



Blount Partnership

Annual Report
2015

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.

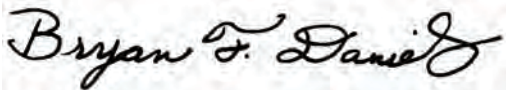
The long term goal of the Blount Partnership is to create primary, high-value jobs with competitive annual salaries with a significant capital investment. It also plans to work towards creating more opportunities for the business and family visitors as well as group travel while increasing educational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

Through the Blount Partnership, 1,725 jobs were announced in 2015, bringing the total number of jobs to 3,961 over the last five years. Not to be overlooked is the \$1 billion capital investment brought in during 2015 which grows the total to nearly \$1.5 billion million during the same time frame. We could not have achieved this growth without your investment and partnership.

Additionally, the Partnership also hosted numerous educational training workshops and seminars while continuing to be an advocate for the business community with governmental briefings. It has also made a strong commitment to workforce development by bringing educators, advanced manufacturers and the construction industry together to forge a better union that will shape the workers of the future.

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

It was a year of unprecedented heights as 2015 saw the greatest string of economic development announcements ever done by one organization in the state of Tennessee's history.

With the introductions of Advanced Munitions International and Cirrus Aircraft to the community, along with major expansion announcements by DENSO and TeamHealth, there was \$1 billion of capital investment brought in to Blount County go along with an additional 1,725 jobs. Going back five years, those numbers balloon to nearly 4,000 jobs and \$1.5 billion of investment. With the help of great community leaders it's no wonder this area has become a hotbed for new and existing businesses to relocate or expand.

With these announcements comes the pressure to deliver a workforce with the skills needed to carry out these jobs. To that end, the Blount County Chamber of Commerce has already begun the process of bringing local educators together with leaders of advanced manufacturing and the construction industry to bridge the gap with what's being taught and what's needed to do these jobs. A plan is also being constructed for recruitment outside Blount County.

After a comprehensive self-review, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce awarded the Blount County Chamber of Commerce with 5-Star Accreditation. This prestigious honor puts it among the top 1% of chambers nationwide. The Chamber has been 5-Star accredited since the designation was first awarded in 2005. In fact, the Blount Chamber has been accredited since 1984 and is just one of four 5-star chambers in Tennessee.



The Chamber also welcomed more than 70 new members to its ranks while hosting over 100 networking events, ribbon cuttings, business development workshops, human resource and managerial seminars.

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 \$17.7 billion in 2014, up 6.3 percent, and an all-time high for the state. Additionally, tourism-generated jobs for Tennesseans reached 152,900, an increase of 2.8 percent. State and local sales tax revenue for the industry topped \$1.5 billion.

As a gateway to the Smoky Mountains, Blount County ranked eighth among Tennessee's 95 counties in visitor expenditures with \$331 million in 2014 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 \$10 million from 2013.

Tourism jobs, which number nearly 3,000, led to a payroll of \$77.74 million and local tax receipts of \$11.3 million, which was the sixth-highest total in the state and a 3.3 percent increase over 2013.

On average, visitor spending in Blount County generated \$906,082 in daily expenditures and created \$30,876 in tax receipts.

Additionally, marketing plans were developed to educate travelers that Blount County has ample meeting space, hotels and food available to suit their needs. Leisure travel marketing plans were geared towards soft adventure and pulling in the 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 1,000 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



Darcy Hoffman's "Success Habits That Work!" seminar was one of many successful training workshops.

Education & Training

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

- Hosted a briefing with Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County Schools superintendents at the City of Maryville building.
- Constant Contact digital marketing seminar on social media.
- Successful Habits seminar with Darcy Hoffman
- Three classes on How to Network Effectively
- Be the Manager Other Managers Envy and Bosses Can't Wait to Reward with Glenn Shepard
- Human Resources Supervisor's Training



Pigs and Politics Legislative Day brought together elected officials from around the county.

Advocacy

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

- Hosted five governmental and 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.
- Volunteers in Progress (VIP) group made a legislative trip to Nashville.
- Developed the Chamber's advocacy website (www.blountpartnershiplegislation.com) with information on how to contact elected officials, voter resources and up-to-date news, legislation and issues important to Blount County.



The inaugural Hops in the Hills craft beer festival was a huge success as an anchor event for Summer on Broadway.

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.

- Hosted Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Commissioner Kevin Triplett. Toured Heritage Center, Dancing Bear and Blackberry.
- Hosted third annual Tourism Day celebration with a Civil War presentation by Maryville College's Dr. Aaron Aster.
- Saw near record attendance at both the Townsend Spring & Fall Festivals with increased food and craft vendors.
- Feasibility study to add additional meeting space to the Airport Hilton was completed and the study found the area could support the additional space.
- Business travel marketing plan 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.
- Leisure travel marketing plan was developed to gear 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.
- Participation in the Great Smoky Mountains Half Marathon increased 54% from 2014 to 2015.



The Townsend Bike Bash and Smoky Mountains Half Marathon are two examples of the focus on outdoor sport activities in Blount County. Both saw huge increases in participation and made an economic impact.



The Blount Tourism Ambassador Program was expanded into the high schools in 2015.

- Hired a social media company to run social media to help gain exposure and new followers on social media outlets.
- Developed group/individual itineraries for international traveler which was uploaded on website and videos. A German version was also created.
- Attended three travel shows that included: Select Travel, IPW International Travel, Motor Coach Travel.
- 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.
- Worked with local established events: The Scottish Festival, Smoky Mountain Snowdown, Tour de Blount to help market event out of state.



