



ROANE ALLIANCE

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

About The Alliance



The Roane Alliance is the economic development agency for Roane County. As the umbrella organization over the Industrial Development Board (IDB), Visitors Bureau and Chamber, it oversees the management and day to day operations for the entire team. Established in 2001 as a catalyst for 'positive economic and community development programs,' the primary reason for the Alliance was to bring the three organizations together under one roof to share operating costs and create a central location that works together to promote and market the county. Providing a 'one stop shop' under one roof provides more efficiency and productivity, allowing Roane County to be more competitive and successful in promoting our quality-of-life and quality-of-place. The Alliance also works as a forum to bring leaders, stakeholders and residents together to discuss and share key economic development issues and build consensus across the county. This annual report provides a snapshot of the Alliance's economic and community development efforts in 2019 that helped increase economic prosperity for the county and its residents.

Thank you to our 2019 Roane Alliance Contributors!

City of Harriman
 City of Kingston
 City of Oak Ridge
 City of Rockwood
 East Tennessee Economic Council
 EnergySolutions
 Oak Ridge Utility District
 The Omni Family of Services

Roane County Board of Education
 Roane Medical Center
 Rockwood Electric Utility
 Tennessee College of Applied
 Technology - Harriman
 UCOR
 UT Battelle/ ORNL
 Youth Opportunities

Roane Alliance Funding Sources

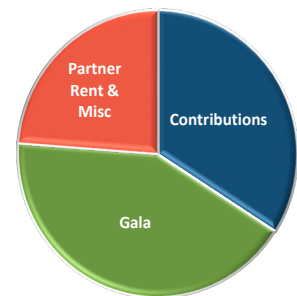


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Pam May, President/CEO

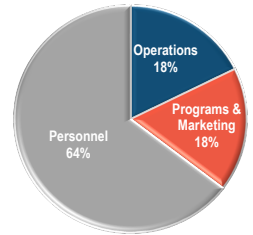
The Roane Alliance experienced many changes in 2019, starting with me as the new President/CEO and ending with losing and then gaining three new team members. And yet, as unstable as the year may have seemed, we still accomplished many things for Roane County. And I think that speaks volumes to the various boards, the Alliance team and the many partners we work alongside to bring economic prosperity to our citizens. Here are just a few of the highlights you will learn more about throughout this report:

- K-25 Overlook reopened bigger and better;
- A \$15M training facility project began – the only one like it in the U.S.;
- Chamber membership ended the year at an all-time high with 417 members;
- The Relax in Roane campaign launched, targeting retirees in key northern markets;
- A new company, E-Jay Thermo, broke ground in Roane Regional;
- 145 seniors graduated as Tennessee Scholars, a record 31.2% of the 2019 graduating class;
- The Chamber’s online member directory had 55,000 visits, a 58% increase;
- \$71.32M was spent by visitors stopping and staying in Roane - \$1.5M more than prior year;
- ‘We’ve Mastered What Matters’ launched – the first-ever campaign targeting industries;
- A commercial database listing available properties for sale, can be viewed on RoaneECD.com; and
- Roane became a pilot community on the Tennessee RiverLine, holding the first-ever group paddle.

Roane Alliance Funding comes from contributors, the annual fundraiser and rent paid by each of the partner organizations – IDB, Visitors Bureau and Chamber. The Roane Alliance Gala is important in that it provides the largest portion of funding for the Alliance’s operating costs - nearly half. And when combined with the annual funding received from municipal and industry contributions, this accounts for 75%, with only a small portion coming from the partner organizations. The Alliance owns the building, allowing more funds to go to programming and personnel, and less on operations. In addition, the Alliance puts 1/3 of the partner’s rent into a building fund to ensure there are funds to cover any unforeseen or planned improvements. In 2015, much-needed improvements were made with funding coming directly from an available CD (per Chamber Board vote). No longer earning interest, the money was used to invest in the building, which now provides a larger and more accommodating space for workshops and meetings. In addition, the nearly 900 visitors per year who drop by to learn about Roane County also enjoy a more welcoming space and an inviting first impression of the area.

“For Industrial Development and Tourism a consistent level of funding” is provided by the county, as established by resolution and the Private Act of 1992. The Chamber is funded entirely through membership and non-dues revenue. The IDB, Chamber and Alliance have their own operating budget and board of directors; while the Visitors Bureau has an operating budget, it falls under and is overseen by the Roane Alliance Board and the Roane County Tourism Committee. The Education Matters program is included in the Roane Alliance budget with its own line item, with a small amount of funding coming from grants and other contributions, while the Retire Roane program’s funding comes from the Visitors Bureau. All partners and budgets run on a fiscal year from July 1 to June 30.

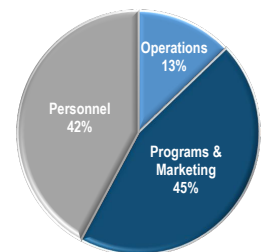
Chamber Budget Breakdown



IDB Budget Breakdown



Tourism Budget Breakdown



Cary Parten, Office Manager



Industrial Development

New Prospects and Investments resulted in one of the busiest years for the Industrial Development Board (IDB) in quite some time. In the summer, Senator Yager advised that the state had chosen Roane County as the location for an Emergency Response Training Facility. The state-of-the-art facility will be the first of its kind in the U.S. to train and prepare local, state and federal personnel to handle a spectrum of disaster events. The \$15M investment is expected to employ close to 1,000, generate \$104M in sales and \$3.6M in sales tax for the county. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2021, and located in the Oak Ridge portion of Roane County. Additionally, several existing industries in the Roane County Industrial Park (RCIP) announced expansions this year:

- Precise Industrial Coatings doubled their existing footprint to 9,000 sqft;
- Sauter Timber is adding 1,000 sqft of office space to support growth; and
- Ag & Industrial Hydraulic Services purchased an additional 1.5 acres with plans to double their existing building to accommodate more business and hire additional staff.



