

A NATIONAL PARK FOR ROANE COUNTY IS IN THE WORKS

By Ron Woody

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Continuing with the Five Point Star management approach, one of the current points/focuses is Industrial/Economic Development. There are many aspects of economic development, one of which is tourism and overall livability for the area.

This piece focuses on making “The Manhattan Project” a National Park helping not only tourism for Roane County but also adding an important aspect of culture, history, art and livability.

Many individuals in and around Roane County are familiar with “The Manhattan Project” as an early 1940s U.S. Army Corp of Engineers/U.S. Atomic Energy Commission creation of facilities and processes to help build atomic bombs.

The Manhattan Project was probably one of the biggest and greatest success stories in American history – a theory, an experiment, a development. Many in the younger generation may not be familiar with this historical mission which helped end World War II and launch the United into the world as a super power. The Manhattan Project’s history is in the process of not only being recorded, restored and preserved but also being considered to become a national park.

The “Manhattan Project National Park Act” is a draft bill (maybe filed by his publication) to create a national park which would include the three atomic sites of Oak Ridge, Hanford, Wash., and Los Alamos, NM. Much of the Oak Ridge Reservation, including the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, lies in Roane County.

Roane County Government has been involved in supporting the Manhattan National Park establishment. We have attended a meeting in Oak Ridge with federal legislative representatives and officials and most recently with the sister cities of Los Alamos and Hanford that many state and federal officials also attended.

Roane County’s involvement of not only supporting but helping direct “The Manhattan Project as a National Park” came through a relationship with the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA). Roane County joined with other Department of Energy (DOE) communities across the nation who deal with DOE issues ranging from prioritizing funding of environmental management budgets and clean-up initiatives to reindustrialization of DOE property and future advancements in research and development in science and technology. Oak Ridge Mayor

Oak Ridge Mayor Tom Beehan chairs the ECA board. ECA took an initiative to work on and support the Manhattan Project National Park bill and held a recent summit in Richland, Wash. Approximately 75 presenters or attendees participated in the summit, including 15 from Tennessee. Many were from the City of Oak Ridge and Anderson County, as well as federal and state employees. Tours were made of the Hanford “B” reactor (historical site) along with the “Tank Farm” clean-up operations.

Roane County Commission has been asked to approve a resolution stating their support of “The Manhattan Project” as a National Park.

Would it not be great to have the national park symbol of a brown arrowhead on Roane County signage signifying Roane County having a National Park? As one travels I-40 and on Gallaher Road there could be a sign that says, "Welcome to 'The Manhattan Project National Park' another Roane County Treasure". We are sure Anderson County and Oak Ridge would say the same.

Roane County, Anderson County, and Oak Ridge City officials are working together with our sister cities to celebrate the leadership and tenacity of the prior generations. This action is saying "thank you" for your service and commitment to the Manhattan Project by working to designate your accomplishments as a national park. Designating these important sites as a national park would also be leaving a trail of history for future generations to study and interpret.

There is a saying that people won't travel to see "stuff", but they will travel around the world to see places.

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