

Private Sector Investments in the Community

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We posed the question in the past few articles of Where Do You Want to Go? We also addressed various government projects at the Federal, State and local levels which reflect what the governments are doing that impact our direction. This article deals with what we see as the direction the private sector is taking our community. Before going into the discussion where the private sector is taking us, let us restate the several available community options.

A bedroom community – a community where Roane Countians live but works in another county.

A retirement community – where private sector and government encourages retirees to live by providing amenities that meet retirees needs.

An education community – where both public and private opportunities exist for secondary and higher education obtainment.

Recreation community – where the private sector and government have available opportunities and provides recreational enjoyment.

A high tech community – where technology is available for personal and business usage along with related jobs.

A community could also be defined as rural (country), suburban (subdivision), or an urban community (cities).

I'm sure other types of communities could be identified but now we have some basis of understanding of the available options. Where is the private sector investing their money?

Here is where we see the private sector is taking our communities. Over the past decades we have seen the rebuilding and various expansion of the Caney Creek Marina. Expansions at Blue Springs Marina, the rebuilding of Long Island Marina (Kingston) started in 2015, and potential rebuilding of the Bayside Marina. Further, we have seen a high end RV park and a planned expansion for 2016/2017. Expansions have been in various boat dealerships over the last several years. Greenways and walking trails are continuously being built on previous Department of Energy properties in Roane County and Oak Ridge. Year around events are held at the Henry/Stafford Exposition Center at Roane State Community College in Harriman. Various organizations are having fishing tournaments, bicycle races, and marathons. A Medieval Faire has been established in Harriman. Waterfront events are held in the city of Kingston. These investments by the private sector support the building of a strong recreation community along with the retirement community.

Housing developments over the past two or three decades consist of Grand Vista Bay, Docks of Caney Creek, Crystal Cove, Indian Shadows, Marble Bluff, Garlington Pointe, Center Farms, Woodland Reserve and Ladd Landing to name a few. As you look at the restrictions and location of these developments you will find high-end developments, many of which require committee approvals for building plans and/or square footage requirement above 1600 square feet. These developments are often on our lake front or have lake and mountain view. One sees selling prices of lots in the upward to \$500,000. Our developers have built retirement communities. Few developments exist that the 25-40 year old couples with children can afford.

The private sector reinvested into a new Roane Medical Center hospital to help meet the needs of the retirement community.

We have also seen growth in our retail and light industry community. We may talk about this in a future article.

Folks, like it or not we have become a recreation and retirement destination. Further, we have seen little private investment is in medium middle class housing for our young working couples.

Imagine, if you will Roane County landing a 2,000 employee industry in the East Tennessee Technology Park. Where do you think the workers would live? They probably would have a hard time affording our lake front homes. Limited inventory of any new houses and lots exist making available only existing housing that now are twenty to fifty years old. The main inventory of available lots would be at the Preserve on the Clinch River. If the Preserve was the destination of preferred housing the impact of education system would not be Roane County school system but the city of Oak Ridge schools.

An education community, I am not seeing Roane County as being. We do not currently have affordable housing for the couples with children for this community to grow. Roane County has limited private schools available; therefore, many private school students travel to Knoxville.

Our communities are created primarily by the private sector. The private sector is investing their own money and generally will be more diligent in planning their investments. The catchphrase "*Follow the Money*" in 1976 was popularized by a drama-documentary motion picture "*All the President's Men*" could be a motivation for the private sectors investments. Government often are not visionary and suffer from slow response. Get engaged with your local government, we need your help to make better decisions.

Hopefully this article will help open up the visionary process of where we are and where we want to go. Information about Roane County government can be found at www.roanecountytn.gov .