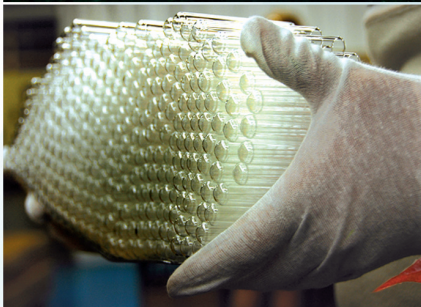
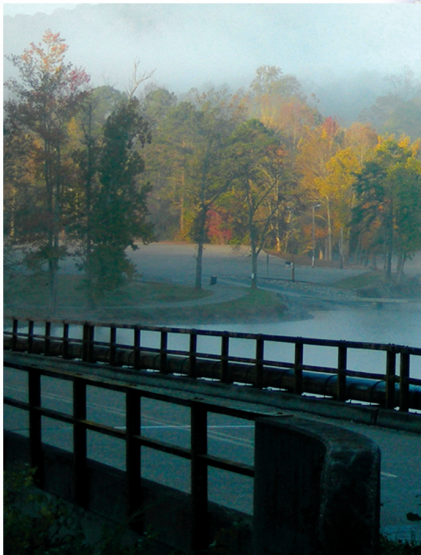


# ROANE COUNTY

2008  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



THE ROANE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
THE ROANE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
THE ROANE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU



[www.roanealliance.org](http://www.roanealliance.org)



At the Roane Alliance, we bring opportunity to Roane County. Whether that's by promoting the uniqueness of our community, attracting exciting new industry to the area, or helping existing businesses grow, we're committed to helping Roane County grow and prosper.



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## Letter from the President / CEO



Dear Friends,

The year of 2008 will be remembered in Roane County as one that brought a lot of challenges.

For example, although more than 200 new jobs were created in Roane County in 2008, for the first time in four years, this annual report is not reporting any net gains in new jobs, as at least as many other jobs were lost over the same time. Neither are we able to report any increases in building permits or record years of industrial prospect activity as we have in years past.

But it could have been a lot worse. One of the few counties in the area not to suffer any massive layoff announcements, Roane County fared better than most, regionally, statewide, and nationwide in several of key economic indicators:

- Sales tax collections continued to climb, even through the last half of 2008 when the rest of the country was slowing to a crawl the collections were nearly 12% higher than the same period the year before.
- Although the county's unemployment rate did rise over the record lows of 2007 – hovering around 5 and 6% through the year – it stayed an average of 10% below that of Tennessee's as a whole throughout.
- And although our residential building was hard hit by the credit and housing crisis and our building permits dropped considerably over the year before – 31% – the decrease was not nearly as severe as our neighboring counties experienced – 45%.

In addition, although prospect activity from what had been Roane County's bread and butter – small to medium sized industries – nearly dried up as the year went on, the Alliance recruiting staff saw even more interest from the large-scale industries, particularly large international companies looking to benefit from the declining value of the dollar worldwide and looking to serve the new Volkswagen plant going into Chattanooga.

And although our tourism industries struggled through 2008, the latest state figures showed tourism dollars spent were still increasing through 2007, and Roane County continued to rank in the top 25 counties in the state in tourist spending overall.

Meanwhile, Chamber membership and financial support remained strong. Our membership stayed at nearly 400 in the Chamber and our annual Alliance fund-raising Gala met its goal.

And finally, the Alliance also became a new partner and found a new funding source in 2008, by joining Innovation Valley Inc., a regional economic development effort. The additional funding from that effort allowed us to launch a new workforce development program and focus even more on addressing the increasingly important needs of high-tech industrial recruitment.

I hope you benefit from looking at this snapshot of Roane County in 2008 and that you will continue to support our efforts, because in hard times, it's even more important than ever to understand that at The Roane Alliance, "We Mean Business!"



# The Roane Alliance Board of Directors

<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	Keith Uselton
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN:</b>	Jerry Stephens
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	Ben Andrews
<b>TREASURER:</b>	George Wilson
<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Julian Ahler
	Troy Beets
	Ron Berry
	Bill Biloski
	Steve Buckley
	Jerry Duncan
	Dean Ethridge
	Mike Farmer
	Jim Gann
	Dr. Gary Goff
	James "Dub" Harmon
	Jim Henry
	Chris Hepler
	Greg Hill
	Sonny Hunter
	Robert Kyker
	Chris Mason
	Mike Miller
	Jim O'Conner
	Fred Tedder

# Roane Alliance Gala Achieves its Goal in 2008

Despite the economic pressures that came with the latter part of 2008, Roane County area businesses pulled out all the stops this year and made the 2008 Roane Alliance Gala a wonderful success. Attendees said this year's fund-raising event may have been even more enjoyable than in years past because there was an even wider array of donations of auction items and the crowd of business and community leaders contained a good number of new faces.

And the fund-raising goal was met.

"We are proud to report that we made our goal," Alliance Board Chair Keith Uselton said after the 2008 Gala numbers were finalized at the end of the year. "We hadn't expected to clear as much this year, so we



had reduced our expectations considerably, but we still thought making the goal we set of \$50,000 in profit would be a challenge in today's economy. But we are gratified to report to all our supporters that they put us over the top, although just barely, and we certainly are thankful to all of them for their continued support."

Kudos for the success for the 2008 gala goes to this

year's Gala Committee: Ben Andrews and Harrison Arnold of Oak Ridge Utility District; Jim Henry and Christina Branham of Jim Henry Coldwell Banker Real Estate; Lynn Farnham of Roane County government; Jerry Stephens of AGA Insurance and Keith Uselton of Daniels Uselton & Clay, as well as the always hard-working Alliance staff.



## Alliance Joins in a Dynamic Regional Partnership – Innovation Valley Inc.

The Roane Alliance joined a high-powered economic development partnership known as Innovation Valley Inc. in 2008. The partnership is made up of Knoxville and Oak Ridge and the four surrounding counties. They are building on the efforts of the five-year-old Jobs Now! program, which completed its efforts in 2007.