Justin Snow, VP of Economic Development

Requests for Information (RFI) were received from prospects interested in Roane County, around 50 throughout the year. While approximately the same amount as in 2018, the prospects this year had an increase in average jobs per project – 286, compared to 238 the previous year; and average capital investment - \$136M, compared to \$124M. From those RFIs, Roane County fit the criteria for 31 with a capital investment total of more than \$2B. Six of those prospects visited Roane County, with one of them being E-Jay Thermo who broke ground in Roane Regional Business & Technology Park (RRBTP) with plans to invest \$1.5M.

Jobs and Unemployment declined in 2019. For job growth, that is bad news and disappointing after experiencing the previous five consecutive years of growth. Bayou Steel closed its doors after filing bankruptcy for all their locations across the nation, but ORNL also added the most new jobs – 394, which provided some relief. Based on those industries who reported by the time of this report, net jobs declined by 159. However, the good news is that Roane experienced another record low unemployment year, ending with 3.9% unemployment.

Building Relationships with TVA and Tennessee Economic & Community Development (TNECD) are both important to Roane's economic development pursuits. In 2019, TVA reached out to Roane specifically to request the Jones Road site in RRBTP be submitted for certain projects. In addition, increases in leads have come from relationships established by Justin with local developers, contractors, real estate brokers and site consultants. To review the entire prospect log visit www.RoaneECD.com/2019_prospect_activity.

Earl Duff Subaru

Earl Duff Subaru began work on their new dealership on Gallaher Road with a capital investment of \$5M. The existing dealership will provide service and used car sales.

Bank of Putnam County

Another groundbreaking occurred in December along the waterfront in Kingston when Chamber member Citizens First Bank (and partner with Bank of Putnam County) broke ground at their new location at 316 W. Race Street.

E-Jay Thermo

E-Jay Thermo broke ground December 18 at their future home on Sam Rayburn Parkway in RRBTP. On the six acres purchased, a 35,000 sf facility is planned for completion by summer 2020 at an investment of \$1.5M. They currently rent in Loudon County and employ 13.





Telling Our Livability Story is an important aspect of promoting Roane County. The Alliance knows how important quality-of-place is in telling our story, whether it's the IDB working with potential new industrial or retail prospects, the Chamber working to promote the local business community, or the Visitors Bureau inviting visitors to come and enjoy our relaxed way of life. So, when TVA began a new program last year to help communities better craft that livability story and provide professional feedback on how to improve it, the Alliance team vied for the opportunity. Roane County was one of only 10 communities selected across the entire Tennessee Valley region to learn best practices from one of the world's leading commercial real estate advisory firms, Newmark Knight Frank.

Months of research and preparation lead up to the presentation on July 17 in Nashville when the Alliance team showcased Roane through photographs, testimonials and stories. Challenges also had to be addressed in the presentation, in order to receive a true picture of where we are. However, the initial feedback was very positive and per the final report "was an excellent presentation – honest, informative, and inspiring." Suggestions were also made to expand on several assets that could make a big impact for Roane, such as telling the story of the people who come to Roane to work at ORNL, as well as the young talent we have.

The Marketing Toolkit should include any tool that helps tell your story, and the Alliance has been working hard to fill our toolkit with what tells Roane County's livability story the best. And of course, all tools have to be adjusted and sharpened over time, so we regularly review, update, and proof any information or marketing collateral that we send out to make sure it showcases our county in the most positive way. The right hand column of this page shows just a few of those tools we use daily.

Building Our Retail Toolkit became more important in 2019, as several long-time retailers closed their doors. In FY20, the IDB looked at funding retail recruitment efforts to help our cities fill the available spaces. Recruiting retail is not the same as recruiting industry, and most economic development agencies in the state do not actively recruit retail. So instead of learning from other counterparts, Justin attended a Retail Academy held in Nashville on July 22, learning and acquiring the tools necessary to help attract new retailers to Roane. While in Nashville Justin also attended the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) Idea Exchange that provided an important networking opportunity with retail prospects. And in November 13-15, Justin attended the ICSC Southeast Conference in Atlanta, an important step in building relationships with retailers and consultants that typically takes years. However, Justin was able to make several connections with retailers who were interested in Roane – Pet Sense and Firehouse Subs, to name a few. Plans are to continue building these relationships and connect on a regular basis so that Roane County and its cities will stay in front of those businesses and franchises looking to expand.

Late in 2019, Scott Stout joined the Alliance team and has been instrumental in bringing on board another tool in our kit. Scott worked with RealMassive to pull available commercial and retail space into one place at **RoaneECD.com/commercial_properties**. The site will provide a one-stop shop for prospects looking for available property in the county, which was something the county and city mayors and managers saw as a need to make it easy for businesses looking to expand or move.



**Scott Stout,
Project Manager**

Collateral:

- 6 Websites
- 1 Blog: MyRoaneCounty.com
- 13 Social Media Channels
- 2 Visitor Kiosks
- 1 Pad Map (Restaurants/Retail)
- 4 Printed Brochures
- 4 Branded Postcards
- 8 Banners/Large Displays
- Branded t-shirts, koozies, stickers

State/Regional Exposure:

- Tnvacation.com
- retiretennessee.org
- National Geographic Website
- Manhattan Project Website
- easttnvacations.com
- TN Civil War Trail Mapguide
- Top Secret Trail Guide
- Tennessee Riverline
- Long & Winding Road Motorcycle Mapguide
- 9 Lakes Mapguide



Education & Workforce



Allen Lutz, Director of Education & Workforce

Joint Partnerships was one of the three S.M.A.R.T. goals Roane’s leaders identified as a top priority during a ThreeStar meeting in May. Developing a plan and implementing “a joint partnership between Roane State Community College, Tennessee College of Applied Technology-Harriman and Roane County Schools” was identified in order to improve workforce development and expand Career Technical Education (CTE) courses to meet skills demands of employers. The Roane Alliance scheduled meetings and worked with these partners to document the efforts in place and identify needs and next steps.

