

The Business Journal

of Tri-Cities Tennessee / Virginia

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40 UNDER FORTY

The 26th Annual Salute to Emerging Stars of Our Region

Plus Jim McGlothlin on the proposed Bristol casino and Ballad Health's trauma system

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| ON THE COVER



40 Under Forty

This year's class of rising stars in the region's business community.

Photos by Tara Hodges, Sweet Snaps Photography.



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Regionalism is hard, but worth it



I've been asked more than once since I began pushing for a regional approach to economic development years ago why the region hasn't already adopted such an approach if it's so sensible. There's a simple answer. Regionalism is hard.

We saw it in the last month when Ballard Health announced its trauma strategy. Ballard's executive team had gone to great lengths to mini-

mize the impact of its various announcements on the regionalism effort. Yet what I'm sure the company had hoped would merely be a speedbump on the road to regionalism turned instead into a temporary roadblock.

Alan Levine, executive chairman and CEO of Ballard, took the unprecedented step of inviting the region's major media outlets, including the daily newspapers, the TV stations and this publication for a two-hour long seminar on what the trauma changes would entail. We in the media were treated to a detailed and nuanced look at Ballard's plans. Levine explained Ballard's decision-making process in painstaking detail.

We learned about the differences between Level I, Level II and Level III trauma centers. We learned about the difference between trauma care and emergency care. We learned about the relationship between Ballard and the first responders throughout Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

And in the end, what we all reported was, for the most part, accurate. But it was hardly complete.

Thus, within a couple of days, we were reporting that local government officials, most notably the Sullivan County Commission (both trauma centers being dropped to Level III trauma center status are in Sullivan County), were up in arms over their perception of Ballard's plan. The Sullivan County Commission is no enemy of regionalism. It's already working with the Washington County Commission on a cooperative effort.

So how did this happen? First, I turn to the great New York philosopher, Reggie Jackson, who said, "Every hitter likes fastballs just like everybody likes ice cream. But you don't like it when someone's stuffing it into you by the gallon. That's how you feel when Ryan's throwing balls by you."

Well, most reporters like to be spoon-fed a story. But two hours of detail is too much for a TV reporter who has 90 seconds to tell the story on the 6 o'clock news, or a newspaper writer who has 40 column inches. So, reporters picked and chose the biggest details and left out the rest.

When Sullivan County commissioners read the newspaper and Internet accounts of the trauma plan, they didn't have the full benefit of a two-hour briefing. So, some of their concerns had been addressed, but those reassurances didn't make the final cut.

Is it a valid criticism of Ballard to say Levine should have done a similar dog-and-pony show for commissioners that he did for us? Yes and no. In order to see harm to the regionalism effort minimized, Ballard would have had to hold similar seminars for elected officials in every city, town and county in which it operates a hospital. Who has time for that?

And this is why regionalism is hard. Whoever champions the cause – in business and in the media – has to have the time and expertise to reach out to all corners of the region with a specific, honest message about how each community will be affected. They have to be credible – and not just about economic development, but about health care, and manufacturing, and education, and how these things interact regionally. They have to be willing to listen to various, often disparate, points of view and work to show that a greater good can be reached by doing things in a way that appears, on the surface, to be contrary to short-term, individual community interests.

They have to know what and how much each news outlet can handle. They have to know what needs to be communicated through social media instead. They have to be eternally positive.

And they have to be us. It's a mindset we all need to adopt.

It happens in other markets. It can happen here.

I grant you, it's not a perfect region any more than ours is a perfect world. Reporters don't get to go on the news and take an hour or two to flesh out a story. Administrators don't get to take time off from their regular duties to visit with every city and county commission whenever a major decision is looming.

But that doesn't mean regionalism's not worth it. Precisely to the contrary, today, it's more important than it has ever been. We're facing one of those, "If not now, when? If not us, whom?" moments.

I commend Ballard for making more of an effort than anyone had made to date. I commend my colleagues in the news media for delivering clarity (if not completeness) regarding an intricate, difficult topic. Please, dear reader, be patient with whatever mistakes might have been made. It is my heartfelt belief we are all trying to learn to serve you better in the future.

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October home sales up 2.8 percent, average price up 13.9 percent

Tri-Cities single-family home resales were up 2.8 percent in October when compared to the same month last year while the average sales price saw its largest year-over-year increase so far this year – up 13.9 percent.

“We’re still seeing some seasonal slowing, which is to be expected as we move into the holiday season,” Northeast Tennessee Association of Realtors President Aaron Taylor said. “But the market remains on track to round out 2018 as the eighth straight year for annual sales increases.”

October’s new listings were slightly lower than September, but outnumbered new pending sales. So, while the overall inventory remains very tight, slower sales and more new listings afford buyers more options than they had a couple of months ago, he added.

October’s big average sales price increase is

the result of several factors. So far this year the year-to-date average has increased in all but two of the region’s seven major city markets driving the regional average higher. At the same time all but two city markets had double-digit monthly year-over-year price gains in October. “The big picture is the regional average price trend shows a conservative 4 percent increase so far this year,” Taylor said.

Closings on single-family homes in the 11-county region monitored by NETAR totaled 590 in October. That’s 16 more than October last year. Last month’s average sales price was \$174,159. The year-to-date sales and price trends show a market comfortably outperforming the first 10 months of last year. Sales are up 7.6 percent and the average price is up 4 percent.

The average days on market for single-family resales in October was 117.

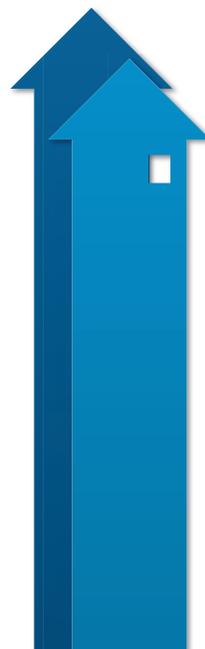
Here’s a capsule look at local market trends based on the year-to-date city and county single-family resales and average prices compared to the first nine months of last year:

CITY MARKETS

Johnson City: Sales 729, up 57. Avg. price - \$229,023, up \$9,356.
Kingsport: Sales 684, up 109. Avg. price - \$178,701, up \$5,717.
Bristol, TN: Sales 287, up 19. Avg. price - \$159,819, up \$16,919.
Elizabethton: Sales 154, no change. Avg. price - \$143,397, up \$9,864.
Greeneville: Sales 153, up 3. Avg. price - \$134,236, down \$3,347.
Bristol, VA: Sales 148, down 18. Avg. price - \$127,063, up \$14,638.
Erwin/Unicoi: Sales 131, down 11. Avg. price - \$147,001, down \$10,909.

COUNTY MARKETS

Sullivan: Sales 1,688, up 135. Avg. price - \$171,529, up \$4,813.
Washington, TN: Sales 1,509, up 94. Avg. price - \$218,749, up \$13,744.
Greene: Sales 560, up 31. Avg. price - \$149,212, down \$71.
Washington, VA: Sales 387, up 8. Avg. price - \$183,556, up \$13,237.
Carter: Sales 497, up 49. Avg. price - \$139,532, down \$3,012.
Hawkins: Sales 482, up 36. Avg. price - \$145,466, up \$6,694.
Wise: Sales 177, up 19. Avg. price - \$106,197, up \$7,229.
Johnson: Sales 118, up 31. Avg. price - \$176,013, up \$32,863.
Scott: Sales 102, down 4. Avg. price - \$97,595, down \$2,925.
Lee: Sales 36, Up 6. Avg. price - \$93,699, up \$18,754.



NOTE: NETAR counts city sales as those in high school zones. City sales and price data are included in the county totals.



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Stacy, McGlothlin pitch casino for former Bristol Mall property

by Scott Robertson

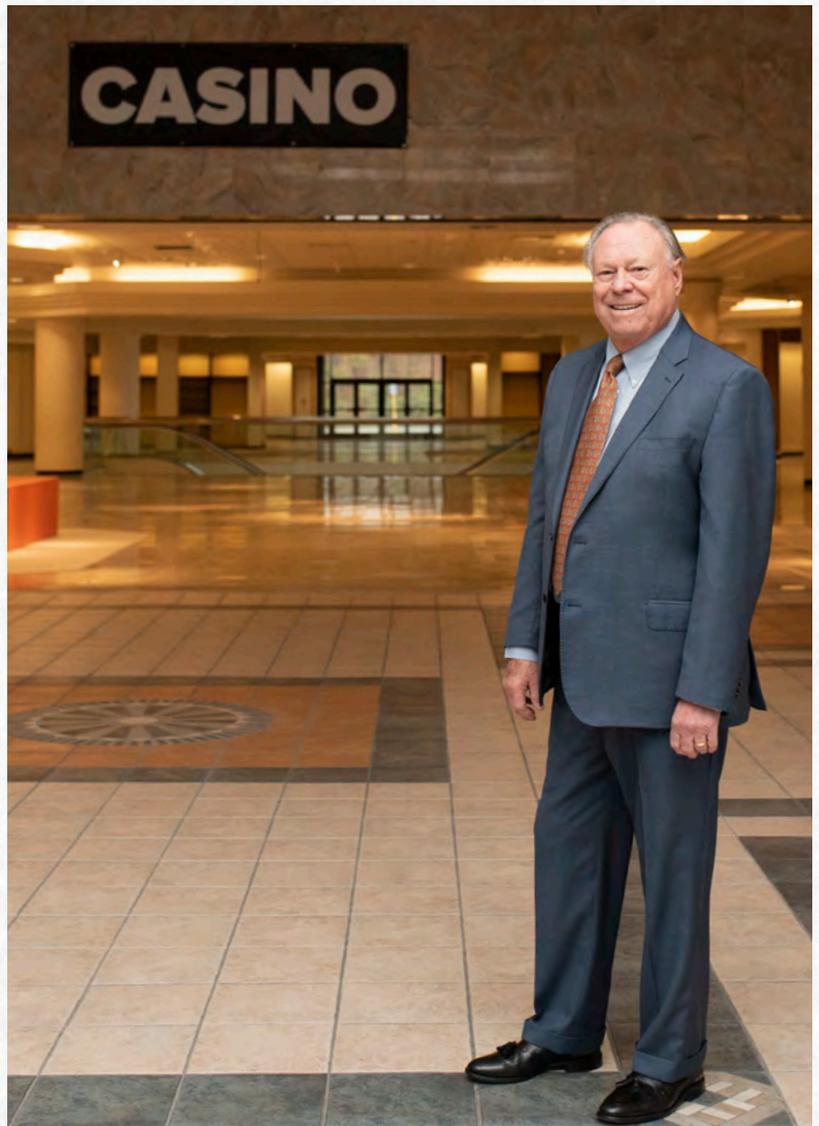
Clyde Stacy and Jim McGlothlin, two men with a history of starting successful companies, are taking a long-shot gamble with multi-million dollar stakes in Bristol, Va.

