



Blount Partnership

Annual Report
2017

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 five years breed the optimism for continued growth.

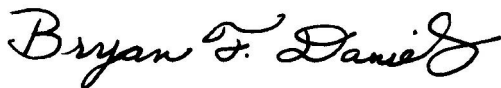
Per that ambition to make Blount County a leading economic driver in the state, the Blount Partnership will continue to strengthen the regional economy while enhancing residents' quality of life. By investing in the Blount Partnership through Chamber of Commerce memberships, funding of the Economic Development 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

One person does not become successful by themselves. It is with that awareness that the Blount Partnership has relied on the solid reputation of its stakeholders to make Blount County a regional leader for economic and tourism development as well as an active chamber of commerce.

The Blount Partnership was honored by being the first in the state and the 58th worldwide organization to receive accreditation by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO).

This drive to remain a destination for businesses to grow and families to prosper remained unfettered as Blount County was able to land two massive manufacturing projects.

After announcing it was building a warehouse that would employ more than 500 in 2015, DENSO doubled down with its next announcement in October by stating it would create approximately 1,000 jobs and invest \$1 billion to make its Blount County facility a primary manufacturing center in North America for electrification and safety systems.

The outstanding DENSO announcement came on top of SCCY Industries April announcement that it would invest \$22.5 million to build a new facility in Blount County that creates more than 350 new jobs. SCCY's new location is slated to be the company's primary manufacturing operation and include its corporate offices and all research and development activities. SCCY, which specializes in manufacturing pistols and sidearms, will construct a 150,000 square-foot facility.

The announcements boosted the total numbers of capital investment and jobs to more than \$2 billion and 5,000, respectively, since January 2013.

As a part of this continued investment, the call has grown louder for a more educated workforce. It did not fall on deaf ears as the Blount County Chamber of Commerce stepped up to hold workforce advisory meetings with educators and leaders of advanced manufacturing and construction industries to implement plans to recruit and build the next generation of workers. A social media presence, along with viral videos to reach millennials and unemployed youth, are part of the developing initiatives.

The Chamber maintained its energy by hosting more than 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.

The tourism industry saw a marked increase in visitor spending. Gov. Bill Haslam announced in August that tourism's direct domestic and international travel reached a record \$19.3 billion. Additionally, tourism-generated jobs for Tennesseans reached 177,000 and state and local sales tax revenue for the industry topped \$1.7 billion.

As a gateway to the Smoky Mountains, Blount County ranked eighth among Tennessee's 95 counties in visitor expenditures with \$357 million according to the Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties report issued by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. Tourism jobs, which number 3,410 in the county, led to a payroll of \$94 million and local tax receipts of \$12.5 million, which was the sixth-highest total in the state.

The Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority also spearheaded the birth of the Tennessee Whiskey Trail, which is made up of approximately 30 distilleries across the state. These distilleries range from small, boutique-style operations to well-known distilleries that have been making legendary Tennessee Whiskey for generations.

The future presents both challenges and opportunities for the Partnership, area businesses and the community. 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.
- Three classes on How to Network Effectively
- Hosted Glenn Shepard's seminar entitled "Be the Manager other Managers envy."
- Hosted annual Human Resources Supervisor's Training.
- Hosted a joint discussion with Maryville College President Dr. Tom Bogart and Pellissippi State President Dr. Anthony Wise about the state of post-secondary education and advancements in workforce development.



Kevin Ross of DeLozier Realty and Auctions enjoys his door prize at a coffee club hosted by Regions Bank.

- 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.



Pellissippi State President Dr. Anthony Wise and Maryville College President Dr. Tom Bogart discussed the state of higher education.

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 of \$357 million. Over 3,400 people are employed in the county with direct ties to tourism and boasts an \$94 million payroll.

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.
- Hosted Tennessee Speaker of the House Beth Harwell.
- Hosted six governmental briefings featuring state and local elected officials.
- Hosted three transportation briefings featuring state and local elected officials.



Past chairs of the Blount County Chamber of Commerce gathered for luncheon. Front Row: Virginia Hardwick, Mike Davis, Elton Jones, Dr. Bob Proffitt, Sara Berry, Teri Brahams. Back Row: Tommy Hunt, Dave Bennett, Bob Sullivan, Denia Lash, Doug Horn, Steve West, Carl Van Hoozier, Greg McClain, Joe Swann and Bob Booker.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



Grains and Grits Spirits and Food Festival became a highlighted stop along the Tennessee Whiskey Trail in 2017.

