



City of Cookeville's Leisure Services

Spring and Summer 2024

# Leisure Life

# A Word From the Mayor



**Laurin Wheaton**  
City of Cookeville  
Mayor

"Making the good life better." That's the mission of Cookeville's Department of Leisure Services, and it's a mission they live up to year after year. As

both a parent and a nurse practitioner, I love that our community is home to an abundance of fitness, arts, cultural, and recreational opportunities. What I love even more is knowing that many of these opportunities are provided for free or at minimal cost by our Leisure Services Department.

As our city grows, our catalog of parks, facilities, and community events grows alongside it. Over the last thirty years, our city has created some phenomenal annual events such as Dogapalooza, the Cemetery Walk, and Shakespeare in the Park along with new facilities like the Heart of the City

Playground, the Park View Skate Park, the Storybook Trail at Capshaw Park, and the Dogwood Park splash fountain and performance pavilion.

A casual observer would say that our community is lucky to have such robust recreational opportunities, but luck has nothing to do with it. Every opportunity was created through the hard work of our city's citizens and workers. And every future opportunity will be built the same way, which proves that the greatest thing about Cookeville is its community. When we all work together, we make Cookeville a better and more spectacular city.

As Cookeville's mayor, I hope you take a moment to enjoy all the wonderful amenities our great city has! I am grateful to our Leisure Services Department for offering ample opportunities for joy, education, and wellbeing for our community.

## Mayor Wheaton

**City of Cookeville**  
**Department of Leisure Services**  
**& Public Facilities**

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Cane Creek Recreation



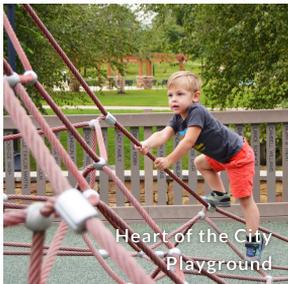
Cinderella Park



Dogwood Park



Cane Creek Gymnasium



Heart of the City Playground



Depot Museum



Cane Creek Dog Park



School of Dance



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Bavillion



Dogwood Park  
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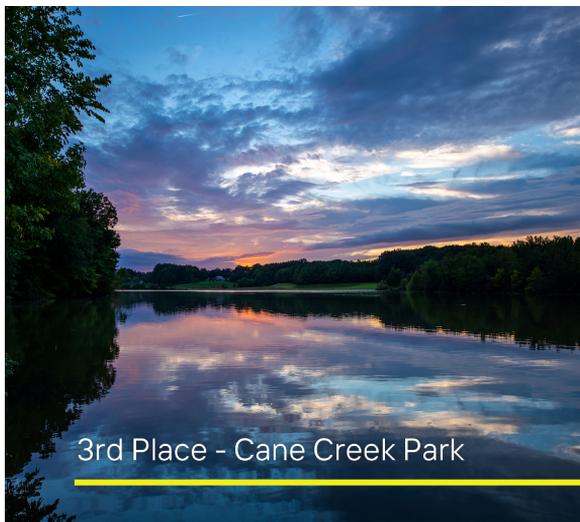
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*Leisure Life* is a biannual magazine produced by the City of Cookeville Department of Leisure Services & Public Facilities

# PHOTOS IN OUR PARKS

**WE ASKED LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS TO SHARE THEIR FAVORITE PHOTOS FROM OUR CITY PARKS AND FACILITIES. HERE ARE OUR TOP THREE FAVORITES!**



3rd Place - Cane Creek Park

**Carolyn Isbell** is a visual artist living in Cookeville. She specializes in both oil painting and photography. Isbell loves the many beautiful parks and other natural areas in and around Cookeville as they allow her to combine her love of hiking, photography, and painting.

