

# The Business Journal

of Tri-Cities Tennessee / Virginia

[bjournal.com](http://bjournal.com)

## Apace of change

**Coming in 2020: Credit unions buying banks, government regulating cannabis business loans and tech moving faster than ever**

**Plus**

**Amazon visits Southwest Virginia and  
Another Select Certified industrial site for Northeast Tennessee**

Bruce Whitehurst, president, Virginia Bankers Association.  
Inset: Colin Barrett, president, Tennessee Bankers Association.



PRSRST STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
Johnson City, TN  
Permit 3

NOVEMBER 2019  
\$3.00 Volume 31 Number 13



## Keep your money **SAFE & SECURE**

When you're busy running your business, it can be hard to keep an eye on where your money is going. Money GPS offers best-in-class fraud protection and reporting services so you can understand where your money is going and when. Together, we can help you limit, control and secure your account, reducing the risk of losing money to criminals who target businesses like yours every day.

Manage Financial  
Risks with



Learn more at [BankofTennessee.com](http://BankofTennessee.com)

**Bank of  
Tennessee**

**SOLUTIONS MADE SIMPLE.**

Money GPS © Bank of Tennessee Member FDIC



# BCS WEALTH MANAGEMENT RECOGNIZED AS “FUTURE 50 FIRM” BY CITYWIRE RIA



CityWire RIA recognized BCS Wealth Management as a “Future 50 Firm.” The Future 50 RIA firms represent a group of finance professionals who are collectively creating the new investment landscape. These firms are comprised of finance professionals who are driven to succeed on their own terms and, most importantly, are in charge of their own investment decisions.

Firms were scored based on their growth trajectory, degree of independent ownership, percentage of fee-based business, approaches to sustainability, diversity initiatives, processes in place for maintaining and attracting talent, succession planning, staff professional credentials, investment offerings/capabilities, service offerings to clients, client education, and charitable work in the community. For firms to qualify, they must be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission with between \$250 million and \$2 billion in assets under management.



801 C Sunset Dr., Johnson City, TN 37604  
1361 S. Wilcox Dr., Kingsport, TN 37660  
423-283-9821 [bcswealth.com](http://bcswealth.com)



The Future 50 RIA award is not designed to be a list of the biggest RIAs by AUM or those growing at the fastest rate. Rankings are not indicative of a firm's future performance nor do they evaluate the quality of services provided to clients. BCS Wealth Management did not pay a fee to participate in this ranking.

## Table of Contents | November 2019



### | ON THE COVER

## Keeping apace of change

Fintech and credit unions and cannabis, oh my. The world of banking just gets more complicated as 2020 approaches.

### | FEATURES

#### 14 Mark Costa explains it all

Eastman's CEO follows a quarterly earnings report that includes missed earnings and revenues with an upbeat forecast

#### 15 The Commish

Tennessee Commissioner of Labor Jeff McCord outlines his department's efforts to work with other entities to make the workforce better ready for tomorrow's labor market

#### 16 Amazon checks in

A statewide tour brings Governor Ralph Northam and Amazon HR executives to St. Paul, Va.

#### 18 All hail to old M.U.?

Milligan becomes the latest higher education institution to stop calling itself a college in favor of becoming a university

#### 19 Higher Education Newsbriefs

The former VHCC president gets the go-ahead to move forward at VBC. VHCC names its new president. ETSU starts an entrepreneurship boot camp for veterans. King and SVCC shake hands on a new deal.

#### 22 SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

All Things Fabulous

#### 24 The newest Select Certified site

Tennessee ECD recognizes Greene County industrial site

#### 26 Good times in Sneedville

Governor cuts ribbon on publicly-funded call center

### | DEPARTMENTS

7 .....	From the Editor
8 .....	Guest Column
9 .....	Trends

27 .....	On the Move
28 .....	Awards & Achievements
30 .....	The Last Word



COVER PHOTOS COURTESY VIRGINIA BANKERS ASSOCIATION, TENNESSEE BANKERS ASSOCIATION

*Office*  
423.854.0140  
news@bjournal.com

*Publisher*  
William R. Derby  
bderby@bjournal.com  
423.979.1300

*Co-Publisher*  
Jeff Derby  
jderby@bjournal.com  
423.306.0104

*Managing Editor*  
Scott Robertson  
srobertson@bjournal.com  
423.767.4904

#### Marketing Coordinators

Robin Williams  
rwilliams@bjournal.com  
423.794.6938

Allen Moore  
amoore@bjournal.com  
423.341.4888

Richard G. Preston  
rgpreston@bjournal.com  
423.262.7760

*Creative*  
Derby Publishing, LLC  
Graphics Director / Judd Shaw  
jshaw@bjournal.com  
423.833.2726



Subscription per year \$25.



The Business Journal of  
Tri-Cities Tennessee/Virginia  
is published monthly by  
Derby Publishing, LLC  
PO Box 5006  
Johnson City, TN 37602  
Phone: 423.854.0140  
©2019



# Only at BLACKTHORN

No other club in Northeast Tennessee offers our blend of ambience, recreational sports, delightful social events, and exceptional service.

Annual events at Blackthorn mark the seasons and traditions for members and guests alike. Let Blackthorn's traditions, old and new, set the stage for creating your own memorable experiences.

Whether you come to Blackthorn for our outstanding sports facilities, myriad social activities, or an intimate retreat from the world, you'll appreciate the warmth and welcoming spirit at the Club.

Whenever you visit Blackthorn, know that we'll take care of all the details each step of the way. The only things you need to do are relax and enjoy.



**Select Spots  
Remain!**

Join now while memberships are available! The Club has announced a cap at 400 golfing memberships!

For more information, contact Rachel Ingram at

**(423) 913-3164**

[rachel@blackthornclub.com](mailto:rachel@blackthornclub.com)







**For every leap  
in life there's  
a bank that  
has your back.**

On the edge of every next step and new adventure, you want a bank that stands behind you. As First Tennessee becomes First Horizon Bank, that's exactly where we're excited to be. Strengthening your stride with business banking that demonstrates a deeper understanding of you, your path and your potential.

**Make the leap with us today  
at [firsthorizon.com/leap](https://firsthorizon.com/leap).**



**Understanding Runs Deep**



# Are the Houston Astros evil?



I admit, I would have rooted for the Washington Nationals in the World Series this year anyway. But truly, the Nationals' opponent in the Fall Classic, the Houston Astros, represent something heartless, cold and anti-rural.

When the World Series ended, the Astros stopped playing against the Nationals. But the Astros organization didn't stop being against us.

You may remember the fact that when a beautiful new ballpark opened a few years ago in Tusculum, the Appalachian League affiliate that played there was the Greeneville Astros. Last year, the Greeneville team was affiliated instead with the Cincinnati Reds.

You see, a couple of years ago, the Astros started a trend toward major league teams reducing the number of minor league affiliates they support. In September of this year, the website [fivethirtyeight.com](http://fivethirtyeight.com) reported that all of major league baseball was looking at following the Astros' lead and not just dropping affiliates, but eliminating entire leagues.

It's all very businesslike. A former Astros front-office official told the website that an internal analysis of the Astros farm system showed the organization was wasting coaching time and effort on too many players who had zero chance of ever playing in the big leagues. The minor leagues were created in 1919. There's been very little disruption in the model for a century. But two years ago, the Astros looked at how European and South American soccer organizations centralize player development to maximize return on investment. The Astros immediately ended their affiliation with two of their minor league teams.

Within a couple of weeks after the [fivethirtyeight.com](http://fivethirtyeight.com) piece appeared, Major League Baseball (MLB) and the organization of Minor Leagues, MiLB, entered into discussions that appear likely to formalize the reduction in the number of minor league teams MLB supports from 160 to 120, as first reported by Baseball America.

Why am I on about this? Because in this instance, baseball is a microcosm of the economy. By the time larger market forces decide to make decisions that affect rural markets, there is little to nothing the folks in rural America can do about it. Don't believe me? Ask the folks whose careers got up

and went away when natural gas and increased regulations virtually wiped out the coal industry. By the time they could call their congressman, the damage had been done.

The only way for smaller markets to avert being blind-sided is to pro-actively diversify our economies, playing to our strengths and mitigating our weaknesses. We can't wait until we hear rumblings of bad news. By then it's too late. We have to be working together now to see where we can shore each other up and make the best of what we have.

I can't blame the Houston Astros for trying to do things more efficiently than they've been done in the past. That's what they should be doing. I don't blame MLB for wanting to streamline their operations. Sports leagues are like industries. When someone comes up with an idea that can shift a paradigm in a positive way, nobody wants to be left behind.

