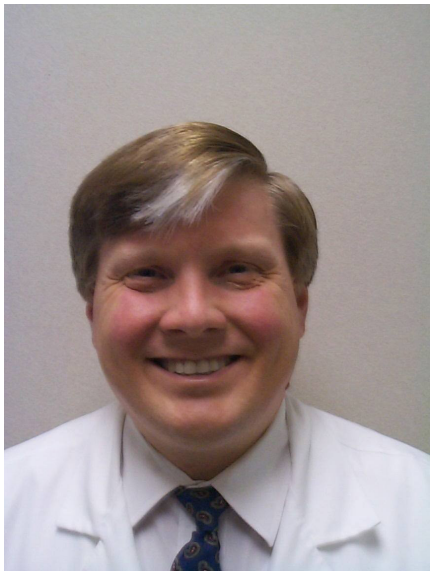
COGS

Official newsletter of the
ROTARY CLUB OF KINGSPORT

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October 19, 2026

Dr Stephen May
Polio History, Medical Primer and Current Status



Dr. May received his undergraduate degree from ETSU in 1979, and a graduate degree in Medicine from the UT Center for the Health Sciences in Memphis in 1983. He completed his Family Practice residency in Huntsville,Alabama in 1986 and has a Fellowship Degree in Family Practice.

Dr May returned to his home town inElizabethton in 1986 and was in a busy full spectrum family practice with his father for 26 years. He has held many leadership positions in the hospital setting and in Public Health.

Dr. May has served since 1999 as the Regional Medical Director for the Sullivan County Regional Health Department along with Assistant Medical Director for Sullivan County EMS since 2006. He was also the TN Emergency Preparedness Medical Director for the TN Department of Health in 2013 and 2014 and has been an Examiner for the TN Center for Performance Excellence. He holds assistant professorships with the ETSU College of Medicine and Public Health with a number of published articles and has received multiple community awards to include the Christian Servant Leadership award and Health Care Hero award. He was recognized by the Sullivan County Commission in 2022 for his medical leadership during the Covid Pandemic with Oct. 25 being proclaimed as Dr. May day in Sullivan County.

He has many diversified talents to include music, aviation, blacksmithing and wildlife management, loving all things outdoors. He has served as a Major in the Civil Air Patrol and past commander of the Tri-Cities Composite Squadron. He has also been the medical director for the Shephard's Inn Domestic Violence Shelter in Elizabethton since its inception.

He currently resides in Elizabethton with his bride of 42 years and has 3 children with 4 delightful grandchildren.

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October 14, 2026 Meeting Summary

Attendance was 56.8%

Sharon Moore presided over the Kingsport Rotary Club's regular meeting at MeadowView. Jane Crawford led the club in the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, and Sharon introduced her two guests. Aundrea Salyer brought some Sunshine with an update on the Grace and Grumpy audiobook.

We sent out Happy Birthday wishes Steve Wilson and Paul Gray! There were no membership anniversaries or wedding anniversaries to celebrate.



Aundrea welcomed Steven Bower as the club's newest member. We're excited to have him join the Kingsport Rotary family! Welcome! Steven was supported by sponsor Wirt Taylor and Isaac Webb.

Our annual wreath and poinsettia sale is underway! As the club's primary fundraiser, this is a great opportunity to support Rotary while sharing beautiful holiday greenery with friends, family, and local businesses. An information page and printable and e-order forms will be sent out via P-mail. The Friendsgiving flyer has been shared in COGs. Members are encouraged to help make our fellow Sullivan County Rotarians feel welcome at this fun, local gathering focused on fellowship and connection. Kathleen reported last week's attendance at 52.9%, with two guests present.

Committee Reports:

- Fundraising: Rotary sweatshirts are available for $10, apple butter for $9, and the Grace and Grumpy book for $10.
- Impact Projects: Members are asked to donate candy for the Kennedy Elementary Trunk-or-Treat on October 29 and RSVP through the club website. The Friends of Warriors service event is scheduled for November 14. Members are encouraged to wear their Rotary sweatshirts and RSVP through the club website.
- PolioPlus: A proposal was presented for the Board of Directors to approve a club donation matching member contributions up to $1,500. The fundraising effort will remain open through the end of the year to maximize contributions. Remember, the Gates Foundation matches eligible donations to PolioPlus two-to-one! A flyer has also been shared in COGs encouraging members to email their donation commitments.
- Public Relations: Aundrea reported that the club's YouTube channel has 23 subscribers. The goal is to reach 50 subscribers to unlock free live streaming for fellow members.

