



# Leadership in Action



**Gallatin**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

# ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

There are some 15,000 economic development organizations in existence today. Not all of them publish annual reports... for various reasons. These reasons range from budgetary restraints to the trend of annual reports being more of an internal communication tool than an external piece to the simple reason that it is not the staff's strength to produce this type of publication. Truth be told, the last three or four years, a lack of successful projects has dampened many EDOs' enthusiasm toward announcing to the world how the past year went.

Of those that do produce an annual report, probably some 99.9 percent of their chairmen are writing their opening remarks by trying to come up with a clever, innovative, new way to say once again how bad the national economy has been and explaining the negative impact it is having on their efforts.

While the Gallatin Economic Development Agency is not immune to these outside forces, they have yet to limit us in reporting our activities, accomplishments, and, yes, struggles to our supporters. Everyone is living in the same economy. We are fortunate to live in Middle Tennessee, a region with a strong, diversified economy and an incredibly appealing quality of life that combine to soften the impact of national downward trends. However, the pages of this report are never light for an entirely different reason. We do not let things outside of our control stop us from moving our programs forward because now is the time that the best EDOs, the most progressive communities, the leaders in our field if you will, are doing the tough work that leads to success, while the followers are left lamenting the outside forces standing in between them and their success story.

FY 2010/2011 proved to be another year in which the Gallatin EDA shone as a leader in economic and community development. Our existing industry focus paid dividends with several company expansions and more innovative responses to our business community's needs, most notably the unique and highly acclaimed "Work in Gallatin" initiative. Our work in entrepreneurial development was recognized at last fall's Governor's Conference for Economic Development with GallatinBusinessVisions.com winning a LinkTenn Award for outstanding economic development marketing through websites. Related to websites, we ramped up our use of social media in our marketing efforts through LinkedIn and Twitter. We also remained active partners in the regional efforts of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, TVA, and the Tennessee Economic Partnership, as well as nurturing old and fostering new relationships at the state's Economic and Community Development Department and throughout Governor Bill Haslam's administration.



And we lead by example in valuing and nurturing continued education for our professional staff, with Executive Director Clay Walker and Administrative Assistant Shirley Smith receiving training on the latest trends and best practices in marketing, product development, technology utilization, existing industry services, handling Requests for Information (RFIs), and other topics. Clay even took and passed the Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) examination administered by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Only a handful of economic development organizations in our state have a CEcD leading them, and our Board is very proud of Clay's accomplishment.

Clay also lifts our profile and provides a keen economic development perspective through his steering committee seat on Connected Tennessee. He is one of two economic development professionals on the committee that guides the state-wide organization that assesses and champions improvement and implementation of broadband coverage, computers, and other technologies.

This year saw changes on our own Board of Directors and on the Industrial Development Board. Ace Harrington rotated off the EDA after completing his term and was replaced by Mary Jo Lewis, CEO of Sumner Regional Medical Center, who has several years' experience as a volunteer for various economic development organizations. IDB chairman Phil Carver welcomed new members Alan Parks, Derrick Jackson, and Clay Haynes.

All in all, we had a pretty busy and productive year. Following the example of our Mayor and City Council, whose support are invaluable to our efforts, we refused to play the excuse game, not by ignoring the sluggish national and world economy, but by adjusting our scope of work accordingly. That's what good economic development and good leadership are all about.

Looking forward to a great 2011-2012,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Earl Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Earl Fischer, Chairman

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

As the nation's economy continued to limp toward recovery over the past year, Gallatin enjoyed job growth and corporate investment, both from outside and within its existing business community. Three projects represented a little of both as some of Gallatin's major employers were involved in acquisitions and mergers. Two other Gallatin-based companies, not listed here, experienced growth and added to their local investment during the past year but declined to publicize the details due to competitive concerns within their respective industries. All told, more than 420 new jobs were added with nearly \$200 million invested in Gallatin operations. Beyond the nearly 1,000 positions at Sumner Regional Medical Center, the EDA reported 165 retained jobs.

**I applaud the Gallatin EDA for their commitment to economic development strategies that create a competitive advantage for not only Gallatin, but our state, by promoting a business-friendly climate and quality workforce. The initiatives being taken in this region support Governor Haslam's goal to make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs.**

*Bill Hagerty*

*Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner*

## NIC Global

After an exhaustive building search, NIC Global Manufacturing Solutions expanded its Gallatin operations into a 21,000 square foot facility next door to its Belvedere Drive plant, leasing the additional space from Green & Little. Product demand created the need for more space and a major increase in employment. The company's workforce grew from 89 to 157 as a result of the 68 new hires and company officials predict the total employment number will grow to about 190 in upcoming months.

