



# INDUSTRY LEADER

AUGUST 2021

Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association

# 59<sup>th</sup>

## 2021 Annual Board of Directors Meeting and Economic Development Seminar



From left: Brian Taylor, Chris Davis, Keith Carnahan, Steven Surles (standing in for Lee Johnson), Rodney Boyd, and Bob Bibb (Missing: Scott Dahlstrom and Scott Spence)

MTIDA held its annual meeting of the Board of Directors on July 28, 2021, at the Embassy Suites in Cool Springs/Franklin, Tennessee.

On July 29th, approximately 140 community, TN ECD, TVA, electric and natural gas distributors attended the Economic Development Seminar.

The keynote speaker was Mr. Gray Swoope, President & Chief Executive Officer, VisionFirst Advisors, Tallahassee, Florida.

Jessica Breaux, Economic Development Manager, Amazon also gave a presentation.

MTIDA Executive Director Bob Bibb and Assistant Director Kendrick Curtis presented MTIDA and Partner updates.

Lunch followed the seminar.

### *The newly elected Executive Committee Members for 2021-2022 are:*

**President: Chris Davis**

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation

**Vice President: Rodney Boyd**

McMinnville Electric System

**Secretary-Treasurer: Scott Spence**

Duck River Electric Membership Corporation

### *Additional Executive Committee Members are:*

**Keith Carnahan**, Meriwether Lewis Electric Coop.

**Scott Dahlstrom**, Columbia Power & Water System

**Brian Taylor**, CDE Lightband

**Lee Johnson**, Tennessee Valley Authority



Mr. Gray Swoope, President & Chief Executive Officer, VisionFirst Advisors was the keynote speaker





# 2021

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE WAGE & BENEFIT INDUSTRIAL SURVEY

### Sponsored by:

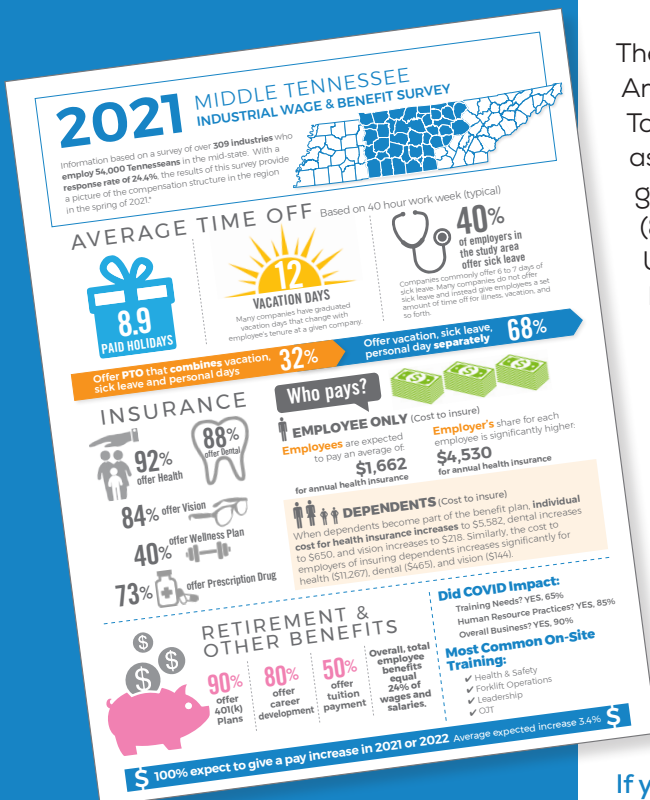
USDA, Rural Development  
Middle TN Industrial Development Association  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
TN Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development  
American Job Centers of Middle Tennessee  
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Upper Cumberland Development District  
Greater Nashville Regional Council  
South Central Tennessee Development District  
Tennessee Central Economic Authority  
The Highlands Economic Partnership  
Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Last month we successfully concluded the 2021 Middle Tennessee Wage and Benefit Survey. This was the second biennial update to the inaugural 2017 survey. All too often it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to obtain locally sourced information about a region's prevailing compensation structure. Despite the difficulty, this information is needed by industries seeking to hire or retain workers. In the absence of locally sourced information, companies and communities are dependent on national aggregations and antidotal information. Such information puts industries at a disadvantage when determining the wages and benefits needed to staff their operation. Because of a broad partnership and the expertise of MTSU's Business and Economic Research Center the 40 counties in the middle of Tennessee now have a reliable dataset that can assist industries make more informed staffing decisions. This year over 300 industries participated and received the reports resulting from the survey between May and July. Over 53,000 Tennesseans are employed at these companies.