But the rest of us, out here in Appy League country, have to realize that this isn't just a single-sport aberration. It's symptomatic of something that's been happening for a decade now. Think about it. Every time you hear good news about EBM-Papst opening a new facility in the region, it seems like just a matter of days before you hear that ALO is leaving.

We've survived the last decade as a regional economy by treading water. But we've had a growing economy in which to do it. Even if the national economic downturn doesn't come within the next year, it will come. Economies are cyclical. Blood, Sweat and Tears was right: What goes up must come down.

The movement that will likely lead to the end of the Appalachian League after the 2020 season started more than two years ago when one big-market business, the Houston Astros, made a strategic decision that created ripple effects into rural America. What other businesses are making decisions right now that will affect us, even though we have no idea they're doing so today?

And why are we constantly making excuses not to make ourselves less vulnerable to this phenomenon?

The Houston Astros' decision to cut minor league affiliations was based on cold calculation. It has had the unintended effect of being anti-rural. The Astros don't care about that. Nor should they. It's not their job to keep the economies and civic pride of Appalachian League towns thriving.

It's ours.



# Broadband's New World

by Morgan Griffith, U.S. Representative for Virginia's 9th congressional district

In August 1492, the Italian Explorer Christopher Columbus set sail in the name of the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella in search of a sea route to the riches of Asia. On October 12, 1492, he landed instead in the Americas and thus opened the New World for Western exploration and settlement.

We all know this story, and so we observe Columbus Day every second Monday of October.

Columbus undertook his momentous voyage in three small ships across a vast ocean to seek new economic opportunities. Today, we can pursue that same goal without leaving our homes or businesses. The instrument of exploration in our time is reliable Internet access.

Just as Columbus had to rove among the monarchies of Europe to obtain financial support for his expedition, however, the funding for broadband can be hard to come by. Rural areas in particular often lag in broadband investment. Recent federal funding announcements will help Southwest Virginia close the gap.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development announced two on October 7. Scott County Telephone Cooperative received \$3 million to upgrade current broadband infrastructure in the Dungannon area, and Grundy-based iGo



Technology received \$3 million to enhance broadband services to an additional 820 homes and businesses.

Rural Development's support can be critical for rural broadband improvements. That is why I wrote letters of support for both projects, and why I hosted a workshop with the agency on October 9 in Abingdon to help economic development officials navigate the process of applying for funding.

Other agencies also contribute to broadband in our area. On October 10, the Federal Communications Commission authorized \$23,979,453 over ten years to Sunset Digital Communications for building out gigabit-speed broadband to 6,998 locations in Southwest Virginia.

Nearly \$40 million in one week will go a long way, but more needs to be done.

Columbus may have been guided in his first voyage by a map of the world that included Asia, Africa, and Europe, but not the Americas which lay in his path, contributing to his lifelong insistence that he had reached the Indies in 1492.

We also have problems with inaccurate maps; namely, those which fail to show the true state of broadband coverage. Some areas are considered to have broadband service if only one house in its census block is served. This leaves many gaps.

Accurate mapping is required to get the most out of investment in broadband. RAY BAUM'S Act, legislation written in the House Energy and Commerce Committee I serve on and signed into law last year, included provisions to improve data collection. Going forward, the Federal Government must ensure that its provisions are being implemented effectively. Broadband expansion may never be honored with a national holiday like Columbus Day, but it will open a new world of economic opportunity that lies out there.



| [bjournal.com](http://bjournal.com)

Information you can use to make better decisions for  
your business and improve your bottom line.

Breaking News | Digital Editions | Mobile Friendly | Easy Navigation



# Sharp drop in regional new pending home sales not enough to derail trend upswing

September's pending home sales trend continued increasing despite a sharp drop in approved contracts. There were 758 new contracts last month, down from an adjusted 942 in August.

The month-over-month change in the moving average employed as a trend tracking metric was up 1.4 percent and up 17.7 percent when compared to September last year. The active pending sales total rose to 1,430 – 110 more than August, according to Realtor Property Resource (RPR). New contracts are those approved in the reporting month while the active pending sales total includes all that have not moved to closing.

Pending sales are a leading indicator of housing activity based on signed contracts for existing single-family homes, condominium, and townhome resales. Since resales go under contract a month or two before the deal is closed, the index typically leads existing home sales by about two months. Under normal market conditions, it's not unusual to see up to

5 percent of contracts fall through. In today's market, that fall-through rate is often higher due to contract contingencies.

Less than half of the approved contracts (48 percent) moved to closing last month. Approximately 70 percent of new contracts face a contingency that has to be completed before moving to closing. The most common contingencies are home inspections (60 percent), obtaining financing (48 percent), and an acceptable appraisal (47 percent).

To date, new listings are 5.9 percent better than the first nine months of last year while new pending sales are up 20.2 percent. The region had 3.3 months of inventory in September.

"That means the market's sales pace continues to absorb inventory faster than it is being replaced," according to NETAR data analyst Don Fenley. September's inventory was the lowest it has been since NETAR began reporting its monthly housing market report in 2008.

## SINGLE-FAMILY COUNTY MARKETS

County	Sept. Closings	Yy ch	Yy % ch	County	YTD Closings	YTD ch	YTD % ch
Sullivan	203	42	26.1%	Sullivan	1627	109	7.2%
Washington, TN	150	17	12.8%	Washington, TN	1380	25	1.8%
Greene	69	13	23.2%	Greene	532	35	7.0%
Hawkins	67	23	52.3%	Hawkins	420	8	1.9%
Carter	56	10	21.7%	Carter	411	26	5.9%
Washington, VA	44	6	15.8%	Washington, VA	378	27	7.7%
Wise	19	2	11.8%	Wise	170	17	11.1%
Johnson	19	8	72.7%	Johnson	136	31	29.5%
Scott	12	7	140.0%	Scott	105	16	18.0%
Lee	3	2	40.0%	Lee	33	1	2.9%
County	Sept. avg. price	Yy ch	Yy % ch	County	YTD avg. price	YTD ch	YTD % ch
Washington, TN	\$233,650	26,761	12.9%	Washington, TN	\$225,310	\$8,239	3.8%
Washington, VA	\$202,419	26,358	15.0%	Washington, VA	\$190,637	\$5,415	2.9%
Sullivan	\$187,115	14,306	8.3%	Sullivan	\$185,273	\$13,647	8.0%
Johnson	\$185,361	7,452	4.0%	Johnson	\$182,356	\$12,983	7.7%
Hawkins	\$157,491	2,312	1.5%	Greene	\$166,009	\$16,775	11.2%
Greene	\$157,281	19,239	13.9%	Carter	\$162,692	\$21,438	15.2%
Carter	\$156,106	1,893	1.2%	Hawkins	\$154,220	\$8,987	6.2%
Scott	\$94,667	15,233	13.9%	Wise	\$110,107	\$1,458	1.3%
Wise	\$92,628	21,601	18.9%	Scott	\$99,631	\$6,382	6.8%
Lee	\$75,833	413	1.0%	Lee	\$76,548	\$16,045	17.3%

## APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SERVICES



*Jerry Petzoldt Agency, LLC*

*Each office independently owned and operated*

**Search Over 750 Properties**  
**[www.tcigroup.com](http://www.tcigroup.com)**

**Kingsport 423.230.0255**  
**Johnson City 423.915.0911**



**Jerry Petzoldt**  
Industrial  
423.677.2486



**Gary Sproles**  
Investment  
423.612.0617



**Jackie Hewitt**  
Buyer Representative  
423.292.1000



**Cassie Petzoldt**  
General Business  
423.677.2344



**Glenn Perkins**  
Net Leased Investment  
423.956.5707



**Kelsey Bartley**  
Leasing Specialist  
423.948.1743



**Lynn Shipley**  
Professional  
423.612.4905



**Shea Sproles**  
Corporate  
423.612.2646



**David Johnson**  
Financial  
423.765.3636



**Jessica DeBord**  
Tenant Representative  
615.393.2198

**FOR LEASE - 12,000 SF MEDICAL SUITE**



**8 Sheridan Square, Kingsport**



# Region's bankers are cautiously optimistic heading into 2020

But the pace of change, they say, is increasing

by Scott Robertson

Bankers who are stuck in old ways of thinking are as irrelevant as free toasters and Christmas clubs. Twenty years ago, no one would have predicted Dodd-Frank level regulation or the rise of fintech (financial technology) much less the questions regarding banking cannabis-based businesses. Clearly, this is not your father's banking industry.

The last two weeks of October are lobbying season for bankers. Virginia Bankers Association President Bruce Whitehurst was in Southwest Virginia in late October, holding a roundtable with bankers and government leaders. "The Southwest Virginia delegation definitely is a very good strong delegation," Whitehurst says. "There's a good amount of tenure. Of course, Terry Kilgore chairs the Virginia House Commerce Committee, which is the committee that oversees all business-related legislations."

