



2015

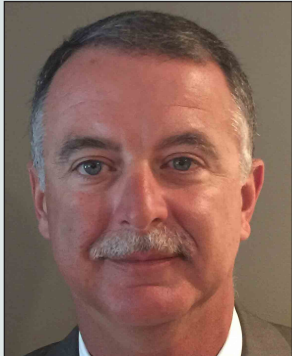
ANNUAL REPORT



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



## JEFF GRAVES



I have enjoyed serving as the 2015 President for WTIA, and look forward to serving however needed in the future. Being on the WTIA Executive Committee afforded me the opportunity to see behind the proverbial "curtain" and witness the many facets of what an economic development organization does. WTIA's staff works with all partners and allies to take advantage of every possible development project.

The Executive Committee continues to work with the staff to provide current and forward based strategies, and marketing efforts to accomplish our goal of growing West Tennessee. It is so important that we continue to work together as a region so our communities are able to compete for new jobs and investments.

Economic development is a long-term effort. Many of the programs, networking, and marketing efforts that we are engaged in currently may not show results for some time, but it is vital to our growth that they be done. Seeds sown regarding Deal Ready® certified sites, virtual buildings, Foreign Trade Zone, retail development, and community preparedness all are coming to fruition. These efforts will continue to position our area for success, and convey to newcomers that West Tennessee is ready, willing, and able to help them be profitable and successful here.

As WTIA enters its 60th year, let's each of us realize and reaffirm our commitment to the goal of achieving success and prosperity for our communities. We are much stronger together and able to compete on the world stage because of our efforts and unity. Thank you for your support in the past and in the upcoming 7th decade of WTIA's service to West Tennessee.

# MESSAGE FROM WTIA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MIKE PHILPOT, CEcD



"The days are long but the years fly by." A quote from author Gretchen Rubin really resonates with me this year. December 31, 2015, marks the completion of my 20th year here at WTIA. Definitely a time of reflection but also a time of looking forward.

A friend of mine started a consulting company and named it Janus Consulting after the Roman god that faced backwards and forward, thus using the past to also see the future. After twenty years it is very easy to "look back" and reflect on all the positive things that WTIA and its members and partners have been able to accomplish. Many things and people have proudly and constantly sought to serve the people and communities of our region. New technologies and innovation in the way we conduct our Association's business and market the region have been implemented. New investments and jobs have come to West Tennessee over this period because our investors provided the necessary resources to our organization to assist in that process.

As good as it is to look back, it is even more important to look forward to the future and the new tasks and opportunities that are before us. We do not have the luxury to "sit back" and revel in past success. The competition is fierce to locate and expand companies in our area. There are more economic development marketing entities across our country and the world that are striving to brand, market, and develop projects for their areas than ever before. WTIA must continue to press forward and look for ways to convey the West Tennessee story and show how locating here is a very sound business decision. We have the experience and tools that are necessary to compete.

The year 2016 is also significant because we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the incorporation of the West Tennessee Industrial Association. Again, this is an example of how past leaders chose to "look forward" and strive to do more things that would help our region. I like to think that WTIA is anchored and grounded in the past, which allows us to continue to move our region forward toward better jobs and a better quality of life.

To all our investors, thank you for making it possible to learn from our past and move toward the future. By planning, implementing, and working together, West Tennessee will continue to grow.