It's a necessary gamble, they say, because the city is facing a bond-debt load it is unlikely to be able to meet. While city government officials say they have taken great strides in keeping Bristol from having to turn in its charter and become a town, Stacy, McGlothlin and others believe that building a privately-funded casino, resort and convention center is the only way to save the city.

"The idea came from Clyde Stacy, not me," McGlothlin told *The Business Journal* during a Nov. 15 interview at the headquarters of The United Company in Bristol. "(I) had looked at buying the mall, knowing I could get a pretty good price, but just could not think of a single thing to do with it. I mulled it over for a long time. I ran into Clyde months later – maybe a year later – and he told me he had bought the mall. I said, 'What in the world for?' He said, 'Well, I want to try to put a casino in there.' I said, 'Well, you'll have to get approval from the state and probably have a referendum here. It just seems like that would be an uphill battle.' He said, 'it would but it's worth it because it's the one thing that's a moon shot for this town. We're losing jobs here. This is one thing that will bring employment and taxes to the city. We think most of the people who would use it are from another state, so it's just a big win for the city.'"

The bond debt facing the city arose from Bristol's retail play, The Falls, a shopping center funded by taxpayer dollars. "The Falls was a mistake," McGlothlin said. "Everybody knows it was a mistake. But the city council that made that mistake isn't this council. I'm so appreciative of the current council today and their ability to make decisions and come to reasonable conclusions."

The main reason McGlothlin says the casino project makes sense where the Falls didn't is that the private sector, mainly Stacy and himself, will fund the project. "This isn't going to be supported by any tax structure," McGlothlin said. "As a matter of fact, this is going to help pay for the mistake of the Falls by helping pay those bonds off. So, the state will end up putting less money into this end of the state instead of more. It will be a boon to the local economy in every case. More money for teachers. More money for policemen. More money for streets, roads and sewage. More money to pay this debt off, which is going to kill us if we don't find a way to do that. Any sound businessper-



Jim McGlothlin stands in front of what he hopes will be the entrance to the new casino in the old Bristol Mall. Photo by Tara Hodges, SWEETSNAAPS PHOTOGRAPHY

son knows you can't have this kind of debt for too long. Interest rates are going up. We're going to be doomed."

With stakes that high, it was surprising to hear McGlothlin say, "We have not done a pro forma. This is a new venture and all you'd be doing is just guessing. I feel like we will definitely make our money back and make a little profit. And if it goes as we want it to, it will build this whole area to a standard we would never have dreamed of."



Delegate Israel O'Quinn listens as State Senator Bill Carrico briefs reporters on plans for the bills to authorize a referendum in Bristol on the casino. PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERTSON

Even with the caveat that no pro forma has been completed, there has been a great deal of research already put into the project. Stacy and McGlothlin hired the Chmura Group, a Richmond-based consulting firm, to look into what the project could mean in terms of employment and taxes for Bristol. And it's not as if the two prime movers are fresh-faced entrepreneurs. "We started in the coal business," McGlothlin said. "From there we went to being in the steel business in the middle 1970s. We started a company for mine, mill and industrial supplies – we had stores all over the eastern United States. We bought a roof distribution company out of Maryland and then another one out of Houston, distributing roofing materials. We got into the pharmaceutical business and research into migraine headache drugs. We went in with the Gregory brothers on King Pharmaceuticals. We owned part of a company that built computer chips. We went into the oil and gas business. We went into mortgage services in Chicago. We did golf courses and real estate."

That kind of history is a necessity, McGlothlin said, because the risk involved is far greater than what most investors could, or would, take. Early news accounts said the cost of the project would be in the \$50 million range. McGlothlin scoffed at that figure.

"It's way, way more than that. We have begun to look at estimates on what a hotel will cost and I'm amazed at the per-room cost of a hotel these days. I think, depending on the number of rooms you decide to build and the reclamation and renovation of the mall into the kind of facility we want, you're talking what we would put in, probably, what the total would cost is something like \$300 million to \$400 million. We would, no doubt, leverage some of that, but that leaves us having at least 50 percent of that. There's no way out of that \$200 million."

McGlothlin is confident the Virginia General Assembly will pass a bill allowing Bristol citizens to vote in a referendum on allowing the casino to be built in their community. "The state of Virginia just announced they got 25,000 jobs with Amazon's new

HQ2 for northern Virginia. They paid \$573 million to get that, according to the AP. But we're offering to get 5,000 jobs here within five years and 10,000 regionally because other people will come and other jobs will be created that don't work right at the casino or the hotel. We're not asking the state to put up a dollar for these \$46,000-a-year-paying jobs."

Carrico, O'Quinn to carry casino referendum legislation

Calling themselves the two least likely Virginia state legislators to carry gambling legislation, Delegate Israel O'Quinn and State Senator Bill Carrico announced they would, nevertheless, do just that. At a news conference at the Birthplace of Country Music Nov. 29, the two said they would introduce bills between the Jan. 9 start of the 2019 legislative session and the Jan. 18 filing deadline which would, if passed, allow citizens of Bristol to vote up or down on whether to allow a casino to be built there.

The two lawmakers agreed that expansion of legalized gambling is a virtual certainty within the next couple of years in the Commonwealth, if not this year. With that being the case, Bristol needs to be ahead of the game if its citizens want to move forward with the casino. Likewise, if the citizens want to vote against a casino, now's the time.

The general assembly will consider the bills during the session slated to end April 3. Should the bills pass, the city of Bristol would be expected to hold the referendum at its first opportunity, likely Nov. 5, 2019, already an election day. While neither Carrico nor O'Quinn appeared eager to take a stand on either side of the question of whether the casino is what's best for Bristol, both said holding a referendum is the right way to decide the question.

"What we have heard is, 'If we are going to go down this path, then we want to have a say here.'" O'Quinn said. "Having local people be able to decide a local issue, especially one of this size, with so much at stake on the positive and negative sides of the coin, is the right way to go." [B1](#)

Ballad Health announces new trauma strategy

by Scott Robertson

Ballad Health has announced plans to create a trauma and emergency care system which it says is designed to improve the overall access to services system-wide through realignment of resources. Concurrently, Ballad will offer a new range of pediatric services at Johnson City Medical Center, Holston Valley Medical Center and Bristol Regional Medical Center.

The most politically charged aspect of the new slate of initiatives is the dropping of Kingsport's Holston Valley Medical Center's Level I Trauma Center designation to a Level III. Ballad Executive Chairman and CEO Alan Levine said the city government and Chamber of Commerce have already begun talks with Ballad on a "Kingsport 2030" planning process regarding the future of healthcare provision in the Model City.

Levine, who prefaced the announcement by saying Ballad has already invested \$4 million in new spending at Holston Valley this year, said the Level I designation at Holston Valley is based on the hospital accruing certain expenses it simply doesn't make sense to accrue, especially when those dollars could be used more productively to provide services for which there is higher demand.

For instance, the hospital currently hires out-of-market specialists on a temporary basis at significant expense just to

maintain the Level I designation. In reality, Levine said, the demand for those specialists' services is so low, local doctors could handle the demand on an on-call basis while saving the hospital dollars it could use elsewhere. "You can be a Level III and provide the same physician services of a Level I."

Johnson City Medical Center will retain its Level I designation moving forward and will pursue verification by the American College of Surgeons. Bristol Regional Medical Center will retain its current Level III Trauma Center designation.

Levine briefed reporters for just under two hours on the system's plans regarding trauma, pediatric services, and particularly the realignment of services in Kingsport in order to better align with the rest of the region. "Right now, we have three trauma centers, but we have no trauma system."

Levine assured those in attendance that the changes would endeavor to first, do no harm. "More than 65 percent of specialty consults for trauma are orthopedic and 20 percent are neurosurgery," he said. "Those services will continue at all three trauma centers. The majority of trauma cases will be treated in the center closest to patient."

The change in designation is only one part of the overall initiative

to improve the access to trauma care and improve outcomes, Levine said.

Levine was quick to point out the difference between trauma and emergency care. "All our hospitals will continue doing what they've been doing for emergency care...If you're having a heart attack, you'll go to the nearest emergency room."

