



County Executive's Newsletter to the Commission



"Economy is the method by which we prepare today to afford the improvements of tomorrow." [Calvin Coolidge](#)

What Are We Hearing About the Local Economy?

We continue to see the news media talking about the great recession and more importantly when will we be out of the recession, or are we going into a "double-dip" recession?

First, as bad as the recession has been, Roane County did not experience it as harshly as many across the state and nation. There are a number of reasons it has not been worse in Roane County:

1. Stimulus funding for the Department of Energy, and thus a number of projects in Roane and Anderson Counties not only kept employees employed, but many contractors increased employment on particularly environmental clean-up projects and research.
2. Existing contracts of DOE remained stable.
3. The TVA Ash Spill employed hundreds of workers from Roane and surrounding counties which, in turn, helped the local businesses by purchases being made for the clean-up, workers staying in our hotels, eating in our restaurants, and purchasing everyday supplies and materials.
4. TVA construction outages and new construction for coal ash storage and gypsum processing and storage.
5. TVA's purchase of real estate not only limits realtors' supply, but also puts more purchasing power in the sellers' households who purchase other homes in the community. There were negative impacts of the ash spill which impacted the real estate market, recreation, and tourism.
6. Midtown Development, including the hospital construction and sewer expansion.
7. School construction project.

What is the future for our local economy?

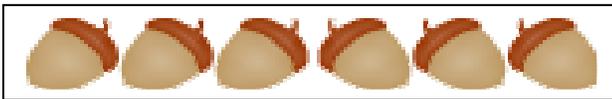
1. DOE funding into the local economy appears to be on the decline. Negative impact. Reduction has started.
2. TVA over the course of the next couple of years will reduce the ash spill cleanup. Negative impact. 2014
3. TVA's new construction for ash storage will be completed. Negative impact. End of 2011
4. TVA's outage will be complete. Negative impact. End of 2011
5. Midtown development and hospital operations will come on line. Positive impact.
6. Expansion of business in the fiber industry will continue at the Oak Ridge National Lab and Horizon Center, a Roane County industrial park. Positive impact.
Reduction at Roane County Industrial Park Toho started. Negative impact.
7. Build-out – We anticipate construction at the Roane Regional Business and Technology Park, and anticipate development along Gallaher Road. Positive impact.
8. School construction project will come to an end. Negative impact for jobs. Positive impact for education.

With all the positives and negatives listed it is very evident that Roane county depends heavily on our TVA and DOE partners as we must work to diversify our local economy with industry not dependent on federal contracts. We must continue work on exploring Accelerating/Incubator of our small businesses. We must work to develop the Tourism/Recreation industry. We must develop an understanding of what impacts, positively or negatively, the Federal Budget and funding of the DOE facilities and TVA has on our local economy.

To help us understand the local economy, I meet and communicate with TVA officials periodically regarding their projects and employment patterns. Also, I've been trying to attend a number of DOE-related meetings and I meet with DOE and Oak Ridge and Anderson County officials as DOE plans their future projects and work.

Plateau Partnership Park (PPP)

The PPP voted at a September 22, 2011 meeting to contract with the Cumberland/Crossville Chamber of Commerce to provide a point person leadership position at a contract cost of \$40,000 annually. The contract should provide leadership direction regarding the partnerships' path forward. The PPP and Chamber must have mutual agreement on the employee the Chamber assigns to the project.



County gets requests on Debt Management

The county has gotten requests to discuss and comment on the Roane County Debt Management Policy as other counties have begun implementing the required Debt Management Policy. Some of the counties have been Bradley, Giles, Hamblen, Hamilton, Knox, Loudon, Scott and Washington; as well as CTAS consultants Gary Hayes and Ben Rodgers.

Employee Spotlight:

Jacqueline Coleman, Purchasing Clerk, retired on August 29, 2011 after 19 ½ years of employment with the Roane County Purchasing Department. Jacque filled in as Acting Purchasing Director at one point in her career here. Congratulations Jacque! Enjoy your retirement.

Melvin Moore, Property Appraiser, retired June 30, 2011 after 35 years of employment with the Roane County Property Assessor's Office. You will continue to see Melvin around the Courthouse as he will be doing some part-time work in the Property Assessor's Office. Congratulations Melvin! Enjoy your retirement.



Energy Communities Alliance

In mid-September, I represented Roane County at an Energy Communities Alliance meeting in Washington D.C. The Energy Communities Alliance is an association of community leaders from the DOE facilities across the nation. Anderson County was represented by County Mayor Myron Iwanski and County Commissioners Tracy Wandell, and Buzz Patrick. Oak Ridge City was represented by City Mayor Tom Beehan and Dr. Amy Fitzgerald. Oak Ridge and Anderson County have been represented on the Alliance for years and we are not aware if Roane County has participated or not. I attended to see whether Roane County should sit back and let Oak Ridge and Anderson County represent Roane County or whether we, Roane County, should also have a voice. Roane County has a lot at stake with two of the DOE facilities being located in Roane County along with all the companies that work in Roane County and employ our citizens. Topics of discussion and position statements addressed to DOE included:

1. Emergency Management clean-up operations – Environmental Management (Heritage Center – a Roane County industrial park)
2. ARI – Asset Revitalization Initiative – Land transfer for Industrial Parks (Heritage Center and other properties in Roane County)
3. National Park Service – Manhattan Project is being considered. (Heritage Center)
4. Energy Park – why DOE is investing money outside the DOE existing complex. Why not at Heritage Center?
5. SMR – Small Modular Reactor – Clinch River Breeder Site – Roane County again
6. High Level Waste – government-owned waste and civil waste (TVA for our region, from nuclear reactors)
7. Reorganization of the DOE management at the national and local level.

