



Blount Partnership

Annual Report
2018

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 six years breed the optimism for continued growth.

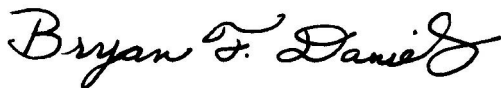
Per that ambition to make Blount County a leading economic driver in the state, the Blount Partnership will continue to strengthen the regional economy while enhancing residents' quality of life. By investing in the Blount Partnership through Chamber of Commerce memberships, funding of the Economic Development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

Resting on one's laurels is never anything that should be done long term. Additionally, just like sports teams that celebrate a win for one day, the Blount Partnership is proud of its accomplishments, but it keeps striving for that next victory.

As a benchmark for how to operate, the Blount Partnership is Five Star accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as well as being recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO).

With a solid reputation among its stakeholders that expect it to make Blount County a regional leader for economic and tourism development, they also expect it to be an active chamber of commerce as the voice for business.

Holding leadership positions and being recognized is nothing new for Blount Partnership board members. The latest example is Industrial Development Board member Dr. Matthew Murray, who was recognized by the Tennessee Economic Development Council with its Jim Spradley Volunteer of the Year Award in Economic Development.

Additionally, Blount Partnership President/CEO Bryan Daniels was named the Tennessee Economic Development Council's Vice President for 2019. He was also named part of the Leadership Tennessee Class VI.

The accolades would not be possible if there was not hard work behind them. With the call out to expand the county's workforce, the Partnership staff made great strides in meeting with high schools, secondary schools and leaders of advanced manufacturing and construction industries to implement plans to recruit and build the next generation of workers. Through the use of well executed social media marketing and videos that speak, visits to the most comprehensive source of career resource links for Blount County businesses at www.blountareajobs.com increased more than 400 percent in one year's time.

Even with that great exposure, the need to keep up the media blitz alerting people to vast job opportunities with Blount County businesses remains the No. 1 priority heading into the second decade of the 21st century.

To the average person in the street, the word tourism doesn't mean industry. In Blount County though, tourism is a major economic-driving force with visitor expenditures reaching a record \$378 million according to the Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties report issued by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. Tourism jobs, which number 3,500 in the county, led to a payroll of \$100 million and combined state and local tax receipts of \$34 million. With numbers like that, it's important to keep promoting the area as a gateway to the Smoky Mountains.

The Chamber continues to be a source of energy in the community while serving as a collaborative force that brings opposing sides together to focus on the getting the best results that make Blount County stronger. As the best way to make connections for business people, the chamber hosted nearly 200 networking events, ribbon cuttings, business development workshops, human resource and managerial seminars to aid businesses of all sizes in their quest for new customers.

Guided by a strategic plan, active chamber, tourism development and industrial development boards constantly put what's best for Blount County at the forefront of their vision. This can be seen through the many innovative programs, events and initiatives that have come through the years and those upcoming.

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.

- Saw more than 600 participants in Human Resource, soft skills and other educational workshops
- Hosted a briefing with Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County Schools superintendents.
- Hosted Glenn Shepard's seminar entitled "Be the Manager other Managers envy."
- Hosted Donna Cutting's "501 Ways to Roll Out the Red Carpet for your Customers."
- Hosted two Human Resources Supervisor's Training sessions in the spring and fall.
- Three classes on How to Network Effectively with Raeus Jae Cannon.



Glenn Shepard continues to draw a full house every year for his manager's seminars.

- Hosted numerous workshops presented by the Tennessee Small Business Development Center and other Blount Chamber members with subjects including Bitcoin, cypersecurity and social media marketing.
- Hosted a joint discussion with Maryville College President Dr. Tom Bogart, Pellissippi State President Dr. Anthony Wise, Tennessee College of Applied Technology President Dwight Murphy and Roane State Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness/Research Karen Brunner about the state of post-secondary education and advancements in workforce development.

