

E-Brief 2022

Excellence Innovation Teamwork Integrity Action-Oriented



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Lights, camera, Franklin

City uses video parodies to communicate with residents

Cole Villetta
US TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

In a world filled with forgettable mailers, lifeless PowerPoints and snooze-worthy speeches, one team stands alone against a great evil: boring municipal communications.

If that sounds like a hammy Hollywood cliche, good. That's exactly how the City of Franklin's communications team likes it.

The five-person team has lived up to the city's public relations strategy by producing fun yet informative videos that keep residents abreast of what's happening in the growing city. The videos feature starting performances from city employees, lovingly cherry-picked and impressive video effects and production.

"Sometimes we hear people say, 'Oh, why are you doing it that way?' But it's so much better," public outreach specialist Melissa McCallough said. "I think people will retain it better if it's entertaining for them and not just numbers or something that's blank and white."

"Even though it's fun, we're still giving them really great information." No music or TV show is safe from parody by the team, which consists of McCallough, Melissa Reiser (communications director), Robert Mott, Stephen Price and Joey Schaverra.

At the 2022 State of the City address, the team used a green screen, drone footage and a Halloween costume to show Franklin Mayor Ron Moore and city administrator Eric Stuckey "flying" over major infrastructure projects such as Maverick and I-75.

"The mayor and Eric could have said, 'Well, we've got this project on Mack Hatch, we've got these beautiful hills, and we could have just shown a video,'" said Reiser, who leads the team. "But when they're in the office like they are,



Robert Mott and Stephen Price, video production team members for the City of Franklin, look at footage from the city's State of the City address on a computer screen. The team used a green screen to show city mayor Ken Moore flying in a fighter jet. COLE VILLETTA/THE TENNESSEAN



The team has also parodied late-night television hits from James Corden and Jimmy Fallon, 60's classics "Back to the Future" and "Ghoulardi" and giddy award shows. The videos are available on the city's YouTube channel (youtube.com/cityoffranklin) alongside live stream archives of city meetings and announcements.

"Government can be colorful and fun, and informative and entertaining," Price said. "I don't like to be bored."

The city's first foray into fun-filled filmmaking was a 2019 music video set to Phish's "Wilson" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...). The video, which showed blokes dancing around downtown with sidewalk, city employees, families and passersby, is one of his favorites because it allowed him to cut loose with residents who may not have met him before.

"I'm blessed to have such a great

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Parodies

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team that encourages me to do some things that help people feel good about our city," Moore said. "It's challenging every year. Now everybody wants to know, 'Well, what are you going to do next?'"

Getting footage from dozens of spots around the city was a time-consuming task, but later videos have become even more complex. The 2022 State of the City address, for example, featured extensive greenscreen and video effects to spoof Apple TV hit "Ted Lasso." Moore donned a dark blue City of Franklin logo sweater to give an inspiring speech in the city board room (rather than a Premier League locker room) and walk through a set of bleachers that eventually spill out "KEN MOORE."

It's an impressive effect, especially considering Moore shot his part for the bleacher sequence at a green screen studio in an unused city hall office space. Schaverra, who in November joined city staff part-time, spent hours digitally removing Jason Sudeikis from the sequence and adding in Moore using Adobe After Effects.

"I think all of city hall heard me (celebrate) when we saw that final video," said Mott, who often directs the videos. "YES!"

The videos have also introduced residents to unlikely stars such as Michael Walters Young, the city's Budget & Analytics manager. In May, he starred in a parody of Jim Kramer's "Mad Money" that — if you could keep up with the frenetic pace and the cartoon sound effects — was a surprisingly approachable primer on Franklin's financial standing heading into the 2022 fiscal year.

"We've all been to State of the City (addresses) where the mayor gets up and reads off a bunch of statistics and information, but it's a lot more palatable to see it in an entertaining way," Reiser



Mayor Ken Moore performs in a "Ted Lasso" parody for the 2022 State of the City address in Franklin. MELISSA REISER, CITY OF FRANKLIN



Robert Mott, cable TV production operations supervisor for the City of Franklin, looks at a video project on a computer screen. COLE VILLETTA/THE TENNESSEAN

Our **Communications team** was featured in the **Tennessean** this week with a long article about our use of video parodies and comedy to communicate with residents. The article written by reporter Cole Villetta starts out, "In a world filled with forgettable mailers, lifeless PowerPoints and snooze-worthy speeches, one team stands alone against a real evil; boring municipal communications." It is a great article focusing on the creativity and willingness of our team to think "out of the box" and create professional, memorable videos about our City services and also praises all of our "actors" who have "day jobs" with the City. The digital version for subscribers is at <https://bit.ly/3S83Kyy> You can see many of the videos written about in the article at www.youtube.com/cityoffranklin **Great job, Communications team! We are proud (and very grateful) of your excellent, innovative work!**



Next week, the **Parks Department** will begin work on a very important project! They are entering the hay bale decorating contest for the **Williamson County Fair!** They have from August 1-3 to finish their project. The entry must be weather and wind-proof. Their entry will be promoting **Ellie G's Dreamworld, Franklin's first inclusive playground.** The drawing to the left is the sketch for what the entry will look like. We'll keep you up to date on their progress. Any prize winnings will go to **Friends of Franklin Parks for the inclusive playground.**

Welcome to our **new City team members** this week!

Chris Hale, Maintenance Worker, Street Department

Chris is from Nashville and now lives in Franklin. He has two kids, one boy and one girl. Chris enjoys working out, coaching his son's little league team and cheering for the Atlanta Braves. Chris previously worked for Phoenix Granite and Marble.

Matthew Shirley, Maintenance Worker, Street Department

Matthew is from Holladay, Tennessee. He has a girlfriend, two kids and two dogs. In his free time, Matthew enjoys working on cars. Matthew has a degree from Dickson Diesel and previously worked for Marquette Transportation.

Our next **Blood Drive** is scheduled for **Monday, August 8th**, in the **City Hall Training Room** from **9 a.m. until 2 p.m.** To make an appointment, you can scan the QR Code or go to the online scheduling system at www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: FranklinTN19. You can streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.



Employee of the Quarter:

The **Human Resources Department** is accepting nominations for the **3rd Quarter of the Employee of the Quarter 2022 Program**. You can submit paper nominations by coming into the Human Resources Department within City Hall or via email by filling out the attached nomination form.

As a reminder, the guidelines are as follows:

- Any employee can be nominated
- HR will accept unlimited nominations during the nomination window for each quarter
- Nomination forms are attached and will also be available on *Inside the City*
- Two employees will be selected per quarter by a committee made up of your peers!
- Completed nomination forms can be emailed to nomination@franklintn.gov or by dropping off the form in the HR Office.

The deadline for submitting nominations for the 3rd Quarter is September 23rd, 2022! Thank you for all that you do! Let's acknowledge and recognize those who are doing a great job at the City of Franklin! Questions? Please contact Cara Rives.

We have our last movie in the park tonight at Pinkerton Park (sorry, kids, that must mean school will be starting soon!). The movie is the 80's classic **Karate Kid**.

Have a great weekend and thanks for *all* you do!

ERIC STUCKEY
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