



Blount Partnership

Annual Report
2016

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP

Working with diligence, tenacity and determination, the Blount Partnership has established itself as the standard by which economic development, chamber of commerce and tourism development are measured statewide.

And with an attitude of never letting downturns get the best of them, the momentum generated by the huge number of jobs and capital investment brought to the county over the last four years breed the optimism for continued growth.

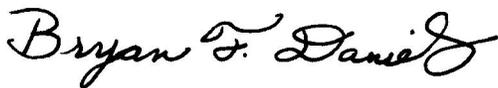
Per that ambition to make Blount County a leading economic driver in the state, the Blount Partnership will continue to strengthen the regional economy while enhancing residents' quality of life. By investing in the Blount Partnership through Chamber of Commerce memberships, funding of the Economic Development Board of Blount County and the Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority, you are helping to create jobs, attract new business, recruit a talented workforce and improve Blount County's competitive positioning and economic prosperity.

The long term goal of the Blount Partnership is to create primary, high-value jobs with competitive annual salaries with a significant capital investment. It also plans to work towards creating more opportunities for the business and family visitors as well as group travel while increasing educational and training programs for the business community.

Additionally, by hosting numerous educational training workshops and seminars while continuing to be an advocate for the business community by making federal, state and local elected officials available to its members, the Blount Partnership remains the only place where people can be heard on an individual basis. Its strong commitment to workforce development is the key to shaping the county's future economic growth.

The Blount Partnership thanks you for your contribution to enhance our economy and quality of life. The importance of the role our partners play in the economic development of Blount County cannot be overstated.

Sincerely,



Bryan Daniels
Blount Partnership President/CEO



Bryan Cable
Chair, Blount Partnership Joint Operating Committee

VISION STATEMENT

The Blount Partnership will earn a national reputation as the primary catalyst for this region's competitive success and economic prosperity, steeped in strong tradition and leadership.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Blount Partnership is to serve its members and stakeholders while promoting economic growth and stability, fostering community development and enhancing the overall quality of life in the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Riding on the coattails of the most successful year of economic development announcements ever experienced by a single county in the state of Tennessee history, the Blount Partnership continued its strong presence as site for development and relocation in 2016.

Not only is the construction of the DENSO warehouse nearing completion, which will bring 500 jobs, B&T Distributing announced it is relocating its regional headquarters and distribution center to the Blount County Industrial Park. The new location brings 80 jobs and represents a \$13 million investment.

The numbers remain robust with \$1.4 billion of capital investment and over 3,100 jobs brought into Blount County by the Blount Partnership since January 2013.

As a part of this newfound investment, the call for an expanded more educated workforce was made. It did not fall on deaf ears as the Blount County Chamber of Commerce stepped up, along with Pellissippi State Community College, to create workforce advisory meetings with educators and leaders of advanced manufacturing and construction industries to come up with a plan to recruit and build the next generation of workers. A plan is also in the works to begin recruiting regionally as well as bringing in other professions to the meetings in 2017.

Coming out of nearly two dozen gathering was the announcement that Pellissippi State is creating a new workforce training facility that teaches to the specific needs of local manufacturers.

A membership event in July netted the Blount County Chamber nearly 300 new members. This ever-growing support of the business people in the county only proves that Chamber is perceived as the strongest voice of the business community and can be an asset when it comes to keeping the county's economy strong.

The Chamber hosted over 100 networking events, ribbon cuttings, business development workshops, human resource and managerial seminars to aid businesses of all sizes in their quest for new customers.

Tourism is another key industry in the county which saw a marked increase in visitor spending. Gov. Bill Haslam announced in August that tourism's direct domestic and international travel reached a record \$18.4 billion in 2015, up 3.7 percent. Additionally, tourism-generated jobs for Tennesseans reached 157,400, an increase of 2.9 percent. State and local sales tax revenue for the industry topped \$1.6 billion.

As a gateway to the Smoky Mountains, Blount County ranked eighth among Tennessee's 95 counties in visitor expenditures with \$346 million in 2015 according to the Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties report issued by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. It represents an increase of over \$13 million from 2014.

Tourism jobs, which number over 3,000 in the county, led to a payroll of \$83 million and local tax receipts of \$12.1 million, which was the sixth-highest total in the state and a 4.6 percent increase over 2014.

Additionally, an Alcoa/Airport marketing plan was developed to educate travelers that Blount County has ample meeting space, hotels and food available to suit their needs. A leisure travel marketing was also launched to pull in travelers that enjoy outdoor activities while on vacation.