Likewise, when *The Business Journal* was having a hard time reaching Tennessee Bankers Association President Colin Barrett in the 615 area code because he was "out of the office," we finally tracked him down less than a mile from our own offices as he held a similar roundtable with Tennessee State House Commerce Committee Chair Timothy Hill in Johnson City. "We're blessed in Tennessee to have really good legislative leadership on matters of commerce," Barrett says. "The new Speaker of the House, Cameron Sexton, from over on the Cumberland Plateau, is a banker."

The agendas for the two roundtables were different, despite

their geographic proximity. In Southwest Virginia, Whitehurst says, cannabis was a leading topic. "Virginia bankers are kind of caught in the middle. There are 33 states which have legalized

some form of marijuana production and distribution. But, because federal law is more restrictive, marijuana remains a controlled substance and illegal. So, we've been briefing legislators on the fact that we are lobbying Congress for legislation that has already passed the House and is pending in the Senate called the Safe Banking Act, which says that in a state where cannabis has been allowed in some form or another, banking those businesses would not run afoul of the law."

It's not just doing business with cannabis producers that could cause problems if the federal government were to take a hard line on banking with businesses that trade in cannabis, says Leton Harding, president, chairman and CEO of Powell Valley Bank. The proliferation of CBD oil sales in traditional brick and mortar establishments opens up a huge gray area. "The law is very strict, but somewhat nebulous. And, if CVS is selling CBD products, then everybody is doing it. Yet, we could get bitten because we don't have some sort of formal pronouncement from regulators."

In Tennessee, which hasn't legalized marijuana yet, bankers have other issues top-of-mind. Tennessee bankers are very interested in pushing for a levelling



"We are advocating in Congress for the Safe Banking Act...in states that have legalized cannabis...banks that bank those businesses would not be afoul of the law."

— Bruce Whitehurst

"They want to do everything on their iPads or on telephones at home, at night."

— Larry Estepp



"We were optimistic last year and we're cautiously optimistic this year."

— Dale Fair



# Taste

WOOD-FIRE KITCHEN

ON THESE FALL EVENINGS, THERE'S MORE  
THAN ONE WAY TO KEEP WARM.



ALL-NEW DINING EXPERIENCE  
NICEWONDER FARM & VINEYARDS, BRISTOL, VA

[NICEWONDERFARM.COM](http://NICEWONDERFARM.COM)

📷 @NICEWONDERFARM



## BANKING, CONTINUED

of the playing field with credit unions. In fact, Barrett says he has been to Washington seven times this year for meetings on that topic. And while he doesn't see immediate changes on the horizon, Barrett says congressmen have begun to perk their ears up because of a new development. "It's not just credit unions taking bank customers. Credit Unions are buying banks. Credit Unions have always talked about how they're not banks, but if one can buy the other, then there's really no difference." The outcome of the 2020 presidential election could have significant impact on how that issue is eventually resolved, Barrett says. Of course, not all issues facing bankers are regulatory in nature.

"Information security technology is top of the house," says Dale Fair, CEO of Bank of Tennessee. "This is probably as important as asset quality and making good loans used to be. That was top of the house, and we do a good job of that too. But these information security issues – there's so much out there that this is a top of house for us."

Larry Estepp, Citizens Bank president agrees. "We're constantly adding more firewalls and patches to our system in order to prevent someone taking advantage of us through technology. Because it's such a wide-open field, we have to be changing and adapting to stay on top of that on a daily basis. It's not like you can say, 'well, we'll invest in that next year.'"

Another complicating factor is that banks' customers can have as great an impact on security as employees or managers. "One of our jobs as a community bank, is not only protect the customer's information, but to help the customer protect their own information," Fair explains. That becomes more difficult every day as a higher percentage of customers prefers to bank from home.

Younger customers don't even want to step foot into a bank branch, says Estepp. "They want to do everything on their

iPads or on telephones at home, at night." But when those same customers do need to interact with a human banker, adds Gerald Hallenbeck, Northeast Tennessee Market president for First Horizon, they demand top-flight service. "We have to be quick learners on the technology side, but we value the one-on-one interaction."



"I think there's questions on what this presidential election might mean as well."  
– Colin Barrett

"According to the FDIC, net deposit growth for all banks in the United States this year has been zero."

– Leton Harding



"We have to be quick learners on the technology side, but we value the one-on-one interaction."  
– Gerald Hallenbeck

Older customers are still more likely to bank in person, but generational differences create circumstances that are much more impactful than whether customers prefer using an app, Harding says. "According to the FDIC, net deposit growth for all banks in the United States this year has been zero." How is that a generational issue? As older bank customers pass away and leave their assets to younger relatives, those relatives are more comfortable moving the assets into non-bank account investment vehicles. "They've had 401(k)s all their lives," Harding says. "They have a different comfort level."

The outlook for 2020 is summed up by every banker *The Business Journal* spoke with in one phrase: cautiously optimistic. "We haven't heard a lot of negativity from our customers," Fair says, "but there are factors that are beyond our control, such as the economy and changes in the political world."

And, of course, each bank has its own circumstances. First Horizon, for instance, just completed a rebranding that eliminated the old First Tennessee and Capital Bank nameplates in multiple states across the Southeast. But the

outlook is still based on banking fundamentals, Hallenbeck says. "We're always watching for any sort of decrease in economic situations, but we haven't seen it yet. I don't see or feel anything in our company that says, 'Hey, we've got to slow it down because we're afraid the economy's going to slow down. You know, you just stay with the fundamentals. Make good loans to good people and you'll be fine.'" BJ





## **At Lexus of Kingsport, we understand the complexities of buying a luxury automobile.**

As part of your *Lexus of Kingsport* ownership experience, we offer many complimentary services: Lexus loaner vehicles, pick-up and delivery of your vehicle while in for service, and a well-appointed client lounge, just to name a few. And, while you are in for service, rest assured that your Lexus will be repaired by a Certified Lexus Technician, trained to work only on your vehicle.

Call or visit *Lexus of Kingsport* today to experience the finest luxury cars ever built.



2527 East Stone Drive | Kingsport, TN | 423-224-2270 | [lexusofkingsport.com](http://lexusofkingsport.com)



# Eastman's Costa: company hopes for trade war settlement, but is well positioned to handle adversity

by Scott Robertson

When Eastman CEO Mark Costa met via conference call with reporters and analysts the morning after the Oct. 24 release of the company's third quarter earnings report, he did so knowing he'd hear questions about the company having missed

estimates on earnings and revenue. He also knew he'd hear about Moody's having changed Eastman's outlook from "stable" to "negative" a couple of weeks before.

Costa was upbeat on the call, even when citing "a challenging macroeconomic environment which has deteriorated in the second half of this year." He said he expected Eastman to generate earnings growth going into 2020, then gave a concise explanation of how the company planned to make good on that expectation.

First, he said, Eastman expects growth in areas where the company has been doing well, even in challenging times, including advanced materials and textiles. Costa said he also expects this year's run of slow sales based on stock level drops by customers to end soon. "At least on a relative basis, there is no way that we can see the amount of destocking that we've seen this year occur again next year." Thus, he said, sales volumes should improve. In addition, \$40 million in cost containment measures put in place during the last nine months should create a net benefit if and when those sales volumes do pick up.

Second, Costa said the company will continue its commitment to innovation. "We're going to look at how we get much more productive with digital investments. We've made choices to invest a lot in digital this year in productivity and commercial execution. And, I'm already seeing a lot of benefits that's paying for those investments this year. And we'll start seeing the benefits on a net basis next year and there's more investments we're going to continue making."

Finally, Costa said the company would maintain strong free cashflow. "Even in this tough environment, we're generating incredibly strong free cash flow at a very high conversion rate. And, we have every expectation we're going to do the same thing next year and we'll continue to be disciplined in how we deploy that cash in dividends, share purchases or debt repayment and pull down to where it makes sense."

Costa said the company was hoping for a settlement to the trade war, but remains positioned to compete if it continues. "If there's a recession where demand is more challenged, we have additional levers we can pull to manage costs, and the innovation will still create some growth to offset those challenges.

"We generate great cash flows, even in a recession or environment, and then we also have plenty of access to liquidity," Costa said. "So, we're well positioned to manage through this uncertain economic environment." **BJ**



Eastman CEO Mark Costa



# McCord: Government departments coming together on Tennessee workforce development strategy

by Scott Robertson



Jeff McCord

**T**ennessee Commissioner of Labor Dr. Jeff McCord told attendees at the Oct. 25 session of the Governor's Conference on Economic and Community Development that the Department of Labor and other

state government departments and higher education institutions are working together on a comprehensive strategy to stay ahead of changes in employers' workforce needs. McCord highlighted work being done with the Tennessee Board of Regents, the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, the Department of Economic and Community Development and Complete Tennessee.