The 2021 update was accomplished under the direction of Dr. Murat Arik at MTSU's Business and Economic Research Center (BERC). To make these results as broadly useful and locally meaningful as possible, BERC compiled multiple reports targeting various geographic subregions. Reports are available focused on eight (8) smaller geographic areas as well as reports for the larger Upper Cumberland, Southern and Northern Middle, and Nashville Partnership 2030 regions. Just as with the 2017 and 2019 surveys, we continue to see the value of this project during either prospect visits with prospective companies asking for this information or through conversations with local staff who can better assist existing industries.

It is our hope to continue and improve this project in future years. To assist with this improvement, we held a workshop with local and regional partners in July to discuss their experiences with the 2021 survey. Also, the Nashville Chamber of Commerce's research staff conducted a follow-up survey to help identify what worked well in 2021 and what needs improvement or change.

If you are interested in the results of the Nashville Chamber's survey or if you have questions about this project, please contact Kendrick J. Curtis at [kjcurtis@mtida.org](mailto:kjcurtis@mtida.org) or (615) 269-5233.



2021 Infographics available at [www.MTIDA.org](http://www.MTIDA.org)

## Healthcare Company Is Relocating Headquarters From Illinois to Tennessee

**FRANKLIN (April)** Advanced Correctional Healthcare, Inc. (ACH) officials announced that the company will relocate its headquarters from Peoria, Ill. to Franklin.

As part of the relocation, the healthcare company will create 58 new jobs and invest \$2.5 million in its new headquarters, which will be located at 720 Cool Springs Blvd. in Franklin.

Advanced Correctional Healthcare, Inc. is the largest county jail health care provider in the United States. It operates health care teams and customized programs in a variety of correctional settings, including county jails, juvenile detention centers, mental health units, work release centers and drug rehabilitation centers.

In 2019, ACH was honored with the Better Business Bureau's Torch Award for Ethics, which is given to companies that demonstrate best practices, leadership, social responsibility, and high standards of ethics that benefit their clients, employees, and



communities. ACH has also been certified by its employees as a Great Place to Work through Fortune magazine for six consecutive years. Further, ACH is currently listed as #6 in Fortune's Best Workplaces in Healthcare and Biopharma.

ACH is the first and only correctional health care company to partner with the DAISY Foundation to recognize nurses for their meaningful work. The company also offers multiple training and support options for its employees, including mentorships, an e-learning platform, partnerships with Capella and Kaplan Universities, the ACH Karen Stocke Scholarship Program and a peer- to-peer mental health program.

Source: TNECD

---

## Four Counties Selected for Property Evaluation Program

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

Bedford County in Middle Tennessee was one of the counties selected. Other counties included Greene, Hamilton, and Hardin.

This round brings the total number of counties that have participated in PEP to 60. Since its inception in 2015, PEP has helped improve the inventory of industrial sites and buildings across the state. The program evaluates potential industrial properties, advising counties on industrial site improvements and where investments may be most beneficial.

PEP originated from TNECD's Select Tennessee Certified Site Program. With assistance of site selection firm Austin Consulting, PEP provides participating

counties with 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.

The four 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 fall of 2021.

Source: TNECD



## Another West Coast Company Is Coming to Tennessee

**COLUMBIA (May)** The JC Ford Company, the manufacturer of automated equipment used on assembly lines across the globe, is establishing a production facility in Maury County.

The move for the California-based tortilla equipment company, a privately-owned family business, represents a \$30 million investment that includes the renovation of two facilities at 2003 and 2007 Oakland Parkway in Columbia and creates 210 new jobs for the region in the next five years.

Founded in 1945, JC Ford is a leading manufacturer in high-speed corn tortilla production equipment. Its machines can produce between 1,000 to 8,000 products in an hour.

The company supplies machines to General Mills, Frito-Lay and Tyson foods and draws a revenue of more than \$50 million. Its machines are used to make the popular snack chip, Doritos.

The project includes the 90,000 square-foot expansion of a facility in Columbia, planned to be completed in February 2022 with a plan to also fully-



staff the facility by August.

JC Ford is taking an immediate presence at the facility as it moves its parts and service operation to the facility, requiring the company to begin hiring 40 to 60 new employees over the next three to four months.