Led by Roane County Schools CTE Director, Lance Duff, those partnerships as well as a number of high school career pathways were already in place, and seeing results. In November the State of Tennessee’s Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn certified 122 pathways across the state, with Roane County receiving 15 of those certifications across the five high schools, accounting for more than 12% of the state’s total certified pathways, the highest of any school district in the state.



Workshops and Seminars ranging from business planning, social media, marketing and workers compensation – 29 in all - were held in 2019. Allen Lutz worked with top experts in their field to get them to Roane County. Working through partnerships with the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC), the State of Tennessee, and SCORE, many of these workshops were offered for free or at a discount to Chamber members. A total of 328 Chamber members and non-members took advantage of the workshops in 2019.



TN Scholars recognized 145 graduating seniors in Roane, representing a record 31.2% of the county’s 2019 graduating class. This was the third year in a row that Roane’s graduating senior class set records as Tennessee Scholars. To be a Tennessee Scholar, students must complete a rigorous course of study, maintain an overall “C” average, have 95% or higher attendance, pass end-of-course tests, have no out-of-school suspensions, and complete a minimum of 80 hours of community service during their four years of high school. The number one factor businesses consider when locating in a community is skilled workforce, which TN Scholars helps to address, and the reason why the Alliance places such an importance in making it a successful program for the county.



Career Days for Roane’s High School and Middle School students are now held each year. In its 11th year, the High School Career Day was held in March at Roane State Community College, while the Middle School Career Day, in its 4th year, was held in October at Harriman High School. One hundred fifteen representatives from more than 40 businesses participated in each of the events that reached 1,020 8th and 11th graders. The participating organizations dedicate their time each year to show students the career options and opportunities available in each of their respective businesses. Interactive activities and displays provide students with experiences that can help guide them to interesting career paths.



“Your efforts set such a positive environment before the session even starts. [Allen] you wear many hats [and] you excel at all of them and make it so easy for your attendees and facilitators.”

Jeff Francis, Tennessee Bureau of Workers’ Compensation

Workers’ Comp 101 Training Workshop, 11/19/19; the highest-scoring workshop held to date



**Teresa Jackson,
VP of Operations**



Youth Leadership is one of the most successful programs of the Roane County Chamber, but all of that credit goes to Chamber Board member and Youth Leadership Director Kathy Parks. Each year, she and the Chamber prepare a curriculum and activities that can launch some of Roane County's top future leaders.



Leadership Roane is a partnership with The Roane Alliance and Roane State Community College (RSCC). Since 1985, RSCC has planned and executed this valuable program that has graduated more than 540 Roane County leaders. The Alliance staff provides support when needed, as well as preparing curriculum and tours for Economic Development day held at the Alliance, and other topics during the year. To learn more about both Leadership Programs visit www.RoaneChamber.com/Leadership.



ThreeStar is a strategic community development program offered by the state to assist communities in preparing for a better future. Roane County has been a ThreeStar community for 31 consecutive years, with the Roane Alliance administering the program for most of that time. By participating and fulfilling the program's requirements, Roane County and it's cities are eligible for:

- Discounts on both the business and community development ability-to-pay calculations - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and FastTrack each year;
- \$25,000 bonus through CDBG;
- Other select TNECD Rural and Community Development programs that otherwise would not be available; and
- Additional grant opportunities to help counties reach their 'S.M.A.R.T. Goals' identified during a required ThreeStar forum.

From 2015 to 2018, TNECD has made 12 investments in Roane County through grants valued at \$3,505,982. And in 2019, the Alliance submitted for a \$50,000 grant to help Tennessee College of Applied Technology fulfill one of the County's FY20 S.M.A.R.T. Goals to "complete TCAT expansion in Roane County." To learn more about this program and to review all three S.M.A.R.T. Goals established by the county visit www.RoaneAlliance.org/ThreeStar.



Silver Sustainable Community is a recognition from TVA's Sustainable Community program that provides a framework for communities to meet environmental, economic and social goals to be more competitive for new and existing investment. Every three years the Alliance submits an application to renew the designation, ensuring that Roane County continues to make a sustainable commitment and follow TVA's environmental policy. Teresa Jackson is Roane's Sustainability Officer, established per the program's requirements. To learn more about this program visit www.SustainableRoane.com.



The Roane County Green Team was formed on Earth Day in 2010 as a grass roots effort of concerned leaders and citizens wanting to make the county the cleanest in Tennessee. Through planning and collaboration, the Green Team works to coordinate efforts with other agencies and organizations to plan events and implement solutions for the county. This year, the team identified two areas of concern to focus on that impacts tourism and economic development recruiting efforts - Highway 72 and Rockwood's Roane County Industrial Park (RCIP). To learn more visit www.RoaneAlliance.org/GreenTeam.



A Unified Drive. A United Force.

52,943

POPULATION (2018)

Population **decreased by 162** over the last 5 years but is projected to **grow by 69** over the next 5 years.

20,444

JOBS (2018)

Jobs **grew by 859** over the last 5 years and are projected to **grow by 1,156** over the next 5 years.