"NIC's Gallatin, Tennessee, operation has experienced unprecedented growth over the past 12 months. A rapid increase in demand for our products and services has driven our business to nearly double the number of jobs in Gallatin," Troy Wood, Vice President-Operations, said. "While the previous two years were tremendously challenging, NIC's talented support team worked to ensure we were prepared for growth, with a strong process improvement focus and revamped training program. In the competitive domestic manufacturing industry, we have found our strength to be in the talents, teamwork, and dedication of our employees."



## Energy Automation Systems, Inc.

EASI constructed and moved into a 20,000 square foot building on Airport Road. The energy automation company had previously leased space on South Water Street. This investment will provide the company room for about a dozen immediate jobs and future expansions. The company is already making plans for another 20,000 square foot building that will be home to a sheet metal and lighting products manufacturing facility.

"The City has been so helpful to us. We've been overwhelmed," CEO Joseph Merlo said. "The Economic Development Agency, the Planning and Codes Department... everyone we have worked with has gone out of their way to help us. I can say with complete certainty that all of our company's future growth will be in Gallatin."

## RCTENN, LLC

Locally owned RCTENN continued to grow its business, adding investment and employees over the past year. The company took advantage of TVA's Valley Investment Initiative, a new program designed for expanding companies. RCTENN has invested just under \$500,000 in equipment and added about 40 positions, with more growth anticipated depending on certain pending contract outcomes.

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



“2010 and 2011 have proven to be very good years for RCTENN, LLC, with overall growth up 55 percent from 2009. The volume increase has been through increases with our existing customers as well as with new accounts,” President Rob Coleman said. “Gallatin’s centralized location coupled with easy access to interstates 65 and 40 makes it a good fit for many of our national customers. We anticipate additional growth for the balance of 2011 and for 2012, with several new projects coming on-stream in the fourth quarter. These projects will likely add another 15 full-time jobs.”

RCTENN, formerly Colson Tennessee, was opened in 1997 as one of the first companies to locate in the Gallatin Industrial Center. The original manufacturing facility was 45,000 square feet with an additional 30,000 square feet of distribution space constructed in 2006, and has been under current

management since 2001. Originally producers of chair bases and components, RCTENN diversified into refrigerator components, construction applications, and consumer products such as toolboxes, house wares, and cleaning accessories. Production processes include over-molding of TPE and TPR to polypropylene, injection molding of plastics onto metal parts, and a full range of resins covering nylons and various other materials.

## Weir Minerals-Linatex

As construction was being completed on the 12,000 square foot expansion announced in March of 2010, Linatex officials announced a merger with Weir Minerals. Local officials expect the merger, announced in September, to provide more stability and opportunity for expansion of the Gallatin facility which serves as an American headquarters for Linatex. The latest expansion created 26 new positions.

“Linatex products were a perfect complement to our portfolio,” said Scot Smith, Weir Minerals Managing Director. “Linatex works well with many of our existing products, as well as bringing exciting new and diverse solutions for us to offer our customers throughout all of our markets.”

Linatex rubber products is expected to be a key addition to the Weir product line serving markets of mining, dewatering, energy, oil and gas, transportation, milling, processing, general industrial, and water/waste management.

## Laminate Technologies

Laminate Technologies, located in the Gallatin Industrial Center, completed its 20,000 square foot expansion. The latest investment by Laminate brought an immediate six new hires with the potential for 6-12 additional positions. The company utilized the Valley Investment Initiative through the Tennessee Valley Authority and was aided by the City’s agreeing to extend Commerce Way to accommodate the larger plant.

Founded in 1985, Laminate Technologies is a one-source solution for customized laminated panels and fabricated components. The company, headquartered in Tiffin, Ohio, is one of the largest, privately held, custom laminators in the country, with plants in Ohio and Texas as well as the Gallatin facility.

## Industrial Marketing and Consultants (IMC)

Relocating from its James Street property, IMC, a company specializing in millwright services, machining, fabrication, welding, and design-and-build custom automation and installation, moved into the former Simpson Strong Tie building on Calvert Drive in the spring of 2011. The 49,000 square foot facility was recently renovated after the May 2010 flood caused significant damage. Since the move, the company has increased employment from 18 to 26 and hopes to continue to increase that number.

“We moved into this bigger building so that we could expand. We can use our bigger equipment now and are hoping to expand our machine shop services within the Gallatin market,” said owner Butch Groves. “Gallatin is a good central location for us. We do a lot of work in Portland as well and with Nissan in Rutherford County, so it is a very good spot for us.”