When fully operational, the new center will be used by JC Ford to supply the U.S. and global market with its products, with 40% of the parts manufactured sent outside the U.S.

The company's products range from producing 250 pounds to 4,000 pounds of tortillas per hour on an entirely automated system.

Source: The Daily Herald

## Firearms Manufacturer Targets Clarksville for Headquarters Relocation



**CLARKSVILLE (May)** Another new industry for Clarksville-Montgomery County signals that the community remains an attractive expansion and relocation site for corporate businesses, despite some of the global business interruptions of the coronavirus pandemic.

The latest announcement comes from Troy Industries Inc., one of America's largest suppliers of OEM small arms accessories. The company is relocating its U.S. manufacturing headquarters to Clarksville which was announced by the Clarksville-Montgomery County Industrial Development Board.

Troy Industries joins two high-profile gun companies in Middle Tennessee.

- Beretta is located in Gallatin.
- Barrett, which makes the state firearm and holds a military contract, is based in Murfreesboro.

The company has executed a lease agreement at 1575 Corporate Parkway Blvd. – owned by the IDB – the former home of the Tennessee Rehab Center.

Officials said Troy Industries plans to transition the facility into a design and manufacturing facility for top-quality small arms components and accessories.

The company plans to add 75 jobs in Clarksville, part of a \$7.1 million investment. Its customer base includes military and law enforcement personnel.

Troy Industries, Inc. was previously based in West Springfield, Massachusetts.

Source: Leaf Chronicle

# On the Ascent

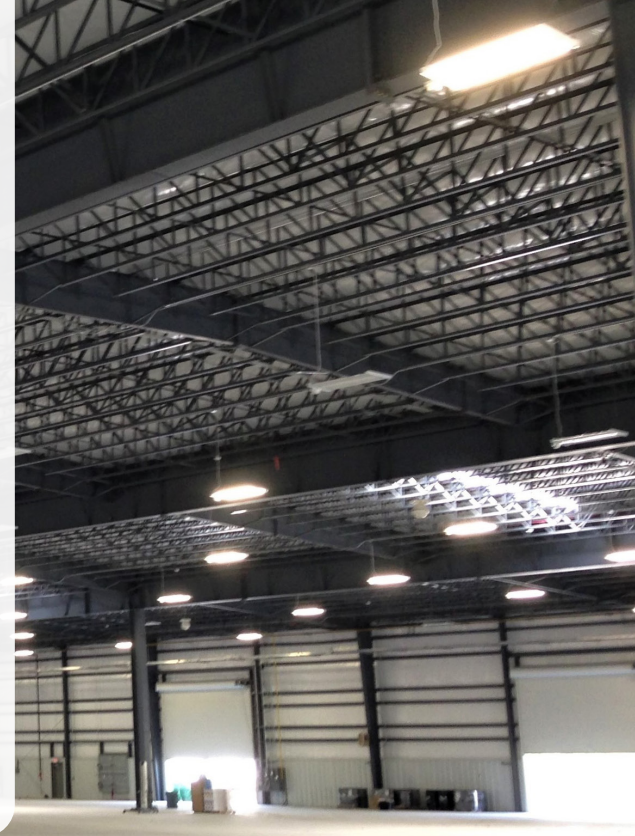
**PORTLAND (May)** Ascent Buildings, LLC officials announced that the company will establish new operations in Sumner County.

Ascent Buildings will invest more than \$10 million and create more than 120 jobs over the next two years.

Founded in 2020, Ascent Buildings is a full service, pre-engineered steel building manufacturer with headquarters and manufacturing operations in Portland, Tenn. The company specializes in manufacturing structural systems, roof systems, wall panels and additional architectural and commercial grade products.

Ascent Buildings hosted a job fair on June 2, 2021, in Portland. Positions ranged from plant positions such as welders, fitters, machine operators and material handlers to maintenance and management positions.

Source: TNECD



## Safari Helicopter Lands in Macon County

**LAFAYETTE (May)** Safari Enterprises, LLC officials announced that the helicopter manufacturer will relocate its headquarters and manufacturing operations from Marianna, Fla. to Lafayette.

Safari Enterprises, LLC, known as Safari Helicopter, is a leading manufacturer of two-seater helicopter kits. Over the next five years, Safari Helicopter will invest \$7.5 million and create 85 jobs in Macon County.