McCord said looking to the future, two trends appear unavoidable. First, automation and artificial intelligence will shift the entry structure into manufacturing businesses. "The entry points are going to be automated as we move forward. So what do you do about that? The answer to that is apprenticeships. You pay somebody to learn on the job to move up through while you're getting that higher skill level," McCord said. "And then when they get the higher skill level, you pay them at the higher skill level."

The second trend is that constant changes in the skill sets needed to adapt to changes in markets and technology will mean the education system and employers will need to restructure their relationship to allow for lifelong learning and retraining. "The key there is to start thinking about competency-based education. So, as we switch jobs, we bring a lot of knowledge. As quick as we can master the competency, then we can get on to the next item that we have to work and get ready for the next learning event that we have to have. So, layers (of entry level jobs) will be stripped and education will not be a terminal event, but more an iterative event as a part of what we do to work. And so, our structures have to move to accommodate that."

The Department of Labor is working through its Labor Standards area to show manufacturers they have opportunities to bring apprentices under the age of 18 into their operations without violating child labor laws or putting themselves at risk for

unwarranted liability, McCord said.

"We should be able to get the capability where we can provide consulting for your industry partners so we can walk into them and say, a 16-year-old can do this, but they can't do this." **BJ**



## KEEPING IT LOCAL

As locals ourselves, we take great pride in the design work we do for our community. We view our projects as more than simply a job, but a way to make a difference in the lives of our families, friends, and neighbors. We are faces you will recognize on and off the job site. See you around town!



3203 HANOVER ROAD, JOHNSON CITY, TN | (423) 952-2700 | THOMASWEEMSARCHITECT.COM





Southwest Virginia government, business and education leaders at a roundtable discussion with Governor Northam and Amazon executives

## Northam hosts Amazon on “listening tour” stop in St. Paul

by Scott Robertson

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam hosted a roundtable discussion in St. Paul Oct. 21 with officials from Amazon’s second headquarters, located in Arlington. Held at the Oxbow Center of the University of Virginia’s College at Wise, the conversation included community and business leaders in Southwest Virginia who spoke about workforce development, economic development, and small business issues.

“Workforce development is a key reason why companies are choosing to locate in Virginia, and we’re proud to work with diverse partners to grow our tech talent pipeline across the Commonwealth,” Northam said. “One of my proudest days in office was last year when I announced Amazon’s decision to call Virginia their second home, and we believe the company’s location here can benefit every part of the state. Southwest Virginia has strong communities, a skilled workforce, and visionary leadership, and I’m pleased to have the opportunity to discuss with local leaders how we can attract more jobs and investment to this important region.”

The event was one stop on an Amazon listening tour that will put human resources executives from the online retail giant in direct contact with representatives from business and government in every Virginia county. As such, the company is making no promises at this point about creating new jobs anywhere in particular. Instead, said Amazon Vice President of People Operations Ardine Williams, the company is interested in hearing what communities are doing that could help Amazon get the best people for its Arlington HQ2 facility and other Virginia operations.

“The listening tour is around the Commonwealth and what we’re interested in is what’s working really well in workforce development,” Williams said. “As we think about staffing our

operations in Capital Landing, as we look out over 10 years, it’s 25,000 employees. So, there are kids in school today that we’ll have the opportunity to work with in the future. So, understanding what’s working well is important as we think about policy and as we think about what we’re doing we understand what’s working well.”

Amazon already employs around 10,000 people outside Arlington, Williams said. “We’ll continue to grow in the state. We have a large base of employees in the state outside of National Landing and we’ll continue to grow that base.”

In November 2018, Northam announced that Amazon would invest at least \$2.5 billion and create more than 25,000 high-paying jobs to establish their second headquarters in the Crystal City/National Landing area of

Arlington. The Commonwealth’s proposal was designed to help grow the tech talent pipeline in all parts of the state, enhance transportation infrastructure, and ensure that the economic benefits of the Amazon project are shared across Virginia.

“After our statewide workforce tour in September, the number one issue in Southwest Virginia is bringing jobs to the area to keep communities together,” said Chief Workforce Advisor Megan Healy. “It is great to show international business leaders the strong workforce and innovation happening in all parts of the states.”

“Bringing Amazon’s HQ2 to Virginia was a huge win for the whole Commonwealth,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball. “The Governor has been focused on diversifying the economy, and making sure all regions participate in our economic growth. This roundtable is a chance to highlight the human and natural assets of Southwest Virginia, and hear from community leaders about ways we can continue to enhance the





economic prosperity of all regions.”

Duane Miller, executive director of the LENOWISCO Planning District told the executives from Amazon that if they chose to create jobs in Southwest Virginia, they would be dealing with local governments that would work across town and county lines to meet their needs. Travis Staton, CEO of the United Way of Southwest Virginia, spoke of a similar cooperative spirit between education and industry in the region. Virginia Coalfields Economic Development Authority Executive Director Jonathan Belcher presented Williams with a thick folder full of information about economic incentives and programs across the region.

The governor’s chief of staff, Clark Mercer, asked if the administration and Amazon could be provided with a one-page summary of that information. Streamlining the region’s pitch could make a huge difference, the governor added. “How do you market to northern Virginia companies? Once they see this is God’s country, they’ll want to be here,” Northam said. Delegate Will Morefield responded that he would make sure Amazon received a one-sheet summary if he had to type it himself.

Evan Feinman, who serves dual roles as Chief Broadband Advisor to the Northam administration and executive director of the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, hailed the work being done by private companies including Point Broadband to help the region achieve the goal of universal broadband coverage within a decade.

Delegate Israel O’Quinn and consultant Mary Trigiani of Spada Inc., spoke of the blossoming partnership between the Southwest Virginia Technology Council and its Northern Virginia counter-



Virginia Governor Ralph Northam with Eastman Vice President of People Operations Ardine Williams PHOTOS BY SCOTT ROBERTSON

part organization, which could help facilitate workforce development initiatives in the tech sector beneficial to both Amazon and Southwest Virginia.

Following the discussion, Northam and Williams sampled the quality of life in Southwest Virginia, going four-wheeling on the Spearhead Trails. [B](#)

## T E N N E S S E E ’ S #1 RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LENDER

We provide mortgage programs specific to your needs with closings on your schedule.

- Conventional
- FHA (Federal Housing Administration)
- VA (Veterans Administration)
- THDA (Tennessee Housing Development Agency)
- Rural Development
- Additional Loan Programs Available



**BOB HEFTY**  
MORTGAGE CONSULTANT  
423-943-0410 CELL  
bob.hefty@migonline.com  
NMLS #186694, TN #102525



**DEBRA CHANDLER**  
MORTGAGE CONSULTANT  
423-677-8049 CELL  
debra.chandler@migonline.com  
NMLS #1622489, TN #136200



**MICHAEL WORLEY**  
MORTGAGE CONSULTANT  
423-383-2728 CELL  
michael.worley@migonline.com  
NMLS #1495938, TN #12729587



**MATT STICKLEY**  
LOAN OFFICER  
423-306-9995 CELL  
matt.stickley@migonline.com  
NMLS #1805581, TN #173916



**BRANDON BURLESON**  
LOAN OFFICER  
423-943-6055 CELL  
brandon.burleson@migonline.com  
NMLS #1815845, TN #178121



**MORTGAGE  
INVESTORS GROUP**

\* According to Courthouse Retrieval Systems (CRS). NMLS #34391, TN #109111

**JOHNSON CITY**  
**423-283-4702**  
508 Princeton Rd, Ste 201

**KINGSPORT**  
**423-765-2211**  
1825 N Eastman Rd, Ste 3

**WWW.MIGONLINE.COM**





# Milligan College to become Milligan University in 2020

by Dave Ongie

Before Milligan College President Dr. Bill Greer made a major announcement regarding the future of the school, he took some time to draw a thumbnail sketch of Milligan's history for those gathered inside the Gregory Center last Friday morning.

Greer retraced the steps that led to the founding of the school over 150 years ago. He spoke of Milligan's struggle to stay open during World War II, which ultimately led to the bold decision to suspend operations and allow the campus to be used exclusively by the U.S. Navy to train officers. He also reflected on the post-war boom period that allowed Milligan to grow into what it is today.

Two things became clear during Greer's walk down memory lane. First, the traditions of Milligan and the foundation the school is built upon are enduring and undeniable. That deep sense of tradition is what led a couple of alumni who felt passionately about Milligan to press Greer to make a promise not to change the name of the school as he prepared to take over as Milligan's president in 2011.