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

## Alura Aviation

Although Alura Aviation represents only one employee at this time, its move into the Sumner County Regional Airport could pay dividends down the road. Founder and President Franco Valentino said that he hopes to build a sales staff of about a half dozen in 2012. Alura currently manufactures its low to mid-range price point headsets used in private aircraft in China. The move to Gallatin and the regional airport has already proven to be a good fit. Alura's product was honored this year with a Gear of the Year award from Aviation Consumer magazine for the "best budget headset."

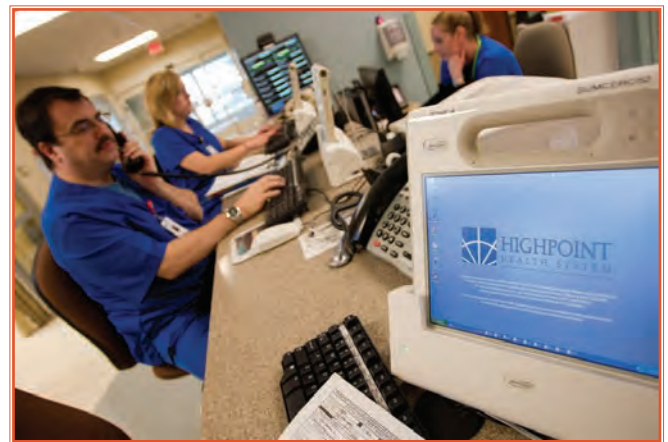
"Everyone in Gallatin has been overwhelmingly welcoming and provided me everything I need. It's just a wonderful place to do business," Valentino said. "And the entire staff at the airport has been great. Whatever we've needed, (Director) Steve Sudbury and his team have taken care of it."

## Engineered Tactical Solutions

Work continues on Engineered Tactical Solutions' new property on Calvert Drive. Relocating from leased property in Sumner County, the weapons design and manufacturing company purchased and renovated the 20,000 square foot Ferguson Building, formerly serving as a warehouse for several local industries. The company expects to be operational by the end of 2011.

## Lifepoint/Sumner Regional Medical Center

After several months of uncertainty going through a bankruptcy, Sumner Regional Health System's saga ended positively when it was purchased by Brentwood-based LifePoint Hospitals, Inc. In addition to the \$145 million purchase of the entire Gallatin-based healthcare system that comprised four hospitals, including Sumner Regional. LifePoint said that it would invest more than \$60 million in capital spending over the next 10 years and almost immediately gave employees at 2.5 percent pay increase. Although the system is now known as Highpoint, LifePoint did not change the names of the individual hospitals.



"The things that make a difference for us are in the community itself: the people in the community and how they're working together to create an economic opportunity for growth and a prosperous future," LifePoint COO Jeff Seraphine said. "We see that and how the elected officials work with the business community and work with the local hospitals to help marry those opportunities. And we certainly found that in Gallatin."

Founded in 1999, LifePoint has grown to become the third largest health care company in Middle Tennessee with more than \$3 billion in revenue. LifePoint operates 47 hospitals in 17 states.

## HSK Stainless

Three projects moved into buildings developed by Ott Gregory. HSK Stainless, a stainless steel firm recently formed by three partners from nearby Lebanon, will produce metal strip coil used in various manufacturing processes. At the end of the fiscal year, the company was installing and calibrating its machinery. The company began with just five employees, but officials say they expect steady growth.

## Tenvision

Tenvision, a company started by three engineers, providing sales, repair, and maintenance of ultrasound equipment, employs five people in the Gregory Drive plant. Tenvision's customer base is primarily doctors, hospitals, and health care clinics.

## C&C Industrial Sales

And C&C Industrial Sales, also known as CCIS, relocated from Nashville into a more suitable building that also accommodates its Sumner County workforce. The company, purchased by Sumner Countian Wade Hickam some eight years ago, is a supplier of finishing systems and equipment such as painting, powder coating, robotic systems, and paint booths, and does custom installations. Local customers include Samick Music Corporation, Competition Powder Coaters, and various automotive-related businesses. CCIS employs 23 people.

# GEAR

In December of 2010, the GEAR – Gallatin Expansion and Retention – program celebrated its fifth anniversary. Over those short five years, the program has become known as one of the most effective, aggressive business retention and expansion efforts in the region. The strength of GEAR has been its focus on customer service.

“Having dealt with economic development groups in six different states, I believe the GEAR program is the most pro-active and pragmatic group with which I have worked,” claims RCTENN President Rob Coleman. “While any economic development group needs to work on bringing in new business to the area, the EDA, through GEAR, consistently looks for ways to assist their existing companies and to patch them in to the many state and local resources available to help them grow their business. I have often wondered why other economic development groups spend all their time recruiting businesses when it is far cheaper to keep the ones they have.”

