

President's Message

Recently, over 100 members of our organization gathered for the annual Tennessee Economic Development Council Day on the Hill in Nashville. I'm most pleased that we had over sixty members of the General Assembly join us for the legislative luncheon during which we heard comments from Tennessee Chamber President Deborah Woolley, Commissioner of Finance and Administration Dave Goetz, and Commissioner of Economic and Community Development Matt Kisber.

I saw first-hand many TEDC members taking advantage of the day in Nashville by walking the halls of Legislative Plaza and meeting with elected officials, presenting their personal opinions of proposed legislation, or simply saying hello to their respective Senators and Representatives. Economic Development is a relationship business and nothing beats a face-to-face conversation. The Day on the Hill provides an easy format to interact with members of the General Assembly.

On multiple occasions, I had members of the General Assembly remind me of the importance of having our voices heard every day the Legislature is in session, and not just the day we congregate for Day on the Hill. After all, TEDC members are on the front lines of economic development and our daily experiences are important to those folks making the laws in Nashville.

Included in this newsletter is TEDC's 2008 Legislative Agenda. All members of the General Assembly receive a copy of this newsletter, but it never hurts to make a phone call or email to stay connected with our elected officials on the days we are in our offices and they are in their respective chambers.

Finally, on behalf of TEDC, I would like to congratulate the State of Tennessee for its number three ranking in the nation for the 2007 Site Selection Governor's Cup rankings. This shows our state's commitment to build on its reputation as a business-friendly environment and to drive economic growth.



Doug Lawyer
President, TEDC

2007-2008 Board Members

Doug Lawyer - President
Walt Wood - Vice President
Paul Latture - Secretary/Treasurer
Mark Herbison - Immediate Past President/Legislative Liason
Donald Hurst - East Tennessee
David Hamilton - Middle Tennessee
Spencer Sessions - West Tennessee
Mike Evans - SEDC Director
Paul LaGrange - State Liason

TEDC East Regional Meeting
Friday - March 14, 2008
Elizabethton Airport
Elizabethton, TN
10a-1p

For more info visit:
www.tnedc.com

tnedc.com

Matt Kisber



Commissioner's Corner



The Tennessee Economic Development Council is an important partner with the State of Tennessee in creating higher skilled, better paying jobs. The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development understands that the chances of success rise dramatically when we work together as partners.

As a result of our cooperative efforts, along with the business-friendly climate Governor Phil Bredesen has worked hard to create, Tennessee has seen more than 141,000 new jobs, \$21 billion in new capital investments and 38 headquarters locate in the state over the past five years. The most recent testament to our successes is evident in the March 2008 issue of Site Selection magazine. Tennessee is ranked number three in the nation for economic development, our highest-ever ranking.

Governor Bredesen also understands that a business-friendly climate alone won't guarantee continued economic growth. We must support our public education systems and maintain a trainable work force. In next year's fiscal budget, the Governor has proposed the majority of new state dollars go toward education. Public education and job growth are two sides of the same coin and will result in continued interest in Tennessee as a business location.

Despite the slowing of the national economy, companies are still interested in relocating or expanding in Tennessee. Many are asking about possible sites and positioning themselves for a potential economic rebound in 2009 or 2010. When the time comes for those companies to grow, they will understand Tennessee is the best place to do just that.

Throughout the coming year ECD will place special emphasis on creating job opportunities in the rural areas of our state through the Rural Opportunity Initiative. Economic growth and prosperity should be shared by all, not just Tennessee's larger urban areas. We will also be announcing the first round of Orange Carpet Tours this spring, and the Governor has called for another infusion of capital into the Rural Opportunity Fund in next year's budget.

ECD hopes to announce new opportunities for training and assistance to communities in developing their economic leadership skills in the coming year. Mark your calendars for the Governor's Conference on September 15-16, 2008 in Nashville at Gaylord Opryland Resort. This year promises to be an exciting one, and ECD is poised to work with TEDC to make your job creation projects a reality.

TEDC Legislative Agenda 2008

Fully fund the request by ECD to ensure continuation of Fast Track infrastructure funds and training dollars. These dollars are a critical component of many economic development recruitment and expansion projects throughout Tennessee.

Workforce development and preparedness has become increasingly important in an ever-competitive economic development climate. As companies look closer at existing workforces in a given locale as part of their site selection process, it is critical to understand an area's workforce strengths and weaknesses. TEDC encourages the legislature to support the Department of Labor's efforts of statewide implementation of the Work Keys program through local technology and career centers.

Worker's Compensation law in the State has been significantly improved which has allowed Tennessee to both retain and create new jobs while protecting the rights of workers and companies. The Council urges Legislators to retain the accomplishments of past worker's comp legislation.

Having a strong statewide broadband information technology infrastructure is critical to enable increased productivity and strengthening opportunities for new high technology job growth and investment in both urban and rural areas of Tennessee. TEDC encourages the legislature to support expansion of Tennessee's technology infrastructure networks.

Expand the jobs tax credit program to allow more companies to qualify. The twelve month fiscal year requirement to reach the minimum threshold for jobs tax credit needs further consideration, especially in the rural areas as defined by Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 counties. Also, High Technology companies historically require lower employment numbers. Lowering the 25 job threshold for this industry sector needs to be considered.

Support the \$1.3 Million dollar improvement for the Rural Opportunity Initiative Loan Fund- A program that was begun in 2007 by the Bredesen administration that encourages business growth in rural counties for people that normally would not have access to capital.

SAVE THESE DATES:
April 30 - May 2

*Spring
Conference*

*Destin
Florida*

For Room Reservations call
the Holiday Inn Destin at
850-837-6181.

Overnight room rates begin at
\$115.00 per night



Welcome New TEDC Members

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