



ANNUAL REPORT 2012



Jerry Bailey

Message from the President



The year of 2012 continued to be a slow year as far as jobs created in our area. Although we have seen many information requests come through, I don't believe many of the companies are ready to commit due to the economic and political uncertainties in our country. If you've been around as long as I have, you know as well as I do the cyclical nature of the economy. I can recall several times when the economy hit bottom and we wondered if it would ever revive. So far, every time it has. Hopefully, this downturn won't be the exception. I also know even in lean economic times, West Tennessee Industrial Association is as critical to our area as ever. We cannot market our area on an individual member basis like we can as a group. Coordinating all the marketing, research and requests would be overwhelming and very costly if done by each individual member. WTIA fills the bill nicely to provide these services to all its members.

The Foreign Trade Zone approval is another feather in the cap of WTIA. Without WTIA coordinating and providing the startup funding, it's very doubtful we would ever have attained this, especially if its members had applied separately. As you know, anything we can do to offer an advantage that industry needs will make us a better option for an industry to locate here. The FTZ sure proves that.

When I consider the formation and by-laws of WTIA, I have to commend the members that started the organization. Because our organization is not run by politics, we can be sure all members are treated fairly and given an opportunity for any prospect request. By letting the prospect with plans to locate a facility in our area provide its criteria, WTIA can provide the prospect with all the sites meeting its criteria along with other resources it may desire. Then, it's up to the individual site to be able to sell itself to the prospect. By acting only as a conduit for the prospect to our sites, we are allowed to sell our own areas to the prospect. This provides the prospect an unbiased list of sites and provides us an opportunity to put our best foot forward as a community. This is the way it should work.

Finally, I have enjoyed working with WTIA and its members this year and I thank all of you for that opportunity. Hopefully in the near future we can see growth in our region. May we all see continued success in the coming years.



Message from WTIA's Executive Director

Mike Philpot



The counter balance of “change” is stability. It seems our world, country and economy has been in a constant state of not just change but uncertainty these last few months and years. Unprecedented policies, market swings, natural disasters, and “unrest” have crowded our media and minds. From stimulus packages to tax changes, we keep searching for something that will bring our country and economy some stability and promise of growth.

Successful companies have to be flexible and always open to changes in the market and in the needs of their customers, but they also need a foundation of consistency so they can build their business models. Political administrations change, adapt and impact the marketplace. I believe that the West Tennessee Industrial Association, while being flexible to meet the needs of our communities, still provides a strong degree of stability and consistency regarding economic development services.

All recruitment and development activities rely on keen preparation and diligence. Evaluations and strategy must be developed and execution must be initiated. The Executive Committee and your staff at WTIA continue to focus on the preparedness of our communities. We’ve done this by leading the way with retail development, certified industrial sites, Foreign Trade Zone designations and developing a cutting edge Virtual Building program. Working closely with the Tennessee State Department of ECD, we assisted in the development and now the implementation of the state-wide “Tennessee Select Sites” certified industrial site program. We also launched our Virtual Building program and hope to add additional community participants in the

near future. This is a natural progression of the certified sites program. All of these translate into preparedness. I’ve always said, and continue to believe, that the rural communities can compete for projects with the larger communities, but they must be prepared. The margin for error or deficiency with rural markets is much narrower than with a larger community. Larger communities have more amenities, and a synergy, if you will, that provides them with an advantage. That’s why strategy, preparation and execution become critical for our rural communities.

In regards to other steps of preparedness, we continue to build relationships with our ECD international directors, and hosted them on community visits during their visit to West Tennessee this year. We also hosted a Chinese delegation and participated in Canadian and European recruitment initiatives. We conducted planning sessions and discussions regarding “Smart Parks” and developing infrastructure and targets in Data Processing/Centers for our communities to pursue. We also continue to look for new sectors and opportunities for West Tennessee to take full advantage of, and we have communities that are developing this as a part of their economic plans.