The GEAR membership and EDA staff did not use the fifth anniversary as a time to rest on their laurels. In fact, the program rolled out one of its most ambitious and unique initiatives in the spring of 2011, the Work in Gallatin campaign. The initiative began when two of the city’s largest employers made the same observation in separate conversations with the EDA staff about the relatively low number of local applicants they were receiving. Both believed that the root of this oddity was the idea of many who look at Sumner County as a bedroom community of Nashville, thus looking to Metro for the preferred career opportunities. Companies generally prefer a localized workforce as it is more productive and reliable and creates a greater presence and higher profile within the community. When the EDA brought the issue to the full GEAR membership, there was an overwhelming consensus that this dynamic should be addressed and WorkInGallatin.com was soon created.

The website presents Gallatin’s diverse employment base in primary job sectors, revealing a culture the city enjoys as the county’s and region’s employment hub, highlighting more than 60 of the city’s largest employers, and offering direct links to application procedures of many employers, and providing a list of current openings. It also features articles and resources to improve one’s ability to land a job, such as resume writing and interviewing tips, and education opportunities.



“In theory, people that work and live in their own community have a great work-life balance,” said Andy Grossberg, Human Resources Manager at ServPro, for which the site takes users directly to its job board where they can apply for open positions on-line. “People may be living in Hendersonville or Gallatin and they’re now driving to Brentwood for what they may feel is a good job, but they may not realize that those types of jobs or better are right here in their backyard.”

The site was marketed in local newspapers and on-line news sites with a billboard campaign planned for the fall. The marketing message was an easy one: Sumner County residents can enjoy a vastly improved quality of life by looking to Gallatin for employment rather than face a hectic commute to and from work.

The well-coordinated marketing blitz, coupled with the overall uniqueness and effectiveness of the site (it received nearly 1,000 hits the first weekend it was launched) brought a great deal of attention throughout the region.

“The Work In Gallatin site demonstrates the innovation the Gallatin EDA has shown through its GEAR program over the years, which has become a model around the region and the country,” said Courtney Ross, Vice President, Existing Business of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. “We at the Nashville Area Chamber always appreciate the creative efforts of Gallatin and know that the existing businesses and workforce in that part of our

region will benefit greatly from the Work In Gallatin initiative.”

## Companies in the News

The contributions of a strong employer base go beyond job creation and investment. Several Gallatin companies consistently bring recognition to the community by generating positive media attention. Last year, a handful of such companies created regional, national, and even international exposure.

## ABC Group

The Toronto-based automotive parts manufacturing company, ABC Group, operates three facilities in Gallatin – ABC Fuel Systems, ABC Technologies, and Salga Plastics – totaling almost 600 employees. Recently, the Nashville Business Journal recognized ABC's wellness program, naming it as a Finalist among the region's "Healthiest Employers."

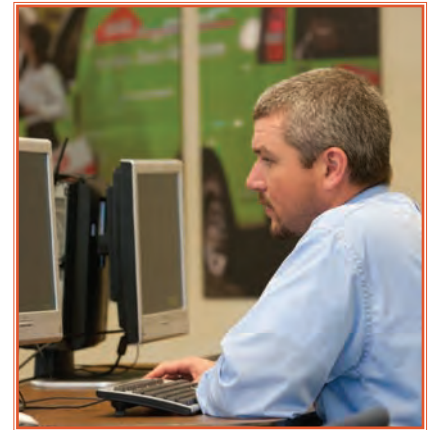
The company created a mission statement with goals for the program and a survey to identify the top three health concerns of its employees. Following the survey, management constructed an action plan to address the concerns. Health and Wellness education is a large component of the program that includes health care screenings, monthly wellness newsletters, and incentives such as Wii Fit game systems and gift cards.

## Servpro Industries, Inc.

Headquartered in Gallatin since 1988, Servpro Industries has become the leader in restoration services. The company that was started in 1967 as a painting business by the husband-wife team of Ted and Doris Issacson reached the long-time goal of becoming a \$1 billion company in 2009. Servpro has continued to grow with double-digit increases in annual revenue.

This type of growth and an outstanding reputation within the industry earned Servpro recognition by Entrepreneur Magazine as the eighth highest ranking in its list of top franchise-based companies. It was the highest ranked restoration services company.

"We focus heavily on training the franchisees," CEO Sue Steen said. "We have been able to achieve what we have by helping entrepreneurs build businesses."