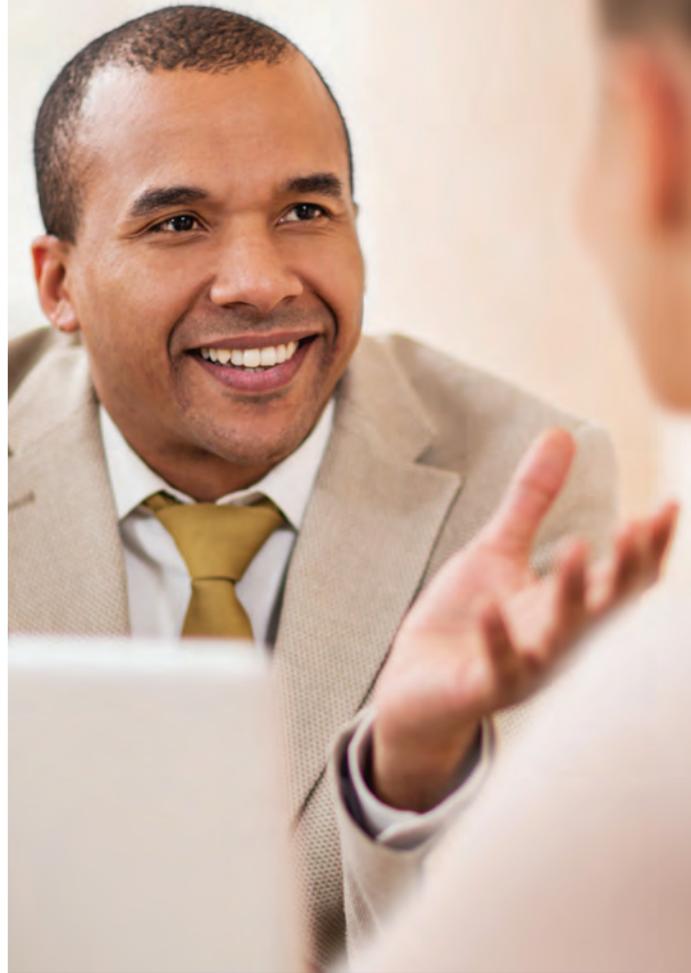
Levine said Ballad would seek to add a research component to trauma center services. Of the 5,200 trauma cases Ballad facilities handled last year, more than 2,000 were geriatric falls. "We'd like to do research on contributing factors to falls and hopefully reduce the incidence of preventable trauma."

Johnson City Medical Center, Holston Valley Medical Center and Bristol Regional Medical Center will all upgrade their pediatric offerings significantly over the same 10-month timeframe during which the trauma system will be implemented. Johnson City, in partnership with the Niswonger Children's Hospital, will begin offering the region's first pediatric trauma services, including a perinatal center and new pediatric specialties. Holston Valley and Bristol Regional will be home to new Niswonger Children's Hospital-branded pediatric emergency rooms.

Last year, Levine said, there were around 20,000 visits to Sullivan County emergency rooms by children. "Those patients will have the benefit of a pediatric emergency room," he said.

The trauma and pediatric initiatives will not result in job losses, Levine said, adding a promise to invest savings back into the provision of care rather than putting them toward the bottom line. "The priority here is to make health care more accessible, improve outcomes and save lives." **B**

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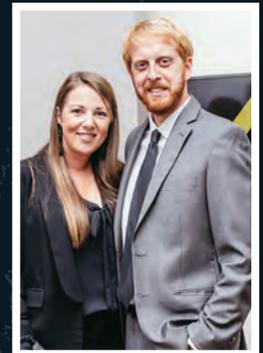
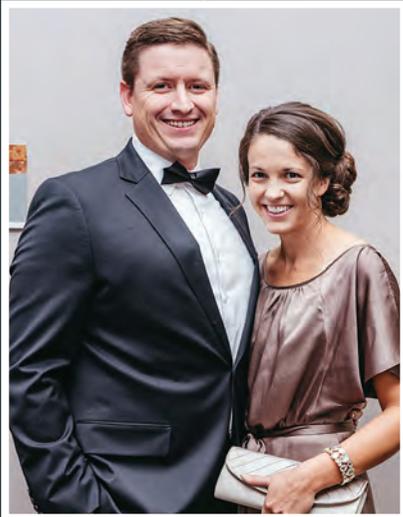
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40 Under FORTY GALA

The 26th annual celebration honoring 40 of the regions top young business professionals





4 Under FORTY

A SALUTE TO EMERGING STARS OF OUR REGION

40 Under Forty honors business community's brightest young talent

A cross-section of rising stars in the business community, from successful entrepreneurs and job creators to those climbing the corporate ladder at an accelerated pace, was feted Oct. 19 at the 26th Annual 40 Under Forty Gala at the Millennium Centre in Johnson City.

"40 Under Forty shows the established business community how fortunate we are to have these talented, dynamic, enterprising business leaders in the community, while also serving the dual purpose of combating brain drain and encouraging the influx of new talent by demonstrating to other young professionals what great success can be had here," Scott Robertson, managing editor of *The Business Journal of Tri-Cities TN/VA* said. "These young men and women were chosen by a team of outside judges from a field of more than 80 nominees based on criteria including business achievement and community involvement. The achievements of these 40 individuals offer assurance that the business community of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia will

be in good hands for many years to come."

A crowd of around 250 business and community leaders, including keynote speaker Greg DePriest, director of Development at Mountain Mission School in Grundy, Va., was on hand to celebrate the achievements of this year's class.

The Business Journal wishes to thank the businesses that supported the event through sponsorship: Ballad Health served as reception sponsor during the social hour before the event. 40 Under Forty event sponsors include Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union; Milligan College; Kaplan CFO Solutions; YPTRI; Blackburn, Childers & Steagall, PLC; and Saratoga Technologies. In addition, special thanks go to Tara Hodges and SweetSnaps Photography, the Carnegie Hotel for hosting the 40 Under Forty photo shoots and interviews, Mail Works, the Millennium Centre and Moon Tuxedo.

Nominations for the 2019 class of 40 Under Forty are now open at 40Under.com.

James Allen

James says he started his career as an archaeologist working near the arctic circle in northern Alaska before becoming an executive chef. When he was working a dig in Alaska, the locals would bring by spare game they'd taken while hunting or fishing.

James got his hands on a Julia Childs cookbook and began improvising recipes. Soon the other archaeologists were saying things like, "hey, want to see what you can do with this salmon?" So, when the dig ended, James drove a couple thousand miles to a culinary school to hone his talents. Today, his offerings are one reason the Blackthorn Club is so popular. The club has doubled its food and beverage program in James' eight years there.



Kelsey Bartley

Though she has lived all over the world as part of a military family, Bartley has strong roots in Unicoi County. That, along with her specialization in repurposing of historic buildings, made her the ideal choice to be the geographic specialist for the county at TCI Group, a leading commercial realtor in the region. She sold \$500,000 in properties in her first year on the job, while also taking a significant amount of time building her own professional network and writing grant applications for the Northeast Tennessee Association of Realtors. She was also selected to help oversee a commercial accreditation for NETAR to advance the region. Through her active participation in local organizations such as PEAK, a young professional's group in Kingsport, and RISE, a similar group in Unicoi County, she has established her interest and investment in seeing the local community thrive.



Jennifer Beard

Beard is the market president and commercial banker for SunTrust in the Tri-Cities market. Put in plainer terms, she is the face of SunTrust in the market. She has had tremendous success as she has grown her portfolio by over \$15 million in lending and deposits. Beard is a passionate volunteer, as she is very active with United Way and the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce. Said one nominator, "Although Jennifer's workload is substantial maintaining her book of business, she is also consistently reaching out to her teammates to find out how she can be of assistance to them as well."



Kristi Bode

Bode is the director of Patient Resource Management for the Southwest Market at Ballad Health. She has been a registered nurse since 2005 and started her career at Johnson City Medical Center working in the Emergency Department and then the Intensive Care unit. In 2016, she joined the patient resource management department at Franklin Woods Community Hospital, rising to become the department director. She has been instrumental in leading the department to improve patient outcomes and experience at Franklin Woods. This year Bode has been the project coordinator for the Ballad Health system-wide Save Your Scrubs initiative. When the Ballad merger standardized scrubs colors by department system-wide, Ballad caregivers gave more than 3,000 gently used scrub items to healthcare workers in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Haiti and Guyana.

Rx

Name: James Henry

Date: November 2018

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Parker Bohon

Bohon is establishing himself as a rising star on two fronts. Working at Power Tool Company, he partnered with SCAG to create first a social media campaign, then a training campaign that has to date been used almost a quarter million times. Bohon is also rapidly establishing himself as a sought-after creative resource for advertising and editorial still photography. His images are being utilized as the centerpiece of campaigns to promote the City of Johnson City, the Johnson City Chamber, ETSU, Bristol Motor Speedway, and several other businesses based in our region. He has been recognized by the SCAG equipment company as the Technical Service Advisor of the Year. Additionally, he has used his acquired expertise in terrain management and maintenance to assist in the construction of the much-anticipated Tannery Knobs mountain bike trail.

Crystal Bright

Bright currently acts in the chief investment officer role for her team at Merrill Lynch – one of the largest teams in the Southeast - developing and analyzing investment strategies. She is currently responsible for the investment analysis and recommendations used to serve more than 400 families and businesses totaling over \$900 million in assets. In addition, she helps manage the trust and philanthropic planning for clients, driving charitable and community growth in our region by helping clients integrate this planning into their investments. Bright has been involved in numerous projects impacting the entire company, including serving on a panel for creating an integrated investment and wealth planning reporting system for clients. Outside of work, she is involved in the community, serving and volunteering with the Ballad Health Foundation. She also supports Head Start programs in northeast Tennessee.