- Spearheaded the creation of the Tennessee Whiskey Trail in June with a celebration that included Tennessee Distillers Guild members, state legislators, and media at The Factory in Franklin, TN. The Whiskey Trail is divided into three sections including the East region around the Great Smokey Mountains, the Middle Region wrapped in and around Music City and the Western region.
- Continued management of the Main Street Program for downtown Maryville.
- Hosted fifth annual Tourism Day celebration with Legacy Parks, regional planners and civic leaders to develop a strategic fundraising plan to build a 14-mile greenway from Maryville to Townsend.
- Hosted monthly Downtown Maryville Association meetings.
- Saw near record attendance at the Townsend



Kids of all ages enjoyed the Great Smoky Mountains Hot Air Balloon Festival in Townsend on a picturesque August evening

Fall Festival with increased food and craft vendors. The Spring Festival was plagued by rain, thus holding attendance down.

- Leisure travel marketing plan continues toward soft adventure and pulling in travelers that enjoy outdoor activities while on vacation. Ad space in publications focuses entirely on outdoor sport activities, festivals and races.
- Saw increased vendors and attendance at the third annual Hops in the Hills craft beer festival in conjunction with Summer on Broadway.
- Held the second annual statewide distillers gathering in East Tennessee at the Grains and Grits Festival at the Townsend Visitors Center.



Hops in the Hills is becoming a summer tradition as the anchor event for Summer on Broadway in downtown Maryville.

- The Great Smoky Mountains Half Marathon continued to grow with increased participation for the fourth consecutive year.
- In the third year with Discover Organically helping with social media, it saw significant exposure increases and engagement across all its platforms.
- 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, Kentucky Bourbon Trail Meetings, Distillers Convention and the Governor's Conference.
- Added Blount Tourism Ambassador Program classes to local high school students to help spread the program to a different demographic.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Worked with local established events: The Scottish Festival, Smoky Mountain Snowdown, Tour de Blount, Townsend Bicycle Bash, Smoky Mountain Crawl to help market events out of state.
- Made seven visits touring 21 tourism-related locations to familiarize the staff with what is available for visitors to do and see.



DENSO, Blount County's largest employer, continued to add to the total with a record-breaking announcement of 1000 jobs and \$1 billion investment.

Economic Development

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

- DENSO will create approximately 1,000 jobs in Maryville and invest \$1 billion to make its Blount County facility a primary manufacturing center in North America for electrification and safety systems. DENSO will expand multiple production lines to produce advanced safety, connectivity and electrification products for hybrid and electric vehicles. These new products will radically improve fuel efficiency and preserve electric power by recovering and recycling energy, and by connecting all systems and products inside the vehicles.
- Announced SCCY is investing \$22.5 million to build a new facility in Blount County that will create more than 350 new jobs. SCCY's new Maryville location will be the company's primary manufacturing operation and include its corporate offices and all R&D operations. SCCY, which specializes in manufacturing pistols and sidearms, will construct a 150,000 square-foot facility.

- The announcements boosted the total numbers of capital investment and jobs to more than \$2 billion and 5,000, respectively, since January 2013.
- Blount Partnership was honored by being the first in the state and the 58th worldwide organization to receive accreditation by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO).
- Held industrial park tenant meetings.
- Currently, working on a number of confidential projects involving aerospace, defense, company headquarters, heavy manufacturing and back office operations.

Workforce Development

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

- Hired Jessica Belitz to work nearly exclusively on recruiting workers to Blount County through job fairs and social media advertising aimed at attracting millennials and unemployed youth.
- Produced a video aimed at getting millennials to look at Blount County for career opportunities.
- Held Blount County Job Fair at Second Harvest Food Bank with more than 300 attendees and 60 businesses represented.
- Hosted Denise Rice of Tennessee Manufacturers Association.



SCCY Industries announced it is moving its entire operation and head quarters to Blount County in April.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



Eighth grade students from every Blount County school got to see a myriad of jobs at the career fair held at the National Guard Armory.

- Continued to administer the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) as awarded by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) in 2016.
- Administered the Arconic Foundation Unemployed Youth Grant.
- Work with the Pathways to Prosperity grant which develops student career paths that enable them to transition early into careers like information technology and advanced manufacturing.
- Participated in state of Tennessee's Manufacturer's Week with Arconic at Pellissippi State's Blount County campus.
- Held multiple workforce advisory committee meetings on STEM, advanced manufacturing, construction and information technology.