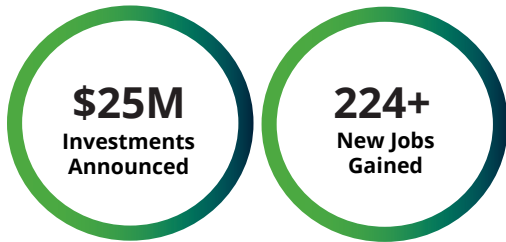
\$45.4K

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2017)

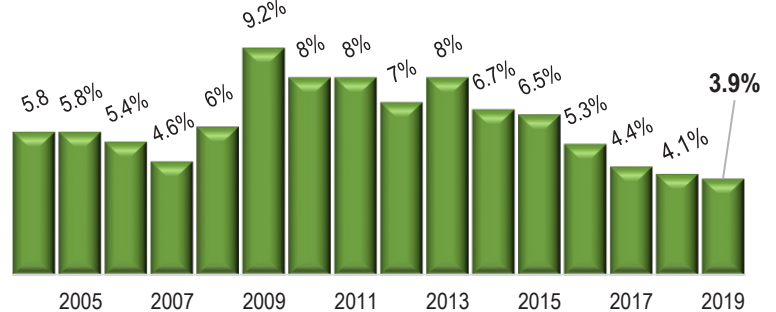
Median household income is **\$12.2K below** the national median household income of \$57.7K.

*Source: TVA, Emsi Q1 2019 Data Set, www.economicmodeling.com

ECD/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:

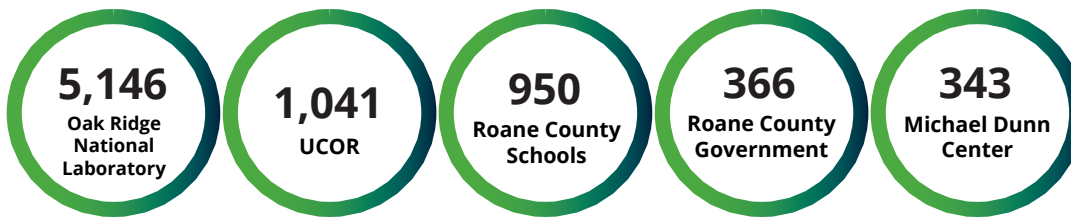


Roane County Unemployment Rates (at an all-time low in 2019)



**Represents average annual unemployment rate*

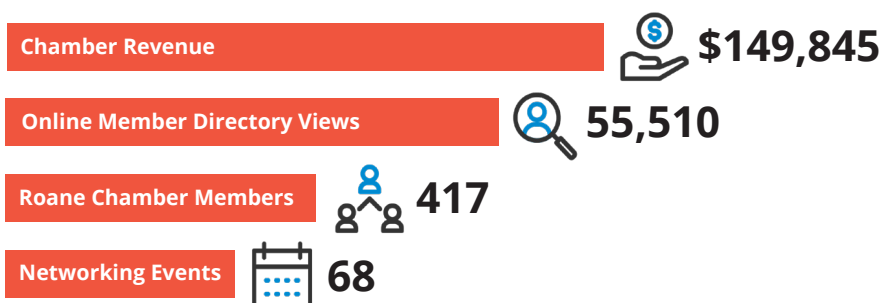
ROANE COUNTY'S TOP EMPLOYERS:



2019 CHAMBER BUSINESSES OF THE MONTH

- Enrichment Federal Credit Union
- Ron Berry Insurance
- Rockwood Merchants Association
- Earl Duff Subaru
- Food City of Kingston
- Chase Drugs & Clinical Services
- Emory Lane Family Boutique
- All-Star Promotions
- Griffin Insurance Agency
- Mossing Management
- Burger Station
- Cadillac Grill

CHAMBER:



The Chamber's social media followers went up 44% (more than any other partner) and had a higher CTR on social (up 163%) as well as more comments than any other partner. The Chamber Facebook page consistently has slightly more video & photo views than the Visitor Bureau, including a 624% increase in video views in 2019 (this is all organic as very little advertising is done).

Chamber Board Committee 2019-20 Initiatives can be found at www.RoaneAlliance.org/Chamber_Initiatives.

MARKETING EFFORTS SHOWS RESULTS:

Website Pages Viewed



385,504

Website Visitors



90,178

Social Media Followers



14,078

Leads / RFIs



10,514

In five years, total website traffic and unique visitors, as well as social media followers have more than tripled and we can reach over ½ million people on our social channels. Compared to 2018, website traffic increased 47%, with 91% of visitors viewing for the first time and social followers increased 23%.

The Chamber website received 74% of the total views across all sites, however the Visitor Bureau site saw the highest individual increases, with 52% more 1st time visitors and 28% more returning visitors. On average, our websites receive more than 1,000 page views every day.

TOURISM CREATES IMPACT:

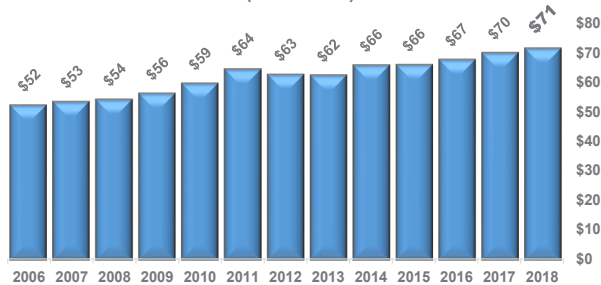
Visitor spending increased year over year, totaling \$1.5M more over previous year and \$15M over the last 10 years. This provides sales tax for our schools, creates jobs for the county, and puts \$376 more dollars in every households pocket each year.

\$71.3M
Spent by Visitors

481
Hospitality
Jobs

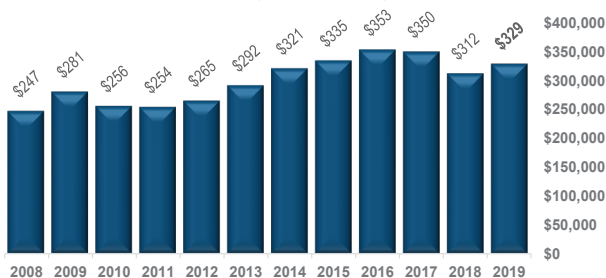
\$376.15
Less Taxes per
Household

Visitor Spending in Roane County
(in millions)



Source: U.S. Travel Association

Motel Tax Collections
(in thousands)



Motel tax collections are trending upward, with 2019 having the 4th highest collection since 2008 and within 7% of 2016 collections of \$353,433 (the highest in our records).

