
HBAT President – 1997



Photos courtesy of ORBA

HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF TENNESSEE senior officers are shown here with Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, at HBAT's Spring Legislative Meeting, earlier this month. From left are HBAT Immediate Past President James Reid, HBAT President/NAHB National Director Duane Vanhook, Lee, HBAT Vice President and Treasurer Charlotte Peak, HBAT Associate Vice President Nathan Paul and HBAT Vice President and Secretary David Moore.

**ORBA members
attend HBAT Spring
Legislative Meeting**

Each spring, home builders from around the state travel to Nashville for a Day on the Hill. The day offers members of the building industry the opportunity to "connect" with lawmakers, learn about issues impacting the industry and help to advocate on behalf of the building industry.



Photos courtesy of ORBA

MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL legislative delegation met earlier this month with ORBA representatives at HBAT's Spring Legislative Meeting. From left are ORBA board members Dennis Epperson, Chad Dean and John Proffitt, state Rep. Mark Cochran, state Rep. Dan Howell, ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak, state Rep. Mark Hall, and ORBA board members Peaches Searles and Max Phillips.

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Low-cost ways to revamp living areas

Home improvement projects require substantial financial investment. But just because a homeowner wants to bring a fresh look indoors doesn't mean he or she has to break the bank along the way.

Living rooms are some of the most frequently used spaces in a home, and they can use an update from time to time to stay on trend or to make the area more functional for a changing family dynamic. Here are some budget-friendly ideas for breathing new life into living room designs.

• **Establish the budget.** Homeowners should figure out how many dollars they can designate to a living room makeover before purchasing supplies or hiring out the work. Figure out the scope of the remodel, visit stores or suppliers to price out materials, get estimates from contractors, and then plan for some unforeseen circumstances along the way to

determine if this type of renovation is affordable. If not, scale things back until the project more closely aligns with your budget.

• **Change the paint color.** Lighter and brighter colors are on trend. A can or two of paint can do wonders for updating a space without a large financial commitment. Pair that new paint color with new window coverings and complementary throw pillows to pull the theme together with minimal expense.

• **Update the flooring.** Tired, outdated carpeting or other flooring can use an overhaul. While solid hardwood flooring may be preferable, there are many types of laminate flooring that mimic the looks of popular wood colors and styles for a fraction of the cost. Plus, many are sold at home improvement retailers and even at warehouse clubs or online for reasonable prices. Laminate flooring also

may be a potential DIY job for a skilled homeowner, saving even more money.

• **Introduce a fireplace.** Fireplaces were once hot commodities, but that popularity waned in the 1970s and 1980s. Homeowners with chimneys may discover a fireplace was boarded over and the bare bones still exist that can be renovated to bring back character. There also are ventless freestanding units that are quite affordable that can mimic the look of a built-in fireplace.

• **Reupholster instead of replace furniture.** There's no need to throw away quality furniture if the fabric is the only thing impeding design. New upholstery or even a slipcover can update designs.

• **Conquer clutter.** Rather than adding something to the living room, remove clutter to give the room a more airy feel. This can instantly

change the look of the room. Use cord covers to tame plugs for electronics and remove unnecessary furniture from the room.

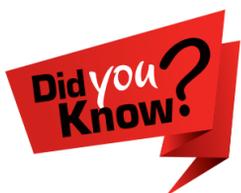
• **Improve lighting.** Another easy and often inexpensive fix is to change lighting fixtures, including using brighter, more energy efficient LED bulbs, and to assess lighting needs to eliminate dark corners of rooms that can make the space seem drab.

Living room spaces in need of an update often can benefit from improvements that go easy on the wallet.

Leaves that fall from trees can be a marvel to behold. But leaves can stain exterior surfaces when they eventually settle on vehicles, concrete driveways, patios, and other surfaces, become wet and/or are not cleaned away in a timely fashion.

Leaf stains are caused by tannins in the leaves. The pigments can be absorbed by porous materials like concrete and leave stains behind.