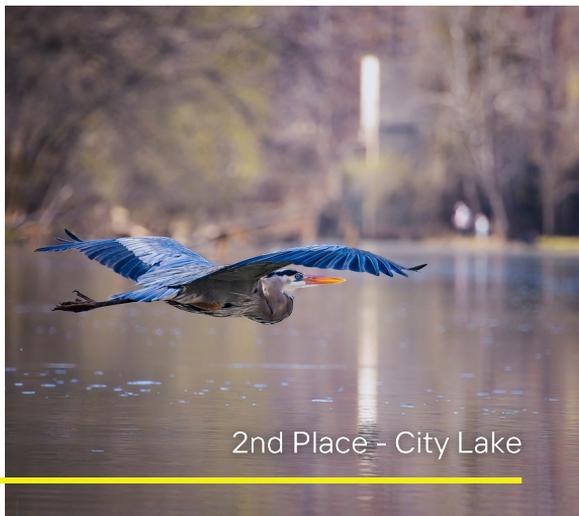


**Carolyn Isbell, Artist**

**Bryan Beaty** works as the Pricing Systems Manager with AVERITT. He is also an avid photographer. Besides being a wildlife and nature hobbyist, Beaty and his daughter, Natalie, make up B-Squared Photography, which specializes in portrait and wedding photography in the Upper Cumberland.

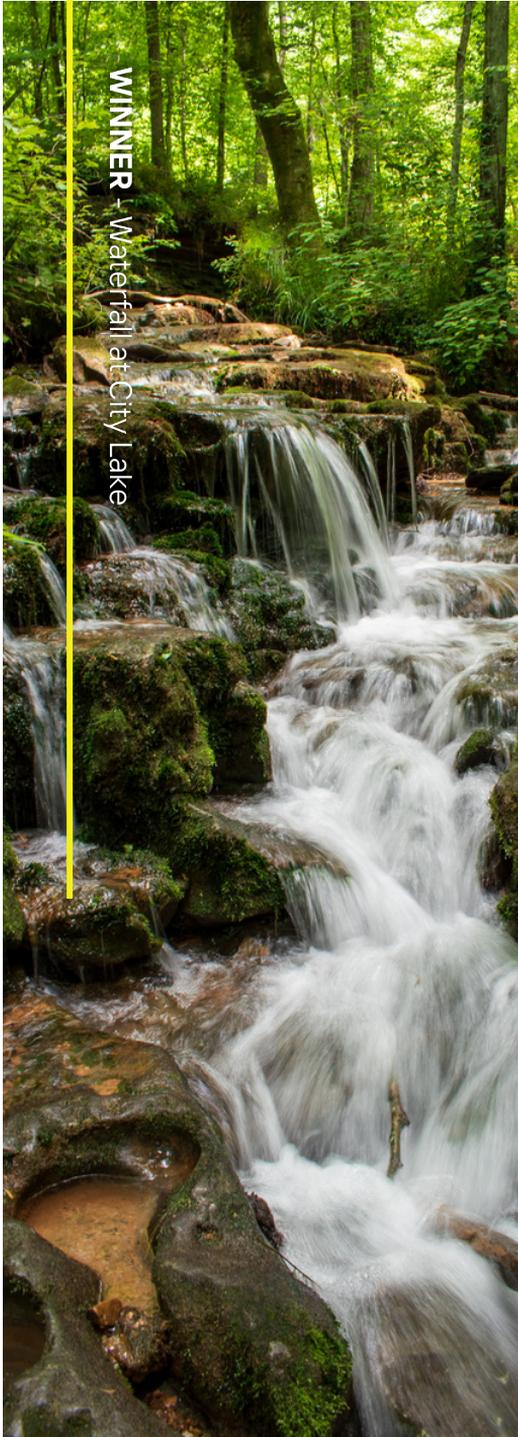


**BSquaredPhotoTN**



2nd Place - City Lake

WINNER – Waterfall at City Lake



## FIRST PLACE ON THE COVER

**Andrea Kruszka** has been practicing photography since the early 2000s. Her love of nature combines with an instinct for framing a shot to create stunning visuals seen on walls across the country and around the world. From the soft pastels of a dawn sky to the fiery brilliance of a sunset, she strives to convey the emotional depth and vitality of the natural world through her use of color.