Top 5 States Requesting Info:

Illinois
New York
Michigan
New Jersey
Ohio



The Roane Alliance Mission is to create an environment and unified voice that promotes job creation, economic development, enhanced quality of life, and education and workforce development. To view the most recent reports from the Alliance and Alliance partnerships (TN Riverline, Legacy Parks, etc.) visit www.RoaneAlliance.org/Publications.





Visitors Bureau

Tourism is the 2nd Largest Industry in Tennessee and one of the largest economic drivers for Roane County, with \$71.32M spent by visitors in our county. The taxes generated by these same visitors resulted in close to \$8M which reduces each household's tax bill in Roane County around \$366 annually. In addition, visitor spending means jobs, creating \$12.47M in payroll for an average 485 hospitality jobs in the county. In five years, tourism created 70 new jobs and increased payroll by \$3.34M. Occupancy tax, which is also generated by visitors but not included in the visitor spending total was \$328,942 in 2019. This was a 10% increase for the county, while the overall tax collections (including City of Harriman) increased 5% overall. Charts are available on page 9.

When comparing Roane to other surrounding lake counties, visitor spending in Roane continues to remain anywhere from \$5M to \$10M above Jefferson, Campbell, and Loudon and nearly double that of Rhea. However, the rate of increase in Roane in 2019 was 2.12% over 2018, as compared to the other counties who all had a higher increase, specifically Rhea County at 9%. This is probably attributed to Roane's aging motels and the increased funding Rhea County put into major fishing tournaments over the years that is now realizing an influx of new and updated motels and restaurants.



The Tennessee RiverLine, the next great regional trail system, is a pilot project of The University of Tennessee's School of Landscape Architecture. Think Appalachian Trail on water. The project brands and promotes the Tennessee River and its communities along its 652 miles from Knoxville to Paducah, KY. Roane County Grant Administrator Jamie Kinard submitted the application, making the successful case for Roane County to be one of only five pilot communities chosen to launch the program. Facilitated by UT's faculty and students, Roane's leaders and residents helped shape the vision for the Tennessee RiverLine through workshops and community events through the summer, and in September, held the first group paddle with 50+ people paddling from Riley Creek to Kingston City Park. Backed by Tennessee State Parks, TVA and the National Park Service, the trail in its first year, had 40+ stories published in Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee and gained 2,300 fans, followers and subscribers on social media. This is just another tool in Roane County's toolkit that can help reach potential visitors. Follow #TNRiverlineRoane and @TNRiverline to learn about events in 2020 or visit www.VisitRoane.com/explore to learn more.

The K-25 Overlook officially reopened in May as a Visitors Center and recreation hub. The new Manhattan Project displays and oversized recreation map provide visitors a glimpse of the area's history, as well as the trails and outdoor activities available to enjoy in the area. Building owner John McCormick, Bionomics, wanted to keep the overlook open but also decided to invest time and money to update and expanded the indoor space – nearly triple in size. Design sensory in Knoxville donated their time and design work, while the National Park Service provided input and trash bins. Other people who helped the overlook reopen were Historians Ray Smith and Steve Goodpasture; Johnathan Sitzler, DOE; Amy Fitzgerald, City of Oak Ridge; and Sarah Self and Katy Jett, Explore Oak Ridge. Manhattan Project National Historical Park representatives from the other two part locations - Los Alamos, NM and Hanford, WA - toured the overlook during the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) conference held in Oak Ridge.

The Oak Ridge area around the overlook is quickly becoming a hub for recreation. In fact, Legacy Parks will publish the *Oak Ridge Natural Assets Guidebook* in early 2020 to provide a blueprint for recreational opportunities and enhancements.





Retire Roane

The Relax in Roane Campaign launched Spring 2019 with a contest targeting retirees from the top 5 target market states: Illinois, New York, Michigan, New Jersey and Ohio. From April 15 to June 15 social media and direct mail was used to reach potential retirees to not only enter the contest but consider Roane County as a place to visit and possible retirement destination. The prize package included a weekend stay with dinner and gift basket at Whitestone Inn. Contest entries were directed to the new campaign landing page, RelaxinRoane.com, part of Retire Roane's website.

Nearly 5,000 entries were received from the combination of paid and organic marketing, generating more email contacts in two months than all previous lead-generating efforts combined. 135,211 impressions were delivered across Facebook and Instagram, generating 2,877 clicks to our website, a click-through rate (CTR) of 2.13% - 137% higher than the industry average of 0.90% for travel and hospitality. The contest also increased traffic to RetireRoane.com, with visits nearly doubling in 2019 with 3,429 visits versus 2018's 1,719 visits.

Roane Received Seal of Approval for the 2nd year in a row from the the American Association of Retirement Communities (AARC). President Pam May accepted the award at a conference in Chattanooga in November where she was also a panel representative to discuss and answer questions about best practices and lessons learned regarding retiree and visitor recruiting and marketing.

The Retire Tennessee annual meeting was held at the Roane Alliance on August 22, playing host to nearly 50 attendees that included Tennessee's new Tourism Commissioner Mark Ezell. Chamber and tourism representatives from across the state, a handful of developers specializing in retirement communities, and several state and regional tourism leaders attended the meeting, including Retire Tennessee Director Ramay Winchester and Assistant Commissioner of Rural Tourism & Outreach Melanie Beauchamp.