**INNOVATION VALLEY INC.**

Innovation Valley Inc.'s goal is to raise \$15 million to fund the next five-year effort to improve the region and allow it to be competitive in today's high-tech world, especially in the area of education and workforce development. The other partners are Blount County Chamber of Commerce, Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership, Loudon County Economic Development Agency, Oak Ridge Economic Partnership and the Tellico Reservoir Development Agency.

Innovation Valley Inc. is led by a board of directors made up of Kevin Clayton, Chief Executive Officer of Clayton Homes, Inc.; Jimmy Haslam, President of Pilot Travel Centers LLC; and Thom Mason, President and CEO of UT-Battelle LLC. The effort is an investor-directed program designed to recruit, retain and expand business growth throughout the Innovation Valley region.

There are specific strategies and tactics in Innovation Valley Inc.'s blueprint that focus on technology-led economic development, as well as education and workforce development. Those two areas of focus represent key differentiators in this plan of work. The blueprint has recommendations in six primary program areas: Education and Workforce Development; Technology and Entrepreneurship; Global Marketing; Business Retention and Expansion; Public Policy and Resources for Living.

The plan recommends targeted business sectors for the region and specific recommendations for attracting, retaining and growing those industries. In addition, the plan includes performance measures and quarterly check points to ensure successful implementation.

The Alliance asked for and was approved for more than \$100,000 worth of funding this year from the Innovation Valley Inc. effort. The Innovation Valley grant will help improve efforts in business retention and expansion; entrepreneurship and technology-led economic development, but a major part of the funding is going toward launching and running a new Alliance education and workforce development initiative called "Education Matters!"

## Alliance Launches New Education and Workforce Development Program

With funding provided by Roane County's regional partner Innovation Valley Inc., The Roane Alliance launched a new program in 2008 to focus on the critical issues of education and workforce development.

The program started with an intensive public education program called "Education Matters!" – an initiative that aims directly at educating our own citizenry on the importance of education and the rapidly changing needs of our workforce.

"We are a global community and our children are going to be in competition with hundreds of thousands of college-educated Indians and Chinese, not just students from other parts of the US," Alliance President/CEO Leslie Henderson said in explaining the reason this program was created.

"The jobs they need to prepare for are no longer available to those with few skills. Even manufacturing positions now require a year or two of post-secondary training. The world is high-tech now and we must get prepared for that. Industry follows talent anymore, not sites," Henderson said. "But this is important not only to our industries, it is also critically important to our children.

Hired to direct the program is Allen Lutz, who is retired from the military, has an MBA, and has a lifelong passion for education. He came to the Alliance after working for Junior Achievement.

"Business and industry are attracted to a well-educated community," said Lutz. "They come for the exceptional workforce the community provides and for a higher quality of living for their employees. Roane County already has an exceptional workforce in many respects; our



goal is to ensure an even better workforce in the future and to attract even more business development because of it."

Lutz said one of his primary focuses as Education and Workforce Development Specialist is to inform students, parents and the community as a whole how critically important it is for our middle and high school students to take the advanced courses in school and to graduate from high school. But, to be successful in today's job market, education cannot end with high school.

"The strong correlation between economic success and educational achievement is incredible," Lutz said, "and the positive impacts that education brings to one's life is usually passed on to their children and grandchildren. The value that education brings to the individual has a direct impact upon the community and its business development."



## Roane Alliance Expands its Industrial Recruiting Worldwide



borne fruit, we believe the seeds were planted and with careful nurturing may yet help our efforts in the future.”

An especially critical trip was the one to Germany in the fall led by Gov. Phil Bredesen. The purpose of that trip was to meet with VW suppliers in Germany considering site locations in the region and it was arranged in conjunction with VW officials planning their first US assembly plant which will be built in the Chattanooga area.

The Roane Alliance incorporated a new target market into its industrial recruiting strategy in 2008 – and decided to go global.

With the decline of the dollar worldwide, international companies had become much more interested in opening up US operations and that increased interest had translated into increased prospects from overseas and the decision to make recruiting trips abroad.

The Roane Alliance participated in two overseas recruiting trips last year – travelling with the governor’s delegation to Germany, and on a regional visit to industries in Toronto, Canada. Funding partners in these ventures included Roane County, Roane Industrial Development Board, Innovation Valley Inc., Oak Ridge Utility District, Harriman Utility Board and Rockwood Electric Utility.

“We needed to spread our net wider this year,” said Alliance President/CEO Leslie Henderson. “We had noticed that international companies were bargain hunting in the US and we needed to let them know that Roane County has a lot to offer. Although those contacts have not yet

“I was honored to be chosen,” said Henderson of the recruiting trip that was organized so the VW suppliers who now do business with VW in Germany could learn more about Tennessee and especially the areas of the state within a defined radius near the site of the new plant.

“The timing of these meetings could not be better, since the suppliers are now in the process of pulling together their bids and applications to do business at the Chattanooga plant,” Henderson said. “And VW officials made it clear that they want 85% of their suppliers to be local. It was important for Roane County to be right there so that our foot could be firmly planted in that door.”

“We know that some of the tier one, heavy equipment suppliers are going to want to co-locate with the plant and there is room there for that on the VW site - but that leaves a significant number of tier twos, and others, who still need to be within that magic 100 kilometer radius that VW prefers and this is where we hope Roane County will benefit.”