Kruszka's work aims to evoke a sense of wonder and reverence for the beauty that surrounds us, inviting viewers to pause, reflect, and immerse themselves in the awe-inspiring landscapes she has encountered. Through the lens of her camera, she hopes to inspire a deeper connection to the world around us and instill a renewed appreciation for the power and majesty of light and color in nature.

Her work can be seen at various shows throughout the year including Made Here Market in the spring and Art Prowl in the fall, as well as year-round at Plenty Downtown Bookshop, PS Paige, and the Cookeville Depot Museum.



**AndreaKruszkaPhoto**

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT RICHIE BEAN

“I just really like being outside and working with some really great people.”

The Cane Creek SportsPlex is a large outdoor compound comprised of eight fields for softball and baseball, a concessions stand, seating areas, and two parking lots. It is a lot to maintain. But the sounds of families cheering from the bleachers makes it all worthwhile.

SportsPlex Foreman, Richie Bean, says he enjoys the work, and he must be telling the truth. This April will mark



Bean's twentieth year working for Cookeville's Department of Leisure Services. Of those 20 years, 19 have been spent caring for the fields and facilities at the Cane Creek SportsPlex.

*“I just really like working outside and getting to work with some really great people,”* says Bean.

Bean is a soft-spoken and dedicated employee. Though a man of few words, his amicable and helpful



personality make him a favorite amongst the Leisure Services team. Like many of the people on our team, Bean began his career with Leisure Services as a seasonal worker.

When asked why he decided to apply all those years ago, Bean says it came down to wanting to be outside and closer to home. He explains that *"before joining Leisure Services, I worked in Nashville, but I still lived in Cookeville. I drove back and forth every day. It got to be a lot."*

In his third year, Bean transitioned to a full-time employee. His current role involves overseeing the work of seasonal Sportsplex employees during peak seasons. When seasonal employees leave for the winter, Bean looks after the complex on his own.



*"There's not a whole lot to do during the colder months, but work picks up when the weather gets warm...We mow, weed eat, and fix up the fields and get them ready for teams and tournaments... We also enjoy watching the games and keeping up with the teams at the Sportsplex."*

Even when not at work, Bean says, *"I still prefer to be outside."* Hunting is one of his favorite pastimes. He frequently trains dogs for raccoon hunting and hunting competitions.

Bean has lived in the Cookeville area his entire life, and he continues to live here with his wife and four children. He considers Cookeville to be a fantastic place to live, work, and raise a family.



# Parks

## West End Park

609 West End St.

This park has play equipment, two picnic shelters, a court for basketball and pickleball, a small field, and restroom facilities. It has history too! West End was the site of Darwin School, which served African-American students from 1928-1963. A historical marker is on the grounds.



West End Park



Cane Creek Park

## Cane Creek Park

201 CC Camp Road

Cookeville's largest park is a great place to hike, bike, picnic, fish, walk the dog, swing, play basketball and volleyball, birdwatch, and so much more! The 56-acre lake is ideal for kayaks, paddle boats, and canoes (available to rent April-October). The 18-hole disc golf course is popular with all ages. The park also features playgrounds, a

mountain bike trail, three covered shelters (available to reserve by calling 931-520-4386), additional picnic tables with charcoal grills, a boat ramp (for boats without motors), and the city's first fully-enclosed public dog park!



## Walnut Park

186 S. Walnut Ave.

Nestled behind the Cookeville Senior Citizens Center, this park has a gazebo, paved walking trails, and picnic tables. Bring lunch and enjoy the peace and quiet. Access the park through the new entrance located in a city parking lot on the corner of Spring Street and Walnut Ave or behind the Cookeville Senior Citizens Center.