Roane County has been part of the Retire Tennessee program since 2008, and one of only 21 communities chosen for the program in 2019. Qualified leads are received from the State's attendance at around ten Ideal Living Shows in the fall and winter. Since potential retirees visit many communities many times before they choose, this program has also provided leads for visitors. As of 2019 Roane received 4,744 requests for information (RFI) that turned into interested retirees who receive our quarterly newsletter promoting the county's events and attractions. RFIs are also answered with visitor guides via mail or email (when available), or relocation packages and maps, when requested. Roane County is represented on RetireTennessee.org, which is heavily promoted by the state and received nearly a quarter of a million visits (241,325) in 2019. Of those viewers, 2,256 clicked through to the Roane County page, which was 1% of the total viewers, and higher than the industry average of 0.90%.



L-R: Luke Freeman, Carter County; Director Ramay Winchester, State of Tennessee; Rhonda Adams, Dickson County; Alix Riter, Roane Alliance; and Lauren Hurdle, Jefferson County



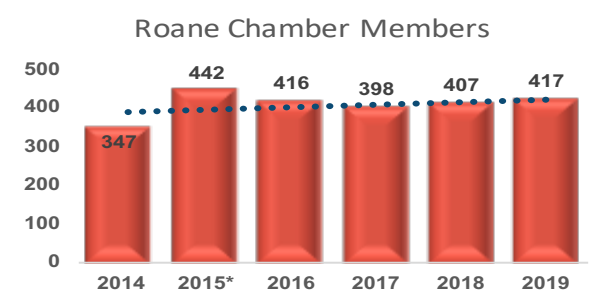
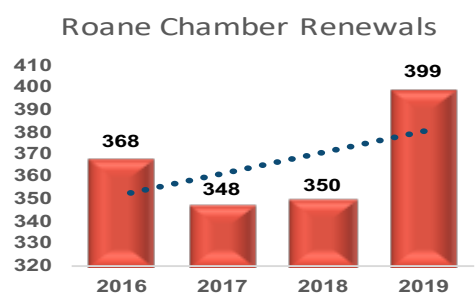


Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Membership increased to 417 members by the end of 2019, a 2.5% increase over 2018, and within 5% of the total membership in 2015, following a membership drive that led to the highest membership on record. While acquiring new members is always a focus, retaining members has become an even bigger focus. In 2019 renewals increased 14% over the previous year, while also being the highest retention total since tracking began with ChamberMaster in 2014. Having a retention program that focuses on communicating and visiting every member regularly has been successful, while the Ambassador group has helped to reach more members and represent the Chamber in the community in more ways than ever.

Thank You Chamber Champions for providing your leadership and support to the Roane Chamber. Listed on the left side of this page, these Executive II Level Members are an integral part of the Chamber and its abilities to provide important programming to the entire business community.



Roane Chamber Member Directory is printed annually by Roane County News, with Ben Briley directing the project. Each member receives an alphabetical listing as well as a listing by category. In addition to the printed directory, members are listed in the online directory, in up to three categories. The online member directory is one of the most-viewed pages on RoaneChamber.com, receiving a quarter of all traffic to the site.

Membership Benefits are evaluated every year to ensure we are providing those benefits the members want, and adding extra value however possible. Referrals are one of those benefits and one of the most important. Through in-person and email requests for services and specific types of businesses, the Alliance refers Chamber businesses first. In addition, the member directory is provided in every relocation package sent or handed out. Networking and meeting other member businesses is another very important aspect of membership so Chamber members are the first to know about special events being planned such as visits and roundtable discussions with state and US representatives, workshops and business consulting opportunities, as well as strategic planning and other community planning projects. There were 771 events on the Chamber's 2019 calendar that included community cleanups, job fairs, safety courses, gardening and more that were promoted through newsletters, targeted emails and social posts.

Roane Chamber Legislative Agenda is presented at one of the most attended events held at the Alliance - the Annual Legislative Breakfast. The Roane Chamber advocates those issues important to members, specifically businesses and industry to the County's state delegation before they head to Nashville. Senator Ken Yager and Representatives Kent Calfee and Ron Travis are invited to hear from Chamber members directly and discuss upcoming legislation or bills that could affect the County or its Chamber members. To view the latest Legislative Agenda visit RoaneChamber.com/legislative_agenda.

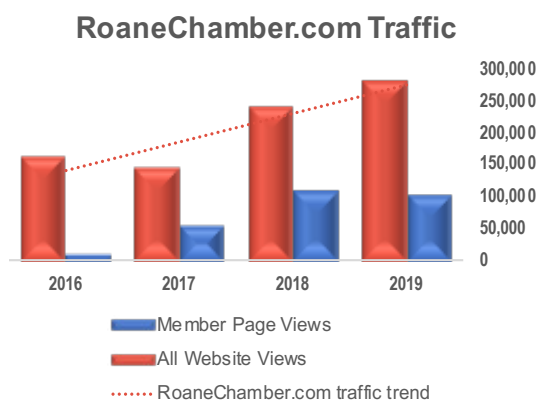
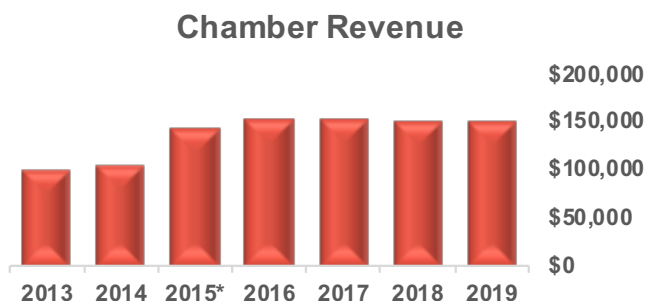


**Tori May,
Chamber Manager**

Chamber Revenue has remained steady since the 2015 Membership Drive. \$149,845 total revenue in 2019 came from membership dues of \$115,214 and non-dues revenue of \$34,631. This year, non-dues revenue increased by 6%, with the successful new Women’s Executive Program adding to the total. Other programs that add to non-dues include the Shop Where Your Heart Is shopping spree and the banquet.