## Samick Music Corporation

The Korean Broadcast System (KBS) spent several days in Gallatin and Nashville in the fall of 2010, shooting a feature titled "Samick Success" for a popular news magazine show, televised nationally. The story chronicled the quality of pianos and guitars under the many brands of Samick Music Corporation as well as how the company, which located its U.S. headquarters and distribution center to Gallatin in 2006, has experienced extraordinary growth in recent years.



"The attention given to us by the KBS is a testament to the success we have found through our staff here in Gallatin," Samick CEO Baik Lee said. "The move came at a great time for our company. We have found a great workforce here and been able to easily convince other employees to relocate here because of the outstanding quality of life. Being in the heart of the music industry in the Nashville area has been a natural fit and we have benefited greatly from our relationships with city and state officials who understand business."

## Goodall Homes

Goodall Homes, founded in 1983, was recognized by the Nashville Business Journal with a "Best in Business Award" as one of Middle Tennessee's preferred employers. Specializing in new home sales, construction, and residential land development, the company employs 54 people. President and CEO Bob Goodall said that the company's success can be credited to an open book management style and a focus on customer service.

## Workforce Grants

Two local businesses were awarded incumbent worker grants from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. ABC Fuel Systems received a grant to provide training to 45 employees in lean manufacturing and Servpro Industries received a grant to provide training to 103 employees in computer skills, design, and support. Workforce Essentials played a key role in the process.

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

When Governor Bill Haslam addressed Tennessee Technology Development Corporation's 2011 Tennessee NEXT Conference in May to unveil the INCITE program, among the throngs of entrepreneurs, government officials, and small business incubator and accelerator directors was a small group of community economic developers. That group, which included Gallatin EDA Executive Director Clay Walker, was there for two primary reasons: they recognized the importance of entrepreneur development and they were eager to hear details of the Governor's plan to help foster innovation, investment, and job growth among high-tech, start-up companies.

The \$50 million program includes \$30 million to be used for incubators and accelerators throughout the state. While the Administration is still establishing specific guidelines and processes for the program, the overall emphasis on nurturing entrepreneurship is consistent with much of Gallatin's focus over the past couple of years.

"As we learn more about the INCITE program, it is reaffirming for the dedication of much of our resources to this critical piece of a complete economic development program that often goes ignored," Walker said. "Our partnership with Volunteer State Community College has reaped many intangible rewards and some concrete deliverables. We're hopeful that we will be able to work with what is obviously a like-minded administration to take a tremendous next step in this area of our work."

Gallatin certainly has a head start. Two years ago, the EDA entered into a partnership with Volunteer State. VSCC has had an incubator on its long range plans for some years. Together, the EDA and the college funded an independent feasibility study and a business plan. The effort hit bumps in the road when seeking federal grants for seed money but has continued to work toward that goal.

"We at Vol State have pledged our full support to partner with the Gallatin Economic Development Agency to finish what we started in 2009 and bring a business incubator to the City of Gallatin," said Dr. Warren Nichols, VSCC President. "As with the Volunteer State Small Business Development Center, the business incubator will ensure that our businesses have every opportunity to succeed in today's global market."

## GallatinBusinessVisions.com



As the partnership sought funding avenues, the EDA realized just how ambitious an undertaking the incubator was and looked for other initiatives to foster entrepreneurship while keeping a groundswell of community support engaged. In August, the EDA launched an online entrepreneur resource center, GallatinBusinessVisions.com. This website was recognized with a LinkTenn Award for "Outstanding Economic Development Marketing Through the Use of Websites" at the 2010 Governor's Conference for Economic Development in September. The site was also honored at the Greater Nashville Regional Council's annual meeting with an "Excellence in Economic Development" award.

"We are always honored to be recognized for the innovative use of technology and other methods of marketing our community. The real reward is the creation and delivery of the product," said EDA Chairman Earl Fischer. "By staying out in front of the pack and being the first or among the first to try new ways of delivering our message, we support our message and our brand of 'Gallatin Gets It.' Successful companies relate to and want to be a part of communities that take the aggressive initiative required to be a leader."

## Partnership with TSBDC

The EDA enjoyed another year of working with the Tennessee Small Business Development Center. The organizations often exchange leads that are better suited for the other group as well as working in concert on projects, one of these being recent growth at RCTENN (see story in Business Development section). In FY2010-2011, the EDA leaned heavily on the advice of Director Charles Alexander in its pursuit of a small business incubator and the development of GallatinBusinessVisions.com, with much of the site directing entrepreneurs to the TSBDC for assistance.

