



INDUSTRY LEADER

JANUARY 2026

Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association

Celebrating a Season of Joy and a Lifetime of Achievement

On December 4th, 2025, MTIDA and TVA Economic Development hosted a joint Christmas party and retirement reception for Bob Bibb. Partners from across the state gathered at 51 North Taproom in Nashville for a special evening celebrating both the holiday season and Bob's remarkable career with MTIDA. It was a full room, and the energy reflected the deep appreciation so many have for Bob and the work he has poured into this organization.

The Executive Committee presented gifts to Bob on behalf of the full Board—an expression of their sincere appreciation for the dedication, leadership, and care he has shown in guiding MTIDA. It was announced that the MTIDA office building will be named the Robert T. Bibb Office in Bob's honor, and a sign to be hung outside the building was presented to him. Afterward, the floor opened

for anyone who wished to share a few words of thanks or congratulations. Several did, and it was a meaningful moment. Those who were unable to attend will have the opportunity to reach out to Bob in the coming months.

Although the reception marked an important milestone in Bob's personal and professional life, this will not be his final day with MTIDA. Bob will remain through March 31st to assist with the transition.

The MTIDA Board of Directors announced that Kendrick J. Curtis has been appointed Executive Director. Matt Von Lunen has been promoted to the Assistant Executive Director position, both effective January 1, 2026.





Nissha Medical Technologies to Relocate Engineering Operations to Tennessee

NASHVILLE (September) Nissha Medical Technologies (NMT) officials announced that the company has selected Nashville, Tennessee, to relocate its engineering operations.

NMT will create 38 new jobs and invest \$4.5 million through the project with plans to share incubator space for research and development (R&D) at Vanderbilt University as its new Center of Excellence. The medical device company will continue its collaboration with EndoTheia, an endoscopic designer and developer led by Vanderbilt faculty member Bob Webster, which first announced a capital and business partnership with NMT in 2023. The two companies intend to build upon their work, enhancing the maneuverability and precision of current endoscopic tools in close cooperation with Vanderbilt teams.

Long term, this industry-university partnership is anticipated to attract not only entrepreneurs from Vanderbilt but also medical device companies by offering students opportunities for internships and



hands-on learning, while giving researchers direct access to specialized equipment, market insights and new industry connections through NMT's external network.

Founded in 1909, Nissha Medical Technologies, headquartered in Buffalo, New York, is a global leader in medical device design and manufacturing, specializing in patient monitoring and surgical solutions. NMT is the medical devices business unit and wholly owned subsidiary of Nissha Co., Ltd., a publicly held company based in Kyoto, Japan (TSE:7915).

Japan is Tennessee's top partner for foreign direct investment with more than 200 Japanese companies across the state that account for more than 57,000 jobs and \$20 billion in capital investment.

Source: TNECD

PolyFlex, Part of Nefab Group, to Expand Manufacturing Presence in Warren County

MCMINNVILLE (September) PolyFlex Products LLC officials announced that the company is expanding its manufacturing operations in Warren County by adding a new location in McMinnville, Tennessee.

PolyFlex will create 58 new jobs and invest \$8.3 million in the new facility, which will assist the company's Morrison thermoform packaging

operations by adding material extrusion capabilities and reuse of end-of-life industrial packaging.

PolyFlex is a subsidiary to Swedish-based Nefab Group, which acquired the company in 2023. Upon completion of the expansion, PolyFlex will employ 85 across Warren County.

Source: TNECD



TNECD Announces Three Counties to Participate in Property Evaluation Program



Pictured: Dale Reagan, Clay County Mayor, and Andrew Tilson, Austin Consulting



Counties selected from Tennessee's East, Northern Middle and Upper Cumberland regions

The program has now reviewed 511 sites across the state

Clay County was visited by Austin Consulting in November 2025 as part of TNECD's Select Tennessee Property Evaluation Program. A Humphreys County visit is scheduled for January 2026.

NASHVILLE (October) The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) announced today the three counties selected to participate in the latest round of the Select Tennessee Property Evaluation Program (PEP).

The counties are Clay, Humphreys, and Roane.

PEP evaluates potential industrial properties, advising counties on industrial site improvements and where investments may be most beneficial. Since its inception in 2015, PEP has helped improve the inventory of industrial sites and buildings across the state, with 511 sites being reviewed.

"Access to shovel-ready sites is a vital factor in attracting economic development projects to Tennessee," said TNECD Commissioner Stuart C. McWhorter. "Our success in securing new investments and job creation across the state is due in large part to the strong partnerships we maintain with local leaders, and I commend Roane, Humphreys and Clay Counties for recognizing the value of this program and for their commitment to advancing regional growth."

The program originates from **TNECD's Select Tennessee Certified Site Program**. With assistance from site selection firm Austin Consulting, PEP provides participating counties guidance on site planning for future industrial development projects.