Our future presents both challenges and opportunities for the Partnership, area businesses and the community as a whole. Program expansion and communication continue to be points of emphasis. As a united business, economic development and tourism community, we must present one voice of both fiscal responsibility and encouragement.

With the continued support of more than 1,300 businesses, individuals and organizations that make up the Blount Partnership, we will continue to represent the voice for business in the community and drive economic prosperity for our county and region.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Education & Training

The Blount Partnership hosted the following educational training workshops and seminars.

- Hosted a briefing with Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County Schools superintendents.
- Hosted three Constant Contact digital marketing seminars.
- Three classes on How to Network Effectively
- Hosted Glenn Shepard's seminar entitled "Hire With Confidence, Fire Without Fear, Tame Toxic Employees and Put Your Team on the Fast Track to Record-Shattering Success"
- Hosted annual Human Resources Supervisor's Training.
- Hosted TN Achieves training for mentors.

Advocacy

The Blount Partnership made sure that the business community was apprised of the latest happenings in our government.

- Advocated four government agendas for local, regional, state and federal issues.
- Presented Sen. Lamar Alexander the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Spirit of Excellence Award.
- Hosted Tennessee Commissioner of Transportation John Schroer.

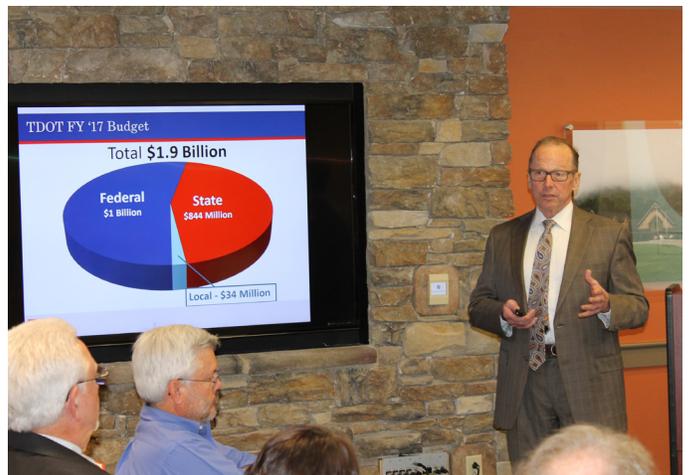


Glenn Shepard returned for a fifth consecutive year to assist managers with solutions to effectively manage employees.

- Hosted Tennessee State Treasurer David Lillard.
- Hosted six governmental briefings featuring state and local elected officials.
- Hosted three transportation briefings featuring state and local elected officials.
- Hosted the Pigs and Politics Legislative Day to thank the elected officials for the work they do.
- Partnered with Oak Ridge and Knoxville in developing the Regional Legislative Agenda.
- Hosted federal and state legislators at Nashville reception to ensure Blount County is heard.
- Volunteers in Progress (VIP) group made a legislative trip to Nashville.



Sen. Lamar Alexander (I) was presented the Spirit of Enterprise Award from Clark Thomason of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Blount Partnership President/CEO Bryan Daniels.



Tennessee Commissioner of Transportation John Schroer gave a briefing about the state's transportation plans for the near future.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Tourism

The Blount Partnership took a very active role in developing marketing plans to reach leisure, business and luxury visitors to the area.

- Blount County ranked eighth in the state in visitor expenditures which was a 4.6% increase over the previous year. Over 3,000 people are employed in the county with direct ties to tourism and boasts an \$83 million payroll.
- Business travel marketing plan for Alcoa/Airport properties was developed to help educate travelers that Blount County has the meeting space, hotels and food and there is no need to travel to neighboring counties.



The Grains and Grits Festival brought together distillers from across the state for a celebration of spirits.

- Began the Main Street Program for downtown Maryville of which the Blount Partnership will direct.
- Hosted fourth annual Tourism Day celebration with Superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Cassius Cash as part of the 100-year anniversary of the National Park Service.
- Had tourism booth at two-day Blue Angels Air Show at McGhee Tyson Airport.
- Hosted monthly Downtown Maryville Association meetings.
- Saw near record attendance at both the Townsend Spring & Fall Festivals with increased food and craft vendors.



The second annual Hops in the Hills craft beer festival, in conjunction with Summer on Broadway, made for a great summer weekend in Maryville.