A Lifetime Membership level was added in 2019 to encourage retirees to get involved in the community by joining the Chamber. Retirees can now be an individual member for their lifetime for \$300 and also include their spouse for the same benefits for just \$50 more. Lifetime members won’t have to remember or owe any dues again, while providing more revenue upfront for the Chamber. Six lifetime members and five spouses were added in 2019, creating around \$1,500 additional revenue for the Chamber for the year.

The Chamber Website continues to see increased traffic, with a 16% increase over 2018 overall. The online Member Directory saw the largest increase with more than 55,000 views, an increase of 58%; while the Hot Deals page was the next most visited page, with nearly 5,000 views and an increase of 41% over 2018.



The Chamber Ambassador Program continues to be one of the most successful Chamber programs, with 50+ active members. In 2019 the ambassadors found even more ways to ‘give back’ to the community - raising \$1,000 for Michael Dunn; helping 76 teens find prom dresses, tuxedos and accessories with the Say Yes To The Prom Dress event; collecting Angel Tree donations to provide Christmas gifts for 46 children in 6 schools; and the Shoes for Souls backpack drive to collecting brand new backpacks and school supplies to give to students the first day of school at Kingston Elementary.

The Women’s Executive Program launched Spring 2019 to provide business women and leaders a platform for networking and inspiration. Danice Turpin, Director of Tennessee College of Applied Technology; Candace Vannasdale, General Manager of Harriman Utility Board; Betsy Cunningham, Manager of Community and Public Relations at Y-12 Federal Credit Union; and Cheryl Sanders, Major for the Tennessee Highway Patrol were the four outstanding speakers. The event was sponsored by the Oak Ridge Utility District and lunch was provided. With 16 to 25 attendees at each of the four sessions, the Chamber earned nearly \$1,000 in non-dues revenue, while raising the same for co-host and event venue, Greenwood School Education Foundation.

Shop Roane has been the longest-running program in the Chamber, and one of the most important - to promote the importance of shopping local. Annually, a shopping spree contest is held to encourage shopping locally at participating businesses before Christmas for a chance to win cash prizes. Brick and mortar Chamber businesses can participate for \$100 to cover the prize money and advertising. Print advertising and the website provided the list of participating businesses, while social media posts promoted the contest. At least one post per day in two weeks leading up to the contest received 17,500 impressions and nearly 1,500 people engaged with the contest posts. There were more than 1,200 people that entered from 26 local businesses, sending close to 50 people on average into each business. Super Saturday is a day designated by the Chamber to ask everyone to commit to spending at least \$50 at a local business the day after Black Friday to bring awareness to residents about local businesses and the unique gifts they can provide.



Kaley Hill,
Communications &
Marketing Manager

Marketing and PR

The Marketing Plan is one of the most important documents created each year by the Roane Alliance, directing much of what we do daily. Increasing the effectiveness of the marketing collateral, while increasing our reach through digital and print advertising is the primary strategy. Our marketing efforts are designed to recruit industrial and retail prospects, promote the local business community and encourage outdoor and history enthusiasts and future retirees to visit. We love sharing information with the local community to remind them of the great assets we have but our mission is to increase economic prosperity for our citizens, and the easiest way to do that is to recruit others to come into our county to spend money and create more jobs.

Social media has become one of the best and most cost-effective ways to reach our target markets. It does require staff time for research and content creation, however, our reach on social now includes 14,000 followers plus an extended reach when we share on state and regional marketing partners' pages. More than 1,000 posts were created across our social channels in 2019, but we shared many more posts from our attractions, events and businesses, promoting Roane's quality of life. Paid social and digital ads are also a good way to target specific zip codes or demographics in target markets but the organic marketing efforts created by the Roane Alliance often pay the highest dividends.



Marketing Campaigns continue to be successful, and in 2019 two new campaigns were launched - *We've Mastered What Matters* and *Relax in Roane*. The popular Soak in Roane campaign, initially launched in 2017, has grown into an extension of the Roane Tourism brand and is still seeing results.

"We've Mastered What Matters" by creating a branded marketing packet with industrial prospects in mind. The newly-branded folder and brochure highlights assets like location, skills and affordability, in addition to quality of life and place. Personalized flyers can also be provided with a consistent branded message that provides details on the industrial sites that fit the prospects criteria. RoaneECD.com webpages were also updated with the new branding, as well as videos that provide a birds-eye view of the industrial parks and properties across the county, and their close proximity to I-40 and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. As companies continue to make decisions for themselves instead of using consultants, as shown by the increase in requested information in 2019, we will continue to look for new ways to reach business owners directly. One such company was E-Jay Thermo, who recently broke ground in Roane Regional Business and Technology Park.



The Relax in Roane campaign was a new campaign targeting top retiree markets in the north. Through a pleasing, relaxing new brand, a successful contest was held on social and through direct mail. A new branded landing page, relaxinroane.com, was created for the Retire Roane website.



Google ads also ran during the summer, promoting lake and recreational activities. The most searched keywords were 'Fishing in Tennessee,' 'RV Resort Camping,' 'Lake Vacation,' and 'Bassmaster Classic.' During the campaign there were 942,000 impressions that resulted in 6,370 clicks to our website. A print ad also ran in *Tennessee Magazine* in September along with an editorial about Tennessee's rivers and lakes.

