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## Executive Director's Report

*From the desk of G.C. Hixson ...*

### Oh For a Crystal Ball!

When discussing the economy either with our clients or others in the economic field, I sometimes wish I had a peek into the mystical "crystal ball". It is during these times that I find myself asking if Wilson County's economic glass is half full or half empty? Without question and after any analysis, I always answer the same, Our Glass is Half Full!



Experience has shown that Wilson County's economy and that of middle Tennessee doesn't experience the tremendous highs and lows of other regions of Tennessee and of the nation. This is not to say however that our local economy is as strong as it once was or that people in our community are not affected by present conditions. The lesser degree of being affected by national economy can be contributed to our diverse economy, the strength of our local banks, a business friendly business tax structure, quality of labor, available land and facilities and our central location. These factors have driven our growth in the past and will lead us through these difficult times.

**What do the experts say?** Without putting your faith in the crystal ball one simply has to rely upon the experts in the field. One of the best articles on projections of what is going to happen appeared in the 2008 fall edition of *Development Magazine*. In that article five leading economists from universities, governmental agencies and trade associations were asked their views on the economy and their predictions for 2009. Below are highlights of their comments:

**What track do you think the economy will take over the next six months?** The economy in 2009 will stabilize due to less insecurity in both the financial markets and in political arenas. The economy should accelerate beginning in the second quarter of 2009 with growth in the two percent range. (three percent is traditional and considered steady growth)

**What are the greatest threats to an economic recovery?** Most agreed the greatest threat is from over-regulation from the federal government. Other factors included continued and significant bank failures, continuation of armed conflict and the continued loss of confidence on the part of U.S. consumers.

**What sectors do you see as being particularly strong for development and investment?** Multi-family buildings and apartments will be strong over the next 18 months. Distribution space will remain strong with the Southeast being especially attractive due to its demographics. Office and commercial property typically lags in recovery and may not begin until 2010.

**Given the current state of the economy, when do you forecast the next up cycle?** The timing of any return will greatly depend upon many of the decisions in Washington, DC. Most economists think that total stability will return in less than a year with steady growth beginning in 2010.

**So, what does this mean to Wilson County?** First, Wilson County has a very stable local financial market. Second, I think that we will see our housing industry continue to recover led by multi-family and apartment growth already present in Mt. Juliet. Our inventory of buildings is strong. Panattoni developers will add over 2.4M sq. ft. of space in 2009.

The factors that made us attractive remain the same, buildings and sites are available, and we have an available and proven workforce. Certainly, OUR ECONOMIC GLASS IS ONLY HALF FULL!

## TRW Receives Training Assistance Grant



Commissioner James G. Neeley of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development announced the award of a \$63,165 training assistance grant to TRW of Lebanon, Tennessee. The award was made under the skills shortage/upgrade grant which will allow TRW to broaden the current skill base of both hourly and salary employees.

The need for additional training was identified during a 2008 JECDB existing industry survey and then coordinated by Mr. Mike Bolen, TRW Plant Manager and Mr. Donny Bevis, Assistant Director of Region 8, UAW. The training is expected to begin in early 2009 according to TRW officials and will be administered by the Nashville Career Advancement Center.

## CoreTech Park

CoreTech is designed to be America's first true green technology research and development business park. CoreTech's cellular concrete products and market applications are revolutionizing the way construction will be performed in the future. Cellular concrete (aerated concrete) is a lightweight concrete with a Portland cement base containing many small air cells uniformly distributed throughout the concrete.

The CoreTech Park site is to be located within the City of Lebanon and will become a magnet location for other green technology development companies. Phase One includes the location of CoreTech's corporate headquarters operation. CoreTech plans to employ more than 200 people amongst a 100,000 square foot Class A office facility, a 45,000 square foot Technology Training Center and a 65,000 square foot facility for research and development.

Greg Quinn, President of CoreTech Industries is working with local officials to get this project underway. For more information visit [www.coretechusa.com](http://www.coretechusa.com).