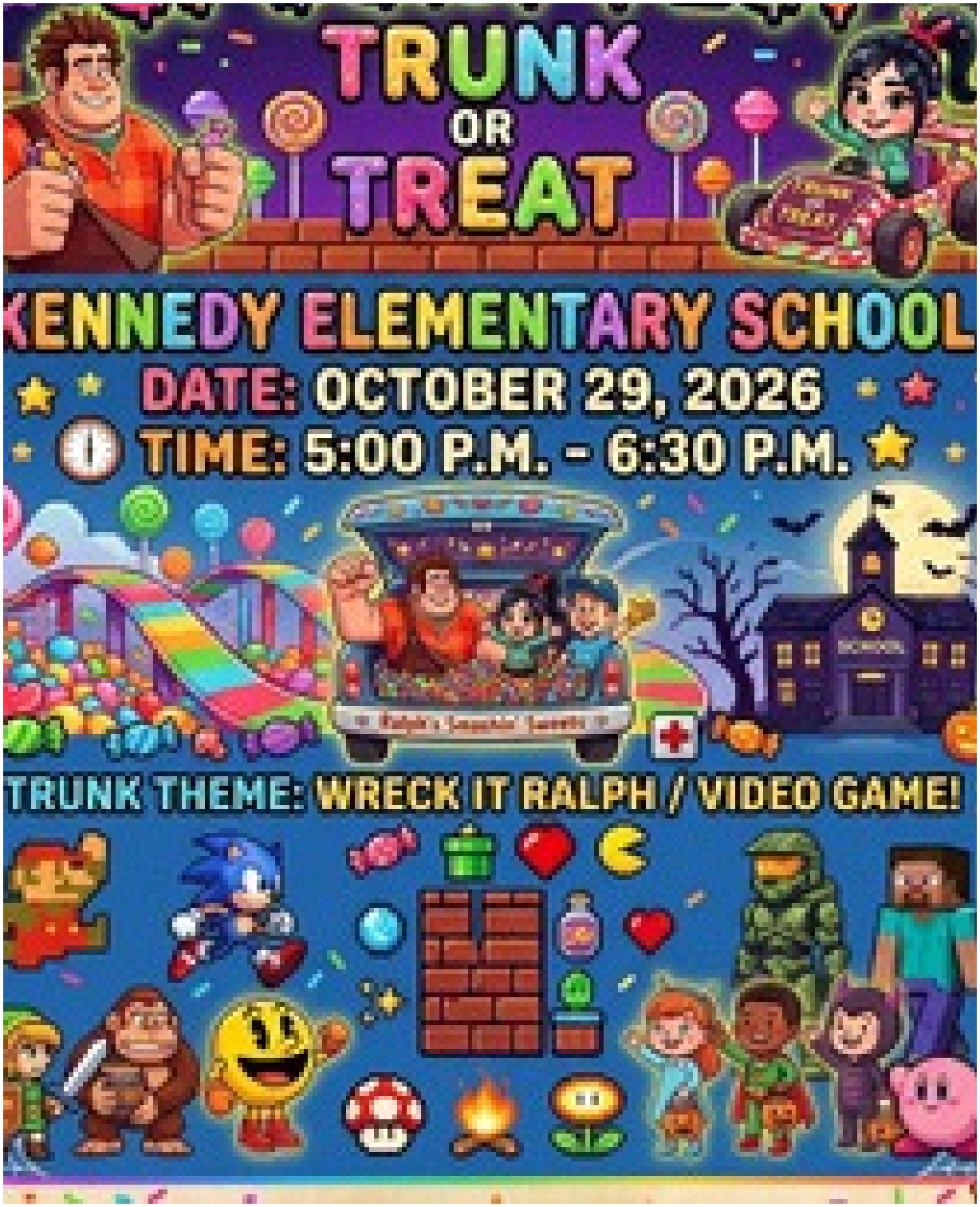
Vanessa Bennett, Chief Operating Officer of the Kingsport Chamber, introduced Desteny Clemons, Director of Healthy Kingsport. They shared a recent national award and highlighted the programs and initiatives helping make Kingsport a healthier community. Their presentation showcased the important work being done to improve health and well-being throughout our city.



Thank you to everyone who joined us for another great Rotary meeting. The meeting was adjourned with the ringing of the bell.