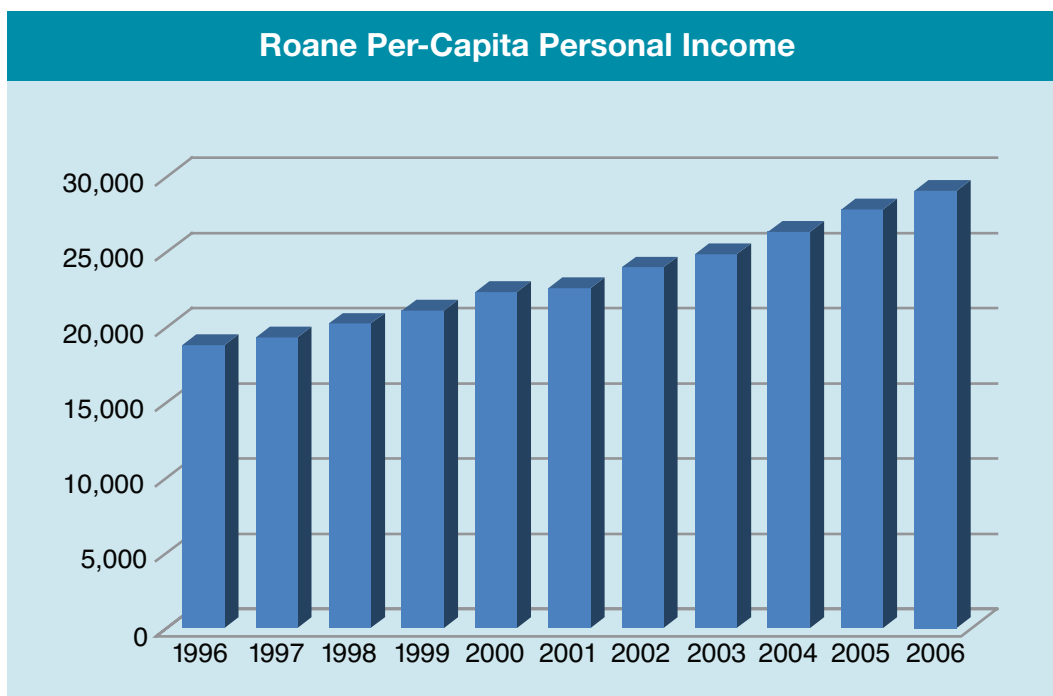
## Roane Residents Reach State's Top 20 in Earnings and Income

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), U.S. Department of Commerce, statistics released in 2008 show that over the period of 1996 – 2006 Roane County residents have been earning more and have been enjoying a higher per-capita income every year – pulling Roane up into the top 20 counties in the state.

The BEA report showed that in 1996, the per-capita personal income for Roane was \$18,795, resulting in a placement of 34th among Tennessee counties. In 2006, Roane had a per-capita personal income of \$29,074 and climbed in ranking to 20th in the state. Per-capita income is a measure of how much money each individual receives of the yearly income that is generated in their state through productive activities. Components of personal income include net earnings by place of residence, dividends, interest, rent and personal current transfer receipts.

Roane County earnings increased 6.4% between 2005 and 2006, while the state change was 5.5% and national change 5.7%.

“A major goal of the Alliance since its formation was to bring the county’s per-capita income up to the state average,” said Leslie Henderson, President/CEO of The Roane Alliance. “I feel very gratified that we have logged some of the top percentage increases in the state consistently over the past few years and that we are now at 90% of the state average. This is very good news for our county and really a cause to celebrate.”



# Roane County Industrial Development Board of Directors

**CHAIRMAN:** David Webb

**VICE-CHAIRMAN:** Bob Kyker

**SECRETARY/TREASURER:** Jerry Stephens

**MEMBERS:** Kyle Agee, Jr.  
Ron Berry  
Jane Long  
Bob Lunsford  
James Owens  
Jim Palmer

*"Roane County is becoming the next Blount County as far as industrial growth."*

*Gerry Eastman  
President, Joseph Construction*

# Half of Roane Industries Now Doing Business Worldwide

The results of a survey of Roane County existing industries released early in 2008 showed a healthy industrial sector that had seen the handwriting on the “World is Flat” wall – nearly half of the industries surveyed reported their company’s primary market had become international.

“This report shows that Roane County industries are doing well and more than half of them are planning expansions, even as they are reflecting some caution about the timing,” said Leslie Henderson, President and CEO of The Roane Alliance. “Bottom line is that our manufacturing sector in Roane County is strong, healthy and growing – especially into the international marketplace.”

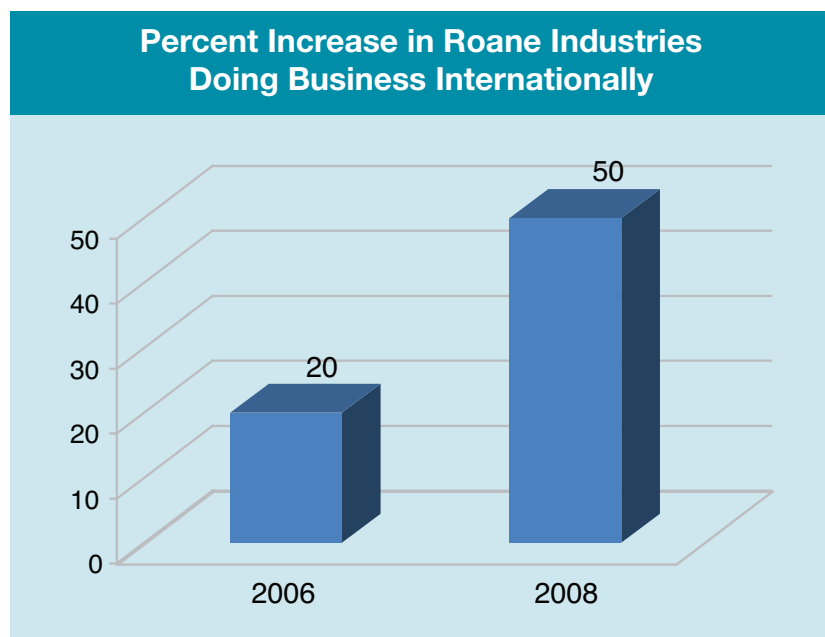
The survey – which was conducted in late 2007 – updates similar information gathered by The Roane Alliance two years ago. The survey was done in partnership with the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The visits and surveys were conducted by a team of volunteers

working under the leadership of Vicki Watts and Jennifer Palmer, co-chairs of the Roane County Chamber of Commerce’s Economic and Community Development committee.

In the recent report, 83% of the industries participating in the survey reported increased sales, up from 79% in 2006. The largest jump, however, was seen in the percentage of companies who reported now being involved in the global marketplace. Two years ago, only 20% of Roane industries surveyed reported doing business internationally. This year that number jumped to 50%.

Meanwhile, although more than half of the industries surveyed said expansions were in the works, that number was significantly lower than the survey two years ago (80% reported expansion plans in 2006) – a finding that may reflect increased caution due to the economic forecasts at the time.