## ACTION REPORT

### PROSPECTS:

**12** companies visited **17** communities

### INFORMATION PROVIDED TO:

**54** companies

### MEETINGS:

Logged attendance at **197** area meetings

## SERVICES:

- Established and maintained professional relationships with site search consultants and corporate real estate executives
- Assisted with marketing of all regional assets, i.e., Port of Cates Landing, Memphis Mega Site, FTZ 283, and local industrial buildings and sites
- Extensive community development assistance for all of our communities
- Assisted in the identification, development, and implementation of retail projects through the West Tennessee Retail Alliance
- Participated in local and regional Leadership programs
- Maintained websites: wtia.org; TVASites.com; Deal Ready®; West Tennessee Retail Alliance
- Demographic updates
- Presentations and/or speeches to: McKenzie Industrial Development Board, Dyersburg Rotary, Gibson County Adult Leadership Class, Lauderdale County Adult Leadership Class, Gibson County Youth Leadership, Trenton Rotary, Henderson County Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting, City of Bolivar officials
- Toured multiple buildings/sites in West Tennessee
- Assisted with prospect presentations/RFI preparation for various communities
- Assisted multiple communities with dynamic/virtual building concept planning
- Hosted West Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives Meeting
- Hosted WTIA annual and mid-year meetings
- Updated West Tennessee Industrial Guide
- Conducted retail strategy meetings in multiple communities
- Continued West Tennessee Retail Alliance marketing efforts
- Assisted with Strategic Opportunities to Advance our Region (SOAR) sessions in multiple counties
- Assisted with FTZ 283 information requests





## 2015 RETAIL DEVELOPMENT:



Fourteen West Tennessee Retail Alliance member counties reported 400 new businesses opened and created 913 new job opportunities. These new businesses, while they vary in type and scope from individual and family owned new businesses, such as Southern Sole, Selmer (McNairy County) to nationally recognized chain businesses, such as Ruler Foods, Brownsville (Haywood 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 14 WTRA member counties reported a total of \$3,602,656,941 in retail sales for 2014. (Retail sales figures exclude Shelby and Madison Counties and the 2015 Tennessee retail sales figures were not available at the time of this report.)



## TRAVEL

- TEP Marketing Events in Chicago, Atlanta, and Dallas
- Site Selectors Guild in Puerto Rico
- TVA Economic Developers Forum in Nashville
- SEDC Young Professionals Event in Dallas with consultants
- USDA Rural Development Conference in Murfreesboro
- TEDC Spring Conference in Destin
- ICSC in Louisville and Atlanta - retail development
- SEDC Annual Meeting in Savannah, GA
- TEDC Fall Conference in Knoxville
- OFII and Select USA Meetings in Washington, DC - international marketing
- NACIC Meeting in Toronto
- Meet the Consultants Event in Chicago
- Governor's Conference in Nashville
- SEDC Board Meetings in Atlanta



# PROGRAM OF WORK



## New Business Recruitment and Development

- 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.
- 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 Distribution/ Logistics companies.
- Continue to develop contacts and relationships with site search consultants. Participation, when budget permits, in hosting events with site search consultants and company officials.
- Participate with Local Communities, State ECD, and TVA on recruiting efforts to ensure coordination of efforts.
- Continue to review foreign recruitment strategies and where deemed viable or necessary, participate in strategic marketing trips. i.e., State of Tennessee, TEP, etc. Canada/Europe.
- Continue promoting retail development through West Tennessee Retail Alliance.

## Community Preparedness and Development

- Maximize and amplify assets of the region; infrastructure, FTZ 283, Mega Site, Port of Cates Landing, etc. Assist with marketing materials for the communities.
- Work with communities to prepare and present proposals as requested.
- Provide research and documentation of regional demographics, mapping, etc. that can be utilized by our communities when they are dealing with prospects.
- Present programs, information and tools that will enhance local competitiveness on projects. (Allies Meetings, webinars, hosting consultants, SOAR assessments, etc.) Offer programs not being offered by other economic development groups.
- Training of local leaders in marketing and utilizing the Foreign Trade Zone program.
- Continue to promote and market the Deal Ready® and Tennessee Select Sites programs and ensure their validity.
- Implement more virtual building initiatives.

15  
NEW PLANTS AND EXPANSIONS

724  
NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES

\$119,787,000  
IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT



*“We Want Tennesseans Filling Tennessee jobs.”*

*Governor Haslam has challenged our state with a critical new mission: the Drive to 55 – the Drive to get 55 percent of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025. It's not just a mission for higher education, but a mission for Tennessee's future workforce and economic development.*

### **Tennessee Promise**

Tennessee Promise is both a scholarship and mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students that attend college in our state. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by the Pell grant, the HOPE scholarship, or state student assistance funds. Students may use the scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 27 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate's degree program.