City Lake Natural Area

## City Lake Natural Area

*Bridgeway Drive*

This 74-acre natural area is a favorite among fishermen, kayakers and hikers. The lake, a no-wake zone, has a boat launch and fishing pier. Picnic tables are close, and a small waterfall awaits at the end of a short, quarter-mile trail through the woods. To get there from downtown Cookeville, travel east on Hwy. 70N, cross over I-40 at Exit 290, turn left on Poplar Grove Road, and go straight onto Bridgeway Drive.

## Dogwood Park

*30 E. Broad St.*

This downtown oasis, with tranquil green spaces and an interactive splash fountain, is a great place for quiet picnics and leisurely walks! It also features a performance pavilion, a gazebo, and Heart of the City Playground.



Dogwood Park

## Cinderella Park

*700 Cinderella Lane*

Cinderella, one of Cookeville's oldest neighborhood parks, has so much to do! Play equipment, a swing set, a small picnic shelter with charcoal grill, additional picnic tables, a basketball court, and restroom facilities. Located at the end of Mitchell Avenue, it offers convenient access to the Tennessee Central Trail.

## Capshaw Park

*560 E. Stevens St.*

This natural area, near Capshaw Elementary, is the perfect place for peace and quiet. It has three picnic tables and a new Storybook Trail.



## Ensor Sink Natural Area

*670 Clover Hill Dr.*

A serene park in the heart of town, Ensor Sink features four picnic tables, walking trails, a small amphitheater, stone council ring, and an informational kiosk about the city's sink hole system.

## Park View Park

*570 Scott Ave.*

This park features four baseball fields, play equipment, a picnic shelter with charcoal grill, and a concrete skateboarding park.

## Franklin Avenue Park

*550 N. Franklin Ave.*

This small neighborhood park at the corner of Franklin Avenue and 6th Street features play equipment and a picnic shelter.

Parks are open 7 a.m.-10 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

# Facilities



Cookeville Depot Museum

## Cookeville Depot Museum

116 W. Broad St. | 528-8570

Built in 1909, this charming facility is on the National Register of Historic Places. You'll find Tennessee Central Railway artifacts inside and a train engine, caboose, and track cars outside. The museum regularly hosts events and activities such as concerts, movies, and scavenger hunts. Visit Tues - Sat from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free.

## Cookeville Leisure Services

### Administrative Office

10 E. Broad St. | 520-4386

Have questions about the city's parks and facilities? Call or visit us at our new location.

## Heart of the City Playground

30 E. Broad St. | 520-4386

This 12,000-square-foot facility located in Dogwood Park was designed so that all children, regardless of their ability or mobility level, can play together.

(Closes at dusk)

## Cane Creek SportsPlex

2200 W. Jackson St. | 520-5224

This softball and baseball complex features four adult fields and four youth fields, and it hosts many major tournaments. Co-ed adult softball and kickball league games are played here. Also home to coach pitch and tee-ball leagues.



Heart of the City Playground

## Park View Skate Park

570 Scott Ave. | 520-4386

Cookeville's skate park, located at Park View Park, includes lots of fun and challenging features for skaters and BMX bikers, such as wall rides, ledges, rails, and bowls. This concrete facility is the first of its kind in the Upper Cumberland. It was designed by Seattle-based Grindline Skateparks. (Closes at dusk)



## Cane Creek Dog Park

180 CC Camp Road | 526-7393  
Cookeville's first public dog park, located inside Cane Creek Park, features agility equipment and off-leash areas for large and small dogs.



Cane Creek Dog Park

## Cookeville History Museum

40 E. Broad St. | 520-5455  
History lovers, rejoice! This museum offers exhibits, both temporary and permanent, that promote the history of Putnam County. Take a look around and learn something new about something old. Visit Tues -Sat from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free.

## Cane Creek Gymnasium

180 CC Camp Road | 526-9767  
Visit the gymnasium to play basketball, soccer, volleyball, pickleball, cornhole and spikeball. Admission is \$1. This facility hosts league play and youth camps. Available for rental.