- Leisure travel marketing plan was executed towards soft adventure and really pull in the travelers that enjoys outdoor activities while on vacation. We shifted printed ad space to publications that focus on outdoor sport activities, festivals and races.
- Saw increased vendors and attendance at the second annual Hops in the Hills craft beer festival in conjunction with Summer on Broadway.
- Hosted the first-ever statewide distillers gathering in East Tennessee at the Grains and Grits Festival at the Townsend Visitors Center.
- The Great Smoky Mountains Half Marathon continued to grow with increased participation for the third consecutive year.
- In the second year with CSC Interactive helping with social media, it saw significant exposure increases and engagement across all its platforms.



Superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Cassius Cash (second from right) kicked off national tourism week with Joel Zachry former Appalachian Bear Rescue president (second from left) along with Blount Partnership President/CEO Bryan Daniels (left) and Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



A plan has been devised to market the hotel and restaurant properties around the airport as well as highlighting other things

- Attended a number of travel shows throughout the Southeast.
- Attended a number of conferences including the Tennessee Hospitality and Tourism Association, Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College and the Governor's Conference.
- Continued to expand the BTAP program in our area. Added the class to local high school students to help spread the program to a different demographic.



Participation has more than tripled, with more than 2000 runners hitting the road in the third annual Great Smoky Mountains Half Marathon,

- Worked with local established events: The Scottish Festival, Smoky Mountain Snowdown, Tour de Blount to help market events out of state.
- Made seven visits touring 24 tourism-related locations to familiarize the staff with what is available for visitors to do and see.

Economic Development

The Blount Partnership continued to recruit, retain and bring new business developments into Blount County while also pursuing overseas interests.

- Announced B&T Distributing purchased 20.75 acres of land in the Blount County Industrial Park to relocate its regional headquarters and distribution center. The new location brings 80 jobs and represents a \$13 million investment.
- Held tenant meetings at every industrial park in the county.
- Currently, working on a number of confidential projects involving aerospace, defense, company headquarters, heavy manufacturing and back-of-fice operations.



B & T Distributing headquarters will relocate to Blount

From Staff Reports

B & T Distributing Co. is purchasing 20.75 acres of land in the Blount County Industrial Park on Mount Tabor Road in Maryville to relocate its regional headquarters and distribution center, the company said Wednesday.

The new location will bring 80 jobs and represents a \$13 million investment.

The wine and spirits distributor, which services over 1,000 wine & spirits stores, grocery stores, bars and restaurants in middle and East Tennessee, has been located in Knoxville since 1961. After being acquired by Kahn Ventures Inc., earlier this year, it joined Horizon Wine & Spirits and Delta Wholesale to create the first fully operational statewide distributor network in Tennessee.

"We were seeking a larger warehouse area for our expanding distribu-



tion network and decided this parcel of land in Blount County met our expectations as we look toward the future of our company," B & T Distributing President David H. Henry said in a release.

"We thank the leadership in Blount County for their hospitality and partnership. We feel this move will allow us to continue to increase our market share and become more efficient in our delivery system."

Part of the deal, which has no incentives from the Blount County Economic Development Board or the county and city, includes a \$10

SEE RELOCATE, 5A

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Workforce Development

The Blount Partnership worked to bring together manufacturers and educational entities to determine future needs of the local workforce.

- Pitched Boatmate Trailers internship program to WATE which did story on high schoolers learning a trade before graduating.
- Held Blount County Job Fair at Second Harvest Food Bank with more than 500 attendees and 60 businesses represented.



Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam (l) and Tennessee Economic Development Commissioner Randy Boyd (r) kicked off Blount County's Manufacturer's Week in October with visits to DENSO and Pellissippi State.

and Tennessee Economic Development Commissioner Randy Boyd at DENSO and Pellissippi State's Blount County campus as well as a tour of Newell Brands' facility.

- Held four workforce advisory committee meetings on STEM, five on advanced manufacturing, four on construction.
- Conducted monthly educator's roundtable to begin discussions on a share Career Technical Education (CTE) facility in Blount County.