## D&H Electronic Systems, Inc. is Relocating to a New Facility



D&H Electronic Systems, Inc. is in the process of moving into a new facility located in the Highway 109 Business Park. The building consists of 11,000 sq. ft. with 3,800 sq. ft. of office.

Established in 1982, D&H, a female owned business, was incorporated to supply a wide variety of alarms and communications equipment for both facility protection and efficient communication.

The Company provides sales, connection, inspection, installation, and service of equipment selected for performance and reliability, through a factory trained and certified staff.

D&H provides *Protection Alarm Systems* for fire and emergency calls; *Sound and Communication Systems* for professional sound, paging, intercom and telephone;

*Security Systems* for closed circuit television, controlled access and building perimeter protection; *Nurse Call Systems* for patient call, code blue, asset management and staff locator systems; and *Associated Systems* for Clock Systems and Television Distribution.

Their clients consist of commercial, industrial and institutional facilities.

Glenda Binkley is the President and Dora Binkley Martin is Vice President of D & H Electronics and they have 40 employees.

## TRW Hosts Existing Industry Forum - Commissioner Neeley Guest Speaker

The Existing Industry Forum Luncheon was hosted by TRW Automotive in November. Mike Bolen, Plant Manager, gave an overview of TRW and noted they have 374 employees. He also noted that current employee reduction was the result of plans that were made more than a year ago to move certain lines to other TRW facilities.

James Neeley, Commissioner of the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development was the guest speaker for the Forum. He spoke on various training programs for industries including the Incumbent Worker Program and jobs skills upgrades.

# Cumberland University Happenings



The New Year will be another banner year for Cumberland University with a host of progressive new programs taking shape, including the Engineering Science program launched in the fall of 2008.

Housed within the University's Labry School of Business & Technology, the Engineering Science program seeks to provide students with the latest in technology-related instruction while offering an academic foundation anchored in the business world. For the coming semester, students enrolled in the selective program will acquire computer-programming skills by working alongside CU President Dr. Harvill Eaton as part of a course focused on electronic gaming. Coursework will not be limited to the traditional classroom setting, as students will also be able to receive personal attention and assistance from Dr. Eaton thanks to the use of video conferencing technology and remote desktop access.

The Engineering Science program is but one of several new programs at the Lebanon institution as it enters its 167<sup>th</sup> year. A new Entertainment Design program, steeped in graphic design, photography and the visual arts, is rapidly gaining popularity and raising the profile of CU's School of Music & the Arts. A new Media Communications program, which seeks to train 21st Century journalists and communications professionals, is also expected to launch in 2009.