## Roane Regional Park's Long-Awaited I-40 Interchange Opens



On a rainy windy fall day in 2008, Roane County officials and industry leaders celebrated the official opening of the long-awaited new interchange off I-40 that was built to serve Roane Regional Business and Technology Park and the surrounding area. Industrial Park Road (I-40 mile marker 362) was officially opened when a car driven by County Mayor Mike Farmer – loaded with Roane County Industrial Board members and Tennessee Department of Transportation officials as well – drove through a ribbon stretched across one of the new exit ramps.

The massive project began several years ago and included widening the interstate through the area to six lanes; widening the bridge over I-40, plus the construction of an access road in addition to the entrance and exit ramps to serve the interchange. The bid cost was \$18.3 million to the state.

“It was a long time coming, but it sure was worth the wait,” said Roane County Industrial Development Board Chair David Webb. “The industries located in the park now have high-quality, safe and efficient access to the interstate at their very doorstep, and with the cost of gas nowadays, this should help their bottom line, as well as their ability to serve their customers in a more timely fashion.”

Roane County Mayor Mike Farmer said, “Aside from the great benefit this provides to our industrial park, Exit 362 makes nine interchanges now off Interstate 40 in Roane County, and as we all know, around each interchange, commercial development flourishes and for that reason also, we are very grateful to the state for making sure this happened.”



## Roane Regional Welcomes EOD Technology, Inc.

Roane County welcomed EOD Technology, Inc. (EODT) to Roane Regional Business and Technology Park last year with a ribbon cutting and a big crowd of company representatives and local officials. EODT's newest office and warehouse/distribution facility went into an existing building at the park and houses some 60 professional level employees with an annual payroll of more than \$3 million.

EODT is a global provider of munitions response, security, and critical mission support services. Headquartered in East Tennessee since it's founding in 1987, the employee-owned firm has offices in Huntsville AL, Washington DC, Baghdad, Kabul, and Kuwait City. The firm has experienced significant growth over the past five years with more than 200 employees in East Tennessee.

With their headquarters in Lenoir City at capacity they needed additional space for their anticipated future growth. EODT is leasing part of a building – the first spec industrial building acquired in Roane Regional – purchased last year by Diesel Engine Parts.

According to Leslie Henderson, President and CEO of The Roane Alliance, “The plan to lease part of the building, as the space was too large for Diesel Engine Parts needs, has proven to be a good fit for EODT and Diesel. EODT is a significant addition to Roane Regional Business and Technology Park.”

“The new space, tailored to suit our needs, will be used as EODT's corporate logistics hub and serve as office space for our domestic operations,” according to Matt Kaye, EODT's CEO. “The flexibility it offers EODT will be a tremendous competitive advantage as we continue to expand our operations. East Tennessee is a good place to do business and we are proud to be a part of the growth Roane County is experiencing.”



## Industrial Board Cuts Ribbon on Third Spec Building at Roane Regional

The year 2008 also saw a celebration of the grand opening of Roane County's third spec building at the Roane Regional Business and Technology Park. The event marked the completion of the basic shell of a 23,000 square-foot industrial building – the newest building to be completed through the Roane County Industrial Board's spec building program. The first two have already been sold and are already home to two new industries.

Leslie Henderson, President and CEO of The Roane Alliance, said, "Our spec building program has been a major contributor to making Roane Regional Park the hot property it is today. Since 80 percent of the industrial prospects today are looking for existing buildings, this has put us back into the industrial recruiting game in a big way."

The first building is now home to Diesel Engine Parts (DHPS) – which performs final machining of engine parts manufactured at their plants overseas – and EOD Technology, Inc. (EODT) a global provider of munitions response, security, and critical mission support services. And the second is home to Saginaw Control & Engineering (dba SCE) – a Michigan-based manufacturer of electrical equipment and supplies.

The series of three industrial buildings has been financed and built by the private sector. Roane County contributed the costs of an additional sewer line needed to serve the development. DEKD – a private-sector partnership managed by Gerry Eastman, the president of Joseph Construction – built the buildings. Eastman is an experienced industrial developer who has done a number of spec building projects in industrial parks across East Tennessee, most recently in Blount County.

Eastman has already launched phase two of the spec building program in another agreement with the industrial board that provides options for another series of three spec buildings to be built in Roane Regional in the future.

"Roane County is becoming the next Blount County as far as industrial growth," Eastman said. "The prime industrial site in this region right now is right here at the Roane Regional Business and Technology Park."



# Roane Business and Industry Faced Economic Challenges in 2008

Roane County businesses and industries faced a lot of challenges in 2008 as the oft-predicted recession finally took hold and businesses were preparing for the even harder times that were being forecast for 2009.

A number of industries reported struggling as the year closed out. Some said they were starting to cut staff; some reported cuts of temporary employees; others reported cutting back hours, or days, or shifts. Some shut down completely over the holidays to save money. But nearly all were reporting that they were doing business a little more cautiously and hoping for better times.

New industries continued to come to Roane County and add jobs, though not nearly as many as in previous years. And along with the new jobs created from those incoming firms, a number of existing

industries continued to add to their workforce numbers – making more than 200 new jobs created in 2008. But since other industries were cutting back, there was no net gain in employment this year for the first time in four years.

That being said, though, at the end of 2008, indications were that Roane County did not seem to be suffering as much as many of our neighbors across the region, the state, or the country.

For example, even though the residential building sector may have been the hardest hit – the number of residential building permits dropped by 31% – most of the other counties around the Knoxville area experienced decreases even more severe than that, averaging a 45% drop overall.