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AMANDA BRISTOL

Director of Information Technology

Recently named to The Business Journal's
40 Under Forty!





Amanda Bristol

Bristol is in charge of information technology for Milligan College. It is a task that gets more daunting – and more important – every year. For instance, this year, she received emergency calls that people couldn't get online in a building on campus. It turns out, the power was out in that building. But the callers weren't saying, 'hey, the lights have gone out.' They were saying, 'hey, I can't get online.' That's the level of importance of a network on a college campus today. Bristol oversees the entire infrastructure and applications used for teaching, learning, and living on campus and online at Milligan. She developed and implemented a strategic plan for technology that included creating the wireless network, which required the replacement of fiber and wireless nodes across the entire campus, greatly improving the experience for students and faculty. She also played a critical role in the integration of Emmanuel Christian Seminary into Milligan College, which required significant new and updated technology infrastructure and processes over the course of several years.

Emma Clark

Clark is administrative executive at Appalachia Service Project, where she began working a couple of months ago, but she made her reputation in the region at the Downtown Kingsport Association. At DKA, she served as associate director. In this role, her responsibilities included managing a social media presence, newsletters and communications with city leaders, and major event planning. She has been one of the driving forces behind many of the events that have differentiated downtown Kingsport in recent years, including BuskerFest, the Wine Festival, Christmas tree lighting and the Christmas parade, and the Independence Day celebration. In each of these, the events have grown year over year, and have achieved their objective of bringing Downtown Kingsport together. During this same time, she helped drive the organization of PEAK, a young professionals' network for Kingsport.



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Joe Jackson

Vice President of Technology
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Jeremiah Clark

When you hear economic developers tout the fact that with today's connectivity, you can live here and work anywhere, they're talking about Clark's life. He works at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic and lives in beautiful Kingsport. Having successfully led Wellmont Health System through the system-wide implementation of the EPIC electronic medical records software a few years ago, Clark caught the attention of the Cleveland Clinic, which brought him in on a contract basis. He is now lead systems analyst there. In addition, he's a successful entrepreneur back in Kingsport, owning and operating Appalachian Digital, a web development and social media management firm. He's also one of the "glue guys" who holds everything together at the PEAK young professionals' organization, where he planned the most recent PEAK annual event.

Curt Collins

Collins' Greene County, Tenn., law practice has boomed over the last six years. He's gone from a one-room rented space to owning a four-level office building with a partner and three legal assistants. He has been recognized by his colleagues through his election as president of the Greene County Bar Association, and to the board of the Tennessee Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. He has earned the Tennessee Supreme Court Pro Bono Award, and has been selected to serve on the Federal Bar/Bench Committee. In addition, he's very active in the community, serving as a board member for the Capitol Theatre, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Young Life.



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to Dave Ongie, News Editor for the *Johnson City News & Neighbor*, for his recognition as a "40 Under Forty" Honoree



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Stephen Curd

Virtually every entrepreneur needs a mix of creativity, practicality and determination to succeed, but when you're a men's fashion designer getting shows at New York Fashion Week – as Stephen has done – and living in Southwest Virginia – as he is – well, the bar on all of those is raised a good bit. Curd, the designer who owns Lavelle Manufacturing in Glade Spring, Va., has not only compiled a long and distinguished client list of gentlemen who appreciate high-end bespoke clothing, he's also started LaVelle Denim, which is creating jobs in Southwest Virginia and has caught the attention of customers, peers in the industry, and investors. It might seem counterintuitive that a man could operate a New York-style boutique in Glade Spring, but Curd has a talent for making clothes from stage costumes to jeans, and a market sense for how and to whom, to sell each. That business sense was highlighted just this year when he was chosen to participate in the KIVA 2018 Small Business campaign after having won a Washington County business challenge grant.

Clint Douglas

Douglas is president of Douglas Carpet Cleaning, a family-owned carpet cleaning and water restoration business that his dad started in the 1970s. He also has an active role in Douglas Roofing, a family-owned roofing company his father started in the 1990s. Along with his brother Tyler, Douglas has grown those two businesses to the point where he now has the opportunity to branch out. Douglas owns and operates the first liquor store in Jonesborough, Tenn. He also owns two sets of apartment complexes, as well as commercial buildings, and other real estate ventures. He enjoys supporting and attending local FCA functions and he is a supporter of Young Life. He attends Grace Fellowship Church with his family and is an active member in his local Emmaus community.



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"We are extremely proud to have another member of our dedicated team of Food City associates inducted into the prestigious 40 under 40 class. Melissa is a tremendous asset to our company and a great example of the bright future Food City has because of its associates. Congratulations Melissa on this well deserved honor – we couldn't be prouder!"

Steven L. Smith
 Steve Smith, Food City President/CEO



Melissa McCall, Pharm.D, MBA
 Pharmacy Professional Services Manager, Tri Cities Division
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Laken Fritz

Fritz was hired to assist with managing the merger between Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System. On day one, she developed new processes and delivered results, with little direction or guidance. She quickly developed rapport with leaders from both legacy organizations and began to earn the trust of executive leadership. She was quickly identified as a future leader and, once the merger was complete, was promoted to director of Financial Administration and is assigned with assisting the chief financial officer as the strategic lead on large, complex financial projects. Outside of work, Fritz has given her own time as a board member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Faithfully Business, and the Johnson City Run Club.



Richard Graves

In the spring of this year, Graves was named general manager of WEHC, thanks in large part to the successful efforts he has made at the radio station to shape programming to not only meet community tastes, but to challenge listeners with in-depth discussions of issues not frequently considered by most area media. As a result of his success in pursuing this quality, WEHC has been honored three times with awards from the Virginia Association of Broadcasters, he has received the Rita and Craig Southerland Award for career broadcasting, and his work has been praised by many for highlighting such issues as addiction, healthcare and education – the issues that will make or break this region in coming years. In his role, Graves oversees the production of more than 65 hours of original programming each week; he supervises more than 50 volunteer programmers from the community; he partners with more than 30 local organizations to provide information, news and commentary about issues central to the community; and manages the station's fundraising efforts. In the meantime, WEHC has become one of the first all-solar-powered stations east of the Mississippi River.



Area's Top Chef

James J. Allen, CEC – Executive Chef at Blackthorn Club at The Ridges | Jonesborough, TN

James graduated at the top of his class from Le Cordon Bleu in Minneapolis, MN. He continued his training at a Top 100 restaurant in Ireland, where he learned the importance of supporting local farmers and the impact it has on his menu items. Using his culinary expertise and attention to high quality ingredients, James has doubled Blackthorn Club's Food & Beverage Program over the last eight years.



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David Grigsby

Grigsby, Nuclear Fuel Services' Lean Six Sigma engineer, endeavors to make life better for those around him by making his whole company work better, a little bit at a time. He has been at NFS for six years and helps all of the departments work a little bit better each day using Lean Six Sigma tools. He provides Yellow Belt training, which gives employees the tools they need to improve their own workspace. He is an ASQ Certified Six Sigma Black Belt, and is pursuing his Master Black Belt from North Carolina State University. In addition to his engineering skills, he has become adept at providing software solutions using VBA programming and discrete model simulations. When he's away from the job, Grigsby leads the local Boy Scouts of America Cub Scout Packs 131 and 311 as cubmaster, and is a youth soccer coach.

Taylor Hamilton

Hamilton has played an integral part in the historic merger of Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health to form Ballad Health. Hamilton oversaw all aspects of the branding, communications and marketing for Ballad Health as it was being created and is heavily involved in almost all aspects of the system's mission to improve the health of the region's population. Prior to moving to the region, Hamilton was regional director of communications and marketing with Physicians Regional Healthcare System, based in Naples, Florida. In addition to her experience in hospital marketing and operations, she's been involved with three start-up companies. She's served on the local executive leadership team for the American Heart Association; on the board for the Children's Advocacy Centers of Tennessee; and served as a committee member for the regional chapter of the American Cancer Society.

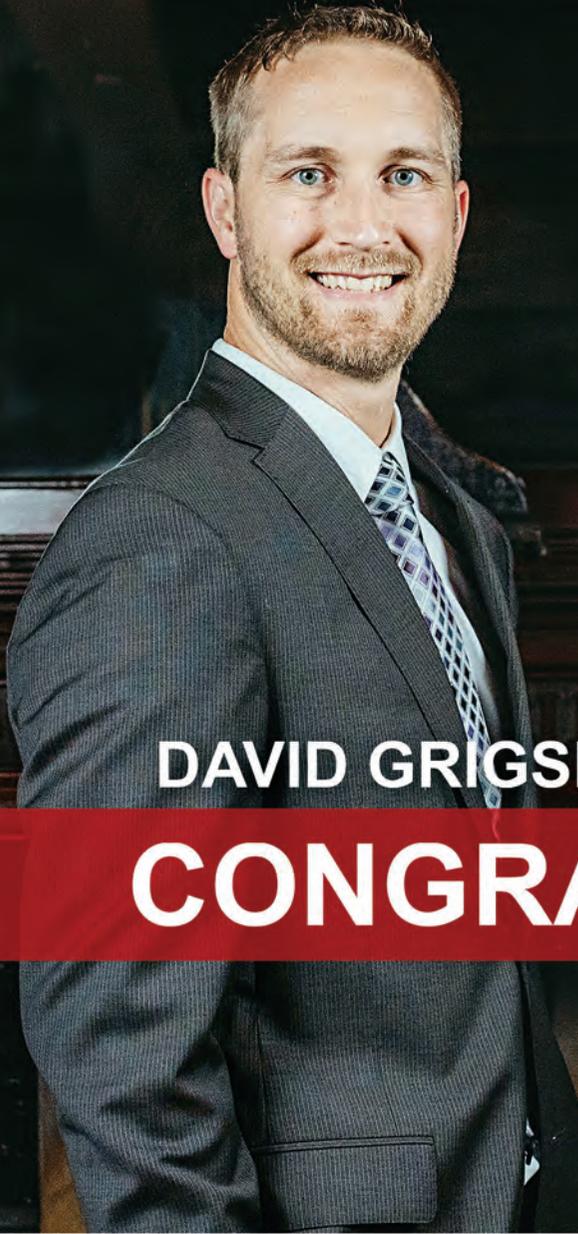


Congratulations, Michael!