I’m proud of the investments and support that all our member systems have made in West Tennessee. Because of the mutual support of WTIA, all of West Tennessee derives a benefit. I’m thankful for our partners throughout West Tennessee, our investors, Executive Committee and especially our staff. Thank you for all your support in 2012 and we will continue to strive to make West Tennessee even stronger in the coming year.

Action Report

Prospects:

8 companies visited 17 communities

Information Provided to:

64 companies

Meetings:

Logged attendance at 236 area meetings



Services:

- Maintained websites: wtia.org; TVASites.com; ECD site; Deal Ready®
- Demographic updates
- Presentations and/or speeches to: Milan Industrial Board, Crockett County elected officials, UT Institute for Public Service, Memphis Area Association of Governments, Gibson County Leadership Session, Trenton Rotary Club, Milan Rotary Club, Lauderdale County Leadership Session, Gibson County Youth Leadership Session, and Southwest Tennessee Development District officials
- Toured multiple buildings/sites in West Tennessee
- Assisted with prospect presentations/RFI preparation for various communities
- Assisted multiple communities with TN Select Sites applications
- Secured Foreign Trade Zone designation FTZ 283 for select West Tennessee sites; WTIA funded the Port of Cates Landing and Memphis Megasite portions of the application
- Hosted prospects during regional visits
- Hosted West Tennessee Allies meeting
- Hosted WTIA annual and mid-year meetings
- Hosted multiple FTZ update/introductory meetings with applicants and interested groups
- Emceed Jackson State Community College Economic Summit
- Assisted with creation of Virtual Building marketing concept beta project in Lexington
- Conducted retail strategy meetings in multiple communities
- Continued West Tennessee Retail Alliance marketing efforts

2012 Retail Development:



16 West Tennessee Retail Alliance Member Counties Reported 342 New Businesses Opened...

and created 1,288 new job opportunities. These new businesses, while they varied in type and scope from individual and family owned new businesses, such as "Image Nation Apparel" located in Bolivar (Hardeman County) to nationally recognized chain businesses, such as "McDonald's" located in Parsons (Decatur County), certainly had a positive impact on the economic development of their communities.

To illustrate the impact of retail on our West Tennessee economy, the Tennessee Department of Revenue reports that these 16 WTRA member counties reported a total of \$4,517,252,042 in retail sales for 2011. (Retail sales figures exclude Shelby & Madison Counties)



Mission Statement

"Working with its economic development allies, this Association's primary purpose is to generate and retain businesses and industries that create jobs, wealth, and economic prosperity for the West Tennessee region."

Travel:

- Site Selectors Guild Conference in Orlando
- TVA Economic Developers Forum in Nashville
- TCCE Winter Conference in Nashville
- SEDC Board Meetings in Atlanta, Myrtle Beach, and New Orleans
- AAAA Forum & Expo in Nashville
- Rural Development Conference in Cookeville
- TEDC in Destin
- Hannover Messe in Germany
- SEDC Meet the Consultants in Atlanta
- IEDC in St. Louis
- ICSC in Nashville and Atlanta
- TVA Retail Development Forum in Nashville
- Governor's Conference in Nashville
- CCIM Memphis SIOR Joint Meeting in Memphis
- Various recruitment, marketing, and networking trips

Program of Work



New Business Recruitment and Development

1. WTIA will continue its focus on small and medium sized companies for recruitment purposes. We will pursue the niche of companies which meets the capabilities of most of the rural communities that we serve. WTIA staff will continue to document and report monthly all New Business Recruitment and Development activities.
2. Target smaller companies that match with our region's attributes. Targets include, but are not limited to: Food Processing/Packaging, Metal Fabrication, Plastics, Automotive, Medical Devices, and Defense-related companies.
3. Continue to develop contacts and relationships with site search consultants. Participation, when budget permits, in hosting events with site search consultants and company officials.
4. Participate with Local Communities, State, and TVA on recruiting efforts to ensure coordination of efforts.
5. Continue to review foreign recruitment strategies and where deemed viable or necessary, participate in strategic marketing trips. i.e., State of Tennessee, TEP, Canada/Europe, etc.