Roane County Government should continue being engaged but it will take some funding with membership dues and travel costs, or we could allow Oak Ridge and Anderson County to lead for us.

DOE is a main economic driver in our local economy.

For the Employee Benefits for Retirement

I've been putting this article off for some time since we have been unable to provide raises or bonuses to our employees (excluding schools). Internally, we have been discussing, and it is my goal, to provide a supplemental match retirement plan for our employees through a 457 plan similar to a 401 or 403b (currently school teaching staff has this match product).

What are we talking about?

First, all employees of Roane County have available a supplemental retirement plan that is employee-contribution only. Any employee can withhold, as a payroll deduction, money for a supplemental retirement plan. This withholding is very similar to having an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Withholding for retirement is prior to Federal Income Tax and Social Security and Medicare withholding, thus reducing your income tax and social security and Medicare taxes.

Second, we believe that employees should take steps during their employment to plan for retirement. One avenue is a payroll deduction of a 457, 403b, or 401k (These numbers represent only IRS-approved legal plans). The programs are similar – 457 for counties and cities; 403b for education, and 401k for businesses.

Third, upon an employee retiring with Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS), one will receive basically 45% to 50% of his/her average high five (5) years of salaries. Upon reaching Social Security eligibility, one may receive 15-20% of their current pay. Therefore, upon retirement you may have roughly 65%-70% of your current pay. Can you live with 30%-35% reduction of your current pay? Do you have additional savings? Should you have an additional supplemental retirement plan?

Your TCRS benefit calculation can be found at: www.tn.gov/treasury/tcrs. This will show how much money you can anticipate from TCRS.

An annuity calculator can show you how much cash you need in order to purchase an annuity allowing you to receive a set amount of money per month: www.immediateannuities.com. This will show you how much money you may need upon retirement outside of your TCRS retirement.

GOAL: Within the next three years our goal is to have a plan where we can assist the employees in contributing to a supplemental retirement plan. The County will make a match if the employee will contribute. That's our goal, but I would encourage our employees to not wait on Roane County to make a match; start as soon as you can by contributing to your own supplemental retirement plan.

See Linda Stooksbury for more information.

More to come.

Governor's Conference

Roane County was represented at the 58th Annual Governor's Conference by County Executive Ron Woody, Roane Alliance CEO/President Leslie Henderson, and various Alliance staff members.

The focus of the conference was the Governor's "Jobs – 4 – TN" program which included:

- Assisting local business to grow through acceleration/incubation
- Tourism Industry
- Helping businesses with State and Federal programs.

Flu Shot Information



Kroger pharmacy will come to the Roane County Courthouse sometime in October to administer free flu shots to Roane County Employees who have a "CAREMARK" prescription card. We did this last year and it saved the county thousands of dollars. Information on the exact date and time will be enclosed in with your payroll check/stub as soon as the date is decided.

Also, if you have a "CAREMARK" card and want to go ahead and get your shot, you can go to the Kroger Pharmacy Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. to get your free flu shot. No appointment is necessary.

Employees who do not have a "CAREMARK" prescription card or do not carry insurance with the county will be able to receive a free flu shot on a different date. Information will be sent in with your payroll check/stub when that date is set.

Grants

We thought it would be of interest to provide information regarding grants in Roane County. Roane County currently has twenty-one (21) grants, excluding highways and schools, ranging monetarily from a couple of thousand dollars to \$750,000.

In the past month we have applied for three (3) additional grants. We have applied for a used oil grant to provide oil absorbent material at our convenience center oil collection sites, a State Farm Insurance grant to provide fire extinguishers to county vehicles and a Firefighters Grant for two (2) new ambulances.

The Industrial Board is applying for an Industrial Access Road Grant for the Roane Business and Technology Park. We are also working on a Trails Grant from the Department of Environment and Conservation for recreation development.

In the spring, we will be submitting an application for a Community Development Block Grant to provide sewer service to a residential area in Midtown. There will also be some Emergency Management grants available from TEMA in the next few months.

We continue to host the County Grant Writers' Group on a regular basis. The group meets quarterly and has participants from Roane County, Oliver Springs, Harriman, Kingston, Rockwood, Roane State and the East Tennessee Development District. Members bring information on grant opportunities and also update the group on grant activities going on in their communities.

Innovation Valley

The Innovation Valley Technology Corridor is a 25-mile-long corridor extending from Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Roane County through Knox County and on to McGhee Tyson Airport in Blount County. The communities that are directly impacted by the economic development activity along this Corridor include: Blount, Knox, Loudon, Oak Ridge, Roane and Tellico. This includes the region's top research and development activities, as well as a significant concentration of technology businesses.

In recent years, a substantial amount of economic development activity has occurred along the Innovation Valley Technology Corridor.

Innovation Valley, Inc. was formed to ensure that the strategies recommended in the Blueprint (a five-year economic development strategy) are implemented. The partner organizations include: Blount County Chamber of Commerce, Knoxville Chamber, Loudon County Economic Development Agency, Oak Ridge Economic Partnership, The Roane Alliance, and the Tellico Reservoir Development Agency.

The goals are to:

- Create 30,000 new jobs
- Grow the number of existing business jobs by 19,000
- Create \$3.125 billion in new and expansion project capital investment
- Increase per capita income to \$45,000
- Increase High School graduation rate by 20%

October Events:

The Corn Maze will be open all during the month of October and will close on November 19, 2011. See the website at www.roanegov.org for information on times and prices.

October 8 – The Scarecrow RCP Fall 5k @ Roane County Park (5k Run/1mile Fun Walk). All ages and skill levels welcome. Sign in @ 7:00 a.m. – Race/Walk begins at 8:00 a.m. Check out the website at www.roanegov.org for more information and registration form.

If you have an item of interest related to our county, please submit to Sheila or me. Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the month.

Ron