BUSINESS JOURNAL'S
4 UNDER 40

Michael plays an integral role in economic development in Northeast Tennessee, and we wouldn't be **Where Tennessee Begins Its Business Day** without him. We congratulate him on this well-deserved honor.

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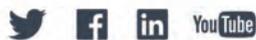


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Tim Haywood

A fundraising consultant by trade, Haywood has helped area schools raise over \$250,000 in the past year. He has established and maintained a good rapport with principals, teachers, and coaches in the area. He is also the campus minister for 708 ministries, which is a Christian outreach program that serves the ETSU, Milligan, and Northeast State campuses. His volunteer work is mainly focused around High Rock Bible Camp in Duffield, VA, where Haywood has served on the board of directors in the past and continues to direct weeks of camp during the summer and retreats in the spring.



Annie Howard

A graduate of the University of Tennessee Law School, Howard's choice to work in healthcare law made a move to the Tri-Cities a natural choice. With healthcare becoming the largest industry in the region, she has ample opportunity to work on hospital administration and operation, patient safety, and litigation assistance issues. When the Richmond, Va., law firm of Hancock Daniel opened an office in Johnson City, Howard was the first attorney there. One of her nominators, a leading attorney with a regional healthcare provider, said in her nomination, "She is the kind of high-quality person that we should all desire to attract to our region to help sustain and grow the dynamic culture we enjoy here." She has settled productively into the community. This past year Howard served as the Membership Council director on the Board of Directors of the Junior League of Johnson City, which raised over \$25,000 for the improvement of women's and children's health locally.



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James Mumpower



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Jennifer Hunt

Hunt is a full-time faculty and program coordinator with the Department of Health Services Management and Policy in the College of Public Health (CPH) at East Tennessee State University. She has previously worked for the former Mountain States Health Alliance, now Ballad Health, at their flagship hospital, Johnson City Medical Center, in the Value Optimization Systems department where she conducted several quality improvements and Lean process improvement events in clinical process redesign. In addition, Hunt has a Certified Materials and Resource Professional designation from the American Hospital Association. She also received Green, Bronze, and Silver Lean certifications through Simpler Business Systems and the University of Iowa. She is an excellent teacher, having earned Best Teacher at the 2017 annual CPH faculty and staff awards. In terms of research, her latest study on Lean process improvement that centered on Congestive Heart Failure patient identification was published in the Journal of Nursing Care Quality.

Jake Hutchison

Hutchison is a manager in the Blackburn, Childers & Steagall Tax Department. But his title belies the great amount of leadership and work beyond the call of duty he provides the company. Inside BCS, Hutchison serves on the Tax Process Committee, Recruitment and Retention, Internal Leadership Program, Non-Billable Budget Committee and Marketing committees. He also serves as a mentor to new staff. A veteran of the United States Air Force, Hutchison is a servant leader. He is the current vice president of the Kingsport Downtown Rotary and the treasurer of Keystone Dental Clinic. Hutchison is a graduate of Kingsport Leadership and a member of the AICPA, the TSCPA, Bays Mountain and Boone Trail Baptist Church. He has volunteered with the Kingsport Chamber, Bud's Prom, Habitat for Humanity, Second Harvest Food Bank, Hope House, Salvation Army, Robinson Middle School Band, Girls, Inc. and many others in our area. Said one of his nominators, "he is hard-working, always up-beat, and never turns down an opportunity to make the world around him a better place."




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Joe Jackson

Jackson has been instrumental in Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union’s successful evolution from garden variety credit union to mission-driven community development financial institution since CEO Ron Scott recruited him in 2011. Jackson led an IT overhaul that positioned ACFCU to handle the challenges of effectively serving unbanked and underbanked consumers in rural Appalachia. He oversaw technical upgrades that have helped the credit union operate effectively in the grant space. He shepherded ACFCU’s IT systems through a complicated merger and has navigated ever-evolving tech and regulatory space, allowing ACFCU’s systems to handle 60 percent growth in asset size. Jackson helps oversee the sound and recording studio at his church. He has coached Johnson City Parks and Rec soccer for several years and done pro bono IT work for Family Promise of Greater Johnson City.

Alison Johnson

One of Johnson’s nominators, who’s very familiar with her work as director of Critical Care and Step Down at Johnson City Medical Center, summed up what makes Johnson a rising star. “Alison,” she said, “can get things done when others cannot.” It’s a simple statement, but strong, and in Johnson’s business, it can mean a great deal. Having risen through the ranks from bedside nurse to charge nurse to nurse manager to director, Johnson has a great working knowledge of what those in her charge need in order to succeed. That’s got something to do with why Ballad Health has put her in charge of 179 bed step down units, plus respiratory therapy. The patient populations she oversees are some of the most vulnerable. Yet she earns praise for having the emotional intelligence to handle their needs while also being a productive leader, and having the financial acumen and forethought to please hospital administrators as well.



**CONGRATULATIONS
PARKER BOHON**

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Kat Latham

As chief operations officer of Johnson City Brewing Company, Latham helps manage the employees, does most of the administrative work, and plays an integral role in planning for the growth of the company. It wasn't so long ago that the company operated out of a couple of rooms in the back corner of the King building in downtown Johnson City, moving equipment and furniture back and forth from room to room to make it all work. Today the company has a destination address on the corner of Roan and Main Streets, and is often full to overflowing. Part of that success is, of course, the quality of the product. Part is word of mouth from Kat's diligent networking. Her community involvement includes being president of the Johnson City Downtown Merchants Association, a Girl Scout Volunteer, a teacher in the Kindermusik Room, chairperson of the Little Chicago Downtown Music & Arts Festival, a member of the Johnson City Rotary Club, and serving on the Financial Aid Committee for the Nature Camp Foundation.

Jon Luttrell

Luttrell has taken a new position since being nominated for this honor earlier this year. When he was nominated, he was a public relations specialist for the city of Bristol, Tenn. Today he is the business development specialist for the city's economic development department. He oversees a hiring expo at the Bristol Motor Speedway involving more than 40 employers looking to fill more than 1,500 slots. To date, those expos, which Luttrell ran even when he was in P.R., have brought about 5,000 people through the doors. When he's not helping companies and employees find each other in Bristol, Luttrell is also a talented actor and singer who sits on the board of an organization that provides scholarships to talented students in the arts.



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Congratulations to Crystal Bright!



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Paula Masters

Dr. Masters is vice president of health programs in the recently-formed Population Health Department of Ballad Health. She previously was assistant dean of student services in the College of Public Health at ETSU. Over her career, she has been project director or principal investigator for grants and contracts pertaining to improving local public health workforce training, reducing childhood obesity and chronic disease in Central Appalachia, and developing and conducting assessments related to diabetes, among many others. She has received numerous awards and honors including the Distinguished Service Award by the Tennessee Public Health Association in 2016 and several Dean's Awards for outstanding contribution to the college at ETSU. In her leadership role with Ballad Health, she is helping craft, deploy and measure the system's strategic plans and commitment for community health improvements across East Tennessee and South-west Virginia over the next 10 years.

Melissa McCall

McCall joined the Food City team in 2009 as a pharmacy intern, while attending ETSU. She became a licensed pharmacist in 2010, serving as a staff pharmacist. In 2011, she was promoted to pharmacy manager for Kingsport's Clinchfield Street Food City. She quickly mastered pharmacy operations and developed a strong patient base. She also assumed the additional responsibilities of employee diabetes educator - certified through the APA to provide associate diabetic counseling services. In 2015, she was promoted to pharmacy professional services manager, responsible for the supervision, operations and compliance of 38 pharmacies. She is active within her community, serving as a Sunday school teacher and Upward Basketball coach. She enjoys educating children on pharmacy operations, assisting with store tours and has volunteered with ADA and Leadership Kingsport.



CONGRATULATIONS

We would like to congratulate our very own Annie Howard for being named a *40 Under Forty* Honoree!



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Amy Margaret McColl

McColl serves as the marketing manager for Visit Kingsport, where she directs the award-winning communications department, efforts of which have brought tens of thousands of visitors and millions of tourism tax dollars to the region. She also manages Visit Kingsport's social media platforms, promotes Fun Fest, serves as lead manager for the Santa Train and markets a number of the tourism bureau's many other events. In addition, she helped to create and coordinate the very popular Santa's Depot which debuted last year. She was instrumental in promoting Kingsport's Original Long Island Ice Tea campaign, a marketing plan that brought more than \$2 million worth national and international publicity to Kingsport and the Tri-Cities, and she has secured more than \$270,000 in marketing grants for Kingsport from the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. She has had leadership roles with a number of organizations, including Kingsport's Centennial Planning Commission, Friends of Allandale Board of Directors, Junior League of Kingsport, Bays Mountain Park & Planetarium Board of Directors, PEAK Young Professionals Board of Directors and more.