As phase one of the relocation, the company will build a 16,000-square-foot facility at the Lafayette Municipal Airport. Phase two will include construction of additional buildings to accommodate for future growth. The company manufactures and sells “home build” helicopter manufacturing kits for aviation enthusiasts with an in-house build option for those uncomfortable with the building process.

Source: TNECD



## NIC Global Expands in Sumner County

**GALLATIN (June)** NIC Global officials announced that the company will expand operations in Gallatin.

NIC Global specializes in mechanical and electromechanical assembly, expert sheet metal fabrication and global sourcing of metal and plastic components. The project represents an investment of \$2 million and the addition of 28 new jobs.



NIC Global currently has 200 employees at its Sumner County operations, located at 501 N. Belvedere Drive in Gallatin. The expansion includes investments in new fabrication equipment, special error-proofing systems, and upgrades to its powder coating capabilities. Additionally, NIC will be adding 26,000 square feet of additional manufacturing space to support new programs.

Source: TNECD





## Advanex Americas Picks Sumner County



**WHITE HOUSE (June)** Middle Tennessee's newest headquarter transplant from California is an international company that's bringing more than 100 jobs with it.

The arrival of Advanex Americas Inc. in White House, which is about 25 miles north of Nashville, will build a 40,000-square-foot building for a headquarters and manufacturing space for its small industrial springs, pins, and other products "used in everything from ballpoint pens to space stations," as noted in a state press release.

It's the Americas division of a 75-year-old company based in Tokyo. Advanex is relocating its Americas office from Cypress, California – leaving a building that's just a mile from the former offices of Mitsubishi Motors North America. The automaker made a similar relocation to Cool Springs in 2020.

Advanex is investing \$17 million to build its White House operations, which will have 102 jobs. The state is providing a \$1 million grant toward the project. Incentives from the Tennessee Valley Authority were not immediately disclosed. Robertson County and White House also offered incentives, including eight years of discounts on property taxes, according to city records. Government funds will cover the estimated \$2.35 million of roadwork to allow access

to the site at 508 Hester Drive.

Advanex's site search lasted more than two years and involved several states, according to Kenichi Ogaki, president of Advanex Americas. The search was code-named "Project Advantage."

"We chose Tennessee because of the welcoming business climate and the tremendous support of ... government officials who are helping us quickly and efficiently bring a facility to an undeveloped site that will suit our needs and give us great accessibility to our customers," Ogaki said in a statement. "Tennessee has built a broad education system that includes developing a skilled and professional labor force that is attractive to business."

Documents filed with White House show a potential second phase of expansion for Advanex elsewhere on the nearly 10-acre property.

The Advanex announcement marks back-to-back economic development recruitments for Robertson County, which in April formally revealed a 625-job manufacturing plant for Puritan Medical Products, which makes swabs used in Covid-19 testing and other medical tests.

Source: Nashville Business Journal



## Trucking Company Rolls Into Nashville

**NASHVILLE (June)** A new, full truckload freight brokerage, that concentrates in specialized, oversized open deck truck shipments, Simple Logistics Solutions will establish new operations in Nashville. The company works with both shippers and carriers to arrange the safe transport of goods and services across the United States and Canada.

The project is expected to create 92 new jobs and invest nearly \$712,000 in its headquarters operations at 414 Union St. in Nashville.

*"On behalf of the entire SiLo team, we are proud to establish our Corporate citizenship here in Nashville. We're excited and ready to grow through diverse local talent from the rich university presence and the solid transportation industry players the state of Tennessee has to offer. Our recent investment in our downtown Nashville office space has positioned us with a reliable location to bring in both experienced and entry level professionals that will support our continued growth,"* said Luke Hilko, Vice-President, SiLo.

Source: Area Development

## Project UNITE Connecting Middle Tennessee

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE (June)** TNECD broadband's team presented grant checks totaling over \$7 million to United Communications and Middle Tennessee Electric to connect unserved communities in Bedford, Marshall, Rutherford, and Williamson counties. The presentation accompanied the partnership's "Project UNITE" announcement to expand critical broadband access in Middle Tennessee.

Project UNITE, an initiative of United Communications, was created with the goal of providing high-speed internet—fiber or wireless—to every under-connected home or business in Middle Tennessee. With the support of Middle Tennessee Electric and through strategic partnerships with local communities and business and government leaders, Project UNITE will bring Middle Tennessee residents and businesses the internet connectivity they need and deserve.

The General Assembly recently appropriated an additional \$100 million to support TNECD's broadband efforts and goal of ensuring all Tennesseans have access to high speed internet.

