

# **MEDIA COVERAGE**

VLL  
Americans should not be content with the current law. The ban, passed in 1994, extended only to the manufacture and importation of semiauto-

public support. And now the ban has the support of the president. He should give the legislation more than a few good words. ■

## Pollution chart toppers

With three cities, including Nashville, still in the top 25 of the American Lung Association's list of most ozone-polluted cities, the state has a long way to go to clear the air.

Still, there are successes as Nashville's move from 18th to 21st shows. Chattanooga bounded out of the top 25 altogether. Memphis slightly improved its ranking to 18th. Even Knoxville with the worst pollution in the state showed modest improvement. High ozone causes breathing problems especially for the elderly, the young and those with asthma.

Cooler temperatures are being credited for diminishing the amount of ozone in the air, which can hamper breathing and foul the view. But ozone is the problem that won't go away without considerable help from government regulation. With power plants, automobiles and other sources interacting with the considerable heat in the South, the problem must be addressed at the source.

Certainly, local efforts to monitor car emissions have helped Nashville and other cities in controlling pollutants. Tennessee's four major cities all require emissions testing. But the best local efforts can't act as well as national attention to cleaner-burning cars and power plants.

The Bush administration insists that a largely voluntary system allow-

## Local anti-ozone efforts need the help of strong national policies

ing plants to swap credits is the answer instead of "new source review" that would require any additions to plants to be vetted for stronger controls. The Tennessee Valley Authority, for example, already has reduced its ozone emissions 50%, according to its spokeswoman. It plans to reduce remaining ozone emissions by 75% over the next two years.

Yet, the ozone remains a constant threat to the health of humans as well as the region's natural treasures. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park has seen its scenic views increasingly reduced during summer months because of the high ozone levels. Automobiles contribute to the ozone problem but so do the coal-fired power plants.

Cities help illustrate the problem of high ozone levels, but they can't solve the problem alone. The nation's 25 most polluted cities should be a priority in Washington as well as close to home. ■

## Make it tough on DUIs

No drunken driver should be on the road, but the most deadly people driving are the repeat offenders — those considered hard-core drunken drivers by federal authorities.

The National Transportation Safety Board is putting a new emphasis on hard-core drunken drivers. By one estimate, less than 1% of the nation's drivers make up 27% of the drivers involved in fatal accidents. The hard-core group includes those who continue to drive while drunk despite prior arrests or those caught with a blood-alcohol level of almost twice the legal limit.

The board's finding is not surprising, but it is a call to focus on the worst of the worst. It doesn't take a repeat offender to kill people, but it's the repeat offender who presents the greatest risk to others. States must get those offenders off the road.

The board recommends measures that would end the sort of plea bargaining that gets drunken drivers off

## Hard-core drunken drivers pose the greatest threat to highway safety

Treatment programs are valuable and should continue, but if hard-core drinkers are involved, they need tougher punishment.

Tennessee does not have a good record in establishing tough drunken driving laws. Most improvements on DUI laws in this state have come with a lot of foot-dragging by legislators. But it's time for every state to wake up to what drunken drivers are doing to innocent people.

National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Ellen Engleman

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**Jack Irby**  
Antioch 3701

## Forecast valuable

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