James Mumpower

Any businessperson will tell you, you can't have progress if the numbers don't work. Mumpower is the numbers guy behind some pretty significant progress. In 2014, he served as the financial strategist for the original Erwin Utilities team responsible for developing the Erwin Fiber business plan. Erwin Fiber now provides Gigabit broadband services to the rural, underserved areas of Unicoi County. His workload and responsibilities have increased greatly over the last five years. In addition to facilitating the creation of Erwin Fiber, he recently assumed the position of director of Finance and Accounting. In this position, Mumpower is now responsible for the financial sustainability of Erwin Utilities' five departments. His dedication to his community reaches beyond Erwin Utilities. He is a member of the Unicoi County Industrial Development Board and a founding member of Erwin RISE, a group of professionals dedicated to furthering Downtown Erwin and Unicoi County.



Amy Margaret McColl was recently honored as one of Tri-Cities 40 Under Forty!

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Richard Graves
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Dave Ongie

Ongie is part of a dying breed of journalist. He is a teller of good news. As managing editor of *Johnson City News & Neighbor*, Dave helps the community by shining a spotlight on the great people doing good works every day. His writing, while factual, is imbued with a subtle and sincere wisdom. A hometown boy, Ongie brings the care for community of someone who graduated from Science Hill High School and East Tennessee State University and the earnestness of someone who sits on his church’s leadership council to his work and his life outside work. One rarely hears words like integrity, humanity and kindness applied to journalists. Were more journalists like Ongie, that would change.

Cathy Osborne

One of Osborne’s nominators said, “I believe that the best type of employee is the one who finds identification with the community. One that brings emotional intelligence, sensibility, character, love and passion for the organization and its mission. That person is Cathy Osborne.” She is director of operations for Boys & Girls Club of Greene County. Under her direction, that organization has won numerous local, state and national awards for our youth program services, volunteer work and staff outreach in the community. Osborne has twice been named Outstanding Youth Development Professional for the state of Tennessee by Boys & Girls Clubs of America. She is active in several organizations including Youth Builders, Keep Greene Beautiful, Greene County Health Council, Academy of Boys & Girls Club Professionals, Boys & Girls Clubs Worker Association and First Baptist Church.



Michael Parker

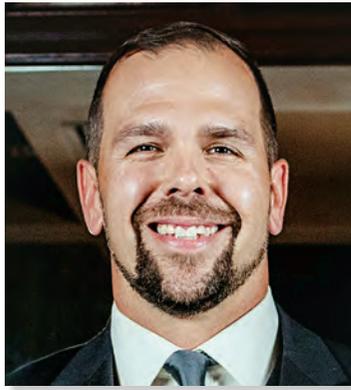
When a major jobs announcement is made in Sullivan or Hawkins counties, you can bet Parker had something to do with it. Parker, who started as an intern at NETWORKS, was recently promoted to director of Economic Development. He’s not only well-respected in the economic development community and across “Team Tennessee,” but also by the site location consultant community, as well. That’s an important crowd to have on your side considering almost every project involves a consultant. Along with working projects, Parker is lead on the Northeast Tennessee Red Carpet Tour – a two-and-a-half day tour attended annually by eight to 12 consultants, Tennessee Economic and Community Development staff, and economic development partners from across Northeast Tennessee. This event has directly led to multiple projects, including the 500-job announcement at Agero, and even received an award from the International Economic Development Council. Outside of the office, Parker is a graduate of LEAD Bristol and assists with the planning of that group’s economic development day each year.



Joseph Powers

Joey, as his friends know him, has always had a knack for growing businesses. While in high school, he started a lawn care business and went from mowing neighborhood yards to hiring four full time employees. He founded Green Cube Solutions, LLC in January 2012. The company provides roll-off dumpster and storage containers for rent and sale. Two years later he launched a hauling and transportation company with the use of a roll-off dumpster program and multiple over-the-road tractor-trailers. Today, Green Cube Solutions has grown from one full-time employee to 15 and opened a second location in Knoxville. Powers was the recipient of the 2016 Rising Star Award from Tennessee Small Business Development Center and won the 2018 Tennessee Small Business Person of the Year hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration in Washington, D.C.





Zach Pumphrey

When he was a youngster in Georgia, Pumphrey had an eye injury that required surgery. The surgery was a success and his eye is fine, but the experience made a profound impact on his life. He knew in college that he wanted to do something in medicine, and after talking with the optometrist who worked at the surgery center where he was studying, the light clicked on for him. He met another young optometry student at UAB and they married and moved back to Northeast Tennessee. Pumphrey partnered with an Elizabethton doctor who was working a practice that had been in place for around 50 years. Pumphrey is in the process of purchasing the practice from his partner now. The practice supports residents throughout Carter County with ten employees serving 50+ patients daily. Pumphrey also continues to serve part-time as an optometrist at the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center.

Kenny Shafer

Shafer is the chief operating officer of Johnson City Medical Center, having risen a long way in a very short period of time. Said one nominator, "I was surprised that such a young person had been put into such a role at MSHA's flagship Trauma 1 facility. It wasn't long before we all came to realize that Kenny was in the right seat on the bus." Shafer's youth belies a skillset that includes the ability to keep the financial requirements of the hospital squarely in his sights while still maintaining a supportive work environment for medical professionals with decades of experience. Another nominator said, "Physicians, nurses, pharmacists – these people want to be led by someone who doesn't tell them how to do their jobs, but rather by someone who enables them to do their jobs. Kenny does that."



SunTrust Bank congratulates our teammate Jennifer Beard for being named one of the 40 under 40.

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Kellie Simpson

As VP of finance, Simpson oversees accounts payable, payroll, budgeting, cost accounting and various other responsibilities for the region's largest employer, and is charged with producing accurate and timely financial information to Ballad Health's senior management. She played a key role throughout the Ballad Health merger process, helping integrate both legacy health systems (Wellmont Health and Mountain States Health Alliance) into one coherently functioning system. Her passion for her work is evidenced by her willingness to help educate others. She has served as a presenter for ETSU's healthcare finance class, and has performed mock interviews at local high schools to prepare students for job interviews. She was also a presenter in March 2018 at the Kaufman Hall Axiom Summit. She also served as a key organizer for the annual Niswonger Children's Hospital Softball Tournament.



Jonathan Tipton

Tipton is more than an up-and-coming star in the mortgage banking industry; he is already there. He is consistently ranked in the top 10 nationally among over 300 Benchmark Loan officers. His loan production is on pace to exceed \$20 million in 2018. One nominator with 30 years in the business said he has never seen anyone with as much talent, drive and enthusiasm as Tipton. A financial planner said, "I have sent him dozens of clients for mortgages and every one said it was the best mortgage experience they ever had...so I did my mortgage with him." Tipton is deeply involved in his church (Heritage Baptist) as treasurer and has served in the past on the boards of Ronald McDonald House and Dawn of Hope, both of which have benefitted from his leadership and his financial expertise by appointing him treasurer.



Jerrod Tolley

Tolley, health physicist, has worked at Nuclear Fuel Services for 10 years in a number of leadership roles within radiation protection. As a second-generation nuclear worker, he understands the responsibilities to health and environment and the importance of community outreach. He has a technical background in science, including medical and emergency response. Tolley received a B.S. in Chemistry from East Tennessee State University with a technical background in Chemiluminescence/Florescence. While at NFS, he has continued his education in health physics, attending training at Oak Ridge's RE/ACTS facility for Emergency Response, Leadership Training from the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, and Radiological Emergency Planning: Terrorism, Security, and Communication from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. As a member of NFS's Speakers Bureau, he talks to area youth about the importance of education with a STEM Focus.



Jessica Waterman

Sometimes, how much you save your company can be as important as how much you make for your company. By that yardstick, Waterman is a superstar for BTES, where she serves as systems analyst supervisor. The aptly named Ms. Waterman is responsible for BTES' Load Managed Water Heater Program. That's the program that allows BTES to turn off water heaters during peak times. The Load Managed Water Heater program has reduced BTES' power costs by over \$16 million. In addition, she manages BTES' employee training program (SMART) and is an integral piece in managing the Customer Service Department's data. She is a member and Category Lead in the Baldrige Team that led BTES to earn the 2017 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. And in her spare time in 2018, she administered fund-raisers that generated \$5,000 for two local families in need.