While these stains may wash away over time, homeowners may prefer a



faster way to get rid of unsightly stains. To remove moderate leaf stains, mix oxygen bleach with hot water and apply to stains using a scrub brush. Dark

stains may require a tougher cleanser, such as one that contains trisodium phosphate.

Some homeowners find success using a pressure washer to clean away leaf stains, while others rely on commercial leaf-stain removers.

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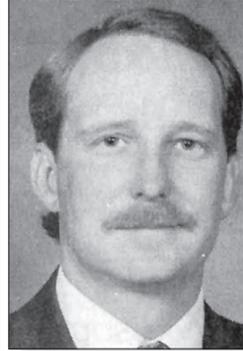
**Past Presidents
1993-1997**



Dee Burris
President – 1993



Gale Thomas
President – 1994



Paul Rice Jr.
President – 1995



Charles Shirley
President – 1996, 1997

Everyone welcome! ORBA hosts Legislative Open House



Photos courtesy of ORBA

OCOEE REGION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION board members pose for a photo at ORBA's Legislative Open House. From left are John Proffitt, Jennifer Holden, Max Phillips, Dennis Epperson, Dustin Wong, Blake Allison, Charlotte Peak, Tim Evans, Charles Blankinship, Peaches Searles, Chad Dean, Keith Jones, Paul Rice, Lake Mantooth and Jerry Franitz. See more photos from this event on Pages C11, C12 and C15.



AMONG THOSE in attendance at ORBA's Legislative Open House were above, from left, former ORBA President Dee Burris, ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak, and Dr. John Stanbery, Republican state executive committeeman; (above, right), Bradley County Register of Deeds Dina Swafford and Rhonda Johnson.



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Keith Jones is 2022 ORBA president

During the ORBA Installation Banquet, former ORBA 2003 President David May III swore Keith Jones in as 2022 ORBA president.

Jones has been active in ORBA since Andy Hart and Dennis Epperson encouraged him to join in 2009. Jones is no stranger to construction and has been in the industry since 1995, doing various construction on jobsites for many contractors including David May.

In 2000, May built Jones' first house and Jones got the bug to do it himself.

Jones is a native of Bradley County and owns KACEZ General Partnership with Charlotte Peak and has a residential, commercial, industrial license. He also specializes in installing custom tile showers and flooring. He has built and developed many town homes, custom homes and spec houses during his 26-year career, including several years in the cellulose insulation business.

Jones gives back to the community through builds with



Photos courtesy of ORBA

KEITH JONES, left, was sworn in as 2022 ORBA president by 2003 President David May III.

Habitat for Humanity and the Ocoee Region Builders Association. KACE Construction also built back six homes for the Long Term Recovery Group and Habitat after the 2011 tornadoes. He has served on the Government Affairs Board for ORBA for several years and is on the Bradley County Board of Zoning and Appeals.

Jones attributes KACE's success to several people that guided the company in the early years, including Randy Brown who helped them develop

their first subdivision in Polk County; David May for construction guidance; Eddie Moreland at Nationwide Insurance for guiding them in investment properties for their retirement; and to Bobby Taylor, Scott Taylor and Terry Buckner at Bank of Cleveland for always financing the projects and for giving blunt advice and saying, "No" to bad ideas.

Jones is married to Samantha and has three children — Savannah, Nathan and Thomas, and enjoys fishing, boating and

traveling. He is also a member of the Conasauga Masonic Lodge.

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**Past Presidents
1998-2003**



Barbara Chadwick
President – 1998



Jim Pemberton
President – 1999, 2000



Andy Hart
President – 2001, 2002



David May
President – 2003



BRADLEY COUNTY Sheriff Steve Lawson, Road Superintendent Sandra Knight, Road Department Administrative Assistant Gloria Hayes and ORBA board member Dennis Epperson were among the attendees at the event.



FROM LEFT are Bradley County Commission Chairman Johnny Mull, Jay Goza, 10th Judicial District Attorney General Steve Crump and Christy Goza.

PHOTOS of past ORBA presidents were on display during the meeting.



FROM LEFT are ORBA board member Jennifer Holden, and ORBA members Allyson Hannah and Lindsey Surlas.