PEP includes an on-site visit by Austin Consulting and TNECD, an educational webinar on the site selection process and a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and needs of each community's inventory of industrial sites. This assessment also offers recommendations to improve marketability.

"More often than not, the finalist sites visited during an industrial site search have been part of a local community's planning efforts for a decade or more," said Jonathan Gemmen, senior director at Austin Consulting. "Tennessee's Property Evaluation Program enables a thoughtful and strategic approach to the early stages of the process, fostering consensus among local leaders around these critical initial decisions."

These counties were selected based on the demonstrated local need for industrial properties and the county's ability to assemble properties with viable market potential. The application process begins with a submission of a letter of intent, which is accepted at any time. Upon receipt of the letter, interested communities will receive the PEP application. A new round of communities will be accepted into the program in the with letters of intent due by January 15, 2026. Visit [here](#) to learn more about the program or submit a letter of intent.

Source: TNECD



Anatolia Cabinet and Millwork Selects Tennessee for New Manufacturing Facility

BAXTER (November) Anatolia Cabinet and Millwork officials announced that the company has selected Baxter, Tennessee, as its first location in the state.

Through the project, Anatolia Cabinet and Millwork will create 56 new jobs and invest \$9.6 million in Putnam County. The company's new facility will be the first and only cabinet and millwork factory statewide operating with an AI-integrated production system, marking an important milestone for advanced manufacturing in Tennessee.

Source: TNECD



NASHVILLE (November) Carlex Glass America executives announced that the company will expand its advanced manufacturing operations in Nashville.

The more-than \$55 million project will create 143 high-skill jobs and equip the Davidson County campus with next generation production lines. Scheduled for completion in mid-2026, the expansion will enable Carlex to fabricate larger precision-formed automotive glass using the most technologically advanced equipment available – the only end-to-end process of its kind in North America.

A cornerstone of Tennessee manufacturing since 1958, Carlex's investment in new technology and equipment signifies its commitment to the community, its customers and U.S. manufacturing. The business serves original equipment manufacturer customers across the automotive sector, providing products ranging from windshields, panoramic roofs, sidelights and backlights.

Source: TNECD



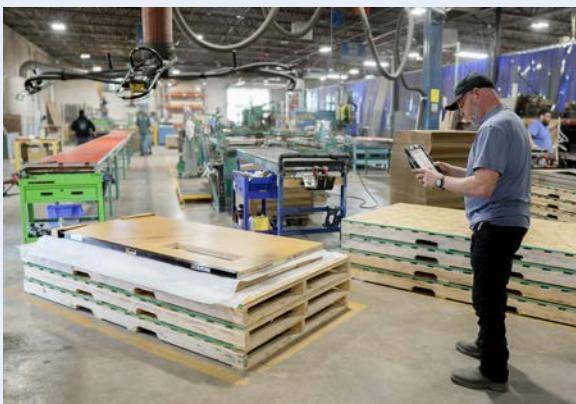
CDF Distributors to Expand, Relocating Manufacturing Headquarters to Sumner County

GALLATIN (November) Commercial Door and Frame (CDF) Distributors officials announced that the company is expanding by relocating its headquarters and all manufacturing operations to a new Sumner County facility.

CDF is locating in the former Simpson Strong-Tie building in Gallatin, Tennessee, where the company plans to create 85 new jobs and invest \$26.1 million. Upon completion, CDF will employ 195 Tennesseans.

Founded in 2011 in Gallatin, CDF, owned by Foreword Companies, is a commercial door, frame and hardware manufacturer and supplier, with customers across North America.

Source: TNECD



T.RAD North America Selects Clarksville for First Tennessee Location

CLARKSVILLE (December) T.RAD officials announced that the company is expanding to Tennessee with Clarksville as the company's first location in the state.