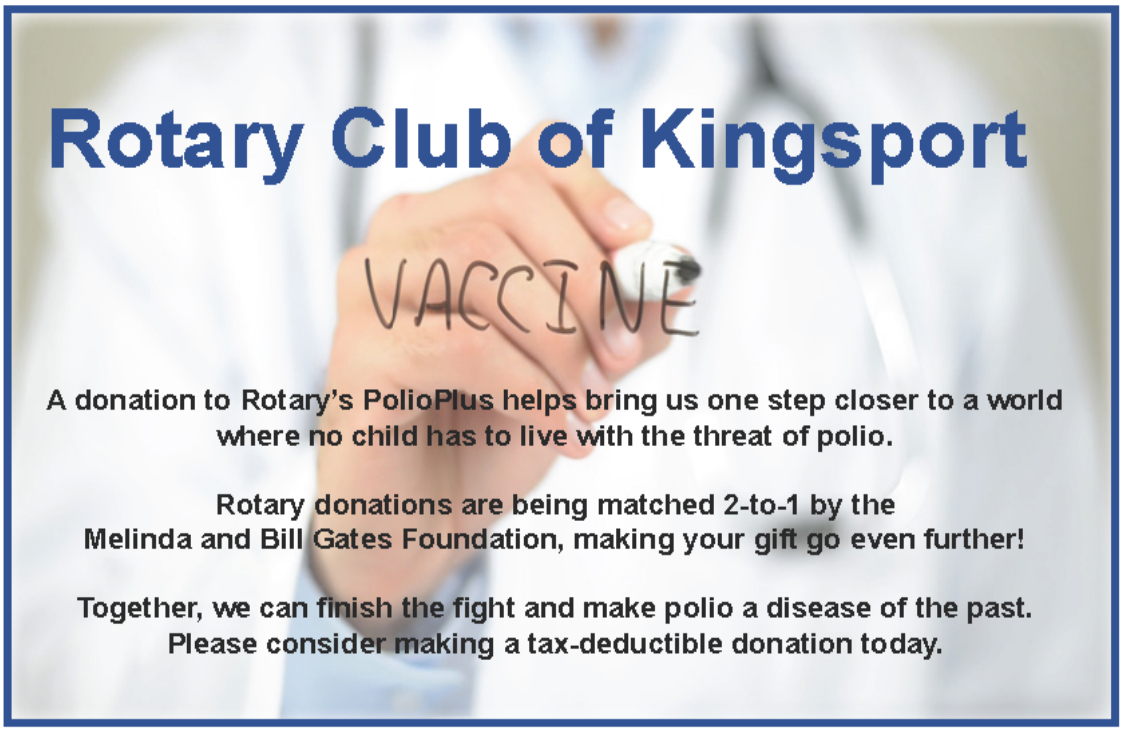
kingsportrotaryclub@gmail.com

Please help with this event by making donations of candy for this event - please bring candy to the October 21st or October 25th meeting.
If you are able to attend, please RSVP through the Club Website



kingsportrotaryclub@gmail.com

Polio Plus Contributions



Donations can be made using our club email,
KingsportRotaryClub@gmail.com

In your note please indicate your preference:

Single donation	☐
Quarterly donation for next four quarters	☐
Pay by check	☐
Pay by dues	☐

Amounts suggestions include $25, $50, $100, or other amount.

Friends of Warrior's Path State Park Workday

Fall-Day of Service/Caring

Organized by Friends of Warriors' Path State Park



When: Saturday Novomber 14/ Rain Date Sat. Nov. 21
8:15am-2pm (or as long as you can stay)
Where: Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground
(Located at Warriors' Path State Park)
Breakfast, Lunch, Refreshments & Supplies provided for volunteers

Remember to do!
1. Wear work gloves
2. Wear old clothes in layers.
3. If you have a leaf rake, or heavy-duty rake and/ or wheelbarrow-please bring-make sure it is labeled.

RSVP to Friends of Warriors
For questions, contact Mary Steadman @ 423-956-4330

kingsportrotaryclub@gmail.com

We're planning a Sullivan County-wide Rotary Friends-giving where we can all come together for some good food, great conversation, and a chance to connect.



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Rotary Club of Kingsport

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

From hope to history: how we defeated polio in the Western Pacific

By Dr. Shigeru Omi

Editor's Note: This year marks the 25th anniversary of the World Health Organization's certification of the Western Pacific Region as polio-free. To commemorate this anniversary, we invited Dr. Shigeru Omi, who led the WHO's polio eradication efforts in the region from start to finish, to reflect on the story behind that victory.