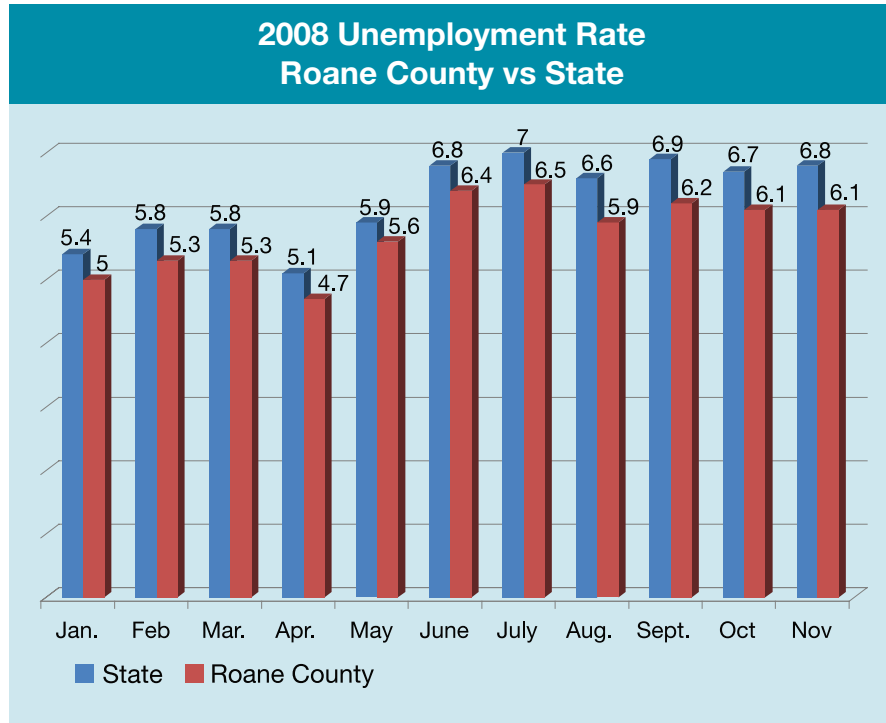
Residential Building Permit Trends 2007-2008			
KNOXVILLE AREA	COUNTY	2008	% Change
	ANDERSON	140	-50.2%
	BLOUNT	303	-44.5%
	HAMBLEN	170	-30.6%
	JEFFERSON	150	-67.6%
	KNOX	1,534	-45.0%
	LOUDON	242	-40.5%
	MONROE	125	-22.8%
	<b>ROANE</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>-31.1%</b>
	SEVIER	243	-44.6%
	3,033	-45.0%	

Source: The Market Edge Residential Building Permit Trend Report, East TN, 12/31/08 Edition



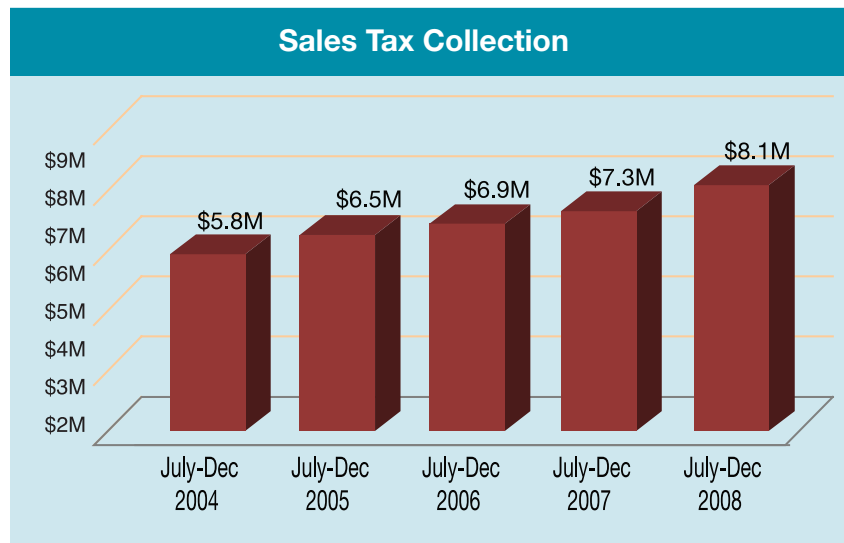
# Roane County Business and Industry Fared Better Than Most

Although unemployment rates rose, the Roane County rate averaged a solid 10% below the state's rate throughout the year.



January through December of 2008, Roane County averaged 10% below the state unemployment rate.

In addition, there were other positive economic indicators, not the least of which was a continuing increase in Roane County's sales tax collections of nearly 12% over July through December 2007.



# Roane County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	Dr. Gary Goff
<b>CHAIR-ELECT:</b>	Kim Harris
<b>VICE CHAIRS:</b>	Gail Lyke, Finance
	Dana Peterka, Small Business/Retail
	Vickie Watts/Jennifer Palmer, Economic/Community Development
	Diana Knobloch, Membership
	Paul Cowell, Tourism
	Mark Powers, Public Affairs
	Kim Harris, Educational Affairs
	Frank Myers, Housing
<b>TREASURER:</b>	Chris Ahler
<b>DIRECTORS:</b>	Lynn Farnham
	Rob Halcrow
	Jane Long
	Kathy May-Martin
	Dr. Toni McGriff
	Jamie Nelson
	Lorry Ruth, Jr.
	Johnny Teglas
	David Webb
	Lonnie Wright

# Chamber and SCORE Help Members through Tough Times

This year, the Chamber launched a new series of high-powered lunchtime workshops designed to help area business owners get through the challenges of today's economy.

Offered free of charge to all Chamber members, these workshops were the result of a partnership between Alliance partner, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), a volunteer service organization of retired and working business executives, and the Chamber's small business/retail committee. SCORE has been a partner in The Roane Alliance for several years, providing counseling to small businesses at no charge.

"These workshops are taught by some of the smartest folks in the business," said Leslie Henderson, President/CEO of The Alliance, of the SCORE counselors who conducted the two-hour seminars. "One counselor, for example, is a turn-around specialist who in one instance – and in very short order – helped a company move from under a half a million dollars in annual profit to more than \$7 million a year."

Henderson explained that the workshops, labeled "Lunch and Learn Workshops" were set up to help business owners become more successful.



Workshops held include:

- **Surviving in Tough Times by Growing the Profitability of Your Business** – Covered important points about controlling and reducing expenses and increasing sales so business owners can not only increase their profits, but also grow their business.
- **How to Delight Your Customers and Grow Your Sales** – is designed to help businesses to increase their sales by increasing customer satisfaction.
- **Pre-Business Start Up Planning** – Topics discussed include 'The Research Needed to Start Your Business and Steps to Take to Begin Your Business'. The workshop helps you answer important questions such as "Who Are Your Customers?", "What Assets Do You Have to Begin Your Business?" and "What Is Your Experience in Business?"