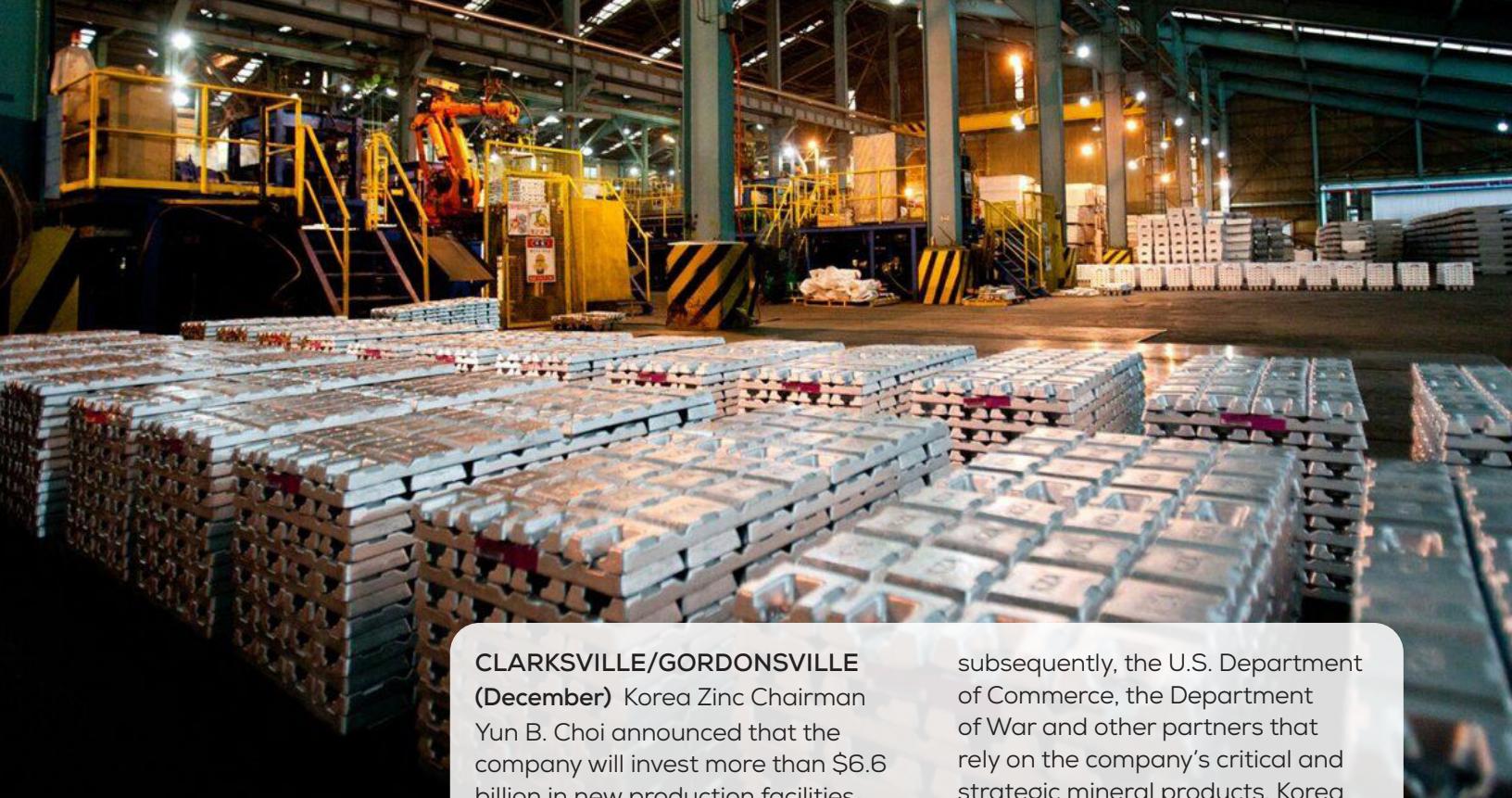
As part of the project, T.RAD will create 928 new jobs and invest \$90.2 million in Montgomery County as the company constructs a new facility at the Clarksville-Montgomery County Corporate Business Park South, a Select Tennessee Certified Site. Upon completion, the additional investment and staffing will support increased production and expand the company's customer base across the Southeast.

T.RAD North America, headquartered in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, is a subsidiary of Japanese manufacturer T.RAD. The company was founded in 1936 as a radiator manufacturer in Kawasaki, Japan, and today, has grown into a global corporation, operating across four continents.

Japan is Tennessee's top partner for foreign direct investment (FDI) with more than 200 Japanese companies across the state that account for more than 57,000 jobs and \$20 billion in capital investment.

Source: TNECD





Korea Zinc Selects Tennessee for First U.S. Operations, Announces \$6.6 Billion Investment

CLARKSVILLE/GORDONSVILLE (December) Korea Zinc Chairman Yun B. Choi announced that the company will invest more than \$6.6 billion in new production facilities in Clarksville and Gordonsville, Tennessee. The announcement, made by the world's leading comprehensive nonferrous metal manufacturer, represents the company's first U.S. locations and the largest single private corporate investment made in state history.

As part of its production efforts, Korea Zinc will create 420 new jobs in Montgomery County and an additional 320 jobs in Smith County over the next five years. The multi-county project comprises construction of a new facility in Clarksville that will house the company's U.S. headquarters as well as manufacturing operations. In Gordonsville, the company plans to reopen a former mine, bringing back lost jobs and industry to the community. The company, known for its commitment to community engagement, education and environmental sustainability, plans to acquire and invest in several locations statewide.