FROM LEFT are ORBA member Tom Cate and Bradley County General Sessions/Juvenile Judge Barrett Painter.



FROM LEFT are Teresa Davis and ORBA board member Dennis Epperson.

**ORBA hosts
Legislative
Open House**

Photos courtesy of ORBA



ABOVE, FROM LEFT, are City Fields Executive Director Dustin Tommey, Bradley County Commissioner Cindy Slater and ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak.



AT LEFT, Bradley County Circuit Court Clerk Gayla Miller, from left, Dale Dixson and Bradley County Juvenile Court Director Vickie Towne were among the guests.

See more photos from this event on Pages C12 and C15.

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**Past Presidents
2004-2012**



Phillip Daniels
President – 2004, 2005



Dennis Epperson
President – 2006, 2007, 2009
HBAT President – 2017



Chris Spors
President – 2008



Charlotte Jones
President – 2010, 2012



FROM LEFT are Samantha Jones, 2022 ORBA President Keith Jones and ORBA board member Lake Mantooth.

Photos courtesy of ORBA

**ORBA hosts
Legislative
Open House**

See more photos
from this event
on Page C15.



FROM LEFT are Rachel and Steve Hatchett, and Bradley County Sheriff Steve Lawson.



ABOVE, AT LEFT, 10th Judicial District Assistant Public Defender Donald Leon Shahan was among the attendees of ORBA's Legislative Open House. Above, at right, photos of past ORBA presidents were on display during the meeting.



ORBA board member Tim Evans was among the guests.



ORBA BOARD MEMBER
Peaches Searles, at left, visits with guests at the Legislative Open House. At right is ORBA board member Max Phillips.



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ORBA, RCAR support non-contiguous annexation

In 2021, ORBA defended the right for a property owner to be annexed into the city if the property owner requested it. Realtors from River Counties Association of Realtors and members of ORBA gave statements encouraging the Bradley County Commission to approve non-contiguous annexation.

Non-contiguous annexation occurs when the owner of a property that does not touch the city limits asks for that property to be annexed.

In August, local Realtors questioned the County Commission's commitment to helping property rights and private property rights and helping make way for affordable housing, bringing up those topics during discussion about non-contiguous annexation.

Commissioner Charlotte Peak, a supporter of the annexation request and ORBA's execu-

utive officer, introduced Max Phillips, Realtor emeritus with the River Counties Association of Realtors and a member of ORBA's Board of Directors.

Thanking commissioners for giving him the opportunity to speak on behalf of RCAR, Phillips said, "The first thing I would like to ask is, is the Bradley County Commission against private property rights?"

"Property owners should always be able to decide what they want to do with their property at all times," Phillips said.

Phillips also asked if commissioners are "against affordable housing."

"There is no way to have affordable housing unless we have high-density lots ... that lowers the price of a house," he said.

Phillips said people

are moving to this area because of multiple factors, including no state income tax, low cost of living, "great weather," a four-season climate, and what housing that is available is affordable.

"We need homes. We need jobs. We need tax dollars," Phillips said. "With all due respect, please reconsider."

"... We don't have years to wait here, the people are coming. We can't put them on the street — They're coming and we don't have any [homes] to sell them," he added.

Phillips also noted sewer availability is not just an issue for new construction.

"There are houses now that are being condemned in Bradley County because of septic tanks," he said. "We have a real dirt problem here. It doesn't work [for all septic systems];

and we need sewer bad. "In order for developers to have and develop high-density subdivisions, they have to have sewer. They have no other choice ... their hands are tied: either they annex themselves into the city, or they cannot develop the property ..."

See **SUPPORT**, Page C16

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ORBA presents annual scholarship to Grant Holden

Each year ORBA gives out a scholarship with a matching grant from HBAT. This year, Grant Holden received the scholarship, which was presented by 2021 ORBA President Charles Blankinship.

Holden attends Baylor University in Waco, Texas, seeking his bachelor's degree in accounting and business. He is the son of ORBA members George and Jennifer Holden, who serve as co-owners of Lowe's Cabinet and Lighting Gallery.