"I was consistent in saying I could not and would not make that promise," Greer said. "I could only promise what I would do was my very best to lead Milligan forward, ensuring that we would continue to offer programs that are central to our mission and relevant to the market."

That leads to the other main theme of Greer's history lesson. While tradition is revered, change has also been a constant throughout Milligan's long history. And the changes the institution has undergone in recent years put Greer and the board of directors under increasing pressure to call Milligan what it is – a university.

Under Greer's leadership, Milligan is now composed of five schools – the William B. Greene School of Business and Technology, the School of Arts and Humanities, the School of Bible and Ministry, the School of Sciences and Allied Health and the School of Social Sciences and Education.

"With that organization, we became a university, if not in name," Greer said. "We're classified by organizations like the Carnegie Foundation and U.S. News & World Report as a university. In fact, this year we're listed as No. 13 on the list of best regional universities in the South by U.S. News."

With that in mind, Milligan's board of directors held a vote and made the decision to change Milligan's name to Milligan Univer-

sity effective June 1 of next year. In some ways, the move was a matter of semantics – no ground was broken, no ribbons cut.

But anyone well-versed in marketing is keenly aware what a subtle name change can do. In the case of Milligan College, which has students from over 30 countries on campus in the midst of a

sharp increase in international enrollment, Greer believes the name change could pay huge dividends overseas.

"Enrollment of international students is on the increase, growing 28 percent over last year alone," Greer said. "In fact, nearly 10 percent of this year's incoming class came from foreign countries, and 5 percent of our student body came from foreign countries."

"We believe this number can grow, but the name 'college' is a barrier in other countries because colleges are often considered inferior to universities. That's not


necessarily true in the U.S., but it certainly is abroad."

As Milligan College makes the transition to Milligan University next summer, the student center will undergo a dramatic facelift. Thanks to a donation from 3CLANE Family Foundation, Inc., the student center will receive a new external façade and entrance in addition to several updates to the building's interior.

According to a release from Milligan, the remodeled areas will flow into the recently updated dining area, Fireside Grill. Additional outdoor space will be added and connect to the building with doors that lift open, and modern furnishings will update gathering spaces. A new high-tech a/v system also will be incorporated throughout the building.

"I am deeply grateful to the 3CLANE Family Foundation for making this project possible," Greer said. "The generosity of this family foundation has been manifest through their support of the Neely Scholarships at Emmanuel Christian Seminary and will now impact the entire university as we carry out this project in the heart of campus."

As Greer offered a glimpse into Milligan's future last Friday, he did so with a playful nod toward both the tradition and the change that has paved the road to the present.

"In its early days, (Milligan) had three primary goals," Greer said. "The thorough training of the student, the prohibition of the whisky traffic and the spreading of the teachings of Christ to the world. We still pursue two out of three. I'll let you be the judge of which two." 





# Virginia Business College Receives Provisional Certificate to Operate



The Virginia Business College (VBC), a new college in Bristol, Va., was granted a Provisional Certificate to Operate from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Oct. 29.

“This is a significant step forward for the Virginia Business College,” says Dr. Gene Couch, president of the four-year, private non-profit institution. “This approval will allow us to begin recruitment of the inaugural class of students. We anticipate a site visit by SCHEV in the Spring of 2020, which is required prior to our final approval.”

Virginia Business College is located on the former campus of Virginia Intermont College located on Moore Street in downtown Bristol. The Virginia Business College will primarily be a residential college, but will also accommodate commuter students

and online learners, according to Couch. Significant improvements have been made to the campus and will continue in the months ahead.

The Virginia Business College plans to offer seven business concentrations to bachelor degree-seeking students. The seven concentrations are:

- Accounting
- Business Analytics
- Entrepreneurship
- Human Resource Management
- Information Technology Management
- Management/Leadership
- Marketing

VBC expects to enroll students in August 2020. **BJ**

## Hutchison named VHCC President, effective 2020

Dr. Adam Hutchison will become the next president of Virginia Highlands Community College, assuming the role at the beginning of 2020. “Adam Hutchison is an impressive and seasoned higher education leader,” said Dr. Glenn DuBois, chancellor of Virginia’s Community Colleges. “He has a remarkable record of establishing and sustaining successful workforce development programs – the kind of programs that are a growing demand in the college’s service region, and across Virginia.”

“We are excited to welcome Dr. Hutchison to both our college and our local community,” said Catherine Brillhart, chair of the Virginia Highlands Community College Local Board. “Dr. Hutchison’s energy and enthusiasm for higher education will bolster our learning environment and engage our students, faculty, staff, and supporters.”

“His experience in workforce and economic development builds upon VHCC’s commitment to student success and community partnerships,” Ms. Brillhart concluded. **BJ**

### Don't stop now



You need more than a controller but can't afford a full-time CFO — not yet. You've reached the gap of uncertainty. Crossing it is easier than you think. At Kaplan CFO we do it every day. As part of your management team, we create the processes, resources and financial stability you'll need on the other side. Let's go.



**Mike Holt**, Kaplan CFO Partner  
Kingsport | Bristol | Johnson City



423-676-1100  
mike.holt@kaplancfo.com  
www.kaplancfo.com



## King, SVCC sign dual admission agreement



King President Alexander Whitaker and SWCC President Dr. Thomas Wright PHOTO COURTESY KING UNIVERSITY

**K**ing University and Southwest Virginia Community College (SWCC) announced a new program agreement Oct. 22 that will provide qualifying SWCC students with dual admission and guaranteed acceptance to King.

King President Alexander W. Whitaker IV and SWCC President Thomas F. Wright, Ed.D., signed the agreement during a news conference in King University's Student Center. The collaboration offers students the advantage of a structured approach for completion of an associate's degree at SWCC, followed by pursuit of a bachelor's degree through enrollment at King.

"We are committed to increasing access to higher education

for students throughout our region, with the goal of enhancing their potential for future success," Whitaker said. "Studies show that students who attain an associate's degree have a greater likelihood of achieving a bachelor's degree, which expands their professional development, career opportunities and earning potential. We're proud to partner with SWCC on this agreement, which provides two-year SWCC graduates a seamless opportunity to continue their studies at King."

Students enrolled in the dual admission program will:

- Benefit from a strongly supportive learning environment while at SWCC;
- Work jointly with academic advisors at both institutions to determine course selections, based on the associate degrees they are pursuing and their academic programs of choice at King; and
- Receive a guided transition to King, culminating in a lower-cost bachelor's degree from the University.

"This agreement provides an excellent opportunity for SWCC students to achieve the next step in their educational journey," Wright said. "We have a longstanding partnership with King, and are pleased to collaborate further in the effort to streamline our students' access to a four-year degree."

Acceptance to King will be provided as early as the beginning of the third semester of enrollment at SWCC, and students will be able to register during King's earliest registration event during the semester in which they will be graduating from SWCC. [B](#)

## ETSU launches veterans' entrepreneurial bootcamp

**F**ollowing World War II, the U.S. witnessed a surge in businesses started by veterans, and today, veteran entrepreneurship continues to impact the American economy. Veterans are uniquely positioned to excel in business ownership and encouraged to apply for a free entrepreneurship training program aimed at developing business ideas and refining early stage businesses.

STRIVE - Startup Training Resources Inspiring Veteran Entrepreneurship, is an eight-week cohort led by faculty members in the College of Business and Technology at East Tennessee State University. STRIVE is open to all veterans, Reserve and National Guard members and their spouses. Participants will engage in online learning, meet one evening per week and be connected with mentors. STRIVE students will receive personalized instruction and assistance relevant to the growth of each business concept.

"ETSU is well-positioned to connect veterans with existing programming, experienced faculty and a community of successful entrepreneurs. We will utilize available resources within the College of Business and Technology, including the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC), to provide practical hands-on instruction. The STRIVE curriculum aims to help veterans build confidence in their business concepts," said Dr. William Heise, professor of management and marketing and director of the MBA program at ETSU.

ETSU is the second institution in the country selected to host a STRIVE program through a partnership with Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, which has trained over 70,000 entrepreneurs. The IVMF's entrepreneurship programs leverage the skills, resources and infrastructure of higher education to offer cutting-edge, experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management for veterans and transitioning service members.

"Veterans demonstrate so many of the qualities of successful entrepreneurs - ambition, dedication, innovation and team-first perspective," says Misty Stutsman, director of entrepreneurship and small business programs at the IVMF. "STRIVE is a great first step for veterans as they prepare to live the American dream they fought to protect. We are honored to partner with ETSU in launching this program."