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 Senator Lamar Alexander as he received US Chamber's Spirit of Enterprise Award, given in recognition of his support for pro-growth policies in Congress.
- Hosted five governmental briefings featuring state and local elected officials. Visits were made from state Sen. Art Swann, state Reps. Jerome Moon and Bob Ramsey. Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell, Maryville City Manager Greg McClain and Alcoa Deputy City Manager Andrew Sonner also held briefings.
- Hosted three transportation briefings featuring state and local elected officials.
- Partnered with Oak Ridge and Knoxville in developing the Regional Legislative Agenda.
- Volunteers in Progress (VIP) group made a legislative trip to Nashville.

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 \$378 million. Over 3,500 people are employed in the county with direct ties to tourism and boasts a \$100 million payroll.



H.O.G. Rally bikers enjoyed downtown Maryville as one of the many stops during their week-long tour of Blount County and surrounding area.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



Grains and Grits Spirits and Food Festival is the trademark event for the Tennessee Whiskey Trail.

- Created and released a mobile app for Cades Cove with the assistance of state tourism dollars to help increase exposure for the Cove while giving visitors a way to tour it and get information without a cellular signal and post their own personal experiences.
- Served as the headquarters for the Eastern United States Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) Rally with more than 3,000 bikers taking to the area's roadways for the week following Memorial Day.
- Continued management of the Main Street Program for downtown Maryville.
- Hosted sixth annual Tourism Day celebration with Great Smoky Mountains National Park spokesperson Dana Soehn and East Tennessee Division Manager for the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development Dave Jones.
- Hosted monthly Downtown Maryville Association meetings.



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

- Saw record attendance of more than 10,000 at the Townsend Fall Festival with increased food and craft vendors.
- The Spring Festival saw solid attendance as the weather was good.
- 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 four annual Hops in the Hills craft beer festival in conjunction with Summer on Broadway.
- Held the third annual statewide distillers gathering in East Tennessee at the Grains and Grits Festival at the Townsend Visitors Center. Attendance continues to grow with nearly 700.



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

- The Great Smoky Mountains Half Marathon continued to grow with increased participation for the fifth consecutive year with more than 2000 runners.
- In the fourth 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 conferences including the Tennessee Hospitality and Tourism Association, Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College, Distillers Convention and the Governor's Conference.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Worked with local established events like The Scottish Festival & Games, Smoky Mountain Snowdown, Tour de Blount, Dancing Bear Bicycle Bash, Smoky Mountain Crawl and Great Smoky Mountains Hot Air Balloon Festival to help market events out of state.
- Made six visits touring 23 tourism-related locations to familiarize the staff with what is available for visitors to do and see.



ETSU President Dr. Brian Noland and his executive staff made a two-day visit to learn more about the Partnership's workforce development efforts.

Economic Development

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

- Industrial Development Board member Dr. Matthew Murray was recognized by the Tennessee Economic Development Council with its Jim Spradley Volunteer of the Year Award in Economic Development.
- Blount Partnership President/CEO Bryan Daniels was named the Tennessee Economic Development Council's Vice President for 2019. Daniels was named part of the Leadership Tennessee.
- DENSO follows up its \$1 billion investment in the future of mobility with production of electrification-related component for original equipment manufacturers. The investment expanded multiple production lines to create products like DENSO's next-generation inverter, as well as advanced safety components, and products that connect vehicles and society.

- Koide announced a facility expansion to increase its production capacity.
- The community has boasted a capital investment and jobs of more than \$2 billion and 5,000, respectively, since January 2013.
- Cirrus Aircraft expanded its operations by constructing three buildings on its campus, including its heralded state-of-the-art training center.
- Held industrial park tenant meetings to both inform about legislative issues that affect them and gain feedback about their needs and concerns.
- 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.

- Partnered with Thryv Communications to promote the job board website www.blountareajobs.com. A focus was made to geotarget businesses in East Tennessee that were either closing or downsizing in order to inform workers about job opportunities in Blount County.
- Redesigned www.blountareajobs.com to include employers in every major profession while posting links for soft skills and other resources to aid in finding a job.



