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The Memphis

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# Wharton Proposes Increased Budget With No Added Taxes

Memphis Mayor A C Wharton presented his budget proposal to the



A C Wharton

Memphis City Council on Tue., April 21, 2015.

The \$656.6 million budget calls for a \$12.1 million increased over last year's estimate, raising spending by 1.9 percent for Fiscal Year 2016.

Wharton's Administration expect a 4.1 percent in increased revenues for the city. The Additional financial resources would not be enough to cover the entire budget.

"The Proposed FY 2016 Budget reflects my administration's continued strong commitment to safe and vibrant neighborhoods, fighting blight and investing in our young people," said Wharton in his introduction statement. "We are increasing the investment in public safety by nearly \$7 million to fund new recruiting classes in both Police and Fire, as well as an increase in the use of Public Safety Technicians so that we can devote more commissioned police officers to the vital, hands-on task of crime prevention."

Wharton noted that crime has been down over the past few years. This year crime has been down by six percent. The mayor said he wants to continue striving towards a safer and improved

Memphis community.

"We remain vigilant in our commitment to public safety," Wharton said.

"The FY2016 budget proposes to invest \$3 million for the demolition of

buildings that are both eye-sores and havens for crime reflects my administration's ongoing commitment to fighting blight. Additionally, our proposed Capital Improvement

Budget for FY 2016 general obligation bonds (GO) is \$54 million compared to \$82 million in FY15, and includes \$15 million for street paving compared to \$9 million in

FY 16. So as we have been conservative in our overall GO request, we have targeted street paving for a 66% increase over last year."

**BUDGET**, cont'd on page 3



## Delta Fine Arts Program's #SocialMediaTakeover

An auditorium full of supporters filled the Little Theater at LeMoyne-Owen College on Sun., April 19, 2015, as Delta Fine Arts, Education and Cultural Center hosted its Poetic Prose and Theatre Program's #SocialMediaTakeover. Shown are some of the student participants and others who helped make the event a success. The DFA staff who organized the program includes: Dr. Audrey Elion, Krissi Bolden, Cliff Habath, Angela Kuykendoll, Chadwick Lyons and Breanna Wilson. About 50 students from the Memphis area participated in last weekend's activities. (Additional photos on page 10.)

# Superintendent Changes Local Schools Budget

Shelby County Schools Superintendent Dorsey Hopson has made a considerable change the school district's budget.

The proposal calls for an additional \$14.2 million for the 2015-2016 school year.

The budget adjustment was made as 16 items were added to the budget in the midst of \$15 million gap between the districts expected costs and revenues.

SCS board officials also previously

made amended the budget on March 3, 2015, while cre-

ating a financial plan in support of the district's Destination 2025, and 80/90/100% Strategic Plan.

Five priorities for the next school year includes plans to: strengthen early literacy; improve post-secondary readiness; develop teachers, leaders and central office to Drive Student Success; expand high-quality school options; and mobilize family and community partners.

Revenue for the 2015-16 General Fund was projected to be nearly \$19 million lower than the cur-

rent budget year due to declining enrollment caused by local population trends, more schools being taken by the Achievement School District and the addition of five new charter schools in Shelby County.

"Though the situation presents a significant challenge, we can ensure all financial decisions are aimed to support student achievement in the most effective and efficient manner because they are aligned to our strategic priorities," noted an SCS letter at [www.scsk12.org](http://www.scsk12.org).

"Since the onset of the budget process in November, District staff has worked hard to narrow the gap between expected revenues and anticipated costs by \$110 million. Prior to the Board voting on the proposed 2015-16 District Budget, staff will be seeking additional efficiencies to protect investments in new initiatives that will bring us closer to our ambitious goals for students."

"I am pleased to present the Initial Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 **SCHOOL**, cont'd on page 2



## Legacy Sunday Award

Mt. Vernon Baptist Church-Westwood hosted its 2nd Annual Legacy Sunday Celebration on April 19, 2015, with LeMoyne-Owen College President Johnnie B. Watson (left) receiving the honors. Shown is Mt. Vernon Pastor James Netters presenting the award. (Photo by Tyrone P. Easley.)

# Nation's First Parenting Places Open In Memphis

Two Universal Parenting Places, judgment-free zones where parents can receive professional counseling, information and emotional support for family related issues, were dedicated today at Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women and Knowledge Quest.

Attendees included Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell, Jr., Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, international speaker and author Robin Karr-Morse,

and a host of community leaders, advocates and families.

The dedication ceremony of both UPP locations included site tours and performances from Memphis' creative community, illustrating a few of the nontraditional and diverse support programs the centers offer.

"Everyone is susceptible to the challenges and related consequences of parenting, which is why **PARENT**, cont'd on page 7



## Benjamin Hooks Institute To Join Hands For Change

The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis recently presented its Join Hands for Change Gala, Empowering, Supporting, and Celebrating African American Men. Memphians Charles Harris, Derwin Sisnett and Pastor Linwood Dillard, Jr., were recipients of the Community Service Award. Kendrick Harper, Bobby White, and Oneka Richardson presented the awards to the honorees. Timothy L. Rose, Corey Allen, Logan Meeks, and Daphene McFerren also participated in the program.