Dr Shigeru Omi speaks at a Rotary District Conference

I still remember the book that changed everything. It was a quiet afternoon in Shibuya, sometime in the early 1970s. I was a restless university student, unsure of my path, wandering the aisles of Tokyo's largest bookstore. A slim volume caught my eye – a personal account written by a psychiatrist. As soon as I opened it, the idea of medicine, the calling of a doctor, and the dignity it held hit me all at once. That night, I made up my mind. I would become a doctor.

Years later, after a decade of practice in rural clinics, hospitals, and sleepless shifts, I found myself searching for something more – work that was not only rewarding, but broadly impactful. I applied for a position at the World Health Organization (WHO). At the time, two posts were available: one, a high-ranking assistant to the regional director; the other, a lower-paid technical officer for polio eradication. I chose the latter. That's how I began my journey to help lead the charge against polio across the vast and complex Western Pacific region.

The Polio Frontline of 1990

When I started in 1990, most people thought the goal was impossible. The virus was still endemic in large parts of Asia. There was no money. No roadmap. Just a ticking clock and a resolution passed by WHO: to eradicate polio by the year 2000. It was, in a word, chaos.

The first thing I noticed was the absence of basic surveillance systems. Cases of acute flaccid paralysis – a category of disease polio belongs to – went undetected, unreported, and not tested to be diagnosed. Official records showed only 6,000 cases per year. But we all knew that number was wrong. The virus wasn't hiding. We were simply blind to it.

Of course, there were more. In Cambodia and Vietnam, families lived on boats, drifting along rivers – unreachable, undocumented, and highly vulnerable to disease. In places like Mindanao in the Philippines, conflict made access nearly impossible. In China, children born outside the "one child" policy were often not registered at all. No documents meant no health services – and no vaccines. These unregistered children were the ones polio found first.

And one of the greatest challenges was funding. Even purchasing enough vaccine required millions of dollars – not to mention the operational cost, resources needed to build infrastructure, train health workers, and reach remote communities. I organized a major technical meeting in Tokyo in 1991, bringing together every expert in the region working on polio, hoping that some organizations, or some countries would decide to give us money. We followed up with another meeting in the Philippines. But no one offered money. Not a single pledge.

The wise men from Rotary

It was October 1992. I had organized yet another technical meeting – this time in Beijing. And this time, something different happened.

Just hours before the meeting, three men visited me – Rotarians from Japan, India, and the United States. They weren't strangers. They had attended previous meetings and understood the technical details. They came with an offer: "If you agree to lower the target age for vaccination from under five to under four," they said, "we will donate US$1.5 million immediately."

Their reasoning was practical. WHO's global policy was to vaccinate all children under five. But only in China, nearly

Continued from Page 7

all polio cases occurred in children under four. Reducing the target age would make the campaign more focused and efficient. They wanted their contribution to have the greatest possible impact.

I was thrilled. Electrified. The logic was clear, and the funds could kick-start what had felt like a stalled campaign. But WHO headquarters in Geneva pushed back. They didn't want to change policy to match a donor's condition. I understood the concern, and yet, I also knew what US$1.5 million could do. It was a catalyst.

So, I took a risk. I asked a senior Geneva colleague – the most vocal opponent – to quietly step out of the room. During his absence, the rest of us came to a consensus: we would accept Rotary's condition and proceed.

That single decision changed everything. The US$1.5 million was our first real pool of funding. Rotary didn't just write a check. They showed up. And they stayed. They became true partners; a global network of committed individuals who would go on to advocate, fundraise, vaccinate, and build trust in places where even governments struggled to reach.

The breakthrough

Momentum came slowly and then all at once. Rotary's initial funding unlocked attention and credibility. Other donors followed. Working with governments and visiting local communities, we built surveillance systems where none existed. We mobilized lab networks to test all cases of paralysis and accurately diagnose polio.

In Vietnam and Cambodia, we launched "vaccine boats" – floating checkpoints on the Mekong River, ensuring every child was vaccinated before passing through. In conflict-affected Mindanao, we secured a temporary ceasefire to carry out immunization campaigns.

China posed a different challenge: undocumented children born outside the one-child policy. I met directly with the Minister of Health. I didn't debate policy. I simply shared the data. Weeks later, at a national meeting, the Minister publicly announced that "all children" would be vaccinated. That's when I knew we had a real shot. And after three years, China reached polio-free status.

The last mile is the hardest

In 2000, we celebrated the certification of the whole WHO Western Pacific Region as polio-free. It was a moment we've earned in collaboration through tireless work. It was proof that eradication wasn't just a dream. It could be done.

But polio still exists in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in places where health systems are fragile and conflict is constant. And as we saw recently in Gaza, the disruption can reopen the door. And it only takes one spark to undo decades of progress.

