

JOINT STATEMENT OF INTENT

INTRODUCTION

September 25, 1780 represents a significant example of regionalism in current day Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Western North Carolina that literally changed the course of history. On that day, 239 years ago, approximately one thousand frontiersmen gathered at Sycamore Shoals and began their march to Kings Mountain, South Carolina where they fatally wounded redcoat General Patrick Ferguson, defeated the Tories under his command and accomplished what is known as the turning point in the war for American Independence. Those “Overmountain Men” changed the course of our nation’s history.

Now, the leaders of our region have a generational opportunity to change the course of our economic history, by making a meaningful commitment to build on the past successes of regionalism and step boldly into the future.

In recent years, our municipalities and counties, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations have collaborated on projects of common interest and benefit. They and our employers, educational institutions, local government officials and other leaders and stakeholders have been challenged to not just think regionally but to tangibly act and even consider joining forces and pooling resources to derive better results than we have enjoyed in the past.

We know how fortunate we are to live in this remarkable region with its history of innovation and manufacturing success as well as other commercial achievement, strong education systems and high — yet affordable — quality of life. But we can do better for our citizens’ and our children’s’ futures.

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Boards of Directors of NETWORKS and NeTREP agree as follows:

While NETWORKS and NeTREP have focused their primary priorities, functions, and activities down paths best suited for the organizations and communities they serve, both organizations share the following mutual goals:

- To attract new industries and businesses to the region;
- To assist in the growth and expansion of existing industries and businesses located in the region;
- To prioritize workforce development so that citizens have marketable skills that are needed by the area's existing and potential employers, while partnering with educational and other organizations that provide training;
- To develop the effective branding of the region in a manner which will support the attraction of new industries and businesses to the region and enhance the growth and expansion of existing industries and businesses in the region;
- To market the region and its many positive features throughout the nation and world and promote the region's natural and recreational assets to increase tourism in the region and to demonstrate the region's desirable quality of life to attract residents, visitors, businesses and young professionals; and
- To provide leadership, coordination and professional support for the local economic development efforts of the cities and counties located within the region.

In furtherance of achieving these mutual goals, NETWORKS and NeTREP will:

- Support each other and each other's efforts while continuing to pursue their own missions;
- Collaborate where possible;
- Share opportunities — in terms of projects, events and even business leads and prospects — that might be a better fit for the other organization;
- Continue to speak positively of the other organization;
- Lend a helping hand and support in an appropriate manner projects being led by the other organization whenever and wherever possible;
- Refrain from encouraging or incentivizing established businesses to relocate from one county to another;
- Strive to foster a higher standard of living and better quality of life for the citizens of our region regardless of political boundaries and jurisdictions;
and
- If merging or otherwise becoming part of the same organization is in the best interest of the region, to be willing to explore such concept and what it would mean with an open mind.

We can build a FUTURE that is as historically significant and revolutionary as our PAST.