Source: TNECD



WORKING  
TOGETHER TO  
BUILD A MORE  
CONNECTED  
MIDDLE TN

## Martinrea Invests \$40M in Springfield

**SPRINGFIELD (July)** Martinrea announced that the automotive parts manufacturer will expand its operations in Robertson County, investing \$40 million and creating 97 new jobs.

Through the expansion, Martinrea will upgrade its large presses, add additional robots and welding cells, and add 30,000 square feet to its existing facility at 1 Fabco Drive in Springfield.

Martinrea is a diversified and global automotive supplier engaged in the design, development and manufacturing of highly engineered, value-added Lightweight Structures and Propulsion Systems. Founded in 2001, Martinrea currently operates in

57 locations in Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Slovakia, Spain, China, South Africa, and Japan. In addition to the Springfield, Tennessee, location, it also has locations in Columbia and Shelbyville Tennessee; and Hopkinsville, Kentucky; Canton and Tupelo, Mississippi; and Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Source: Area Development





# Retirement Technology Company Taps Nashville for Headquarters



**NASHVILLE (July)** Smart USA Co. officials announced that the London-based retirement technology company will locate its U.S. headquarters in Nashville.

Smart USA Co. is the U.S. division of Smart Pension Ltd., one of the world's fastest growing retirement technology businesses. The company will create 128 new jobs and invest \$2.2 million in its Davidson County operations over the next five years.

Founded in 2014, Smart has more than 70,000 retirement plans on its platform throughout the U.K., Ireland, Dubai, and Australia. Smart USA's offices in Cummins Station will support its new venture into the U.S. retirement services industry.

Source: TNECD

## Chewy to Establish Fulfillment Center in Wilson County



**MT. JULIET (July)** Chewy, Inc. officials announced that the company will establish a new regional e-commerce fulfillment center in Wilson County, creating 1,200 new jobs.

Chewy, Inc., a trusted destination for pet parents and partners, will have its new facility located at Couchville Pike and Maddox Road in Mt. Juliet, which is projected to open in fall 2022.

Founded in 2011 and dually headquartered in Dania Beach, Florida and Boston, Massachusetts, Chewy is a leading innovator in pet e-commerce, offering pet parents a broad selection of more than 2,000 of the best and most trusted brands, including pet products, supplies and prescriptions.

Wilson County continues to attract companies in the transportation, distribution, and logistics sector. Since 2020, more than 80 percent of new jobs committed in Wilson County have come from projects in this industry. Wilson County is within 650 miles of 50 percent of the U.S. population and a one-day trucking distance to 75 percent of U.S. markets.

Source: TNECD





## Oakridge Motorsports Park Reborn as Flatrock USA in Cumberland County

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY (July)** Rusty Bittle, developer and founding partner of Flatrock USA, announced Cumberland County as the location for a sprawling entertainment and leisure destination featuring a motorsports park designed by world renowned Tilke Engineers & Architects. The 773-acre tract is located off I-40 at the Westel exit and was owned by the Plateau Park Partnership. The property has sat dormant for years after Roane, Morgan and Cumberland counties entered into a partnership to purchase and market the site for development.

"A Tennessee motorsports park is a legacy project for me," said Bittle. "The state of Tennessee has a reputation for automotive excellence, we are leading the way on advanced transportation technologies like electric vehicles, lightweight composites and artificial intelligence. A motorsports park will help the state and Plateau build an international reputation for next generation transportation technologies and become a tourism destination for automotive enthusiasts."

The Plateau Park Partnership was thrilled at the prospect of Flatrock locating to our site," said John Davis, Chair of the Plateau Park Partnership. "This property sat vacant since well before 2007, we had multiple prospects but the hilly terrain and lack of utilities to support a large manufacturing facility ultimately caused those prospects to walk away. The terrain is actually an asset for Flatrock and a leisure and tourism destination that leverages our state's strong automotive industry will provide high quality economic development for the entire region."

With the Plateau Partnership Park offering more

than double the amount of land than the previous location option, Bittle was able to expand his concept from a motorsports park to a sprawling entertainment and leisure destination that combines world class amenities with a motorsports park.

The destination will feature a six-mile track, designed by Tilke Engineers & Architects, that incorporates the rolling terrain of the site while retaining and displaying the natural beauty of the surrounding area. In addition, the track will feature a state-of-the-art paddock

area to include race control, hospitality suites, meeting space for training and orientation, rooftop viewing, private garages and a FIA Certified Kart Track for public use and corporate team building events.