"Working with the Gallatin EDA this year has been great," Alexander said. "The EDA is an excellent source of referrals for small business and did an excellent job with the business incubator feasibility study. The GallatinBusinessVisions.com site has been a practical resource for those looking to start a business in Gallatin. The site is easy to use and has helpful information."

# INFRASTRUCTURE

For all of their economic development success stories, aggressive marketing campaigns, and regional alliances, if there were not a quality product to sell, the City's recruitment and expansion efforts would be in vain. One need not spend much time in Gallatin to see the infrastructure work being done in terms of highway and street improvements, a stunning downtown revitalization, and an expanded industrial park. The past year represented no slowdown for Gallatin's growing reputation as "a city on the move."

"In order for Gallatin to maintain its competitive edge in economic development and its incredible quality of life for residents, we will not accept the status quo," Mayor Jo Ann Graves said. "While constantly striving to improve, Gallatin has remained fiscally responsible not only in the projects we have undertaken but also in utilizing state and federal money whenever possible and streamlining project costs through efficiencies. Gallatin continues to move forward."

## Gallatin Industrial Center, Phase II

A few years ago, when the City purchased a 207-acre tract of land adjacent to the Gallatin Industrial Center at just under \$4 million, it reiterated in a strong way the EDA's tagline of "Gallatin Gets It." The expansion demonstrated that Gallatin not only wants business, but invests in making it happen. Befitting of its reputation, the City set out to make the park stand apart from other sites to ensure its success.

One way Gallatin is differentiating the property is by designating it a **Foreign Trade Zone**, working with the Nashville Department of Economic and Community Development and Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Development Council to expand Nashville's FTZ #78 to include industrial property in Clarksville and Gallatin. A contingent from the three EDOs traveled with MCS Strategies' principal Mike Michalski to Washington, D.C. to finalize the application. On June 30, Nashville received official word that the expansion had been granted.

"Cooperation amongst the various economic development entities in the greater Nashville area is critical to the overall success of the region. The Gallatin Economic Development Agency has been a key partner in this work," said Matt Wiltshire, Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic and Community Development in Nashville. "Together we recently secured an expansion of the Foreign Trade Zone in this region and worked to restructure the program to make it more accessible to small and medium sized business. The success of this effort demonstrates how regional cooperation can meaningfully improve economic vitality."

A Foreign Trade Zone benefits companies that do business on an international level through tax relief, delayed payment of taxes, streamlined compliance requirements, and expedition of raw materials and finished goods through customs processing.

"Gallatin now offers an essential benefit to companies currently located as well as those seeking to locate in its industrial park," Michalski, whose firm administered the application, said. "Due to the vision of local leadership and the unique sense of regional responsibility, Gallatin is now a player in the global competition for jobs and investment. The FTZ, along with the city's existing economic development efforts, will further future growth and development."

In early 2011, the City received a **State Industrial Access** grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation to construct the main road servicing the park, the Gateway Drive extension, in the amount of just under \$1.9 million. As the City works with TDOT to execute the grant and begin construction on the road, the funding has set several development plans in motion.

The EDA is working with the City's Codes and Planning and Engineering departments and Curtis Construction to implement a **Virtual Building Program**. Through this unique program, the City can provide site plans and building permits to qualified companies immediately, eliminating 90 to 180 days of a typical design and permitting phase. Three buildings – 50,000, 100,000, and 200,000 square feet - will be brought before the Gallatin Planning Commission by the end of calendar year 2011, each expandable by 50 percent.

"Removing costly time concerns for companies that might be delaying projects due to the uncertain economy will give us a tremendous advantage over other similar sites," said Clay Walker, EDA Executive Director. "By eliminating barriers and uncertainties in an uncertain economic climate, we not only can solve very real and critical issues for companies, we also demonstrate that we truly live up to our brand of a pro-business city."

The City also has removed questions companies might have about the property itself by successfully participating in the Middle Tennessee  
(Continued on page 12)

# MARKETING AND BRANDING

The Gallatin EDA made a significant strategic shift in its marketing efforts last year, but remained committed to its biggest strengths – strong state and regional partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Economic Partnership, TVA, and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and promoting the City’s track record in creating a pro-business culture. One tactical addition was the use of Twitter and expansion of Linked-In as marketing tools. Executive Director Clay Walker began tweeting in late January and had nearly 100 followers by the end of the fiscal year. Among the followers of @GallatinEDA are site location consultants, elected officials, and other economic development groups. Walker said that Williamson County Department of Economic Development Executive Director Matt Largen, known as one of the more advanced users of social media in the field, provided a tutorial in maximizing this tool for positive community exposure.