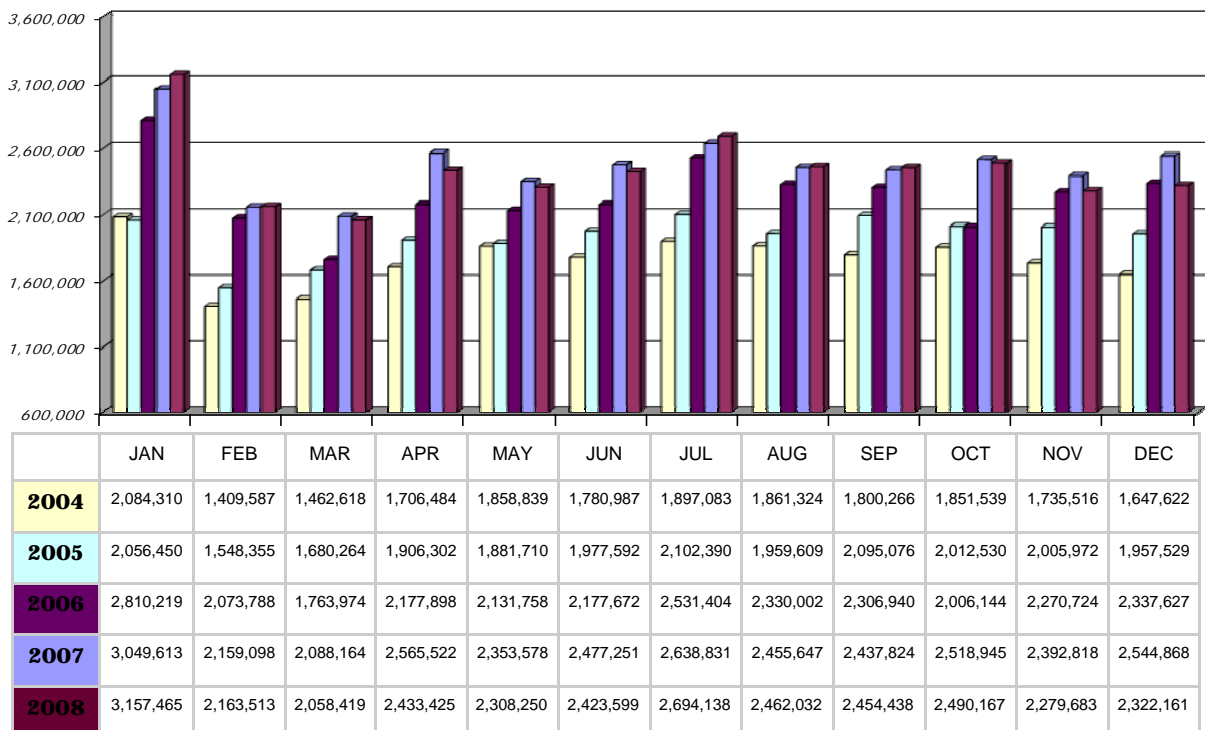
"This generation of college students is unlike any of their predecessors. They've grown up with the internet, with home computing and with all the accompanying gadgetry," Eaton said. "As scholars and teachers, it is our responsibility at Cumberland to prepare them for what is certain to be an exciting new workplace deeply rooted in technology."

## Did You Know . . . . . That CBRL Group, Inc. ranks 3rd in Tennessee's Top 50 Largest Headquarters by Total Employment (excludes governmental entities).

(Source: State of TN Economic & Community Development website)

### WILSON COUNTY

(includes Watertown, Lebanon, Mt. Juliet)  
Local Option Sales Tax Revenue Collections for 2004 - 2008



Source: Tennessee Dept. of Revenue



## Spotlight on Industry

STEVES & SONS, INC.

**“Manufacturing Quality Millwork Since 1866”**



The story of Steves & Sons is a tribute to pioneering spirit, family leadership, adaptability and a firm commitment to quality.

Steves & Sons, Inc. was founded in 1866 as Ed. Steves & Sons Lumber Yard in San Antonio, Texas. In 1904 the Steves decided to set up a plant to manufacture millwork. By 1912, the new mill was so successful it was established as a new entity, Steves Sash & Door, separate from the lumberyard. By 1916, Steves Sash & Door Company was the largest millwork plant in the Southwest.



In 1970 Steves & Sons reached the one million milestone for doors produced since 1950. Despite a thriving building industry, economic conditions forced smaller millwork plants throughout the country to shut down or suffer acquisition from larger operations. Steves decided that a business model based on multiple plant locations would expand the product distribution footprint and insulate the company from regional downturns. A second door plant was opened in Lebanon, Tennessee and a third in Richmond, VA. Improvements in glue technology, machine construction, and the introduction of the molded hardwood door facing allowed Steves & Sons to produce a larger quantity of product in less time but with the same commitment to quality.

Steves & Sons continued to prosper and expand, today boasting state-of-the-art wood door production facilities in San Antonio, Texas, Lebanon, Tennessee, and Richmond, Virginia. The 175,478 sq. ft. facility in Lebanon manufactures doors at 301 Hartmann Drive. Doug Gartner is the Vice President of Branch Operations.

JOINT ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**JECDB**

BOARD of  
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Mount Juliet  
Watertown

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