Additional amenities will showcase the Cumberland Plateau as the ideal destination for a leisure traveler or homeowner. Those include an amphitheater, winery, landmark hotel and conference center, a destination restaurant with a brewery, Innovation Center and museum, retail center, clubhouse with amenities, campground, adventure activities, multiple types of residential properties, farming to provide many of the needed meats and produce for on-site restaurants, helipad and an observatory on the highest point of the property.

A previous market study and analysis based solely on the track and paddock concluded the project would generate \$93 million in its first five years and up to \$110 million under a best-case scenario. The analysis was conducted by an independent consulting firm retained by Tilke Engineers & Architects, recognized as one of the most experienced companies when it comes to design, engineering, and construction oversight in the motorsports world. Bittle has retained Tilke to draft the concept for the park and design and manage construction of the park as the project progresses.

Flatrock will break ground this year with the motorsports park projected to be completed in phases, the first as early as next summer.

Source: Upper Cumberland Business Journal



## Vi-Jon Invests \$45 Million in Expansion

**SMYRNA (July)** Vi-Jon officials announced that the company will expand operations in Smyrna, investing \$45 million and creating 64 new jobs in Rutherford County, roughly a 10% boost to its existing headcount of more than 600 employees.

Vi-Jon will expand its operations at 1 Swan Dr. in Smyrna. Vi-Jon produces personal care products including mouthwash, soap, hand sanitizer, first aid, baby care and hair care. In addition, Vi-Jon markets and manufactures the second largest national brand of hand sanitizer under the Germ-X label.

With more than 140 years of collective R&D experience, Vi-Jon is the nation's oldest private label manufacturer in the health and beauty sector. Between its Tennessee and Missouri operations, Vi-Jon has the capacity to manufacture more than three million bottles of products daily.

Source: TNECD

## The Latest California Company to Pick Tennessee for Headquarters

**FRANKLIN (July)** Kaiser Aluminum, a \$1.8 billion, publicly traded corporation, will relocate its corporate headquarters from Foothill Ranch, California, to Franklin.

As part of the relocation, the aluminum parts manufacturer will invest approximately \$3 million and create 80 jobs as it transitions and expands corporate functions to its new office space located at 1550 W. McEwen Drive in Franklin.

Kaiser Aluminum, a \$1.8 billion, publicly traded corporation, is a leading producer of semi-fabricated specialty aluminum products, serving customers worldwide with highly engineered solutions for aerospace and high-strength, packaging, general engineering, custom automotive and other industrial applications.

Kaiser Aluminum employs approximately 3,700 people and operates 14 production facilities across North America. Engineers, metallurgists, and technicians work collaboratively to produce complex flat-rolled (plate, sheet, and coil), extruded (rod, bar, hollows, and shapes), drawn (rod, bar, pipe, tube, and wire) and certain cast aluminum products.

In addition, the company has dedicated research and development Centers for Excellence focused on product performance, enhancement, and process elimination.

Source: Williamson Herald







## INTEGRATED BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGY

### The Tech Sector Continues to Grow in Middle Tennessee

**FRANKLIN (July)** Integrated Biometric Technology, LLC (IBT) officials announced that the company will establish new operations and locate its corporate headquarters in Franklin.

IBT, which specializes in biometric technologies for identity authentication, identity management and criminal history background checks through the FBI, will create 142 new jobs and invest \$2.3 million in Williamson County.

IBT was originally founded in 1999 as an alternative to the traditional fingerprinting methods. After 9/11, IBT partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to implement biometric enrollment and state criminal history checks. Twenty years later, IBT is focused on bringing the next evolution of biometric enrollment technology to the public with reliable, easy-to-use biometric enrollment, while working to develop new enrollment delivery models for consumer market and government marketplace.

Source: Williamson Source



### Oldcastle APG Invests \$10 Million in Clarksville Expansion

**CLARKSVILLE (August)** Oldcastle APG leaders announced that the company will expand operations in Clarksville, creating 45 new jobs.

Also doing business locally as Red River Concrete Products, Oldcastle APG will invest \$10.2 million to retrofit and expand its existing facilities to increase production of concrete paver products, which are used in applications such as home renovations, commercial projects, and roadways.

With more than 180 locations across the U.S., including 36 in Tennessee, Oldcastle APG is North America's leading manufacturer of concrete building and hardscape products. The company's products range from the structural masonry used in urban construction projects to the finishing touches in backyards. Oldcastle APG is a subsidiary of CRH plc, a leading global diversified building materials group.