“Twitter allows users to communicate directly to an audience that has expressed interest in ‘subscribing’ to very specific information in a very timely manner. The Gallatin EDA was among the first economic development organizations in Middle Tennessee to create a Twitter account,” said Largen. “Clay’s willingness to embrace new technology to move Gallatin forward in an economy that continues to become more connected speaks to his level of dedication to economic development and the citizens of Gallatin.”

The EDA continued to use innovation in websites, launching two new sites with unique and specific functions. GallatinBusinessVisions.com was unveiled as part of the EDA’s entrepreneurship program. This site provides useful information for small businesses and entrepreneurs as well as news items and demographics touting Gallatin and Sumner County as a location that nurtures and supports the entrepreneurial spirit. WorkInGallatin.com was created by the EDA in response to major employers’ requests that it provide help in attracting top local talent to Gallatin companies. The site, which targets Sumner County residents, explains the employment opportunities and career culture of Gallatin, the employment hub of the county. The EDA marketed the site through local newspaper advertisements and multi-media news releases and interviews. (Read more in the Product Development and Existing Business sections of this report.)

The “Gallatin Gets It” message was also touted through e-mail and print and on-line advertisement campaigns. This message has become the Gallatin “brand” over the past four years, with the ads backing the tagline with bullet points on topics such as the expansion of the Gallatin Industrial Center, designation of a Foreign Trade Zone, GEAR – Gallatin Expansion and Retention – program, incentives, worker productivity, and the Educate and Grow Sumner program.

Perhaps the most understated, yet effective method of establishing its brand, the EDA relied on its media relations to generate editorial copy in local, regional, and national publications, including The Tennessean, Nashville Business Journal, and Area Development, Trade & Industry Development, and Expansion Solutions magazines. Editorial content provides a credibility factor that a paid advertisement cannot.

“Your website, ads, and slick marketing material all have their place, but they are not the most important thing,” says Carrie Yeats, Vice President of Economic Development for Austin Texas-based Angelou Economics. “What’s more important is what other people say about us rather than what we say about ourselves.”

Gallatin gained a great deal of exposure at panel discussions throughout the region, with Walker participating on panels for three events over the previous 12 months, including a Lipscomb University leadership development group, community and economic development leaders from the Jackson, Mississippi, area, and the Society for Marketing Professional Services. Joining Walker for one or more of these events were Janet Miller of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, former Tennessee ECD Commissioner Matt Kisber, and other community ED partners G.C. Hixson (Wilson County), Holly Sears (Rutherford County), Rod Kirk (Clarksville), Matt Largen (Williamson County), and Brandom Genglebach (Maury County).

The Gallatin EDA took advantage of an opportunity to tell its success stories as well as show off the City’s newly revitalized downtown to

**(Continued on page 12)**



# RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Gallatin's retail activity saw many exciting developments in a wide range of specialties and services, with a mix of unique, local spots and nationally recognized brands. The revitalized downtown square was the spot for many of the new businesses, with several finding new uses for historic buildings. The Whippoorwill, a restaurant and bar that features live music, opened in the former Swaney-Swift Drug Store. Meanwhile, The Pizza Machine & Co. pizzeria breathed new life into the Suddarth Furniture building. Jewelweed Design Studio and Mercantile, Lime Deli, the Dinner Bell restaurant, and the Iced Baked Shop also opened on or near the square as part of the downtown resurgence.



Christopher and Brenda Newton opened the Epic Event Centre on West Main Street in early 2011, with the first event being the Gallatin Chamber of Commerce Gala, celebrating the organization's 90th anniversary. The Epic Event Centre filled a void in Sumner County by providing a venue for large functions. The facility can accommodate nearly 500 people and features the food that made the couple's Chef Christopher's catering business a success. The Newton's received the Tennessee Small Business Development Center's 2009 Rising Star Award for the new venture.

"They're filling a niche that's yet to be filled in Sumner County," said TSBDC Director Charles Alexander, who helped the Newton's throughout the process. "And the biggest thing to get across is that they've been methodical about this. They've set goals and achieved them through excellent implementation of sound business practices."