In addition, this effort builds upon agreements announced yesterday with the White House, and,

subsequently, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Department of War and other partners that rely on the company's critical and strategic mineral products. Korea Zinc's refining plays a vital role in supporting advanced military technology and safeguarding national and international security by reducing the nation's dependence on China for critical minerals.

Today's announcement is a direct result of Gov. Lee's and Deputy Gov. and Commissioner McWhorter's recent international recruiting trip to Asia. With the company's total investment of more than \$6 billion, this project further strengthens the longstanding relationship between Tennessee and South Korea and reinforces a partnership built on innovation, manufacturing excellence and shared values.

Since Gov. Lee took office, South Korea has emerged as one of the state's top partners for foreign direct investment in creating new jobs and investing capital – a total of \$7.2 billion invested during this administration. With Korea Zinc's investment, South Korea will become the state's No. 1 international partner for capital invested statewide since 2019.

Source: TNECD

2026 MIDDLE TENNESSEE WAGE & BENEFIT SURVEY

A CRITICAL TOOL FOR TODAY'S INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS

MTSU's Business & Economic Research Center is preparing to conduct the 2026 Middle Tennessee Wage & Benefit Survey this spring. The information gathered is the most trusted source for industrial compensation benchmarking in the region.

WHY THIS SURVEY IS CONDUCTED

- Provides reliable, region-specific wage and benefit data
- Reflects Middle Tennessee labor market conditions, not national averages
- Supports data-driven workforce and compensation decisions

WHY PARTICIPATION MATTERS

- Stronger participation = stronger, more useful results
- Data is organized by NAICS code and detailed job classifications
- Employers gain insights not available from other public sources

SURVEY PREPARATION & PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

This fall, MTIDA held four in-person workshops and one virtual session to prepare for the 2026 survey. Seventy-six partners participated during October and November, demonstrating both the strong interest in—and the clear need for—this project. This level of engagement is essential, as partner involvement is the foundation that makes the Wage & Benefit Survey possible. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this effort.

We are now working with communities to review and update industry contact lists in advance of survey distribution.

FOR MORE INFO: berc@mtsu.edu

HOW EMPLOYERS BENEFIT

- Benchmark wages against regional peers
- Evaluate total compensation, including benefits
- Support recruitment, retention, and workforce planning
- Inform budgeting and long-range HR strategies

WHAT TO EXPECT

- One secure survey link per company
- Clear instructions and reference materials
- Strict confidentiality – only aggregated data is reported
- Final results targeted for June 2026, dependent on participation



Workshops such as the one pictured at GNRC were held in Cookeville, Manchester, Mt. Pleasant and Nashville.

Attracting the Next Generation of Economic Development Talent

GovCon Hosts MTSU Students Partnered with Economic Developers

MURFREESBORO (November) On November 4th and 5th of 2025, MTSU Business and Economic Research Center (BERC) students participated in a two-day shadowing experience that connected them with local economic development professionals from across Middle Tennessee during the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) Governor's Conference in Murfreesboro. The event, free to students, was designed to give them direct exposure to the field of economic development through hands-on observation and professional engagement.

Experienced economic developers representing a range of communities and organizational roles were matched with students that shadowed them throughout the conference. Undergraduates and graduates attended a variety of sessions that allowed them to better understand the day-to-day responsibilities of economic developers and network with stakeholders from across the state.

Economic development partners that volunteered their time and attention included Phil Reese from Pulaski-Giles County, Elaine Middleton of Fayetteville-Lincoln County, the Maury Alliance's Rupa DeLoach, Wendy Sneed with McMinnville-Warren County, Ethan Hadley from Crossville-Cumberland County, Ryan Egly of Lawrence County, and Matt Von Lunen with MTIDA.



save the dates

*Board of Directors Meeting &
Annual Seminar and Lunch*
Hilton Franklin Cool Springs

Christmas Celebration
51st Tap Room

July 30 & 31

December 3

2026

We look forward to seeing you!

**Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association
2025-2026 Executive Committee**

President

Jennifer Brogdon | General Manager
Upper Cumberland Elec. Mem. Corp.

Vice President

Al Kerstiens | General Manager
Mt. Pleasant Power System

Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Davidson | EVP & CEO
Middle TN Natural Gas Utility District

Members

Brad Gibson | COO
Middle Tennessee Electric

Carl Haney | Director of Dept. of Energy
Cookeville Energy

Brent A. Baker, P.E. | EVP, COI Officer
Nashville Electric Service

Courtney R. Sloven | Consultant
Tennessee Valley Authority



The *MTIDA Industry Leader* is published by the
Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association

2108 Westwood Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212
mtida@mtida.org
www.mtida.org

Kendrick J. Curtis, PhD | Executive Director
Matt Von Lunen | Assistant Executive Director
Robert T. Bibb | Executive Director, Emeritus
Wendi K. Powell | Graphic Designer