ETSU's STRIVE cohort will begin in February 2020. Applications are available now and spots are limited. There is no cost to attend and graduates of the program may qualify to apply for business funding from various agencies. Classes will meet one evening per week on the Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center Campus, in the Interprofessional Education and Research Center (building 60), located at 178 Maple St., Mountain Home, Tennessee. [B](#)



# Changing with Time. Changing with You.



**East Tennessee's Business Bank for 85 Years.**



**Citizens  
BANK**

866-882-2265

[citizensbank24.com/85years](http://citizensbank24.com/85years)

Bank your own way.



Member FDIC





# All Things Fabulous!



---

## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

---



Live Christmas trees, wreaths and garlands. Opens November 15th. Daily arrivals, trees 4' to 18'. Credit cards accepted, delivery available. Six convenient area locations:

- Tacoma Church of God, 1005 John Exum Pkwy, Johnson City • Sears Automotive, The Mall at Johnson City
- Food City, Boones Creek, Johnson City • Volunteer Parkway, Bristol, Across from Pal's • Trader's Village, Kingsport
- West Stone Drive, Kingsport, Next to Wendy's • 423.747.6227 or 423.773.9749





We believe in creating joy. Your home is distinctly yours, and should showcase your unique taste. From furniture pieces to accent details, one-of-a-kind finds and Norwalk custom furniture allow your own personal style to shine. Come home to a home that reflects you and what you love. **Fringe Furnishings & Decor/155 E Mountcastle Drive 423.328.9330 | Fringefurnishings.com**



Traditional, Fused, Infused & Gourmet Oils and Specialty Dark & White Balsamic Vinegars. | \$5 free gift with purchase of \$25 | **Abingdon Olive Oil Company | 152 E. Main St. Abingdon | 276.525.1524 102 E. Main St. Kingsport 423.530.7676 | AbingdonOliveOilCo.com**



*The Business Journal of Tri-Cities TN/VA* makes a great gift for those in the local area looking to stay in the loop of businesses from Abingdon to Greeneville. **The Business Journal of the Tri-Cities TN/VA | 1114 Sunset Drive, Suite 1, Johnson City 423.854.0140 | bjjournal.com**

**50 YEARS**

**JOHNSON CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Robert J. Seebacher  
Music Director

**TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION**  
Collaborates. Creates. Perseveres.

## Celebrating 50 Years!

SECTION	ROW	SEAT
Johnson City Symphony Orchestra <b>Storytelling</b> Good Samaritan Charities Thanksgiving Drive Mary B. Martin Auditorium Seeger Chapel Milligan College  November 16, 2019 Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Veterans Get In FREE!		
Johnson City Symphony Orchestra <b>The Nutcracker</b> Annual Toys For Tots Drive Mary B. Martin Auditorium Seeger Chapel Milligan College  December 14, 2019, 7:30p.m. and December 15, 2019, 2 p.m.		
Johnson City Symphony Orchestra <b>JCSO's 50th Birthday Bash</b> Mary B. Martin Auditorium Seeger Chapel Milligan College  February 8, 2020 Saturday, 7:30 p.m. ETSU Bluegrass Band, Tri-Cities Jazz Orchestra, ETSU Opera Theatre, Appalachian Express Chorus		
Johnson City Symphony Orchestra <b>Scottish Inspirations</b> Mary B. Martin Auditorium Seeger Chapel Milligan College  March 21, 2020 Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Melissa White, Violin		
Johnson City Symphony Orchestra <b>#BTHVN 2020, BEETHOVEN AT 250</b> Mary B. Martin Auditorium Seeger Chapel Milligan College  April 18, 2020 Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Milligan College Orchestra, Joby Bell, Organ		

Family. Friends. Employees. Business Associates. One size fits all. Tickets starting at \$10. Group discounts starting at 10 or more tickets. **Call 423.926.8742 or visit jcsymphony.com to wrap up a symphony experience!**





Greene County Partnership CEO Matt Garland stands at the edge of the Hardin Industrial Park property. PHOTOS BY SCOTT ROBERTSON

# Greeneville site latest to achieve Select Tennessee Certification

## Greene County Partnership touts Hardin Industrial Park Phase II

by Scott Robertson

**H**ardin Industrial Park Phase II in Greeneville has been announced as the newest Select Tennessee Certified Site. The Select Tennessee program helps communities prepare industrial sites for private investment and job creation by holding sites to rigorous standards that give companies detailed and reliable information during the site selection process. Achieving the designation not only helps communities successfully market their industrial properties, it often helps generate higher prices per acre. The state partners with a private company, Austin Consulting, to ensure Select Tennessee Certified sites are ready to be marketed to a high standard.

“(Austin) treats the process almost as if a consultant with a prospect is coming in to review everything about the site,” says Greene County Partnership CEO Matt Garland, whose team spend two years making the site ready to earn the Select Tennessee designation. “We had to pull all the environmental reviews, make sure the deed was right, had to do two-foot contour maps. We had to put together all the updated information on rates for infrastructure prices and basically anything you would need to know, or would even be curious about, if you were thinking about putting a building on this site. We have an answer for it now.

“That puts us ahead of the curve in terms of recruiting because without all that, you could have a flat field with a private owner, and neither one of you could know what it looks like under the surface. You could have a rock garden. But we went ahead and did soil borings and so we know we have a wonderful, viable site.

Qualifications for certification include having at least 20 acres of developable land for industrial operations, documented environmental conditions and geotechnical analysis, existing onsite utilities or a formal plan to extend utilities to the site, and truck-quality road access. The Select Tennessee suite of programs – including the Property Evaluation Program and the Site Development Grant program – is designed to ensure that Tennessee sites are ready for development, whether through marketing sites that are ready for prospective businesses or providing local communities guidance and funding to achieve a higher level of preparedness.

The exacting nature of the process goes beyond what many site selection consultants will ask for, Garland says. “We’ve had some prospect visits where we filled out some paperwork and had maybe eight to 10 pages of excel spreadsheets we had to complete, but it’s never been as intense as this. That’s why I say



Matt Garland



if you have a question about this piece of property, we can absolutely answer it. We don't have to go hunting for the information. It's at our fingertips."

The extra effort makes a difference, says Austin Consulting Location Consultant Charles Slife. "The State of Tennessee is widely recognized by site selectors and corporate leaders as a low tax, business friendly location. The Select Tennessee Certified Sites program helps connect prospective job creators to high-quality sites where they can locate, grow, and support local communities."

Since 2012, twenty-three companies have invested over \$1.8 billion in capital investment to construct facilities on certified sites, accounting for more than 7,200 new job commitments, says Commissioner of Economic and Community Development Bobby Rolfe. "One of the first things we are asked when we are recruiting new and expanding business to our state is if we have shovel-ready sites. With the assistance of Select Tennessee Certified Site program, we are

giving opportunities for communities across the state to be better prepared for economic growth."

Now, Garland says, "We now have a shovel-ready site with infrastructure ready to go. It's 20.5 acres. There's only one other tenant here (Worthington Industries, a custom metal fabricator), but this site has water, sewer, gas and power – all that you need."

The state lists the Hardin Industrial Park Phase II site as 20.5 acres with 11.3 developable and another 140 available. The site, which is 12 miles away from Interstate 81 is zoned M-1 manufacturing warehouse district. The site is listed at \$25,000/acre.

Sixty-one sites in Tennessee are Select Certified. In Northeast Tennessee, those include Hardin Industrial Complex Phase II in Greeneville; Technology Park II at the Holston Army Ammunition Plant in Hawkins County; Aerospace Park, Bristol Business Park and Partnership Park II in Sullivan County; and the Washington County Industrial Park. [@](#)



The Select Tennessee Certified Site sign earned by Phase II of the Hardin Industrial Complex property is displayed at the feet of the statue of President Andrew Johnson at the Greene County Partnership headquarters in Greeneville.

## Your Local Staffing & Recruiting Resource

Industrial & Office/Administrative Support

**LUTTRELL**  
STAFFING GROUP



Experience the  
Difference,  
Contact Your Local  
Office Today!

[LuttrellStaffing.com](http://LuttrellStaffing.com)

Meet Our Founders:  
Marty Luttrell and David Luttrell

**FAST SIGNS**  
More than fast. More than signs.®



423.282.4229 | 2708 N. Roan Street | Johnson City



# Calling all cars: Allied Dispatch Solutions cuts ribbon in Hancock County

by Scott Robertson



Tennessee Governor Bill Lee cuts the ribbon at Allied Dispatch Solutions, Oct. 9. PHOTO COURTESY ARC

The next time you call for roadside assistance, you may end up speaking with someone in Sneedville. After an October 9 ribbon-cutting, the Allied Dispatch Solutions call center there is officially up and running.