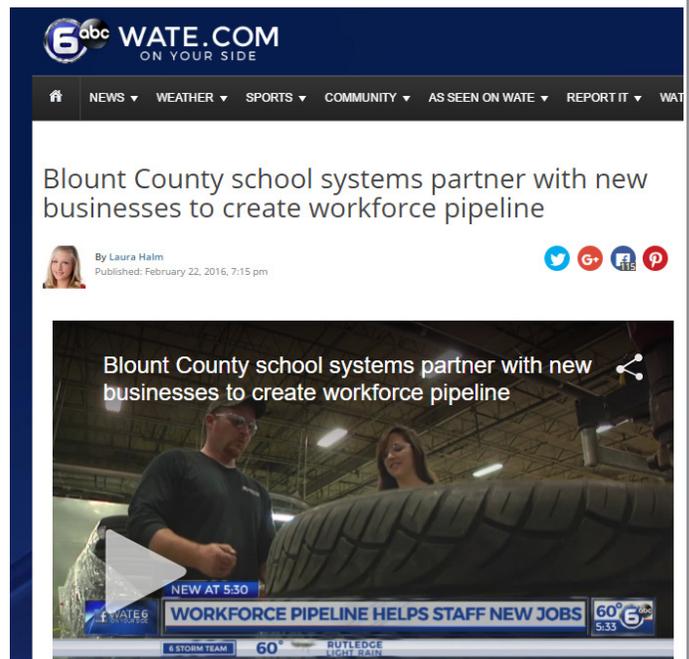
- Hosted Tennessee Commissioner of Labor and Work Force Development Burns Phillips.
- The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) announced that the Blount Partnership was awarded a \$959,267 grant through the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP).

- Participated in state of Tennessee's Manufacturer's Week with a variety of events including a STEM tour at Maryville High School, visit from Gov. Bill Haslam



The Blount Partnership was awarded administrative oversight of a nearly \$1 million Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program grant.

- Along with the Blount County Public Library, presented eight soft skills classes.



BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Business Development

The Blount Partnership saw that businesses stayed connected with each other and offered avenues to reach the public through numerous networking and community events.

- With the assistance of Your Chamber Connection and nearly 300 volunteers, the Blount County Chamber of Commerce brought in 276 new members during a three-day membership event.
- The 276 new members is the sixth-highest total ever generated by a chamber in the state of Tennessee. It brings total membership for the Blount Chamber to 1302.
- Relaunched the redesigned job board at www.blountareajobs.com with additional links to major employers like DENSO, Blount Memorial Hospital, Clayton and all staffing agencies serving Blount County.
- Chamber Ambassadors made over 1200 member

connections helping to increase retention rate.

- The three-day Operation Thank You continues to be a positive where Ambassadors deliver membership packets and plaques to every member.
- Used Anniversary Celebration in January as a networking event with live music. More than 500 attended.
- Presented more than 35 business development workshops.
- Held a record 28 ribbon cuttings and grand openings.
- Hosted 11 coffee clubs, four afternoon mixers, two socials and three president's breakfast.
- Hosted fourth annual Primetime networking event for over 300.
- Held six Women in Business luncheons.
- A great crowd of over 600 attended Taste of Blount.
- Held a numerous one-on-one business counseling sessions.



Thanks to these great volunteers, the Blount Chamber netted nearly 300 new members at its membership event, which showed the great solidarity among the business community that works together to make the county a great place to do commerce.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



DENSO held its groundbreaking for a new warehouse that will bring 500 new jobs to Blount County.

- Helped more than 40 individuals with business start up seminar.
- Hosted seminars for human resource workers, monthly non-profit community collaboration, how to network training events, maximize Chamber membership programs.
- Presented the Best of Blount Awards with NASCAR Hall of Famer Rusty Wallace.
- Continued increase in the number of members participating in Blount County's third annual Small Business Saturday done in conjunction with the American Express national campaign. Went from 12-to-24-to-32.
- Announced with Charter Communications the installation of fiber optics to downtown Maryville.

Communications

The Blount Partnership continued to make strides in communication to its Chamber members and stakeholders as well as the community.

- Made monthly appearances on WATE-TV to promote community events in Blount County.
- Saw Blount County Chamber Facebook fans increase by 33% while having nearly 12,000 post engagements and nearly two million impressions.
- Blount Partnership Facebook page saw a 22% increase in fans with nearly 2,200 post engagements and nearly 200,000 impressions.

- Began a shop local social media campaign that sees small businesses featured on video.
- Made nearly two dozen appearances on live or taped news stories for three television networks.
- Held a gang awareness program that was covered by three television networks and print media.
- Shot promotional video for grand opening ceremony at Pet Supplies Plus.
- Hosted a visit from the Clinton (Tenn.) Chamber of Commerce to view facility and review organizational chart.

Professional Involvement

Blount Partnership managerial staff attended the following meetings and conferences to gain further insight into the national trends.