Source: Leaf Chronicle





# PROPERTY EVALUATION VISIT

by Austin Consulting  
to Bedford County



**SHELBYVILLE & BEDFORD COUNTY (August)** Jonathan Gemmen and Kyle Neu with Austin Consulting recently visited Shelbyville and Bedford County as part of the State of Tennessee's Property Evaluation Program (PEP). This program helps communities assess the development potential of properties in their community. The goal of the PEP is to expand the state's inventory of both industrial sites and existing buildings by bringing in an outside site consultant who is familiar with the requirements that corporations are requiring for new projects. The Shelbyville-Bedford Partnership, led by Shane Hooper, initiated this process in the spring of 2021 and have worked with Austin Consulting, TVA, and MTIDA to confirm the properties to be evaluated in the field. The final step of this process will be a report prepared by Austin Consulting that provides the community with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the evaluated sites and their professional opinion of the site's development potential.

**For more information, please contact Kirby Lewis at TNECD**  
[Kirby.Lewis@TN.gov](mailto:Kirby.Lewis@TN.gov)



## FALL 2021 ROUND

**September 3, 2021** - Deadline for submission of a Letter of Intent

**October 1, 2021** - Deadline for submission of applications to be considered in this round

**November - December 2021** - Site visits for those counties selected to participate

## SPRING 2021 ROUND

**January 14, 2022** - Deadline for submission of a Letter of Intent

**February 4, 2022** - Deadline for submission of applications to be considered in this round

**March - April 2022** - Site visits for those counties selected to participate

<https://tnecd.com/sites/certified-sites/select-tennessee-property-evaluation-program/>



## Whisper Aero Lands in Crossville



From left: Crossville City Councilmen Rob Harrison and Art Gernt, State Senator Paul Bailey, Congressmen John Rose, Whisper Aero CEO Mark Moore, Cumberland County Mayor Allen Foster, Crossville Mayor James Mayberry, and Whisper Aero Chief Operating Officer and Chief Product Officer Ian Villa.

**CROSSVILLE (August)** Mark Moore is bringing Silicon Valley to the Cumberland Plateau, with the headquarters for tech startup Whisper Aero located in Crossville.

Moore, the CEO of the new company, and his team of engineers and researchers are working toward a solution for the next challenge in the emerging electronic vertical take-off and landing passenger aircraft – the noise of the engines.

***“Right now, electric aircraft all have propellers and are relatively slow. Our technology lets these aircraft be really efficient, but be much faster and much***

***quieter,”*** Moore explained. That’s key for the technology to reach the second generation of electric aviation, he said.

Moore worked at NASA for 32 years, with the last 10 years working on the technology that eVTOL aircraft use for flight: Distributed Electric Propulsion. After NASA, he co-founded Uber Elevate, which was working toward aerial ride sharing, or “air taxis.”

When Elevate sold to Joby in 2020, Moore began putting his new venture in place. He and Ian Villa, the company chief operations officer, started raising capital for the new company. About \$3.5 billion has been invested in electric aviation to develop the technology, Moore said, with some companies ready to certify the first generation of eVTOLs aircraft.

As eVTOLs begin to come onto the market, Moore believes it’s possible for people to live in rural communities without sacrificing professional opportunities available in larger cities.

There are more than 5,000 public use airports, like Crossville Memorial Airport, across the country. Right now, those facilities are underutilized. The eVTOL technology could turn those airports into transportation hubs.

While the company is focused on the aviation field, it’s technology also has applications in the industrial, consumer and military markets – all focused on creating quieter environments.

One of the keys to the company’s ability to locate in Crossville was access to high-speed broadband internet. The city of Crossville partnered with Ben Lomand Communications on a project to expand fiber internet access to an area that did not have reliable high-speed internet access.

The city paid \$27,500 toward the project, and Ben Lomand Connect covered the remaining 60% of the project cost. Funding came from the city’s hotel-motel tax revenue, which is earmarked for economic and tourist development projects.

Whisper Aero currently has 12 employees, but Moore said they are looking to double that number quickly. The company hopes to employ about 50 people within the next five years, with economic incentives offered by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

Source: Crossville-Chronicle

# AMAZON

## Delivers Latest Project to Clarksville



**CLARKSVILLE (August)** Amazon officials announced that the company will establish a new, state-of-the-art fulfillment center in Clarksville.