Marketing Partnerships with other organizations have allowed the Roane Alliance to leverage marketing dollars to increase our marketing reach and capabilities in the region and across the state. The Middle East Tennessee Tourism Council (METTC) promotes Roane in their *9 Lakes Recreation Guide* and the *Long & Winding Road* motorcycle trails guide. The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development provides a matching marketing grant for qualifying projects every year, adding around \$20K to the Visitors Bureau budget the last couple of years. TVA also provides grant money to those organizations chosen to participate in marketing programs offered each year. In 2019, the Roane Alliance was chosen and received three small grants from TVA.

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**2019 – 2020
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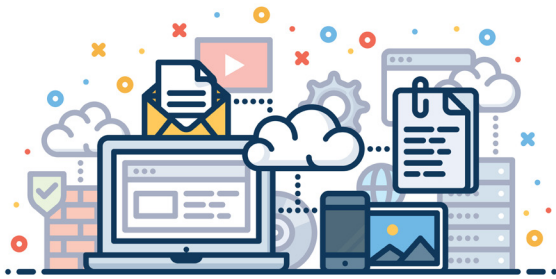
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Tommy Thompson



2019 Chamber Business Award Winners (l-r): Rick Cox, Paul Cowell Distinguished Service Award; Tim Duff, Earl Duff Subaru, Business of the Year; Mark Patterson, Paul E. Goldberg Young Professional Award; Deb Sumner, Dr. Paul Goldberg Leadership Award; Jill McMaster, Woman of the Year; and Henry Redmond, Ambassador of the Year.



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RoaneAlliance.org

VisitRoane.com

SoakInRoane.com

RoaneChamber.com

RoaneECD.com

EducationMatters2Roane.org

RetireRoane.com

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#TNRiverLineRoane

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#RoaneECD

#RoaneChamber

#ShopRoane

#ShowYourLoveForRoane

#UniteRoane

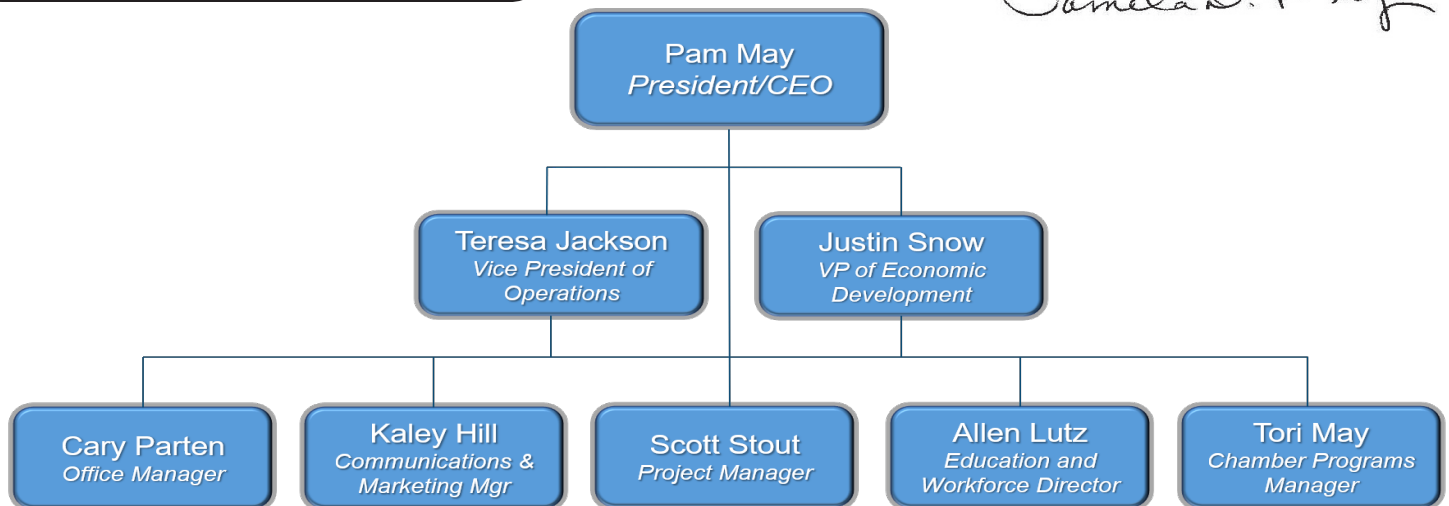
#RoaneChamberMember

Looking Forward... When the Roane Alliance team was finalizing this report in early 2020 we had no idea what was coming. Even by April we hadn't realized the full impact of what a pandemic would mean to our team, our families, our businesses, ... our entire community. So, we did what I feel we are best at - jumped into the new normal full-speed ahead to make sure our community had the information and resources they would need to get through the crises.

We pretty much dropped everything we were working on to focus on helping our businesses, industries and community navigate the quarantine and the constant influx of information that changed daily. Afterall, 'To create an environment and a unified voice' is the beginning of our mission statement. And though our environment changed - worked from home, no eating out or socializing - our voice remained unified. Our community needed to know as soon as possible the steps they should take to continue making sales, how to communicate changes with customers daily, and then how to successfully apply for the available funds before they dried up. We created webpages, Facebook group, new Shop Roane campaigns - whatever we thought could help our community share and receive important information keeping everyone safe and able to make a living, if possible.

We still accomplished quite a lot the first half of 2020, and we haven't given up entirely on holding our fundraiser, that provides nearly 1/3 of the Alliance budget. Only time will tell. However, we have seen glimpses of hope - the April sales tax report was up from the same time last year and our businesses are slowly reopening. One thing that didn't change from what I had written before the pandemic - that we have worked every day to accomplish our mission with the goal of increasing economic prosperity for our citizens. But we can't do it alone. It requires leadership from the business community, municipalities, elected officials, educators, and residents. I encourage you to please stop in and find out more about the Roane Alliance and how to become more involved as a partner and Chamber member.

Camela D. May



Gail Lyke
Alliance Board Chair

Jim Palmer
IDB Board Chair

Dana Peterka
Chamber Board Chair