- U.S. Chamber Institute for Organizational Management
- International Economic Development Council
- Southern Economic Development Council
- American Chamber of Commerce Convention
- Tennessee Chamber of Commerce
- Governor's Conference on Tourism & Economic Development
- Public Affairs Conference/Boots N Business

Staff members also hold leadership positions at a number of national professional organizations as well as state and federal levels.

- Chair of Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives
- Board member of Tennessee Chamber of Commerce
- Vice Chair of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Southeast Board of Regents
- Board member of the International Economic Development Council
- East Tennessee Director of the Tennessee Economic Development Council
- Board member of the Tennessee Economic Partnership

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Joint Operating Committee

Chair Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport

Vice Chair Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc.

Chamber Representatives:

..... Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships, Chair

..... Bob Booker, DENSO, Chair-Elect

..... Dave Bennett, Cherokee Millwright & Mechanical, Past Chair

Economic Development Board Representatives:

..... Fred Lawson

..... Matt Murray, University of Tennessee, Vice Chair

..... Chuck Alexander, Hickory Construction, Past Chair

Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Representatives:

..... Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins

..... Jewell Overton, Vice Chair

..... Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport, Past Chair

Blount County Chamber of Commerce Board

Chair Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships

Chair-Elect Bob Booker, DENSO

Chair – Chamber Foundation Dave Bennett, Cherokee Millwright & Mechanical

Board Member at Large Mary Beth West, Mary Beth West Communications

Board Member at Large Bob Booker, DENSO

VIP Chair Rick Shepard, United Community Bank

VIP Chair-Elect Connie Huffman, Blount Memorial Hospital

Auto Sales & Services, Transportation & Petroleum Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships

Government & Public Utilities Al Scott, South Blount County Utility District

Construction, Building Trades & Suppliers Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc.

Finance & Professional Mike Zorio, Pinnacle Financial Partners

Hotel/Accommodations, Restaurants & Recreation Chad Rochelle, Dogwood Cabins

Individuals/Non-Profits Bill Kilgore

Manufacturers, Wholesalers & Agriculture David Lazar, Alcoa Inc.

Retail/Service/Real Estate/Insurance Drew Miles, Miles Insurance Agency

One Year Director Carl Esposito, The Daily Times

Ex-Officio Members:

Chair, Economic Development Board Fred Lawson

Chair, Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins

Legal Counsel Matt Haralson, Kizer & Black, Attorneys

City of Alcoa Mark L. Johnson, City Manager

Blount County Ed Mitchell, County Mayor Blount County Government

City of Maryville Greg McClain, City Manager

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Economic Development Board

Chair	Fred Lawson
Vice Chair	Matt Murray, University of Tennessee
Secretary/Treasurer	Gary Hensley
Immediate Past Chair	Chuck Alexander, Hickory Construction
Member	David Black, Kizer & Black, Attorneys
Member	Joe Dawson
Member	Monica Gawet, Tennessee Marble Company, Inc.
Blount County	Ed Mitchell, Mayor, Blount County Government
City of Alcoa	Mark Johnson, City Manager, City of Alcoa
City of Maryville	Greg McClain, City Manager, City of Maryville
Ex-Officio Members:	
.....	Robert N. Goddard, Goddard & Gamble, Board Attorney
.....	Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships

Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Board

Chair	Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins
Vice Chair	Jewell Overton
Secretary/Treasurer	Boyce Smith
Business/Resident Representative Alcoa	Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport
Business/resident Representative Walland/Townsend Area	Chad Rochelle, Dogwood Cabins
Business/Resident Representative Maryville	Dr. Tom Bogart, Maryville College
City of Alcoa Representative	Mark L. Johnson, City Manager, City of Alcoa
City of Maryville Representative	Greg McClain, City Manager, City of Maryville
Blount County Mayor or County Commission Representative	Gary Farmer, Blount County Commissioner
Chamber Representative	Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships

Blount Partnership Staff

President/CEO	Bryan Daniels
Vice President	Tammi Ford
Director of Economic Development	Rachel Buchanan
Director of Accounting & Human Resources	Bruce Kerr
Director of Tourism	Kim Mitchell
Director of Communications	Jeff Muir
Membership Sales	Rachel Coffman
Executive Administrative Assistant	Brenda Farner
Accounting & HR Administrative Assistant	Ann Watson
Administrative Assistant	Deborah Nye
Administrative Assistant	Amy Lawson
Administrative Assistant	Claire Carter
Administrative Assistant	Kasey Ferguson
Administrative Assistant	Ashlee Davis
Facilities Maintenance	Robert Galyon