Rotary knows this. You've seen how far we've come. But I must say this: the last mile is always the hardest, as hard as the first million. It always has been, for every communicable disease we've fought. That is the nature of eradication. It demands that we renew and reconfirm our commitment, again and again.

Rotary's role has never been more vital. You are not just funders. You are advocates, partners, and frontline agents of change. You've helped make history once. Now, we must finish the story together.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONTH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30 No Meeting This Week	1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Susan Lodal and Gail Campbell - The Band at 100	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Desteny Clemons - Healthy Kingsport, A program of the Kingsport Chamber	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Dr. Stephen May, Polio Eradication	22	23	24 END POLIO NOW World Poilo Day
25	26	27	28 Aundrea Salyers - So you Think You Want to Run	29	30	31

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Oct 05 - Paul Montgomery
Oct 10 - Kaylee Feathers
Oct 14 - Steve Wilson
Oct 15 - Paul Gray
Oct 18 - Sharon Moore
Oct 28 - Emily Ball

MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

Oct 23 - Ambre Torbett - 24 Years

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 29, 2026 - Kennedy Elementary School Trunk or Treat - 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM
November 14 - Fall Day of Caring at Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground
November 18 - Friends-giving Luncheon - Meadowview 12:00-1:00 PM

kingsportrotaryclub@gmail.com

Rotary Club of Kingsport

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

HOW TO FIND US

Rotary Club of Kingsport

District 7570 | Area 13 | Club 5739

Meets Every Wednesday at Noon
at
The MeadowView Conference Center
1901 MeadowView Pkwy Kingsport, TN

facebook.com/RotaryClubofKingsport/

@RotaryClubofKingsport

KingsportRotaryClub@gmail.com

KingsportRotaryClub.org

CLUB OFFICERS:

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Aundrea Salyer | 423-863-6914

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TREASURER:

John Fleming | 423-579-0059

SECRETARY:

Kaylee Feathers | 423-967-4667

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

Kathleen McLaughlin | 423-429-8421

CLUB DIRECTORS:

Kitty Frazier | 423-534-1745

Linda Coffee | 423-956-9775

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:

Leslie Lynch | 520-425-2259

INTERNATIONAL & DISTRICT OFFICERS

RI PRESIDENT:

Francesco Arezzo

DISTRICT 7570 GOVERNOR

Charlotte Whitted

AREA 13 GOVERNOR:

Joseph (Foe) Ley

DISTRICT SECRETARY:

Andrea Milliron

DISTRICT TREASURER:

Peter K. Howard

DISTRICT FOUNDATION CHAIR:

Paula K. Alston

Rotary THE FOUR-WAY TEST

1 | Is it the TRUTH?

2 | Is it FAIR to all concerned?

3 | Will it build GOODWILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

4 | Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

LOCAL CLUBS FOR MAKE-UPS

MONDAY

Noon | Tri-Cities—Northeast State Community College, Pierce Admin Bldg., Room P309, Blountville, TN

6:00 PM | Johnson City Evening—Howard Hunt's Edward Jones Office, 4018 Roan St., Johnson City, TN

TUESDAY

7:15 AM | Scott County—Scott Co. Park & Golf Course Clubhouse, 247 Fore Drive, Gate City, VA

7:30 AM | Bristol Morning VA-TN—The Summit Co-Work Space (Expedition Meeting Room) 1227 Volunteer Pkwy., Bristol, TN

Noon | Bristol VA-TN—Bristol Train Station ,101 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Bristol, VA

Noon | Johnson City—Johnson City Country Club 1901 E Unaka Ave., Johnson City, TN

Noon | Greeneville—Tusculum University, Niswonger Commons Pioneer Café, 60 Shiloh Road, Greeneville, TN

WEDNESDAY

7:00 AM | Greeneville-Morning—Laughlin Memorial Hospital Cafeteria Conference Room, Greeneville, TN

7:30 AM | Kingsport-Sunrise—Food City Press Room, Suite 300, 200 Clinchfield St., Kingsport, TN

Noon | Unicoi County—Town Hall, 211 N. Main St., Erwin, TN

Noon | Elizabethton—First Christian Church of Elizabethton, Fellowship Hall, 513 Hattie Ave., Elizabethton, TN

THURSDAY

7:15 AM | Johnson City Morning—Food City Community Room, 920 N. State of Franklin Rd., Johnson City, TN

Noon | Kingsport-Downtown—Food City Crown Center, 1205 N. Eastman Road, Kingsport, TN

AVAILABLE 24/7—

www.RotaryeClubOne.org