Jonesy's, a bistro that serves wine and beer and offers a broad selection of cigars from its walk-in humidor, opened in the Greenlea development on Greenlea Boulevard just off of Nashville Pike. Other retail openings included: Champion Car Wash, Frank's Place, Jones & Company Hair Design, Ricardo's Mexican Restaurant (second location), Creative Minds Gallery, Brown's Mulch Yard, Michael's Attic, Volunteer State Bank (new branch), Sweet CeCe's, Jet's Pizza, Cottage Rose Décor, Rochelle's Pet Supplies, Gallatin Dental Care, D'Lish Delivery, Wilson Bank & Trust, Bloomer's Flower & Produce, Elzy's RV Sales and Service, York Guns and Ammo, and Half-Time Sports Bar & Grill.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Gallatin Economic Development Agency's Board of Directors has always prioritized continued education/professional development of staff as a core value. In a challenging budget year filled with projects too important to delay, the EDA, like other City departments, turned to webinar training opportunities and simply scheduled time with other economic developers who have areas of expertise the EDA staff does not.

EDA staff received training in such areas as business expansion, retention, and attraction, retail marketing, GIS functionality, trends in corporate strategy, target market development and implementation, cluster marketing, regionalism, incentive trends, site and building certification, site development, website and social media utilization, and strategic planning.

"It is important that our personnel stay up to date on the latest practices in their respective departments," Mayor Jo Ann Graves said. "Certainly, economic development is one area that requires being on the cutting edge of technology, recruiting methods, and existing industry programs. I am very proud of the level of education and professional reputation our EDA staff has. They are considered leaders in their field and their knowledge and innovation elevate our profile locally, regionally, and nationally."

Executive Director Clay Walker, a veteran of 15 years in his profession, joined the ranks of Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) in March of 2011. The CEcD, earned by qualifying to sit for and passing a two-day exam covering all aspects of economic and community development administered by the International Economic Development Council, is the highest credential available within the profession.

## Infrastructure

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Industrial Development Association's (MTIDA) **Deal Ready Certification** program. Modeling its program after the TVA Megasite Certification program – widely considered the gold standard in site certifications among site location consultants – MTIDA enlisted the Strategic Development Group of Columbia, South Carolina, to review thorough due diligence requirements and determine which submitted sites qualify as deal ready. The Gallatin Industrial Center Phase II earned certification, pending the start of infrastructure installation.

Coupled with the Virtual Building Program, the Site Certification helps companies move more expeditiously through the selection process, shrinking the time line from the decision to expand or relocate to beginning production at its new facility.

“Companies want to move quickly. They’re over capacity and when they want to go, they want to go,” Jonathan Gemmen, Location Consultant of Austin Consulting, said. “That comfort level is key when we see that seal of approval from a third party. It also reflects the characteristics of a business ready community.”

## Other Product Development

Though much attention was given to the development of the Gallatin Industrial Center, the park’s expansion was far from the only part of town where infrastructure work was being done. Several projects were begun, advanced, or completed over the past 12 months.

Work continues on the widening of Highway 109, taking the Interstate 65 to Interstate 40 connector which runs through the heart of Gallatin from two lanes to four in most places and a fifth lane (for left turns) in others. The 109 Gateway Bridge has begun construction. This five-lane bridge spans the Cumberland River, connecting Wilson and Sumner counties. Other projects include the North Water/Broadway upgrade that includes an intersection improvement and landscaped medians, completion of the Town Creek Greenway, Phase I, and an SIA grant to fund the relocation of Airport Road, allowing for the expansion of the Sumner County Regional Airport. South Water Avenue was widened and sidewalks and crosswalks were installed to improve the functionality and aesthetic appeal of one of the City’s main gateways.

## Marketing and Branding

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several Middle Tennessee economic development leaders by hosting a Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Regional Showcase in the spring. Held at the historic Palace Theatre, the event featured a City overview by Mayor Jo Ann Graves, presentations by Donna Belote of Greater Gallatin and Paige Brown of the Gallatin Chamber of Commerce, and a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the EDA’s most unique programs in marketing and recruiting, entrepreneur development, and existing business expansion and retention.

“Clay and his team have been leaders in promoting the regional economic development message in the 10-county Middle Tennessee area,” Miller says. “We have had the privilege of serving on several panel discussions this year promoting the Nashville area as a national best practice and much of our success is attributable to his participation and leadership.”



Although the EDA is the City’s marketing arm, other departments bring a great deal of positive attention to Gallatin as well. Several Gallatin initiatives were recognized at the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) annual meeting in late September, including: “Communications” for a citizens survey, “Economic Development” for the GallatinBusinessVisions.com website and small business incubator feasibility study and business plan, “Public Safety” for the Police Department’s G-Net Alert System, and “Transportation” for design solutions to the new 109 Gateway Bridge. GNRC, a regional planning and economic development organization, works with 13 counties and 53 cities in northern Middle Tennessee.

The City Codes and Planning Department was also recognized with a Tennessee Chapter of the American Planning Association Award for “Excellence in Implementation” for the Downtown Master Plan.