While removing the financial burden is key, a critical component of Tennessee Promise is the individual guidance each participant will receive from a mentor who will assist the student as he or she navigates the college admissions process. This is accomplished primarily via mandatory meetings that students must attend in order to remain eligible for the program. In addition, Tennessee Promise participants must complete eight hours of community service per term enrolled, as well as maintain satisfactory academic progress (2.0 GPA) at their institution. For more information, visit <http://driveto55.org/initiatives/tennessee-promise>.

### **Tennessee Reconnect**

Tennessee Reconnect is Governor Bill Haslam's initiative to help adults enter higher education so that they may gain new skills, advance in the workplace, and fulfill lifelong dreams of completing a degree or credential. For more information, visit <http://tnreconnect.gov>.

### **Tennessee LEAP**

Tennessee LEAP will help ensure that our postsecondary institutions are producing the skills and credentials that Tennessee employers actually need. The objective of Tennessee LEAP (Labor Education Alignment Program) is to eliminate skills gaps across the state in a proactive, data-driven, and coordinated manner by encouraging collaboration across education and industry and by utilizing regional workforce data to identify and then fill skills gaps across the state. For more information, visit <http://driveto55.org/initiatives/tennessee-leap>.



# MEMBERSHIP

<b>SYSTEM</b>	<b>WTIA DIRECTOR</b>	<b>MANAGER/ SUPERINTENDENT</b>
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	Jeff Newman
Gibson Electric Membership Corporation	Steve Sanders	Dan Rodamaker
Humboldt Utility Department	Mike Barker	Alex Smith
Jackson Energy Authority	Ken Marston	Jim Ferrell
Lexington Electric System	Jeff Griggs	Jeff Graves
Milan Public Utilities	B.W. Beasley	David Scarbrough
Newbern Light & Water Department		Sandy Hill
Pickwick Electric Cooperative	Ronnie Fullwood	John Bowers
Ripley Power & Light Company	Phillip Jackson	Mike Allmand
Southwest TN Electric Membership Corporation	Hugh H. Harvey	Kevin Murphy
Trenton Light & Water Department	Ricky Jackson	Scott Dahlstrom
Union City Electric System	John E. Fowler, Jr.	Jerry Bailey

## **ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

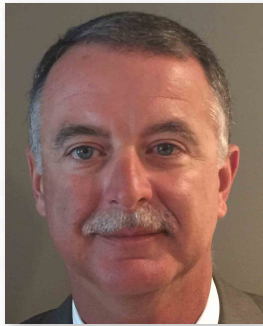
City of McKenzie

McKenzie Industrial Development Board





# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Jeff Graves, President



Scott Dahlstrom, Vice-President



John Bowers, Secretary-Treasurer



Alex Smith, Past President



Regie Castellaw



John Fortune



Dan Rodamaker



Mike Allmand



Kevin Murphy



Jerry Bailey





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Terry Brown  
Bolivar



George Chapman  
Brownsville



Dr. Dwight Hedge  
Dyersburg



Keith Warren  
Forked Deer



Steve Sanders  
Gibson County



Mike Barker  
Humboldt



Ken Marston  
Jackson





Jeff Griggs  
Lexington



B.W. Beasley  
Milan



Sandy Hill  
Newbern



Ronnie Fullwood  
Pickwick



Phillip Jackson  
Ripley



Hugh Harvey  
Southwest



Ricky Jackson  
Trenton



John Fowler  
Union City



An Economic Development Association of West Tennessee Power Distributors

Michael M. Philpot, CEcD  
Executive Director

Jim Blankenship  
Assistant Director

Kimberly Kee  
Operations Director

Nita Henry  
Administrative Assistant



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