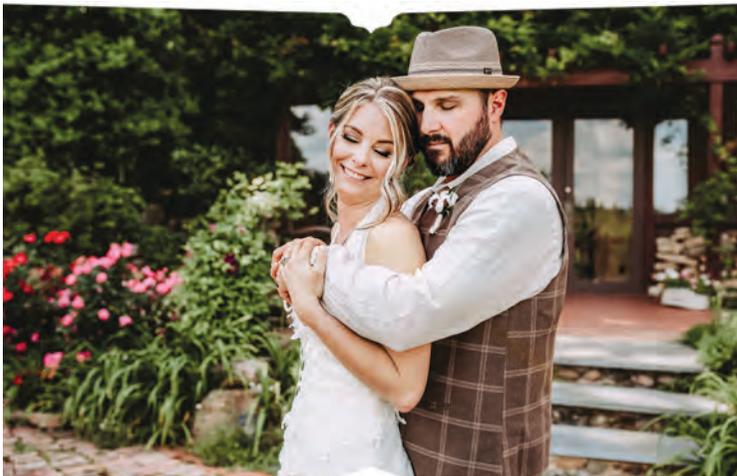
Doug Weller

You may be aware of the US Nitrogen plant in Midway, Tenn., which broke ground back in 2012 and is now at full production. Weller handled all the planning, scheduling, personnel, along with all civil and building projects related to that 400-acre site for his company, C&C Millwright, a construction partner with US Nitrogen. Weller accomplished that with zero lost-time accidents. Of course, one doesn't get contracts like the US Nitrogen plant without some top shelf credentials and referrals, and Weller has those to spare. Nominators told our judges of his integrity and honesty on the front end of projects, when others might paint an overly rosy picture and up the costs later. A former boy scout leader of his said Weller was always the most-results-driven member of any group. That holds true today as Weller is a leader of scouts now, leading hikes and attending courts of honor. He can be counted on to help with anything from flagpole planting to skeet shoots to food pantry benefits. Labelled by another nominator as, quote – "a young man with clear goals and standards, who gives freely of himself, is a great example to young boys and girls, and is a great friend."



Katie Westbrook

Some people are destined for their life's work. When Westbrook was a schoolgirl, she would dress up as an artist for career day. When she was listening to music, she was falling in love with album covers. But she also knew she wanted a more stable career than most artists have, so eschewing a fine arts education, she studied both art and marketing. Fast forward to today. If you've seen the graphics for Kingsport's FunFest, you've seen her work. If you've seen the athletics logos at East Tennessee State University, you've seen her work. If you've seen the Food City Racenight logo, you've seen her work. The Battle at Bristol marketing for the Tennessee-Virginia Tech game? She won a national award for that. Her fingerprints are on some of the best graphics work produced in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia over the last several years. Her career goals have led her to the High Road Agency in Johnson City, where she has already worked on another campaign that's garnered national attention, the Long Island Ice Tea battle.



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Crown Laboratories acquires GlaxoSmithKline brands

Crown Laboratories, Inc., a Johnson City, Tenn.-based skin care company and Hildred Capital Partners LLC portfolio company, announced Nov. 30 it has acquired North American distribution rights of five over the counter consumer brands from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

GSK’s consumer healthcare portfolio has long been regarded as high quality, safe and effective, maintaining a quality image and loyal base of consumers. OTC medications allow practitioners and their patients the ability to access therapeutic products while reducing the burden of prescription drug costs on the healthcare system. The products expand Crown Laboratories’ consumer portfolio by adding No. 1 in category brands that treat multiple conditions. The acquired portfolio includes:

- PanOxyl: No. 1 Dermatologist recommended daily acne wash
- Sarna: No. 1 Dermatology recommended anti-itch lotion
- Zearorb: No. 1 Dermatologist recommended anti-fungal and prevention product
- Desenex: Anti-fungal powder for athlete’s foot
- Mineral Ice: Leading pain-relieving gel

The brands all have a strong heritage and lengthy history in the market. “Acquiring these strong heritage brands strengthens Crown’s OTC portfolio and adds significant value across multiple categories,” said Jeff Bedard, Crown Laboratories President and CEO.



Mitch Miller



Tyler Engle

Northeast Tennessee economic developers, Eastman present to Governor’s Conference

Mitch Miller, CEO of the Northeast Tennessee Regional Economic Partnership; Tyler Engle, CEO of the Unicoi County Economic Development Board and CeeGee McCord, director, Global Public and Community Affairs at Eastman were featured presenters at the 2018 Governor’s Conference on Economic Development in Nashville, Nov. 1-2. Miller spoke on “Building Teams and Engaging Youth.” His remarks centered on the TalentConnect program that invites soon-to-be-graduating college seniors to Northeast Tennessee to meet with the region’s

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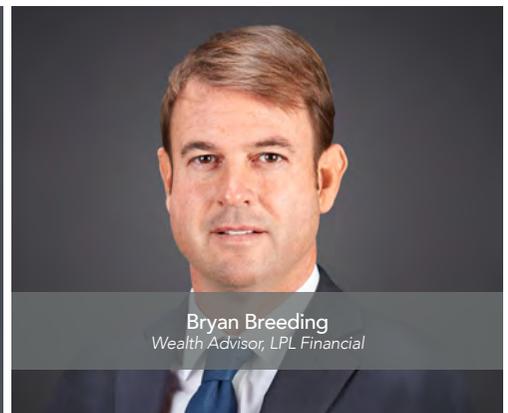
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employers. Engle’s panel discussed product development. Engle shared the experience of utilizing both InvestPrep grant funds from TVA Economic Development and a Site Development Grant from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development to raze a former industrial facility and redevelop it into a marketable industrial site. McCord spoke on the power of sector strategies in economic development, explaining the benefits of focusing economic development efforts on target industry clusters.

First Bank to build new Abingdon corporate office

First Bank & Trust Company is building a new facility that will soon replace the existing location on the corner of Main Street and Highway 11 in Abingdon, Va. “We are expanding and moving our location to accommodate our growth,” William Hayter, president and CEO of First Bank & Trust Company, said. “After reviewing plans to renovate the existing facility, we quickly realized that starting from the ground up was a more economically sound approach. We are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible for all of our customers.” Demolition of the existing branch, located at 667 West Main Street, will begin in late December. Prior to demolition, personnel from the current branch will relocate to a temporary facility across the street. The temporary facility is located at 711 West Main Street, formerly a Rite Aid Pharmacy building. [B](#)

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Regional effort underway to bring USDA to Bristol, Va.

Bristol competing with 135 communities in 35 states

by Scott Robertson

With competition from 135 communities including food and agriculture hubs such as Kansas City, St Louis, Denver and Des Moines; Bristol, Va., officials know they need a regional effort to lure a proposed US Department of Agriculture relocation.

As of mid-November, that's what they've got. Representatives from governments, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations throughout Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee came together at Bristol Motor Speedway to present a unified front of support for the campaign to bring the new homes of the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to Bristol.

"It's all about teamwork. It's all about partnerships," said Bristol, Va., Mayor Kevin Mumpower. "We're going to be much more successful as a region if we really, truly work in partnership. This is a very impactful project. When you talk about the federal government considering moving a major department – one of their entities – the US Department of Agriculture, that is a very big deal. The professional jobs and infrastructure that comes

with that is a very big deal for this community."

"The Tri-Cities region is the best place in the United States for the US Department of Agriculture to locate," said Virginia Delegate Israel O'Quinn. "I certainly am thankful to have the working relationship that we have across state lines. Our legislative delegations work together far more than the average person would ever imagine."

The key selling point for Bristol is the former Alpha Natural Resources corporate headquarters building, which has been vacant since Alpha entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy two years ago. The building is Silver LEED certified, with top-line security features and off-grid power capability. "It's very much aligned for an entity like USDA," Mumpower said.

The USDA announced in August it would be relocating the ERS and NIFA outside the Washington DC beltway as a measure to improve cost-efficiency and bring USDA services closer to agriculture practitioners. USDA has said it intends to select and announce the new location in January 2019. **BJ**

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Contura Energy, Alpha Natural Resources merge

Company begins trading on NYSE as CTRA

In July 2016, as Alpha Natural Resources was emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy, then-Alpha CEO Kevin Crutchfield announced the sale of Alpha's core coal assets to Contura Energy, a company formed by a group of Alpha's lenders. On Nov. 9, 2018, Crutchfield, now CEO of Contura (NYSE: CTRA), announced the closing of the merger of Contura and Alpha.

"The successful combination of these two sets of highly productive assets, operated by an expanded employee base of nearly 4,500 experienced and talented individuals, greatly enhances Contura's already robust competitive positioning in both domestic and international coal markets," Crutchfield said. "Our near-term focus now turns to delivering on the significant synergies expected through this transaction and creating additional value for Contura's increasing number of shareholders."

The combined company will continue to operate as Contura Energy and be led by Crutchfield and Contura's existing management team. The company's assets are now comprised of metallurgical and thermal coal mines in Central Appalachia, a longwall thermal coal mine in Northern Appalachia, one of the largest met coal reserves in the U.S. allowing for near-term organic growth opportunities, and industry-leading export capacity through its 65 percent ownership interest in the Dominion Terminal Associates (DTA) coal export facility located in Newport News, Va. On a pro-forma basis for the full-year 2017, the combined entity sold approximately 11.9 million tons of metallurgical coal, making it the largest met coal supplier in the U.S., and 13.1 million tons of thermal coal, excluding sales from divested assets.

The transaction is expected to generate cost synergies in the range of \$30 million to \$50 million annually, including through coal blending and marketing optimization, as well as purchasing, operating and administrative efficiencies. The company also announced that, concurrent with the transaction close, it completed the successful refinancing of the company's and legacy Alpha's senior secured credit facilities. Specifically, a new \$550 mil-

lion term loan facility, with an interest rate of LIBOR plus 500bps, matures in November 2025. In addition, the company expanded its asset-backed revolving credit facility (ABL) to \$225 million, which matures in April 2022.

The proceeds of the term loan facility will be used to refinance and/or retire the company's and Alpha's existing credit facilities, pay related fees, costs and expenses, and for general corporate purposes. **B**

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Tomorrow's employees using manufacturing skills today

Southwest Virginia students compete in coding competition

by Chris Robertson

Virginia public school students displayed their abilities in fields including coding, teamwork and problem solving at the Lego Mindstorm competition Nov. 10 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. The economic impact of those skills in Virginia was put on display when Amazon announced its plans to locate half of its HQ2 project in the Commonwealth. One of the reasons it gave was Virginia's commitment to providing an educated, trainable, tech-savvy workforce.

