

Ron Woody's Comments to the **University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service (UTIPS) Leadership Academy** at the Whitestone Inn in Roane County on May 15, 2013.

UTIPS Leadership Academy toured the TVA Kingston ash spill site earlier in the day and requested Roane County Executive Woody to make comments after dinner about:

1. Impact of the ash spill event on the local economy
2. Transition from a County Consultant to an Elected Official
3. His thoughts about leadership

Attributes of Roane County:

Woody commented on some of the attributes of Roane County that non-natives may not be aware of such as:

- Roane County houses the world's fastest computer (The Titan) at the Oak Ridge National Lab.
- Roane County is home of actress Megan Fox and recent American Idol contestant Janelle Arthur, who finished in the top 5 for season 12.
- A recent movie starring Robert Duvall, Bill Murray and Sissy Spacek called "Get Low" was about an East Roane Countian, Felix "Bush" Breazeale.
- County seat Kingston was the state capital for a day.
- Technology in Roane County and the region could be a breakthrough for another industrial revolution with the manufacturing of carbon fiber.
- The Department of Energy awarded a pilot contract for the nation's first small modular reactor to TVA/Babcock and Wilcox on a Roane County site.
- Watts Bar Lake is the largest reservoir on the Tennessee River.

Ash Spill:

One of the biggest negatives was and still is the perception of what the spill damaged and potential environmental impact. Although the environmental impact is thought to be minor, the perception is that the impact was a lot worse. The perceptions are not that of the locals but of realtors in other counties saying buy our properties, you better not go to Roane County because of the damage by the ash spill.

Transition from a Consultant to an Elected Official:

Woody's transition was probably much easier than most newly elected officials being that he had been exposed to the inter-workings of government for almost 30 years. The knowledge of the 30 years was when you start making decisions some people are not satisfied, and can become ugly and upset which is hard to handle as an individual. Also, most new mayors and executives do not understand that they have no power outside that of marrying couples and trying to convince a majority of commissioners to support or not support certain policies.

Thoughts about Leadership:

Woody showed what he called his leadership book in progress titled, "All I Really Needed to Know about Leadership I Learned from Fishing."

Woody worked in the commercial catfish industry. This is the fishing metaphor related to leadership:

1. A fish rots from the head first. An organization succeeds or fails based on the head of the organization.
2. You can only travel so far in a Jon Boat with a 6hp motor. Your education, experience and ability will take you so far and you must know your limitations.
3. The size of the hook does not have much impact on the size of the fish. The least among us can be the most important or productive.
4. You need sharp hooks to make a catch. You must always do and be your best.
5. You use the bait that is in season. You work with what you have.
6. We got instructions at breakfast each morning. Although we may hate them, staff meetings are needed.
7. You are either catching fish or not. You have direct feedback of how you are doing.
8. All fish are not worth eating. Sometimes it is not worth our time and energy on a particular project or client. They will not get it and it is time to move on.
9. When you see the jug moving, you know you have a good catch. Positive feedback is important.
10. We used to sell fish live, and then years later we had to clean or dress the fish. Then a few more years later, we have to fillet the fish and every now and then we now have to cook them. You must change your practices as the market changes.

Bonus:

11. Catching fish does not make you money. You make money selling the fish. Your customer satisfaction in the end is what is important.

Woody shared a few more with the group without the explanations. Some are as follows:

- If you fish for a living, it is a job.
- If you are not fishing, you are catching bait.
- Do the type of fishing you know best.
- Fish bite even when it is raining.
- You must have a net.
- You must have an anchor.
- A true friend will help you paddle when the motor quits.
- You find solitude
- It is hard to kiss your girl while in a canoe.

Books will be available in June. We are just not sure which year.