To earn the scholarship, a student must be planning to go into the building industry or an occupation that supports the building industry such as finance or business. The recipient must also be heavily involved in their school, have an exceptional GPA and have completed 15 hours of community service.

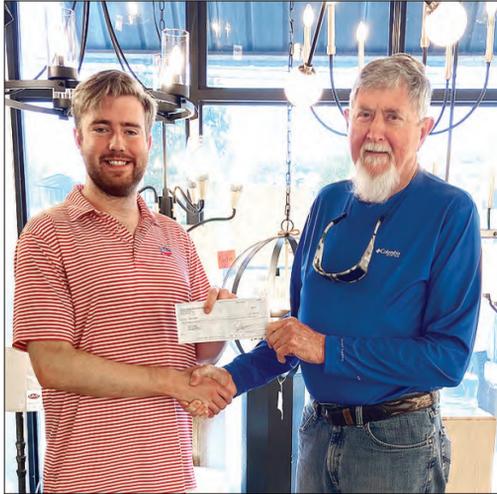


Photo courtesy of ORBA

GRANT HOLDEN is the most recent recipient of ORBA's scholarship. Shown here are Holden, left, and ORBA Immediate Past President Charles Blankinship.

John Proffitt, the chairman of the Education Committee and past ORBA president, helps

go through the scholarship applicants yearly and raises money to help fund them.

Home Builders Association of Tennessee Fall Meeting



Photocourtesy of ORBA

ORBA MEMBERS present at the HBAT Fall Meeting in November (see photo above) included Blake Allison, Chad Dean, Charlotte Peak, Dennis Epperson, Clay Cochran, and John Proffitt and his wife, Vickie.

HBAT presented Charlotte Peak with the BEAM Award (see photo at right). This award is given to builders who use local resources and use members of the association.



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**Past Presidents
2011-2015**



Greg Calfee
President – 2011



Lake Mantooth
President – 2013, 2016



Peaches Searles
President – 2014



John Proffitt
President – 2015

ORBA 2021 Awards Presentation



Photos courtesy of ORBA
DECOTTA BROOKS of Air Systems was recognized as ORBA's 2021 Associate of the Year. 2021 President Charles Blankinship presented the award. Brooks has been very involved in ORBA since joining three years ago, jumping in with both feet and continuing to help in all aspects, from sponsoring membership meetings to door prizes. Decotta and her husband, William Brooks, own Air Systems and Benchmark Home Builders; their company has donated and helped on ORBA's builds and has agreed to help on the upcoming Habitat for Humanity of Cleveland build, as well.



SHOWN HERE are 2021 President's Service Award winner Allyson Hannah, second from left, with Jamie Morey, Logan Brewer and Liz Simmons.



DURING THE 2021 Installation Banquet, Home Builders Association of Tennessee CEO Charles Schneider, right, presented 2021 ORBA President Charles Blankinship with the Past Presidents Pin.



2021 ORBA PRESIDENT Charles Blankinship presented Allyson Hannah of KMA Insurance Group with the 2021 President's Service Award for her community service and service to ORBA. Hannah has been dedicated to helping ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak with events the past two years and behind-the-scenes activities. She has sponsored the Clay Shoot for three consecutive years and is always smiling and sending her staff to feed the participants. She has sponsored breakfast at the Veterans Home and Isaiah 117 House builds during constructions, and lunch at the Clay Shoot.

Pet-friendly fabrics to try at home

- **Woven fabrics:** Fabrics that have visual texture or subtle patterns can help disguise stains and make pet hair less noticeable. Opt for a color similar to a pet's fur color to further camouflage shed hair. Pet owners should know that cats may get their claws stuck in certain woven fabrics.
- **Leather and faux leather:** Many pet owners like that leather and faux leather products are nonabsorbent and resistant to stains, odors and punctures. In addition, fur won't cling to leather and similar fabrics easily, making them a better choice for those with dander and fur allergies.
- **Microfiber:** Microfiber is tightly woven, making it a good option for durable, high-end elegance. Dirt and dust cannot penetrate the fabric, and cats are less likely to get their claws into this fabric. Some microfibers are odor- and stain-resistant as well, though spills will need to be mopped up quickly. One concern with microfiber is the material tends to hold onto pet fur. As a result, owners may spend ample time vacuuming shed hair.
- **Synthetic materials:** Polyester, acrylic or nylon materials can stand up to wear and tear longer than others, so they may be appealing if pets will be allowed on the furniture. Durable fabrics also can be wiped clean with a cloth.

