



# Blount Partnership

**Annual Report**  
**2014**

# BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP

Blount County continued to establish itself as a leader in business, economic and tourism development. We are positioned to build upon this momentum, with continued success anticipated for the upcoming year.

The Blount Partnership will continue to strengthen our 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.

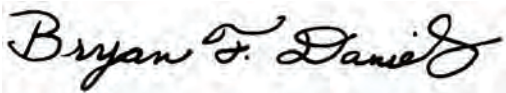
The five-year goal of the Blount Partnership is to create primary, high-value jobs with competitive annual salaries with a significant capital investment. It also plans to work towards creating more opportunities for the business and family visitors as well as group travel while increasing educational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

Through the Blount Partnership, more than 300 jobs were announced in 2014, bringing the total number of jobs to 2,234 over the last four years. Not to be overlooked is the \$12.5 million capital investment which grows the total to over \$431 million during the same time frame. We could not have achieved this growth without your investment and partnership.

Additionally, it also hosted educational training workshops and seminars while continuing to be an advocate for the business community with governmental briefings.

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



Matt Murray  
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

The past year marked another year of innovative programming, well-attended events and unprecedented influence within the community for the Blount Partnership.

The Partnership planned and produced more than 40 events for over 4,000 guests during the past year, providing businesses the opportunity to network, learn and grow their business to contribute to the overall economic prosperity of the region.

It also launched two initiatives for small business -- Small Business Saturday and the Cash Mob -- while continuing to push forth educational and training opportunities through numerous workshops and seminars.

The Partnership also redesigned its three main websites -- blountchamber.com, blountindustry.com and smokymountains.org -- along with introducing a landing page for all three entitled blountpartnership.com. Although there were some hiccups, including the navigability of the tourism site, those issues were corrected by the end of the year.

There were two large scale economic development announcements as K12 Inc., opened its family support center at the Tyson Center and Koide Tennessee expanded its operations in Stock Creek. K12 made an investment of \$2.4 million and added 300 employees. Koide added 32 jobs while making a \$10.1 million capital investment.

As a gateway to the Smoky Mountains, Blount County ranked eighth among Tennessee's 95 counties in visitor expenditures with \$320 million in 2013 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 \$8 million from 2012.

Tourism jobs, which number nearly 3,000, led to a payroll of \$76.12 million and local tax receipts of \$10.9 million, which was the sixth-highest total in the state and a 3.1 percent increase over 2012.

On average, visitor spending in Blount County generated \$877,781 in daily expenditures and created \$28,863 in tax receipts.

A collective meeting of all three boards of directors crafted new vision and mission statements while establishing a list of core values.

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 1,000 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



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

## Education & Training

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

- Improve Your Likeability Improve Your Impact with Bill Graham
- How to Network Effectively
- Hire with Confidence, Fire without Fear, Tame Toxic Employees and put Your Team on Fast Track to Record Shattering Success with Glenn Shepard
- Email Marketing – Simple Strategies for Success
- Human Resources Supervisor's Training



**Bill Graham gave a fresh perspective on how to be more likeable while showing how to get what you want.**

## Advocacy

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

- Hosted five governmental briefings featuring state and local elected officials.
- Hosted the Pigs and Politics Legislative Day to bring candidates and incumbents with the public.
- Partnered with Oak Ridge and Knoxville in developing the Regional Legislative Agenda.
- Volunteers in Progress (VIP) group made a legislative trip to Nashville.



**Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell serves BBQ and helps a local non-profit organization at the annual Pigs and Politics Legislative Day.**

# 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.

- Over 8 million visitors entered the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with 15% coming through Townsend.
- Distributed more than 150,000 vacation guides.
- Host Tourism Day celebration with Tennessee Department of Tourism Director Susan Whitaker.
- Saw near record attendance at both the Townsend Spring & Fall Festivals. Increased the number of food and craft vendor positions with additional electric and water lines.
- Assisted with promotional materials for the Fiber Arts Festival.
- Assisted Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival and Games with re-designed website and mobile app.
- FAM tours of nine area tourism-related businesses from June-September.
- Coordinated the Blount Tourism Ambassador Program that has put forth 138 graduates in seven classes.
- Participated in downtown Maryville's Summer on Broadway celebration which included the Kansas City Barbeque Society sanctioned BBQ Bash.
- Hosted the inaugural Great Smoky Mountains half marathon put on by Vacation Races.