- Conducted monthly educator's roundtable to begin discussions on a shared Career Technical Education (CTE) facility in Blount County and continue discussions on career pathways.
- Along with the Blount County Public Library, presented eight soft skills classes.
- Continue to develop plans to attract people to move to Blount County to work.
- Attended numerous job fairs at four-year and community colleges and high schools.
- Held an eight-grade career fair at the National Guard Armory for all students in Blount County and city schools.



The Alcoa High School held an open house for its new CTE lab to aid in preparing students for the local workforce.

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.

- Relunched the redesigned job board at www.blountareajobs.com with additional links to all manufacturers in Blount County. In 2018, it will expand to include all employers, including tourism.
- 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 as a networking event with live music. More than 400 attended.



Denise Rice from the Tennessee Manufacturers Association visited to enlighten Blount County manufacturers on policies and legislation.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Presented more than 40 business development workshops.
- Held record-tying 28 ribbon cuttings and grand openings.
- Hosted 11 coffee clubs, four afternoon mixers, two socials and three president's breakfast.
- Hosted fifth annual Primetime networking event entitled "ChamberRitaVille" with over 300 attendees.
- 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.
- Helped more than 40 individuals with business start up seminar.



Having fun on the back porch are Bryan Daniels, Joe Tipton, Dave Bennett and Bob Booker as they encourage people to attend ChamberRitaVille, the largest networking event in Blount County.

- 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 featuring a Night with the Lone Survivor Marcus Luttrell. It was a sold out show with more than 1200 attendees at the Clayton Center for the Arts.
- Continued increase in the number of members participating in Blount County's fourth annual Small Business Saturday done in conjunction with the American Express national campaign. Went from 12-to-24-to-32-to-34.
- Hosted four Small Business Administration seminars on financing for small businesses.



The annual Supervisors Training seminar always draws a full room thanks to the folks at Wimberley Lawson.

- Sponsored a cash mob at The Village Tinker.
- Hosted numerous social media and digital marketing seminars for businesses.
- Hosted Reference USA workshop with the Blount County Public Library.

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 30% while having nearly 24,000 post engagements and nearly two million impressions.
- Blount Partnership Facebook page saw a 25%



Representatives from the Small Business Association make quarterly visits to assist small business owners with financing.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

increase in fans with nearly 4,000 post engagements and nearly 200,000 impressions.

- Made nearly two dozen appearances on live or taped news stories for three television networks.
- Relunched www.smokymountains.org and www.blountindustry.com. Early 2018 will see the relaunch of www.blountchamber.com and the www.blountpartnership.com landing pages. All sites will now have the same look at feel of the Blount Partnership brand.
- Made use of programs like Animoto to aid in video production.
- Used the Facebook Live option to show all ribbon cuttings.
- Hosted a visit from the Cookeville (Tenn.) Chamber of Commerce to view facility and review organizational chart.



Afternoon mixers like this one held at Dancing Bear Lodge in Townsend are one of the many networking opportunities offered by the chamber.

- Enlisted aid of Debbie Godfrey to research the history of the Blount Partnership in order to do a year-long celebration in 2020.

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 Mgmt.
- International Economic Development Council
- Southern Economic Development Council
- American Chamber of Commerce Convention



Pinnacle Financial Partners held one of a record number of ribbon cuttings and grand openings in 2017.

- 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 Tenn. Chamber of Commerce Executives
- Board member of Tenn. 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 Department of the Tennessee Economic Development Council
- Board member East Tenn. Economic Development Agency
- Board member of the Tenn. Economic Partnership



Fun was the theme of the evening at the Blount Chamber's anniversary celebration.

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Blount Partnership 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

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

Economic Development Board Representatives:

..... Fred Lawson

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

..... Chuck Alexander, Past Chair

Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Representatives:

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

..... 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 Vanessa Sparks, Blount County Habitat for Humanity

Board Member at Large Bob Booker, DENSO

VIP Chair Connie Huffman, Blount Memorial Hospital

VIP Chair-Elect Renee Ritchey, CBI

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, Arconic

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

One Year Director David Shanks, Shanks & Associates

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
Past Chair	Chuck Alexander
Member	Greg Wilson, First Tennessee Bank
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:	
Legal Counsel	Robert N. Goddard, Goddard & Gamble
Chamber Chair	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 Events & Partnership Programs	Jessica Belitz
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	Ashlee Davis
Welcome Center Host	Kasey Ferguson
Facilities Maintenance	Robert Galyon