One attendee, local realtor Christina Branham, said that after attending 'How to Delight Your Customers and Grow Your Sales,' "I went back and reorganized everything using the information from the workshop. Because of that, I had four closings the next month."

ORNL Federal Credit Union sponsored the workshops, which were held at The Roane Alliance building in Kingston from noon to 2 pm. Lunch and refreshments were included. There was no charge to Chamber members, but if seats were available non-chamber members could attend at a cost of \$35. A continuing series of workshops are already being planned for 2009.

## Chamber Committees Became Even More Busy and Productive in 2008

The Chamber of Commerce – under the leadership of realtor, Kathy May-Martin the first half of the year and Dr. Gary Goff, President of Roane State Community College, during the second part of the year – had a very productive, busy year in 2008. Committees were hard at work implementing new programs and events as well as maintaining yearly events to make them grow and be more successful than years prior.

- The Legislative Committee hosted a Legislative luncheon debate with then Senate candidate Ken Yager and his opponent, Morgan County Executive Becky Ruppe, to allow Chamber members to ask questions concerning the positions on issues of importance to business.
- Spearheaded by the Education Committee, led by Kim Harris, the fifth annual Teacher's Supply Closet brought in nearly \$8,000 in supplies for Roane County's teachers from Roane County businesses and individuals.
- The Tennessee Scholars program – another program of the education committee – saw 112 graduating seniors receiving Scholars medallions in 2008 at their first breakfast event in May. In addition, five scholarships were given by Roane State Community College and two from the Tennessee Technology Center. The Scholars program provides incentives for middle and high school students to take more rigorous coursework.
- The Economic and Community Development Committee, co-chaired by Vickie Watts and Jennifer Palmer, teamed up with the Education Committee for several initiatives, including the creation of a brochure that will offer alternatives to students not college-bound; work toward the first-ever local high school job fair; and the implementation of an internship program – a partnership between local industries and the public school system – and conducted a survey of local businesses and industries for their workforce needs.
- The Chamber Ambassadors, chaired by Christina Branham, implemented new programs and events such as The Positive Image Award, Chamber After Hours, Chamber Welcome Wagon as well as grand openings/ribbon cuttings, coffees and open houses. The Ambassadors have grown from a small group of 5 to a group of 20 active volunteers.
- The Housing Committee, chaired by Frank Myers, held the 2nd Annual Home & Garden Show. A total of 55 vendors were on hand as well as entertainment and crafters. Rockin' L Rentals provided inflatables for the kids and food booths were available. The crowd was so large, parking was a problem, so the Home & Garden show will be held at a new location in 2009 – at Roane State Community College.



## ORNL Chief and Annual Business Awards Highlight 2008 Annual Banquet

The Annual Chamber banquet is always a memorable affair; a must-attend social event of the year. It is attended by the top business and community leaders who socialize, hear from a top name in the business community and honor the winners of the Top Business Awards each year.



This year, the director of the Oak Ridge National Lab – Roane County’s largest employer – spoke to the gathering of some 200 attendees. Dr. Thom Mason spoke specifically about the importance of Innovation Valley Inc., a regional economic

development partnership that Roane County joined this year along with the lab. Mason is chair of the board directing that effort.

After Mason’s remarks, the awards ceremony honored four individuals for their efforts to further the mission of the Chamber and to benefit Roane County.

The 2008 award winners were:



Joy Goldberg of Roane State Community College was honored with this year’s Athena Award. She was nominated based on her professional achievements and community service and assistance to women in reaching their full potential. Dr. Linda Hunter, a major

sponsor of the Athena Award in Roane County, presented the award to Goldberg. Hunter said the criteria used by the selection committee also included: demonstrated excellence, creativity and initiative in the nominee’s business or profession and contributions of time and

energy to improve the quality of life in the community. Hunter has sponsored the Athena Award for the past five years.



David Webb, owner of Rocky Top General Store was the Business of the Year Award winner. Webb reminded everyone in accepting that his store is “not just a store – it is an experience!” As the founder and sole sponsor of the annual Miss Polk Salad Pageant event in

Harriman, the Rocky Top General Store makes significant contributions to the county’s tourism and economic development efforts.



The Distinguished Service Award was the final award and it was presented to Gary Baker from Harriman City Mayor, Chris Mason for the many years of service to numerous community projects that benefit the area. In recent years Baker has been

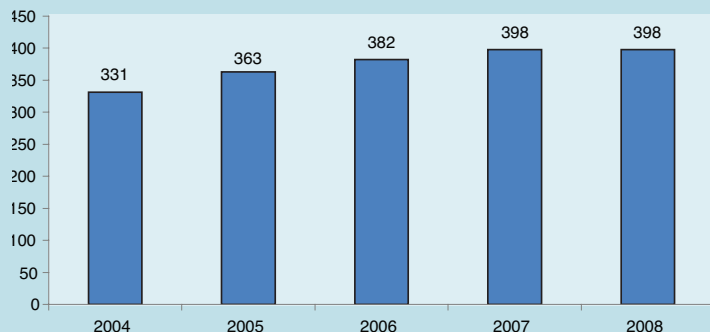
the major force behind the drive to restore the Princess Theatre in downtown Harriman. An unassuming, behind-the-scenes type volunteer, Baker is a continuous supporter of such key projects as the Harriman River Front Park and Roane County’s War Memorial.



Christina Branham was honored as Ambassador of the Year.

## Membership Remains Strong

### Chamber Membership



The Chamber made a concerted effort in 2008 to provide value to the membership to help in tough times. The members responded and we are ending the year maintaining our membership at nearly 400. Because of benefits such as the Lunch and Learn Series, Chamber After Hours, informative speakers at our Monthly Speakers' Series Chamber Luncheon and active and effective committees, members found opportunities to benefit even more than before.