## Dogwood Performance Pavilion

30 E. Broad St. | 528-1313  
Concerts, plays, and outdoor movies are all presented at Dogwood Park's Performance Pavilion. It may also be reserved for events.

## Cookeville Performing Arts Center

10 E. Broad St. | 528-1313  
This 456-seat facility produces local shows, including CPAC's award-winning *Backstage Series*, as well as concerts, dance recitals, film screenings, and other entertaining events.

## Cookeville City Cemetery

241 S. Walnut Ave. | 372-8086  
Office hours for the city-maintained cemetery are Mon - Fri, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

## Maintenance

Parks: 544 Scott Ave. | 528-2605  
Buildings: 790 E. 15th St. | 520-5257



## Cane Creek Recreation Center

180 CC Camp Road | 526-7393  
Come join the rec center camaraderie! This facility hosts fitness programs, youth camps, events, classes, workshops, and the Leisure Services School of Dance.

# ART IN MOTION: THE SCHOOL OF DANCE

*“We’re a dance studio, not a competition studio. Our school is about the enjoyment of dance. It’s about better health, fitness, and teamwork”*

*- Carolyn Bennett, Instructor and Dance Coordinator*

For more than 20 years, the School of Dance has invited people of all ages to move to the music. The school offers ballet, jazz, and modern dance classes for both beginners and more advanced students. Children as young as three and adults of all skill levels are invited to experience new forms of movement and creative expression at the school.

Cookeville’s Leisure Services opened the school in the late 90s to encourage dance and art in our local community. For the first three years of operation,

Leisure Services contracted the Nashville Ballet to ensure the school offered a top-notch dance program at an astoundingly reasonable cost.

The School of Dance helps students build a strong technical foundation and a broad education in diverse dance forms. As each student progresses, they can choose to specialize in specific musical styles or continue to learn across disciplines. Bennett, who has taught at the school since 2007, says she loves watching her students



improve.

*"My favorite part is getting to see the dancers and watching their growth and progression, whether it be over many years or even just a few months. To see the progress they make and the beautiful dancers they turn into."*

The school's instructional year includes continual training from August to May. Students at the school can choose to learn the basics of multiple dance styles or continually build their expertise in one specific area such as ballet, modern, or jazz dance. Students can begin registering for classes in May, and the \$10 registration fee is waived for all students who register by June 31. All dance classes are taught at the Cane Creek Recreation Center.

The instructional year culminates in a Spring Recital. The recital takes place at



the Cookeville Performing Arts Center and includes all the school's students. According to Bennett, the recital is a delightful blend of experience levels, dance styles, and performance themes.

*"The spring recital brings together all class levels and ages... You'll see all the levels and all the techniques in one performance,"* says Bennett.

*"We have five instructors, and we all have very different backgrounds and personalities. For the recital, we all create our own pieces, so you'll see a wide variety of dance styles, costumes, and themes during the performance."*

This year's recital features two performances on May 10 and 11. Each performance begins at 7 p.m. Tickets for the event will be available on the CPAC website at [www.cpactn.com](http://www.cpactn.com).



# GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

## COOKEVILLE CITY CEMETERY

Cemeteries get a bad wrap. Most people think of them as depressing, haunted, or morbid places that are best avoided. But cemeteries are more than reminders of our own mortality. They are testaments to the lives and stories of the people who came before us. Cemeteries are monuments to our collective history. They remind us that we are a part of something larger. That we are chapters in a story that started before we were born and will continue long after we are gone.

Inside the Cookeville City Cemetery, visitors can discover some intriguing

chapters in both our city and our nation's history. Soldiers and war widows, early pioneers who settled this area, women defying social norms to become doctors and leaders of the suffrage movement, and local scandals that rocked our small city and even the nation... Our city cemetery is bursting with stories for those willing to listen.

Are you ready to hear the stories the cemetery has to share? You are? Then keep reading, and remember to join us for the Cookeville Cemetery Walk on Sept. 28 to hear even more local tales from the graveyard!