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**Past Presidents
2017-2021**



Chad Dean
President – 2017, 2018



Blake Allison
President – 2019, 2020



Charles Blankinship
President – 2021



Photos courtesy of ORBA

DURING HBAT'S annual Summer Meeting, ORBA members ran into Tennessee State Fire Marshal Gary Farley. He mentioned the importance of cooperation between builders and code officials. From left are ORBA board member Blake Allison, Farley, ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak, and ORBA board members Dennis Epperson and Chad Dean.



ORBA BOARD MEMBERS in attendance at HBAT's annual Summer Meeting included, from left, Clay Cochran, John Proffitt, Charlotte Peak, Peaches Searles, Dennis Epperson, Blake Allison and Chad Dean.

ORBA hosts Legislative Open House



GUESTS at the Legislative Open House included Dr. John Stanbery, Republican state executive committeeman, and ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak.



FROM LEFT are 10th Judicial District Assistant Public Defender Donald Leon Shahan, ORBA board member Peaches Searles, Bradley County Commissioner Milan Blake and ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak.



10TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT Judge Andrew Freiberg, from left, visits with ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak and ORBA board member Peaches Searles.



ORBA IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT Charles Blankinship, left, is shown with ORBA Executive Officer Charlotte Peak and former ORBA President Dee Burris.

Photos courtesy of ORBA

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SUPPORT: ORBA, RCAR support non-contiguous annexation

From Page C12

Others in the real estate field who spoke at the meeting included David Sanders with Coldwell Banker Kinard Realty, Jonathan Kraft with Crye-Leike Real Estate Services and member of RCAR, and RCAR CEO Lisa Martin.

In early November, the County Commission approved a resolution establishing a policy for non-contiguous annexation petitions in Bradley County. The resolution offers “full transparency to neighboring property owners of the petition for annexation and the opportunity to opine.” That transparency would be in the form of signs posted “in a visible location on the property along each public road bordering the property declaring the intent to request annexation.”

However, Peak argued against the proposed resolution as “anti-city.” She was absent from the meeting, but Commission Chairman Johnny Mull read a statement on her behalf.

“This resolution is designed to be anti-city and slow the requested annexation down and to confuse neighboring landown-

ers,” Peak’s statement noted. “It is intended to scare them into thinking that they will be forcefully annexed if the annexation for the said property requested is granted. I am against the intent of the sign resolution at this time because of the ill intent from the proposing commissioner. There isn’t an existing problem that we need a resolution for. Therefore, I think this needs more attention before we create a policy.”

Later in November, Peak voiced her opposition to imposing two work sessions “to hinder annexation requests,” also referring to “ill will” that she believes some commissioners have for the city.

“I’m all for putting a sign up for the neighbors and being transparent if you want to have your property annexed into the city — I’m all for that — but the two work sessions are a little redundant and unnecessary,” she said.

Ultimately, commissioners decided to move forward with the required signage and two work sessions to review non-contiguous annexation requests.

Dustin Wong is Builder of the Year

Dustin Wong is the president and co-founder of Riverstone Construction. He is a residential contractor and land developer in Tennessee and Georgia. He was awarded Home Builder of the year in 2019 by the Home Builders’ Association of Greater Chattanooga.

Prior to starting Riverstone Construction, Wong managed a kitchen and bath remodeling company, specifically focused on large-scale remodeling projects. He was born and raised in Ooltewah, and graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In his free time he enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with his wife Jessica and his 2-year-old son, Judd.



ORBA Vice President Dustin Wong, right, was sworn in by Bradley County Mayor D. Gary Davis at a recent ceremony, where he was also awarded the 2021 Builder of the Year by ORBA President Keith Jones, left.



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