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.

- Announced Advanced Munitions International will build a global headquarters and state-of-the-art munitions facility. A worldwide leader in high-end ammunition manufacturing, AMI will invest \$553.6 million in a new campus for its manufacturing, distribution and R&D operation while creating 605 new jobs.
- Announced DENSO will create 500 new jobs and invest \$400 million to expand its manufacturing capabilities and construct a new warehouse. Due to expanded production needs at two of the company's manufacturing plants, the existing warehouse will be converted to manufacturing space and a new consolidated warehouse will be built on the company's current campus.
- Announced Cirrus Aircraft will expand into Tennessee with its new Cirrus Customer Experience Center, called the 'Vision Center,' to be located at the McGhee Tyson Airport in Blount County. The Vision Center will be the location for factory direct type rating training from Cirrus Aircraft. It brings 170 jobs with \$30 million of investment.
- Announced TeamHealth will expand its Healthcare Financial Services anesthesia operations with 450 jobs and \$16.8 million investment. It will allow it to strengthen its coding and billing functions.
- Hosted a Blount County economic briefing by University of Tennessee's Dr. Mark Murray and Blount Partnership overview for all the elected officials, including school board members.
- Alcoa Inc. announced the \$300 million completion of its new automotive sheet facility that will produce aluminum sheet for auto manufacturers.
- Currently, working on a number of confidential projects involving aviation, brewing, automotive, company headquarters, heavy manufacturing and back office operations.

With four major industrial announcements in 2015, the Blount Partnership helped bring in:

- **1,725 jobs**
- **\$1,000,400,000 capital investment**

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

- **3,961 jobs**
- **\$1,456,406,000 capital investment**

In 2015:



\$553.6 million investment
605 jobs

DENSO

\$400 million investment
500 jobs

TEAMHealth

\$16.8 million investment
450 jobs



\$30 million investment
170 jobs

Since 2000 there have been 49 announcements regarding industrial development or expansion in Blount County, exceeding the total of 45 for the previous 30 years.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Workforce Development

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

- Received \$100,000 grant from Alcoa Inc. Foundation to continue the Youth Workforce Readiness Training and Internship Program. The program has been in service for two years. Collaborated with local business, industries and Adult Basic Education in placing these individuals.
- Participated in Manufacturer's Week with a variety of events including a high school career tech tour at William Blount HS, a tour of ProNova Solutions and a symposium at Pellissippi State.
- Conducted monthly educator's roundtable to begin discussions on a shared Career Technical Education (CTE) facility in Blount County.
- Held Career Technical Education meetings connecting educators with manufacturers and construction industry.
- Workforce development program putting educators in the workplace tours of Alcoa East Tennessee Operations, Newell Rubbermaid, Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority and DENSO.
- Eight soft skills classes were set up in conjunction with the Blount County Library.



The Blount Partnership received a \$100,000 grant from Alcoa Inc. Foundation to continue the Youth Workforce Readiness Training and Intern Program.



Advanced Munitions International made the largest economic development announcement in Blount County history.



Gov. Bill Haslam announced Cirrus Aircraft is bringing its 'Vision Center' to McGhee Tyson Airport.



DENSO celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a huge expansion announcement.

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.

- Used Anniversary Celebration in January as a networking event with live music. More than 500 attended.
- Presented 30 business development workshops.
- Held 24 ribbon cuttings and grand openings.
- Hosted 11 coffee clubs, four afternoon mixers, two socials and three president's breakfast.



The ribbon cutting at Mtn Trax in Townsend was one of 24 held for Chamber members.



The Blount Partnership's Anniversary Celebration had a little something for everyone with great food, entertainment and a casino.



Comedian and impressionist Frank Caliendo delighted the audience at the Best of Blount Awards.

- Hosted third annual Primetime networking event for over 300.
- A record crowd of 700 attended Taste of Blount.
- Held a numerous one-on-one business counseling sessions.
- Helped more than 30 individuals with business start up seminar.
- Hosted seminars on worker's compensation, hiring and firing, building a better team and conducting performance reviews.
- More than 700 people attended Best of Blount Awards with comedian and impressionist Frank Caliendo.
- Saw double the number of members (24) participate in Blount County's second annual Small Business Saturday done in conjunction with the American Express national campaign.

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



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



TeamHealth announced its third expansion in Blount County in January with the establishment of its Healthcare Financial Services anesthesia operations.



This afternoon mixer at Calhoun's was one of over 40 networking events held throughout the year. There's no better way to get out a meet a lot people than at the Blount County Chamber event. You never know who's going be there.

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Joint Operating Committee

Chair Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport

Vice Chair Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc.

Chamber Representatives:

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

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

..... Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc.

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 Dave Bennett, Cherokee Millwright & Mechanical

Chair-Elect Joe Tipton, Twin City Buick

Chair – Chamber Foundation Virginia Hardwick, Staffing Solutions

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

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

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 Connie Huffman, Blount Memorial Hospital

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

Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Board

Chair	Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins
Vice Chair	Jewell Overton
Secretary/Treasurer	Boyce Smith, Walmart
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	Dave Bennett, Cherokee Millwright & Mechanical, Chair

Blount Partnership Staff

President/CEO	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 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