## THE CEMETERY WALK

Every other year, the city cemetery is host to the Cemetery Walk. Visitors are encouraged to stroll by candlelight amongst the grave-stones as actors in historical dress tell the stories of some

of the cemeteries most famous and infamous inhabitants. Join us for the Cemetery Walk on Sept. 28, 2024. Call the Cookeville History Museum at 913-520-5455 for more information.

## LOCAL HISTORICAL FIGURES



Mahaley Wiley Shaw was the first person buried in the Cookeville City Cemetery. The honor was afforded to Mrs. Shaw as she donated the first two acres of land upon which the cemetery now stands. Mrs. Shaw died in 1879, which means the cemetery was founded in roughly the same year. Older graves have been moved to the cemetery over the years, so some stones bear dates earlier than 1879.



Before medical degrees were issued by Tennessee universities, Cookeville was home to two doctors: a husband and wife. At just 15 years of age, Diana Coffee married a young doctor by the name of Benjamin Gabbert. The pair moved to Cookeville in 1842 where Diana assisted her husband in his medical practice. After his death, she continued to serve as a local doctor for another thirty years.



Henry McKinney was one of Cookeville's earliest settlers. His son, James, founded the McKinney Hotel, the first hotel in Cookeville. Both Henry McKinney and his son were active participants in enslavement in the South. Originally buried in a cemetery in Algood, the McKinney grave was moved to Cookeville in the early 1900s. It continues to serve as reminder of Cookeville's complicated past.

# SPRING & SUMMER HAPPENINGS



School of Dance

## World Tai Chi and Qigong Day

April 27

"One World... One Breath" is the motto of this annual event that offers free Tai Chi and Qigong demonstrations starting at 10 a.m. at Cane Creek Recreation Center. Join us for this global experience.

## Storyfest in the Park

May 4

Lend us your ears for the eighth annual Storyfest in the Park. This is an all-day, family-friendly event that features professional storytellers from across the region as well as an amateur storytellers' competition. Come listen for a while under the big tent.



Storyfest in the Park

## School of Dance Performances

May 10 & 11

Students from the Leisure Services School of Dance present their annual spring performance. Tickets are available by calling CPAC's box office at 931-528-1313 or [www.cpactn.com](http://www.cpactn.com).



History Hike

## History Hike

April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, Aug. 10, Sept. 14, & Oct. 12

It's history and a hike all rolled into one fun adventure on the second Saturday of each month. Start at the Cookeville Depot or Cookeville History Museum between 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and go exploring along Broad Street. Complete this free activity to be entered in a prize drawing.

# SUMMER & EARLY FALL HAPPENINGS

## Fish for Free

**June 8**

A day of free fishing awaits young anglers at Cane Creek Park. This annual event, hosted by Tennessee Tech University's Student Fisheries Association, the city of Cookeville's Leisure Services, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, coincides with Tennessee's Free Fishing Day. No fishing license is required. Participants should bring their own fishing gear and bait.

## Dogapalooza

**Sept. 21**

An event for dogs and the people who love them. It features pet-related booths, off-leash play area, pet parade and more at Cane Creek Dog Park.

## Cemetery Walk

**Sept. 28**

Stroll by candle light through the city cemetery at night. It's a wonderful evening for the cemetery's interred to rise from the dead and share their stories! This fun-filled evening is packed with local history and theatrics. Tickets will be available at the Performing Arts Center for 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. walks. Tickets go on sale Aug. 26 at 8 p.m.

## Shakespeare in the Park

**Oct. 5 - 11**

Watch Shakespeare's classic *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as you sit under the night sky at Dogwood Park's performance pavilion. Every show starts at 7 p.m. Remember to bring a lawn chair and blanket to this free event.



Dogapalooza



Cemetery Walk



Shakespeare in the Park



# OUTDOOR CONCERTS & MOVIES

## Third Thursday in the Park

**May 15, June 19, July 18, & Aug. 15**

This free concert series offers a variety of music, everything from classic rock to country, on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Come enjoy this outdoor music experience.