DENSO follows up its \$1 billion investment in the future of mobility with production of electrification-related components.

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.

- Produced a video aimed at changing perceptions for construction and advanced manufacturing.
- Held Blount County Job Fair at Second Harvest Food Bank with more than 500 attendees and 60 businesses represented.
- Hosted Denise Rice of Tennessee Manufacturers Association.
- Held teacher externships for Blount County teachers to learn more about the needs of local employers in the manufacturing sector.
- Continued to administer the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) as awarded by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) in 2016.
- Hosted a Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) camp at Pellissippi State.
- 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.
- Took national Manufacturer's Day and turned it into Blount County Manufacturing Month with the assistance of Arconic, DESNO, Promat and Pellissippi State to celebrate modern manufacturing and its impact on this community.
- Held multiple workforce advisory committee meetings on STEM, advanced manufacturing, construction and information technology.

- Conducted monthly educator's roundtable to continue 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 10 soft skills classes, up from eight in 2017.
- 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 eighth-grade career fair at the National Guard Armory for all students in Blount County and city schools.



Pellissippi State's Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) camp introduced students to the many careers in the electronic industry.

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.

- Fulfilled the promise to relaunch the redesigned job board at www.blountareajobs.com with links to all manufacturers in Blount County and expanded coverage that includes all major employers, including tourism.
- Chamber Ambassadors made over 6,000 member connections helping to increase retention rate. This was up more than double from 2017.
- The three-day Operation Thank You continues to be a positive where Ambassadors deliver membership packets and plaques to every member.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Presented more than 50 business development workshops, up from 41 in 2017.
- Held a near-record 26 ribbon cuttings and grand openings. The total was two shy of the record 28 held in 2017.
- Hosted 12 coffee clubs, four afternoon mixers, two socials and three president's breakfast.
- A record crowd of over 700 attended Taste of Blount. The addition of food trucks and the Culinary Excellence Awards, as judged by local food experts, added to the festivities.
- Held a numerous one-on-one business counseling sessions.
- Helped more than 50 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.



Star 102.1 morning personality Marc Anthony (L) visits with Peyton Manning during the Best of Blount Excellence Awards.

- Presented the Best of Blount Awards featuring a Night with two-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Peyton Manning. More than 1,100 attended at the Clayton Center for the Arts and nearly 200 got their photo made with Manning at two pre-event receptions.
- 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-to-35.



College administrators Dr. Tom Bogart, Maryville College; Dr. Anthony Wise, Pellissippi State; Dwight Murphy, Tennessee College of Applied Technology; and Karen Brunner, Roane State, VP of Institutional Effectiveness/ Research gave an update on what is happening at the post secondary level.

- Hosted four Small Business Administration seminars on financing for small businesses.
- Hosted numerous social media and digital marketing seminars for businesses.

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. Also made additional appearances on WBIR-TV and WVLT-TV to promote Partnership events.
- Ventured into local radio advertising with WKVL and WBCR on the football broadcasts for William Blount, Heritage and Alcoa High Schools.
- Sponsored The Sports Page weekly sports talk radio program. Produced on Facebook Live, the Blount Partnership is branded on the screen along with two 30-second radio ads.
- Saw Blount County Chamber Facebook fans increase by 20% while having nearly 25,000 post engagements and nearly two million impressions.
- Blount Partnership Facebook page saw a 20% increase in fans with nearly 5,000 post engagements and nearly 250,000 impressions.
- Made more than two dozen appearances on live or taped news stories for three television networks.

BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Relunched www.blountpartnership.com, www.bountchamber.com and www.blountindustry.com. All are consistently branded with the same look and feel of the Blount Partnership brand.
- Updated the Blount Partnership app to implement the changeover to the Weblink membership management system.
- Made use of programs like Animoto to aid in video production and create video invitations for Chamber coffee club and mixers.
- Continued to use the Facebook Live option to show all ribbon cuttings.
- Hosted a visit from the Greene County Chamber of Commerce to view facility and review organizational chart.
- Continued to use Debbie Godfrey to research the history of the Blount Partnership in order to do a year-long celebration in 2020.
- Changed programs in the lobby monitors to streamline the updating of events and information.
- Continue to build relationships with media representatives in print and electronic media.
- Working with Robert Berlin of Open Roads Media to create a video series about the impact the Blount Partnership has in the community by bringing in major businesses and pushing for infrastructure work. Series scheduled to launch in January 2019.



The Townsend Spring Heritage Festival was named one of the state of Tennessee Department of Tourism Development's stops along the Tennessee Music Pathway, joining Blount County venues Smoky Mountain Harley-Davidson's "The Shed" and the Clayton Center for the Arts.

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
- 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 TN Econ. Dev. Agency
- Board member of the Tenn. Economic Partnership
- National Career Pathways Network



Dr. Matthew Murray, director of the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee, was recognized by the Tennessee Economic Development Council with its Jim Spradley Volunteer of the Year Award in Economic Development during its Fall conference.

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Blount Partnership Joint Operating Committee

Chair Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport
Vice Chair Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc.

Chamber Representatives:

Chair Bob Booker, DENSO
Chair-Elect Rick Shepard
Past Chair Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships

Economic Development Board Representatives:

Chair Fred Lawson
Vice Chair Matt Murray, University of Tennessee
Past Chair Chuck Alexander

Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority Representatives:

Chair Tim Seay, Hideaway Cottage & Log Cabins
Vice Chair Jewell Overton
Past Chair Bryan Cable, Hilton Knoxville Airport

Blount County Chamber of Commerce Board

Chair Bob Booker, DENSO
Chair-Elect Rick Shepard
Chair – Chamber Foundation Joe Tipton, Twin City Dealerships
VIP Chair Connie Huffman, Blount Memorial Hospital
VIP Chair-Elect Christi Fightmaster, Pugh CPAs
Auto Sales & Services, Transportation & Petroleum ... Trevis Gardner, Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority
Construction, Building Trades & Suppliers Ben Pinnell, Hickory Construction
Finance & Professional Tony Thompson, Pinnacle Financial Partners
Government & Public Utilities Al Scott, South Blount County Utility District
Hotel/Accommodations, Restaurants & Recreation Richard Maples, Kinzel Springs Partnership
Individuals/Non-Profits Vanessa Sparks, Blount County Habitat for Humanity
Manufacturers, Wholesalers & Agriculture David Lazar, DENSO
Retail/Service/Real Estate/Insurance Drew Miles, Miles Insurance Agency
Board Member at Large Mike Lutheran, Royal Metal Powders
Board Member at Large Kathy Johnson, CBBC Bank
One Year Director Stephen Deucker, Cirrus Aircraft
One Year Director Brian Hayes, Clayton Homes
One Year Director Andrea Knight
One Year Director Renee Ritchie, Feeding the Orphans
One Year Director Chad Rochelle, Dogwood Cabins
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
City of Alcoa	Mark Johnson, City Manager
City of Maryville	Greg McClain, City Manager
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 Maryville Representative	Greg McClain, City Manager
Blount County Mayor or County Commission Representative	Jeff Jopling, Blount County Commissioner
Chamber Representative	Bob Booker, DENSO

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 Membership	Jessica Hahn
Director of Accounting & Human Resources	Bruce Kerr
Director of Tourism	Kim Mitchell
Director of Communications	Jeff Muir
Executive Administrative Assistant	Brenda Farner
Accounting & HR Administrative Assistant	Ann Watson
Administrative Assistant	Deborah Nye
Administrative Assistant	Amy Lawson
Administrative Assistant	Claire Carter
Maryville Welcome Center Host	Kasey Ferguson
Townsend Welcome Center Host	Sharon Thornton
Facilities Maintenance	Robert Galyon