Community Preparedness and Development

1. Maximize and amplify assets of the region; infrastructure, I-69, Megasite, Port of Cates Landing, etc. Assist with marketing materials for the communities.
2. Work with communities to prepare and present proposals as requested.
3. Provide research and documentation of regional demographics, mapping, etc. that can be utilized by our communities when they are dealing with prospects.
4. Present programs, information and tools that will enhance local competitiveness on projects. (Allies Meetings, webinars, hosting consultants, etc.) Offer programs not being offered by other economic development groups.
5. Training of local leaders in marketing and utilizing the Foreign Trade Zone program.
6. Continue to promote and market the Deal Ready® program and ensuring its validity.

24
new plants/expansions

1,307
new job opportunities

\$52.4 Million
in capital investment

Foreign Trade Zone 283

Foreign-Trade Zones are an integral component of an area's economic development program.

- Beneficial for existing industry and recruiting industry
- Jobs are both direct and indirect
- New investment
- Improved infrastructure and expanded tax base
- Stimulate economic growth
- Promote competitiveness for FTZ-based companies
- Maintain and expand operations in the FTZ
- Makes us more globally competitive



Membership

SYSTEM	WTIA DIRECTOR	MANAGER/ SUPERINTENDENT
Bolivar Energy Authority	Terry Brown	John Fortune
City of Brownsville Utility Department	George Chapman	Regie Castellaw
Dyersburg Electric System	Dwight Hedge	Steve Lane
Forked Deer Electric Cooperative	Keith Warren	Harold Willis
Gibson Electric Membership Corporation	Mack Goode	Dan Rodamaker
Humboldt Utility Department	Allen Barker	Alex Smith
Jackson Energy Authority	Ken Marston	Jim Ferrell
Lexington Electric System	Emmitt Blankenship	Jeff Graves
Milan Public Utilities	Chris Crider	David Scarbrough
Newbern Light & Water Department		Sandy Hill
Pickwick Electric Cooperative	Ronnie Fullwood	Karl Dudley
Ripley Power & Light Company	Kenny Parham	Mike Allmand
Southwest TN Electric Membership Corporation	Hugh H. Harvey	Kevin Murphy
Trenton Light & Water Department	Tony Burriss	Bret Fisher
Union City Electric System	John E. Fowler, Jr.	Jerry Bailey



Executive Committee



Jerry Bailey, President



Kevin Murphy, Vice-President



Alex Smith, Secretary-Treasurer



Mike Allmand, Past President



Chris Berryman



Karl Dudley



Jim Ferrell



Jeff Graves



Steve Lane



David Scarborough



Harold Willis

Board of Directors



Terry Brown
Bolivar



George Chapman
Brownsville



Dr. Dwight Hedge
Dyersburg



Keith Warren
Forked Deer



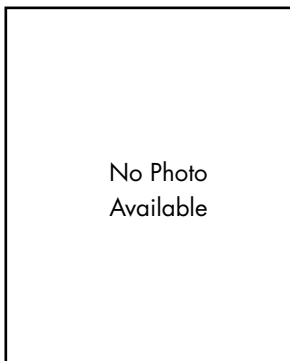
Mack Goode
Gibson County



Mayor Allen Barker
Humboldt



Ken Marston
Jackson



Emmitt Blankenship
Lexington



Mayor Chris Crider
Milan



Sandy Hill
Newbern



Ronnie Fullwood
Pickwick



Kenny Parham
Ripley



Hugh Harvey
Southwest



Mayor Tony Burriss
Trenton



John Fowler
Union City

26 Conrad Drive
Jackson, TN 38305

wtia.org



2012



An Economic Development Association of
West Tennessee Power Distributors

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Michael M. Philpot, CEcD
Executive Director

Jim Blankenship
Assistant Director

Kimberly Kee
Operations Director

Nita Henry
Administrative Assistant