## 2008 Chamber Promotional and Networking Events

### Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings in 2008

Quality Home Health  
Brown Funeral Home of Kingston, LLC  
Touch of Nature  
Educator Concepts Inc.  
Southern Elegance  
Good Ol' Days Diner  
Shear Perfection Pet Salon  
B & S Pet Supplies  
Utopia Cafe  
Priority Healthcare Services  
Citizen's First Bank  
Sweet-N-Spicy Café  
James Auto Repair  
Roane Medical Center/Covenant Health

### New Promotional Events in 2008

Positive Image Award  
Chamber Welcome Wagon  
Chamber "After Hours"  
Lunch and Learn Workshop Series

### Chamber Coffees/Open Houses/Anniversary

#### Celebrations for 2008

All Star Promotions  
Bill Jordan, Coldwell Banker  
Countrywide Home Loans  
Ecoquest International  
Papa Joes Café  
Blue Springs Boat Company  
Roane County Connection  
Rosemary's Florist  
Business Personnel Solutions  
Oak Ridge Utility District  
Methodist Medical Center  
ReMax Realty  
Coldwell Banker  
ERA Realty  
LKL Party Décor

*"The Chamber has promoted my businesses from the very time I joined one year ago. I have been very successful and couldn't have done the things I have dreamed up without (that) support!"*  
*Zac Gronda, owner of Roane County Connection and Zac's Barber Shop in Rockwood.*

## Roane County Commission Tourism Committee

<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	County Commissioner James “Dub” Harmon
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	County Commissioner Chris Johnson
	County Commissioner George W. “Copper” Bacon
	County Commissioner Ray Cantrell
	County Commissioner Nadine Jackson

## Roane Chamber Tourism Committee

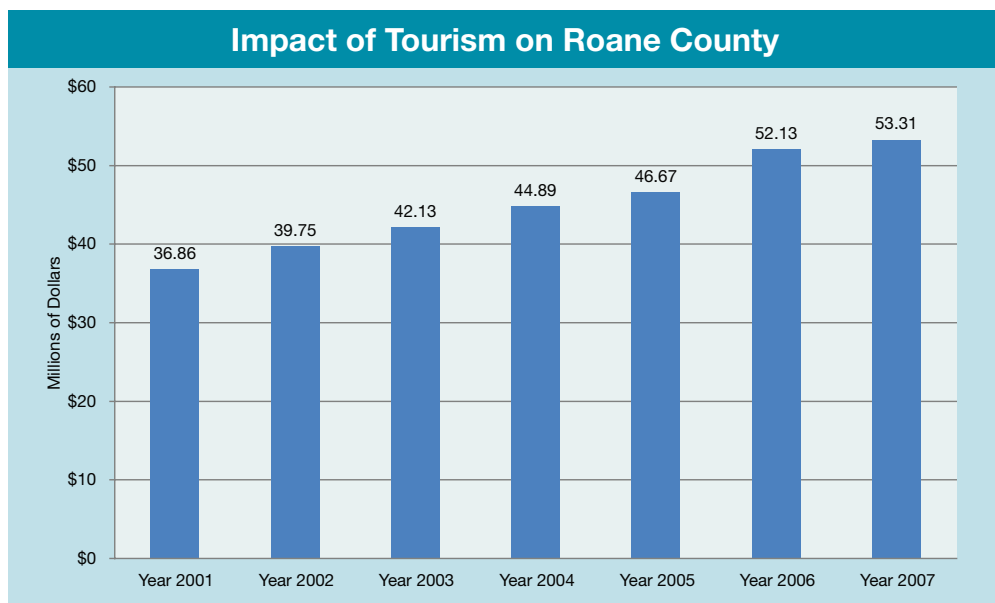
<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	Paul Cowell, Whitestone Country Inn
	Celia Breedlove, Roane State Community College
	Amy Arriola, City of Harriman
	Bruce Eltzroth, Watts Bar Belle Riverboat
	Linda Donson-Shearer, Tennessee Lakefront Cottages
	Ron McConathy, Aronsha Photography
	David Webb, Rocky Top General Store

*Tennessee is now in the top 10 states for person-stays in the 48 contiguous United States, according to the 2008-2009 Governor's Conference Report. According to Governor Bredesen "tourism is one of Tennessee's most important industries" and "continues to be an economic driver for the state."....*

# Roane County in Top 25 Counties in Tennessee in Tourist Dollars Spent

Although 2008 was a comparatively sluggish year for the hospitality industry in Roane County, according to the latest state figures, Roane County was still showing up in the top tier of counties across the state in tourist dollars spent. Those numbers showed an increase from \$52.13 million in 2006 to \$53.31 in 2007. Roane County ranked in the top 25 Tennessee counties based on tourist expenditures. In fact, Roane County showed above Loudon & Jefferson counties for tourist dollars spent in spite of the fact that they are located closer to the Smoky Mountains.

In that state report, local tax receipts from tourism also increased from \$2.68 million in 2006 to \$2.74 million in 2007, saving every Roane County household \$244 in taxes. Tourism employs 440 positions in Roane County and pays \$8.92 million in wages locally.



Sources: *The Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties 2007.*

Tourism is Working for Roane County	
<b>Generates:</b>	<b>Creates:</b>
\$53.31 Million Through Tourist Expenditures	\$3.16 Million in State Tax Revenues
	\$2.74 Million in Local Tax Revenues
<b>Sustains:</b>	<b>Saves:</b>
440 Jobs and \$8.92 Million in resident wages	\$244 in taxes for Every Roane County Household

Sources: *The Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties 2007.*



# Visitor's Bureau Marketing Strategy Becomes Even More Targeted

**Music to Your Ears, Eyes & Soul**  
 Book your place in the fun amid the rivers, mountains and special attractions at our beautiful waterside communities.

**WHITESTONE COUNTRY INN**  
 www.whitestoneinn.com  
 (888) 247-2464 or 865-376-0113  
 Discover the magic of refined country living. AAA 4-Diamond Bed & Breakfast, Restaurant, Wedding Chapel & Conference Facilities.