The call center actually opened in May, and more than 50 employees are already on the job, but Tennessee Governor Bill Lee cut the ribbon officially dedicating the publicly-funded call center in Hancock County last month. The Allied Dispatch Solutions center was built with support funding from the Appalachia Regional Commission (ARC), the United States Department of Agriculture and the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) as well as other public and private partners. The Sneedville facility, located in the Hancock County Industrial Park, was made available for lease at no cost to the company.

The awarding of the project to Allied Dispatch Solutions had been announced in February 2018 as part of former Governor Bill Haslam's "Project 95" initiative, to demonstrate that Tennessee's desire to grow its economy stretched to all 95 counties and to remove all Tennessee counties from the federally designated distressed counties list by 2025.

Hancock is currently one of nine Appalachian Tennessee counties listed as economically distressed by the federal government. It has one of the state's highest unemployment rates and lowest per capita incomes. More than 80

percent of its workforce is employed outside the county. Much of its population is not active in the workforce.


Since Governor Lee succeeded Haslam, expanding the economy of rural Tennessee communities has been one of the central themes of Lee's administration. In fact, Lee's first executive order in January called for "all state executive departments to issue a statement of rural impact and provide recommendations for better serving rural Tennessee."

At the ribbon-cutting, Lee praised the work done to create new jobs in Hancock County. "Creating jobs in rural areas is very important. It's something that needs to happen all across the state."

Also at the ribbon-cutting, ARC Federal Co-Chairman Tim Thomas extolled the virtues of expanding broadband into remote rural areas such as Hancock County. "Modern call centers such as this one would not be possible without modern infrastructure, which today includes broadband access. Helping expand rural broadband in Appalachia is one of my priorities, so that more communities can attract modern investments."

Thomas told the crowd of more than 200 people on hand for the facility's opening ceremony, "Some of our best examples of partnerships in helping meet that need have been right here in Tennessee."

In August 2017, TNECD launched an open search for a company to establish operations in Hancock County. Backed by a more than \$2 million investment, the department offered a nearly 18,000-square-foot call center facility in Sneedville to the company that was the best fit for Hancock County. "There was interest from many companies during our search for a tenant in Hancock County," TNECD Commissioner Bobby Rolfe said. "Allied Dispatch Solutions stood out with its impressive track record of growth in Northeast Tennessee. This is a local company that understands the region, treats its employees well and plays an active role in the community."

Allied Dispatch Solutions plans to hire 50 more employees at the Sneedville facility. The company has operated a call center with more than 260 employees in Johnson City since 2014. The company operates 24/7 and handles in excess of three million inbound and outbound calls per year. Allied Dispatch Solutions has partnerships with several national brands and offers customized roadside assistance service. 



**William Barrett**, a native of Kingsport, graduated from Dobyens-Bennett and then attended Wake Forest University attaining a BA in Economics and Religion and then an MBA. He is a graduate from the Graduate School of Banking at LSU. His career with Bank of Tennessee spans over 13 years during which he has served in various roles including credit, lending, and operations, most recently as Northeast Tennessee market president. His industry knowledge, strategic drive, and “people first” mentality made Barrett the natural choice to manage the bank’s daily operations and achieve its strategic goals. Barrett and his wife have one daughter and live in Johnson City.

Barrett said, “To quote an old TV show, ‘I love it when a plan comes together.’ Particularly when we can take a complex issue like financial services, make it simple, create value, and I can rally people around it. I’m on the A-Team at Bank of Tennessee”.

**Detra Cleven** has been at Bank of Tennessee for over eight years. She was born and raised in Minnesota where she attended Saint Olaf College. She was inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame in 2014 as a competitive swimmer. Her banking career started in 1993 in Lafayette, IN. In 2019, she graduated with

high honors from LSU School of Banking.

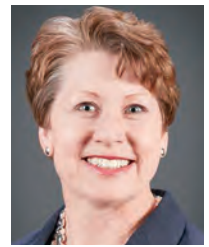
Cleven’s experience includes product profitability, development of both consumer and business deposit products, and treasury management. Cleven will be serving as

Johnson City president, managing Washington County and Unicoi County. Cleven and her husband live in Kingsport and have twins that just started college. “With Bank of Tennessee being a regional leader in financial services, I’m excited to continue the success, high standards, and services that our community deserves,” said Cleven.

William B. Greene Jr., chairman of the bank’s holding company, BancTenn Corp., said, “Based on this strengthened management foundation, we are better positioned to provide new products and services, create new customer value, strengthen our competitiveness and improve profitability.”



William Barrett



Detra Cleven

**THINKING ON OUR FEET.**

CUMBERLANDMARKETING.COM



### Baker Donelson makes *Forbes* inaugural list of America's top trusted corporate law firms

Baker Donelson has been named among America's Top Trusted Corporate Law Firms by *Forbes* magazine. *Forbes* partnered with market research company Statista to create its first-ever list of top U.S. corporate law firms. The list indicates which firms are the most recommended in particular practice areas and is the result of survey responses from 2,500 lawyers. The Firm was most recommended in the practice area of tax law.

*Forbes* selected America's Top Trusted Corporate Law Firms based on an independent survey from a sample of nearly 100,000 lawyers. Participants were asked to recommend law firms in up to 17 fields of law. Out of the thousands of corporate law firms in the United States, only 243 were recognized.

### Levine, Wykoff named to Tennessee Health Care Modernization Task Force

Alan Levine, executive chairman, president and CEO of Ballad Health and Dr. Randy Wykoff, dean of East Tennessee State University's College of Public Health, are two of 26 individuals across the state who were selected in October to serve on Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee's new Health Care Modernization Task Force.

The bipartisan, bicameral task force will be co-chaired by Stuart McWhorter, Finance and Administration commissioner, and Bill Carpenter, former chairman and CEO of LifePoint Health. The task force will host public discussions with the goal of providing

options for consideration to address some of the state's major health care issues.

"Working together, with patients, providers and payers, we can establish Tennessee as a world-class health care market for our people," Lee said. "I would like to thank Commissioner McWhorter and Bill Carpenter for agreeing to lead this effort that will help move Tennessee toward better health outcomes and toward being a leader in the nation on health care."

The group's discussions will help drive the state's consideration of ideas to improve the lives of Tennesseans who lack access to quality, affordable health care through innovation, uniting market forces and addressing community-specific characteristics to health issues.

"Improving health is a complex challenge," said Wykoff. "It requires changing behaviors, improving social conditions and assuring access to quality and affordable health care. While this is difficult, it can be done, and I am honored to have been invited to serve on the Governor's Task Force focused on helping to make these changes a reality."



Alan Levine



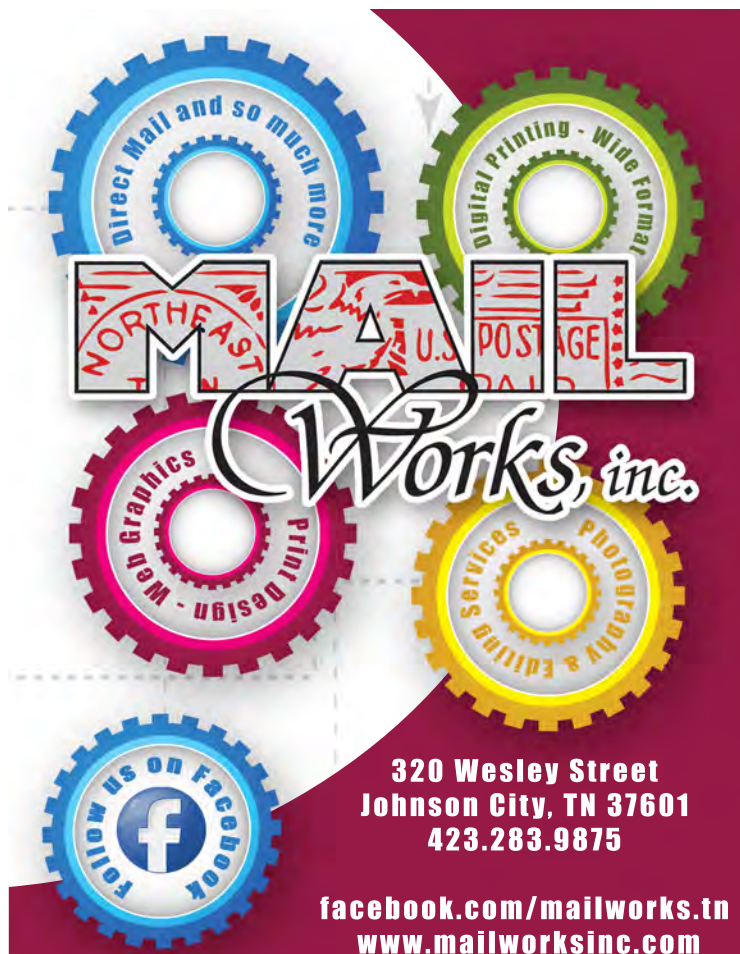
Randy Wykoff



**Proud to Partner with  
Powell Valley Bank**

**JA STREET**  
GENERAL CONTRACTORS

423-323-8017 | [www.jastreet.com](http://www.jastreet.com)



**MAIL Works, inc.**

320 Wesley Street  
Johnson City, TN 37601  
423.283.9875

[facebook.com/mailworks.tn](https://facebook.com/mailworks.tn)  
[www.mailworksinc.com](http://www.mailworksinc.com)



# MARKETPLACE

For advertising information call 423.854.0140

The Johnson City News & Neighbor



**That's not a threat.  
It's a fact.**

The most recent Circulation Verification Council audit of the News & Neighbor shows:

**96%** of area households regularly receive our publication

**95%** regularly read our publication

**81%** frequently purchase products/services advertised

**It's Verified: We Deliver**  
**jcnewsandneighbor.com**  
**423.979.1300**

\*Source: Dec. 2018 CVC Publication Audit Report.