## Cookeville Community Band

**April 1, May 27, June 10 & 24, July 8 & 22**

Summers nights in Dogwood Park are sweeter with the Cookeville Community Band. This woodwind, brass and percussion ensemble presents free concerts at 7 p.m. beginning in May. Bring a chair or blanket to enjoy this musical treat. The Community Band will have a free indoor Spring Concert at CPAC on Monday, April 1 at 7:30pm.

## After Dark Movies in the Park

**June 7, 14, 21, & 28**

Gather around the big screen on Friday nights in June at Dogwood Park for a family-friendly film under the stars beginning at dark. Spread a blanket, munch on popcorn and enjoy this free movie series sponsored by Rep. Ryan Williams.

## NEW! Community Band Festival

**June 15**

Make plans for the inaugural Dogwood Community Band Festival. Ensembles from around the state will converge on Dogwood Park to create a free full day of music.

## Big Band Sound

**Aug. 5, 19, & Sept. 2**

You'll want to dance during these lively orchestra concerts at Dogwood Park. Join us at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

## Bryan Symphony Orchestra

**Sept. 1**

An orchestra under the stars awaits music lovers at Dogwood Park at 7:30 p.m. This free concert features professional musicians and select Tennessee Tech University students and faculty.

## Classic Cinema at the Depot

**Oct. 4, 11, 18, & 25**

Join us on Friday nights in October as we present free classic movies under the stars on the west patio of the Cookeville Depot Museum at 7 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket to sit on. Popcorn, water, and canned sodas are available for \$1.

## Brown Bag Lunch Concerts

**Oct. 4, 11, & 18**

Music and lunch come together in a fun way for this free concert series sponsored by the Cookeville Arts Council. See a variety of bands on the Cookeville Depot patio on three Fridays in October from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch may be purchased on site.

# youth camps



Our recreational and athletic day camps are a great chance for kids to engage in fun activities and sports during school breaks at Cane Creek Recreation Center and Gymnasium.

## Summer & Fall Break Camps

May 28 - Aug. 2 and Oct. 7 - Oct. 18

## All Sports Camp

June 3 - June 7, June 17 - June 21, & July 8 - July 12

## Basketball Camp

June 24 - June 28 and July 22 - July 26

## Beginner & Advanced Volleyball Camps

July 15 - July 19

# fitness, athletics & more

## Fitness

Stay in shape the fun way... with friends!  
We offer daily group fitness classes at Cane Creek Recreation Center. Drop in for \$3 per class. Monthly schedule:

[www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/fitness](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/fitness)

## Classes & Programs

Looking for fun and healthy ways to spend your leisure time? Get involved in our classes and programs, including tai chi, kickboxing, meditation and children's karate. See what's new:

[www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/classes-programs](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/classes-programs)

## Athletics

Leisure Services offers a variety of athletic programs during the year, including softball, basketball, kickball, volleyball and pickleball leagues. Current offerings:

[www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/athletics](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/athletics)

## Museum Exhibits

Check out our exhibits at Cookeville History Museum:

[www.cookevillehistorymuseum.com](http://www.cookevillehistorymuseum.com)

## School of Dance

Leisure Services School of Dance offers ballet, jazz and modern dance for ages 3 and up. Classes are held August-May. Learn more:

[www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/school-of-dance](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/school-of-dance)



## Social Media

Find fun content on our pages:

Cookeville Leisure Services Department  
Cookeville Depot Museum, Cookeville History Museum  
Cane Creek SportsPlex, Cane Creek Gymnasium  
Cookeville Leisure Services Fitness  
Cookeville Performing Arts Center  
Dogwood Performance Pavilion  
Cookeville Leisure Services School of Dance  
Dogwood Park, Cane Creek Park, Cookeville Storyfest



## Newsletter

Want our monthly newsletter? Subscribe at [www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls) or call 520-4386.