**ROCKY TOP GENERAL STORE**  
 www.rockytopgen.com  
 (865) 852-8867  
 Part retail store, part museum. Browse nostalgic merchandise, Case Knives, giftware, furniture, hardware and farm supplies. Host of The "Polk Salad" Festival.

**DISCOVER ROANE COUNTY**  
 Enjoy 738 shoreline miles on beautiful Watts Bar Lake. World class fishing, lakeside resorts and camping, scenic riverboat and train tours, antique shops, unique family festivals, roots bluegrass music, and so much more!

**THE ROANE ALLIANCE** HARRIMAN / KINGSTON / OAK RIDGE / OLIVER SPRINGS / ROCKWOOD  
 For more information, call the Roane County Visitor's Bureau toll-free at 1-800-FUN-IN-TN or visit [www.roanetourism.com](http://www.roanetourism.com)

- Roane County's festivals and events were promoted in area newspapers and online.
- A tourism-specific website was launched to promote tourist attractions and events in Roane County. The website also highlights Roane County's parks, walking trails, and wildlife areas and showcases Watts Bar Lake.
- 1,250 packets were handed out at the youth-league tournaments to promote Roane County businesses. Coupons were included to entice participants to frequent area businesses while they were visiting.
- New brochures were designed to showcase Roane County including a map that highlights popular tourist stops.
- The visitor's bureau continued to publish several flyers handed out to tourists who stop in to provide them information about area businesses. The flyers include:

- Events & Happenings
- Campgrounds, Parks & Recreation
- Restaurant Guide
- Guide to Antiques

A more targeted approach in advertising was implemented in Southern Living, the Tennessee Vacation Guide, and Retirement Lifestyles, resulting in a continued increase in targeted leads for Roane County.

The focus remained on the major tourism attractions such as Watts Bar Lake, the Whitestone Inn, and Caney Creek RV Park while also promoting The Rocky Top General Store, Yonder Hollow Productions, Inc., and Bradbury Community Center and their uniqueness to Roane County.

In addition:

- The Holiday Home Tours advertisement in Southern Living was also published nationally in "The Best of Southern Living".

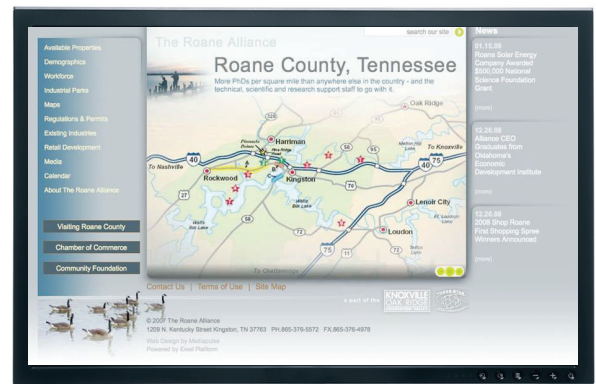
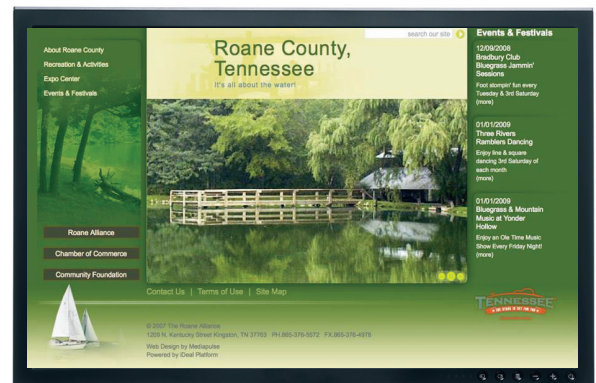
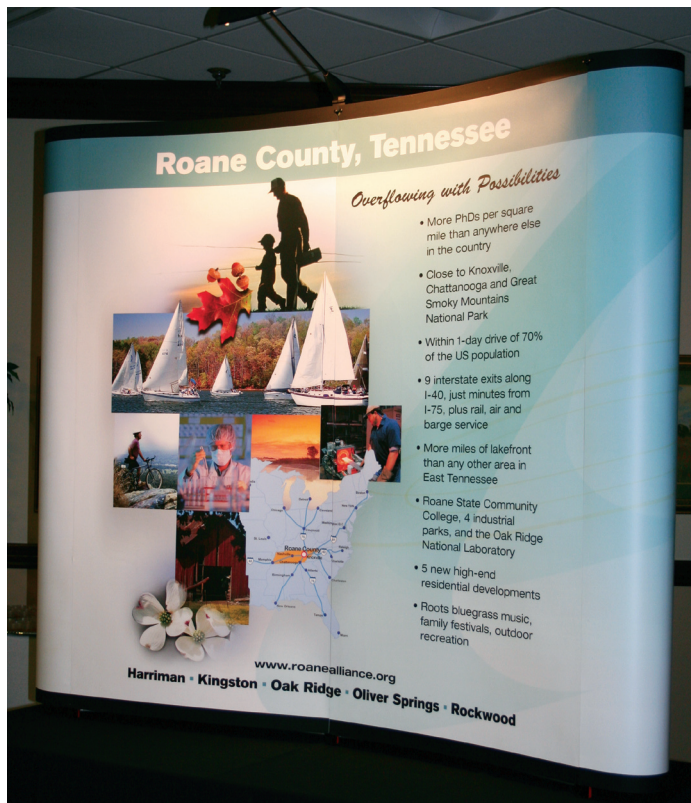


# Looking to 2009

And looking forward to 2009, below are some of the new initiatives already in the works...

- Implementing creative new ways to promote Roane County using the Internet, social networks, and trade shows
- Distribution of a high-end video showcasing what the county has to offer; copies will be made available for sale at The Roane Alliance
- A short version of the video added to the website to showcase Roane County around the clock

- An interactive blog to provide a place to discuss recreational and fun activities in Roane County and on Watts Bar Lake, such as fishing, hiking, bird watching, attractions, and more
- Become a new member of the Tennessee Motor Coach Association and attend the 2009 TMCA Convention & Marketplace to promote Roane County to tour bus companies. Monthly email marketing blasts will also be sent to the tour bus companies keeping Roane County “on their map” to help establish us as a wonderful destination or stop-over for future tours







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