**The Genuine. The Original.**



**Ken Shaw**  
General Manager  
423-282-9191

[garagedoorjohnsoncity.com](http://garagedoorjohnsoncity.com)

**We furnish and install the following:**  
Commercial and Residential Sectional Doors  
Loading Dock Equipment | Rolling Steel Doors



**Distribution**

Public & Contract Warehousing  
Locations in Greeneville & Kingsport  
Rail Service NS/CSX • Local Fleet of Trucks  
Reworking & Light Assembly  
Crossdock Service • Food Grade/Cooler

102 Coile Street, Greeneville, TN 37745  
Phone: (423) 639-1163 • Fax: (423) 639-7270

[www.sopakcotn.com](http://www.sopakcotn.com)  
wkeller@sopakcotn.com

**Budget Office  
Furniture**  
of the Tri-Cities, Inc.

**The Best In New & Used  
Since 1982!**

**1-800-729-6522**

**20 COMMONWEALTH AVE  
BRISTOL, VA 24201**

[www.budgetofficefurniture.com](http://www.budgetofficefurniture.com)

Painting, Sandblasting  
Floor Coatings  
Polished Concrete

**ICE CLEAN**

Dry Ice (CO2) Blast Cleaning



**POLISHED CONCRETE**

423-928-8351  
[estimating@gardnerpaint.com](mailto:estimating@gardnerpaint.com)



TFL #675

**GREENE COUNTY  
LAND & AUCTION CO.**

COMPLETE REAL ESTATE & AUCTION SERVICE

**BUY • SELL • TRADE**

Farmland • Residential • Estate  
Commercial • Acreage

*"All we ask is the you talk with us  
before contracting your property"*

**Col. Larry H. Jones**  
Owner / Broker / Auctioneer

**Vicki W. Jones**  
Owner / Affiliate Broker

*"We don't want all the  
business... Just Yours!"*

**(423) 639-5231**  
**400 North Irish Street**  
**Greeneville, TN**

**E-Journal**  
The Business Journal of Tri-Cities TN/VA

Get important local,  
regional and state  
business news first!

Sign up by  
sending "Yes" to  
[marketing@bjournal.com](mailto:marketing@bjournal.com)  
to receive our newsletter.





# Opioid Crisis: Good News, but a Long Way to Go

by Dr. Phil Roe

Communities across the country are fighting an epidemic against opioid abuse, and Northeast Tennessee is at the epicenter of this crisis. Chances are you know someone – a friend, relative, or coworker – who has been affected. The opioid epidemic did not happen overnight but was decades in the making. There is no doubt it's a crisis. More Americans die every year from opioid overdoses than Americans who died during the entirety of the Vietnam War, and it's more common to die in Tennessee from an opioid overdose than from a car wreck. Ending this crisis will be neither easy nor quick.



There is, however, progress being made nationally. For the first time in nearly 30 years, drug overdose deaths decreased last year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), overdose deaths dropped nationally from 70,237 in 2017 to 68,557 in 2018. After years of steadily increasing overdose deaths, it appears that efforts to reverse this crisis are starting to have an impact, but in Tennessee, we still experienced a record number of 1,856 opioid deaths last year. This needs to continue to be a priority at the federal, state and local level, and I will continue to make it one. I am grateful for President Trump's leadership as well, who has declared the opioid epidemic a public health emergency.

The decrease in the number of deaths is due in part to increased recognition on the seriousness of this issue. Over the last few years, I've been proud to support important reforms that expand resources to fight this epidemic. Last Congress, I was proud to vote for the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, and before that I voted for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act. Together, these bills increase access to medication-assisted treatment for substance abuse, expand the use of telehealth services, incentivize the use of non-opioid prescription alternatives, target the influx of synthetic opioids like fentanyl, enhance physician awareness of improving prescribing practices, and improve disposal of unused prescription opioids which

often become a source that fuels addiction. After providing over \$10 billion the past two years to fund these programs, the good news is that East Tennessee is beginning to see this funding. East Tennessee State University, Ballad, Cherokee Health Systems, Rural Health Services Consortium and several statewide agencies that do work in our area, have all received direct funding to address the crisis in our region.

In May, Rep. Tim Burchett (TN.-02) and I held a joint roundtable in Jefferson County to hear from local experts on how to combat this crisis across our region. One takeaway we heard is that prevention is key. Once addicted, it is difficult to stay clean and not fall back into old habits. We need to engage with our schools, medical community, law enforcement and public health officials with a multi-pronged strategy. There is no community that is unaffected.

One overlooked demographic in this epidemic is the elderly. Last month, the House Education and Labor Committee, on which I serve, passed the Dignity in Aging Act to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). The OAA authorizes funding for organizations and agencies that provide services to the elderly. I was pleased to co-author a bipartisan amendment with Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL) to allow agencies who receive these funds to use funding to help address opioid addiction for older Americans. We must provide these services to prevent and treat drug abuse among the elderly.

In addition to our efforts to better help providers and treatment facilities help people, we must also help our local law enforcement get these illicit synthetic drugs like fentanyl off the streets. Opioid addicts are being targeted by drug dealers importing these drugs, resulting in even more deaths. Currently, one of the obstacles the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has in stopping the illicit flow of opioid-like drugs into the U.S. is waiting for new substances to be developed then classify them as Schedule I. I introduced the Modernizing Drug Enforcement Act with Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-NY) to automatically classify synthetic opioids as Schedule I based on their chemical structure and function. This legislation will help give the DEA the flexibility and tools needed to get these deadly drugs off the streets.

We need a multi-pronged approach, but I am hopeful that all of these actions will move us one step closer to ending this epidemic once and for all.

*Dr. Phil Roe is the United States Congressman representing Tennessee's First Congressional District.*



# YOUR HAPPY FUTURE IS ALSO OURS

*Over 20 branches in NETN and SWVA*

## Nation's Top Rated Mobile Banking App

Free, interest earning checking  
account for all members

Mortgage & auto loans

Business checking and loans

Mobile check deposit

Text message banking and alerts

24/7 fraud protection and support

Online account opening

Free financial experts  
& helpful resources

*Discover how it feels to have*

# ECU BESIDE YOU

800.999.2328  
[www.ecu.org](http://www.ecu.org)

Your savings federally insured to at least \$250,000 and backed by the full faith and credit of the National Credit Union Administration, a U.S. Government Agency.



**EASTMAN  
CREDIT  
UNION®**



# I need care, but where?

We've  
got you  
covered.

Emergency and urgent care services at Ballad Health are close by and ready to serve you for the unexpected times in your life.

For non-emergent medical problems, call your primary care provider first.

Visit [balladhealth.org](http://balladhealth.org) for a list of emergency room, urgent care and primary care locations.



## Urgent care clinic

Quickly

No appointment needed. Open extended hours and weekends.

- Fevers that respond to fever-reducing medications
- Flu
- Migraines
- Minor broken bones
- Minor cuts and burns
- Sinus infection
- Sore throat, cough, congestion
- Sprains and strains
- Rashes
- Urinary symptoms



## Hospital emergency room

Now

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year for serious or life-threatening problems.

- **Any condition that you believe is life, limb or vision threatening**
- Chest pain
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Deep cuts or bleeding that won't stop
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe abdominal pain
- Severe burns
- Seizures
- Sudden dizziness, weakness or loss of coordination or balance
- Sudden loss of vision
- Sudden, new numbness in the face, arm or leg

If you are experiencing life or limb threatening symptoms, don't wait, call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest hospital emergency room.