The inaugural Smoky Mountains Half Marathon produced by Vacation Races made its debut in the Townsend area in September.



The Blount Tourism Ambassador Program continues to be a huge success with 138 graduates in seven classes.

- Developed itinerary for international travelers.
- Participated in state media tour featuring Blount County.
- Assisted with promotional materials for the Winter Heritage Festival and Fiber Arts Festival.
- Attended American Bus Association marketplace for group travel.
- Attended Motor Coach Association for group travel.
- Attended Tennessee Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus Blizzard.
- Attended Travel South Showcase for group travel.
- Attended Southeast Tourism Society for group travel.
- Hosted Foothills Antique Tractor Show.
- Hosted the Smoky Mountain Rumble motorcycle gathering.



Blount Partnership President/CEO Bryan Daniels (L) joins Tennessee Department of Tourism Director Susan Whitaker and Sen. Doug Overbey celebrating Tourism Day in Blount County.

# BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

## Economic Development

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

- Created multi-media campaign to recruit craft brewery projects to the area.
- Announced K12, Inc.'s opening of a family support campus in Alcoa with 300 employees and a \$2.4 million capital investment.
- Announced Koide Tennessee, Inc., is adding 32 jobs in addition to building a 76,000-square foot facility with a \$10.1 million capital investment.
- Blount County delegation traveled to Germany for economic development and tourism recruiting trips.
- Currently, working on a number of confidential projects involving aviation, brewing, automotive, company headquarters, heavy manufacturing and back office operations.

Since 2010, the Blount Partnership has helped bring to Blount County:

- **2,234 jobs**
- **\$431,006,000 capital investment**

In 2014:

### Koide Tennessee

\$10.1 million facility expansion  
32 jobs

### K12 Inc.

\$2.4 million investment  
300 jobs

*Since 2000 there have been 45 announcements regarding industrial development or expansion in Blount County, matching the total for the previous 30 years.*



Koide President Takeshi Yoshida announces its \$10.1 million facility expansion in Stock Creek.



Teacher Yvonne Johnson, Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell, Alcoa City Mayor Don Mull, K12, Inc. President/COO Tim Murray, Blount Partnership President/CEO Bryan Daniels, K12 Site Director Lance Smith, teacher Summer Shelton, teacher Allison York, following the K12, Inc. announcement in March.

# BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

## Workforce Development

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

- Administered \$125,000 Alcoa Foundation grant for four internship groups for unemployed youth. Collaborated with local business, industries and Adult Basic Education in placing these individuals.
- Collaborated with Pellissippi State in hosting a Teacher's Professional Development Day by connecting teachers with local manufacturers who gave first-hand knowledge about what skill sets they are looking for when hiring.
- Participated in Manufacturer's Week with a variety of events including a symposium at Pellissippi State with ModernTech and DENSO.
- For a better understanding of workforce issues, a facilities tour was hosted at two area high schools, Promat and Newell Rubbermaid.



**Blount County teachers take a tour of Newell Rubbermaid to learn what area manufacturers need for workforce development.**



**National Manufacturer's Day was celebrated with a 3D printer demonstration at Pellissippi State.**



**ProNova facility construction continues at Pellissippi Place.**

# 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.

- Changed the direction of the Annual Meeting to a celebratory networking event with live music. More than 400 attended.
- Held 23 ribbon cuttings and grand openings.



The ribbon cutting at The Key Lime Cafe was one of 23 held for Chamber members.



The DENSO crew really got into the Halloween-themed Primetime networking event, coming as their favorite social media platform.



The Best of Blount Awards was highlighted by guest speaker and former Navy SEAL Robert O'Neill.

- Hosted 11 coffee clubs, four afternoon mixers, two socials and three president's breakfast.
- Hosted second annual Primetime networking event for over 300.
- More than 300 attended a rainy Taste of Blount.
- Held a number of one-on-one business counseling sessions.
- Helped a number of individuals with a business start up seminar.
- More than 700 people attended Best of Blount Awards with guest speaker Robert O'Neill, a former Navy SEAL who shot Osama bin Laden.
- Held a successful first Cash Mob at The Village Tinker.
- Used the American Express toolkit to hold the first Small Business Saturday.



# BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

## 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



This afternoon mixer was one of over 40 networking events held throughout the year.



Rep. Bob Ramsey (L), Sen. Doug Overbey and Rep. Art Swann answer questions at one of the periodic governmental briefings put on by the Blount Partnership.



The Blount Partnership continued its long-standing tradition of putting on community events like the Townsend Spring and Fall Festivals.



# BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

## Joint Operating Committee

Chair ..... Matthew N. Murray, University of Tennessee

Vice Chair ..... Vacant

### Chamber Representatives:

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

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

..... Chris Soro, Past Chair, C2RL, Inc.

### Economic Development Board Representatives:

..... Chuck Alexander, Chair, Hickory Construction, Inc.

..... Joe Dawson, Vice Chair

### Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Representatives:

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

..... Jewell Overton, Vice Chair

..... Tim Seay, Secretary/Treasurer, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins

## Blount County Chamber of Commerce Board

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

Chair-Elect ..... Joe Tipton, Twin City Buick

Chair – Chamber Foundation ..... Virginia Hardwick, Staffing Solutions

Past Chair – JOC Rep - Board Member at Large ..... Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc.

Board Member at Large ..... Mary Beth West, Mary Beth West Consulting

VIP Chair ..... Kevin Painter, LeConte Wealth Management, LLC

Auto Sales & Services, Transportation & Petroleum ..... Joe Tipton, Twin City Buick

Government & Public Utilities ..... Henry Durant, South Blount County Utility District

Construction, Building Trades & Suppliers ..... Dave Bennett, Cherokee Millwright & Mechanical

Finance & Professional ..... Mike Zorio, First Tennessee Bank

Hotel/Accommodations, Restaurants & Recreation ..... Joe Huff, Parks & Recreation Commission

Individuals/Non-Profits ..... Trudy Hughes, East Tennessee Foundation

Manufacturers, Wholesalers & Agriculture ..... David Lazar, Alcoa Inc.

Retail/Service/Real Estate/Insurance ..... Connie Huffman, Blount Memorial Hospital

One Year Director ..... Carl Esposito, The Daily Times

### Ex-Officio Members:

Chair, Economic Development Board ..... Chuck Alexander, Hickory Construction, Inc.

Chair, Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority ..... Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport

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

VIP Chair-Elect ..... Rick Shepard, United Community Bank

# BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

## Economic Development Board

Chair .....	Chuck Alexander, Hickory Construction, Inc.
Vice Chair .....	Joe Dawson
Secretary/Treasurer .....	Gary Hensley
Member .....	Fred Lawson
Member .....	David Black, Kizer & Black, Attorneys
Member .....	Monica Gawet, Tennessee Marble Company, Inc.
Immediate Past Chair .....	Matthew N. Murray, University of Tennessee
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, Board Attorney, Goddard & Gamble
.....	Dave Bennett, Chamber Chair, Cherokee Millwright & Mechanical

## Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Board

Chair .....	Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport
Vice Chair .....	Jewell Overton
Secretary/Treasurer .....	Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins
Business/Resident Representative Alcoa .....	Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport
Business/Resident Representative Alcoa .....	Jewell Overton
Business/resident Representative Walland/Townsend Area .....	Mark Chipperfield, Townsend Great Smokies KOA
Business/resident Representative Walland/Townsend Area .....	Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins
Business/Resident Representative Maryville .....	Dr. Tom Bogart, Maryville College
Business/Resident Representative Maryville .....	Boyce Smith, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
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 .....	Chad Rochelle, Dogwood Cabins

## Blount Partnership Staff

President .....	Bryan Daniels
Vice President .....	Tammi Ford
Director of Accounting & Human Resources .....	Bruce Kerr
Director of Tourism .....	Kim Mitchell
Director of Communications .....	Jeff Muir
Director of Partnership Programs & Events .....	Kayla Ruckart
Director of Economic & Workforce Development .....	Rachel Trump
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