Amazon will create 500 full-time jobs with comprehensive benefits at the new one-million-square-foot fulfillment center, where employees will pick, pack and ship larger customer items, such as bulk paper goods, sports equipment, patio furniture and larger home goods and electronics. The facility, which will house innovative Amazon technologies and energy efficient, zero-emission power industrialized truck (PIT) equipment, is expected to launch in 2022.

The Clarksville facility will be Amazon's tenth fulfillment and sortation center in Tennessee and the fourth to be announced in the past 19 months.

In 2020, Amazon committed to creating 1,000 jobs at new facilities in both Memphis and Mt. Juliet and most recently in February 2021, the company announced a new fulfillment center project in Alcoa, tacking on an additional 800 new jobs.

Amazon currently operates fulfillment and sortation centers in Charleston, Chattanooga, Lebanon, Memphis, Murfreesboro and Nashville. The company

is in the midst of building Amazon Nashville, a new downtown office that will bring more than 5,000 tech and corporate jobs to Nashville.

Since 2010, Amazon has invested more than \$13 billion in Tennessee, including infrastructure and compensation to thousands of its employees in the state. Amazon's investments in Tennessee contributed an additional \$13 billion into the state's economy, and using methodology developed by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Amazon estimates its investments in the state have created an additional 39,000 indirect jobs on top of the company's more than 25,000 direct hires in Tennessee.

Amazon's innovative Career Choice program pre-pays 95 percent of tuition for courses in high-demand fields. Since the program's launch, more than 30,000 employees have pursued degrees in game design and visual communications, nursing, IT programming and radiology, to name a few. In addition, Amazon has pledged to invest over \$700 million to provide upskilling training for 100,000 U.S. employees for in-demand jobs. Programs will help Amazonians from all backgrounds access training to move into highly-skilled roles across the company's corporate offices, tech hubs, fulfillment centers, retail stores, and transportation network, or pursue career paths outside of Amazon.

Source: TNECD



# Three Middle Tennessee New Site Development Grant Recipients



**TNECD has awarded 15 new Site Development Grants, totaling more than \$4.6 million.**

The grants are designed to help communities achieve Select Tennessee site certification and prepare industrial sites for economic development projects. The funding helps communities invest in infrastructure and engineering improvements on project-ready sites.

The Site Development Grant program, part of the Rural Economic Opportunity Act, works in tandem with TNECD's Select Tennessee program. Since 2016, TNECD has awarded 115 Site Development Grants across the state, totaling nearly \$39 million in assistance to local communities.

Of the 15 grants awarded this round, three are in Middle Tennessee:

- **Industrial Development Board of Robertson County**  
White House Business Park, \$40,833 – Conduct due diligence studies
- **Joint Industrial Development Board of Celina and Clay County**  
Mitchell Street Industrial Park, \$500,000 – Grade the site and construct an all-weather access road
- **Tennessee Central Economic Authority**  
PowerCom Industrial Center North Campus, \$31,500 – Conduct due diligence studies

Source: TNECD

## Save the Date MTIDA/TVA Annual Christmas Reception – Dec. 2

### Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association 2021-2022 Executive Committee

#### President

**Chris Davis** | General Manager  
Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation

#### Vice President

**Rodney Boyd** | General Manager & CEO  
McMinnville Electric System

#### Secretary/Treasurer

**Scott Spence** | President & CEO  
Duck River Membership Corporation

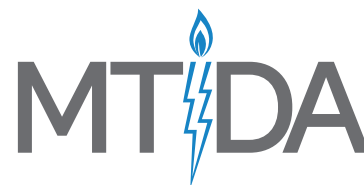
#### Members

**Keith Carnahan** | CEO  
Meriwether Lewis Electric Cooperative

**Brian Taylor** | Superintendent  
CDE Lightband

**Scott Dahlstrom** | Executive Director  
Columbia Power & Water Systems

**Lee Johnson** | Manager, Field Operations  
Tennessee Valley Authority



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

2108 Westwood Avenue  
Nashville, TN 37212

P 615-269-5233

E [mtida@mtida.org](mailto:mtida@mtida.org)

W [www.mtida.org](http://www.mtida.org)

**Robert T. Bibb** | Executive Director

**Kendrick J. Curtis, PhD** | Assistant Executive Director

**Dawn E. Olson** | Executive Assistant

**Wendi K. Powell** | Graphic Designer