In 2016, the general assembly required the Commonwealth's standards of learning for public schools to include computer science and computational thinking, including coding in every year. The Lego Mindstorm competition gave Southwest Virginia students the opportunity to demonstrate what they've already learned.

Twenty-five teams of students from grades 4-8 competed in a mechatronics competition. Students used coding skills to program Lego

MV3 robots to accomplish tasks in a competitive, timed environment. The robots were programmed using Mindstorm software to make movements as fine as a few millimeters. The engineering and programming skills used in the competition are those that are the basis of mechatronics used in industry.

In addition to conducting the research and showing the technical skills necessary to design and program the machines to accomplish the tasks, students also were judged in soft skills including cooperation and professionalism.

Companies sponsoring teams included Terra Tech from Grundy and Northrup-Grumman from Lebanon. Judges included volunteers from the Southwest Virginia Alliance of Manufacturers.

Each team's robot kit cost roughly \$1,000. Some schools were able to purchase their own kits. Others had kits provided for them by the Higher Education Center. 



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ON THE MOVE

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) has approved the appointment of Dr. Bethany H. Flora for the presidency of Northeast State Community College. Most recently, Dr. Flora has been associate director of the Center for Community College Leadership at ETSU.

Flora earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at Virginia Tech, her M.A. in Organizational Management at Tusculum University and her B.A. in Business and Public Administration at the University of Virginia's College at Wise.

"These are exciting times for higher education in Tennessee," Flora said. "Northeast State is well-positioned to meet the growing demand for educated, healthy and engaged graduates to serve as leaders in our communities, civic organizations and businesses. I am honored to be selected by the Board."



Bethany Flora

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Hillhouse Creative Wins Silver at Davey Awards

Hillhouse Creative, a full-service advertising firm based in Kingsport was honored with two awards at the 14th Annual International Davey Awards held in October. The firm won silver awards in two categories: the Corporate Identity Logo category for their design of the STREAMWORKS Education logo; and, the Promotional

Specialty Item category for their "We're Starting Something New!" promotional announcement incorporating a Bluetooth tracking device design announcing the firm's new brand identity.

With 3,000 entries from across the US and around the world, the Davey Awards honors the finest work from the best small shops, firms and companies worldwide. The Davey Awards is judged and overseen by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts (AIVA), a 700+ member organization of leading professionals from various disciplines of the visual arts dedicated to embracing progress and the evolving nature of traditional and interactive media.

MED BRIEFS

Regional ACOs generate cumulative \$100 million+ in Medicare savings

Since 2012, Qualuable and AnewCare, two Accountable Care Organizations in the region, have generated more than \$100 million in Medicare savings between them.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services figures showed 472 MSSP Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) across the country participated and 159 (or 34 percent) of those achieved their minimum savings rate and earned a shared savings payment for their performance in 2017.

Qualuable Medical Professionals is comprised of five area primary care physician groups: State of Franklin Healthcare Associates,

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BJ Departments

Mountain Region Family Medicine, Medical Care, ETSU Family Physicians, Quillen ETSU Physicians and several specialty practices serving Medicare beneficiaries in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. 2017 marks the fifth year of Qualuable's participation as a MSSP ACO. While maintaining high quality of care and achieving cost savings, Qualuable has earned shared savings payments in each year of participation and saved Medicare over \$57.6 million in years 2012 through 2017.

AnewCare Collaborative – Ballad Health's accountable care organization – is one of only 21 accountable care organizations in the country to generate savings for the fifth year in a row, according to results released recently by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. AnewCare has generated more than \$46 million dollars in total savings since its creation in 2012.

"I continue to be extremely proud of AnewCare's dedication to delivering high quality care while reducing costs," said Dr. John Patterson, chair of the AnewCare board. "Achieving savings the fifth year in a row affirms that our providers are working together effectively to improve the health of the community."

"Along with AnewCare, another accountable care organization in this region also achieved savings for the fifth year in a row. We would like to congratulate our friends at Qualuable for this outstanding achievement."

Rich Panek, chief administrative officer of Qualuable said, "Qualuable and AnewCare's continued success as ACOs is a reflection of the participants within each organization and their dedication to providing innovative and quality care for our region." 

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Generate light, not heat, in Ballard Health scrutiny

by Jeff Keeling



The Smothers Brothers' "Mom Always Liked You Best" album cover shows Dick Smothers surrounded by a dog, a wagon, a scooter and other toys. Brother Tom – master deliverer of the "mom always liked you best" line – sits forlornly with his pet chicken, Frank. As I awaited word on which Level I trauma center Ballard Health would close, the comedians' classic routine came to mind. Who would Ballard CEO Alan Levine, in the proverbial role of mom, "like best" – Kingsport or Johnson City?

Never mind that eliminating unnecessary duplication of high-level trauma services was such a no-brainer that it merited conversation even before Mountain States and Wellmont sought to merge. Never mind that Ballard had engaged an outside consultant to help it reach an objective, evidence-based decision about trauma services. Never mind that the Tennessee Department of Health pre-approved four "anticipated deletions and repurposings" in the COPA's Terms and Conditions, and that "consolidation of Level I Trauma Centers" topped that list.

Never mind that the local powers both political and commercial had unanimously supported the merger (at least publicly) during the long application process. Someone's ox was about to be gored, and I figured cracks would appear in the previously ironclad public support of Ballard.

I was pleasantly surprised when I looked at the comment sections below the media's stories on Ballard's announcement and saw almost nothing in the way of sniping, second-guessing or Friday night football provincialism. Perhaps people realized the short-term pain of resource realignment will impact every community within the system as Ballard uses data and evidence to make its decisions, and that the long-term gain should be worth it. How refreshing, I thought.

And how premature. It took the Sullivan County Commission less than 48 hours to officially oppose Ballard's decision to downgrade the trauma center at Kingsport's Holston Valley Medical Center. Since then, a parade of voices have joined the chorus, including leaders in nearby Hawkins and Scott (VA) counties.

Sorry, Sullivan County, but "mom" doesn't like Washington County more and more importantly, you're missing the point. Ballard should indeed be held to account and its actions scrutinized. That task shouldn't fall solely to the states' departments of health, attorney generals' offices and experts such as COPA Monitor

Larry Fitzgerald. The media should report on more than just the conflagrations that flare up when Ballard makes objective decisions that happen to impact one community more than another.

Contrary to the proclamations of the aggrieved, those decisions should help Ballard succeed at its mission. That mission isn't to protect duplicative jobs. It isn't to placate local leaders. It is to improve overall access to the kind of care needed in today's healthcare environment, to keep that care more affordable than it would be without the merger and to lead efforts to improve the overall health of the area's population – all under the scrutiny of the Tennessee Department of Health and Attorney General's office.

If we want to join in that scrutiny, and we should, let's ask the right kind of questions and criticize Ballard when criticism is warranted.

Is Ballard using its market power to strong arm the region's independent providers, or is it playing by the COPA's rules, collaborating in good faith with those providers and working toward an accessible health information exchange?

Is Ballard raising its employees' total compensation (benefits included) as it is obligated by the COPA to do – and as it must do to attract and retain talent? Is its quality of care improving and are its population health efforts effective? Are patients paying less for care than they would under any alternative scenario, and are low and moderate-income patients being treated with dignity and fairness? Is Ballard doing right by the region's rural communities? Is the system making enough money to pull all of this off?

In short, is Ballard meeting the Tennessee COPA's Terms of Certification and the Virginia Cooperative Agreement's stringent requirements? Those requirements are essential to insure the merger's benefits outweigh the disadvantages caused by the anti-competitive market share that merger created. Are the states actively supervising Ballard, which along with the benefits outweighing disadvantages is the second of the two "prongs" required to allow the states (and Ballard) immunity from antitrust action?

We must ask, research and answer these questions – consistently, persistently and for years to come – if we are to take a rightfully active role as Ballard's patients, employees, competitors and payors. This region needs the Ballard experiment to succeed. Without appropriate checks and balances, the likelihood of success diminishes. When they come in the form of journalism, those checks and balances don't provide the click bait of rivalrous controversies such as that surrounding the trauma centers. They provide more light than heat, though, and I think Mrs. Smothers would agree that's what we really need.

(Former Business Journal Associate Editor Jeff Keeling is director of community relations for Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union)

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Gavin Brewer

Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia

Life's more normal with care close by

At almost 4 years old, Gavin Brewer is a little guy with a big personality who's known for his tractors and his cowboy boots — and his enthusiasm for saying good morning. “He will talk to anybody — especially if you start talking tractors to him,” says his mother, Rachel.

Gavin was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia more than a year ago. At first, his family had to travel more than seven hours each way to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, and it was tough — especially with a newborn sibling at home.

Fortunately, he was able to continue treatment at Niswonger Children's Hospital, less than 45 minutes from his home in Bristol. Having treatment so close to their home helps keep life fairly normal for Gavin and his family, says his mom.

Thanks to treatments at St. Jude Tri-Cities Affiliate Clinic at Niswonger Children's Hospital, Gavin's cancer is now in remission, although he still has more than a year of treatments left.

Niswonger Children's Hospital

In 2004, our region embraced a vision to serve our children and help them build healthier futures through the creation of a children's hospital. Now a reality, Niswonger Children's Hospital provides care for the more than 200,000 children living in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. We work every day to be the place that makes kites fly, to help and heal the young people of this region — and, ultimately, to make hope rise.



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