

Welcome to the

Regional Chambers' Legislative Reception

January 20, 2011



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2011 Regional Legislative Agenda

Transportation: Key projects that impact multiple counties

Efficient and convenient transportation infrastructure directly impacts our region's ability to attract and retain employers, enhance tourism opportunities, reduce congestion, improve air quality, and provide safe access to major employment centers, commercial and industrial development.

We support the following key transportation projects that impact multiple counties in East Tennessee:

- The widening of SR 170 (Edgemoor Road) from SR 62 (Pellissippi Parkway) to I-75. With the recent cancellation of the Knoxville Beltway project by TDOT, completion of this major commuter road is vital to ease congestion to major employment destinations and enhance economic development in the region.
- The expeditious completion of the Environmental Impact Statement and implementation plan that will allow the final link of Pellissippi Parkway to open to traffic.
- Support initiatives leading to the development of a general aviation airport in Oak Ridge. In 2010 an aeronautics grant for \$142,722 was approved for the proposed Oak Ridge Airport. These resources will be applied to a planning and programming study for the proposed Oak Ridge general aviation airport. Proposed by the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority, the airport would be located on or in the vicinity of the current K-25 site on land donated by the Department of Energy and would be limited to corporate and private planes. The airport would be a great asset to the region's economic development efforts. It is anticipated that this facility, if constructed, will be operated by the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority.

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The Regional Chambers' Legislative Agenda

The concept of a Regional Chamber's Legislative Agenda was first introduced in 1986. This year, the Oak Ridge, Knoxville, Blount County and Loudon County Chambers have identified four key issues of importance to our region. We are grateful for the consideration given to these matters by our elected leaders over the years.



Regional Chambers' Legislative Reception

January 20, 2011

DoubleTree Hotel, Oak Ridge, TN

Schedule of Events

Reception

Welcome - *Mike Belbeck*, Chair, Oak Ridge Chamber; President and CAO, Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge

Presentation of 2011 Regional Legislative Agenda - *Kerry Trammel*, Vice Chair of Advocacy, Oak Ridge Chamber; Administrator, NHC Oak Ridge

Introduction - *The Honorable John Ragan*, Representative District 33, House of Representatives Tennessee General Assembly

Remarks - *The Honorable Beth Harwell*, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tennessee General Assembly

Closing Remarks/Adjourn - *Mr. Belbeck*

complete the cleanup mission in Oak Ridge to make way for future missions that will create jobs and stimulate economic development.

- Work for adequate federal funding for DOE Oak Ridge Operations Environmental Management Program to clean up Manhattan Project legacy sites at ORNL, Y-12 and East Tennessee Technology



Park so that new science, energy, and technology missions can evolve. This Integrated Facilities Disposition Plan (IFDP) will provide a foundation for the construction of new facilities, the development of new programs, and the hiring of hundreds of new employees and subcontractors from across the region.

- Support National Nuclear Security Administration's Complex Transformation plan designating Y-12 as the Uranium Center of Excellence and endorsing the continued



modernization of the Y-12 facility. This includes supporting efforts to fully fund the construction of the Uranium Processing Facility at Y-12, supporting third-party financing as a necessary vehicle for modernization at Y-12.

- Support and fund workforce development partnerships, particularly in the areas of manufacturing, nuclear technologies, and engineering.

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Energy, Environment, and Future

National Missions: *Positioning the region for federal investments that yield next-generation economic opportunity*

East Tennessee was the site of the World War II Manhattan Project associated with the development of the atomic bomb. Today Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and the Y-12 National Security Complex carry out missions of national importance supporting national defense, homeland security, energy security, and economic competitiveness. In parallel, the U.S. Department of Energy is engaged in the cleanup of the legacy of weapons research and development at ORNL, Y-12, and the East Tennessee Technology Park (the former Uranium enrichment facility). The cleanup work is complicated and often dangerous, highly regulated by DOE, the State of Tennessee and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and occurs in the midst of the ongoing missions at ORNL and Y-12. Significant public and private investments are modernizing ORNL and Y-12, providing new facilities and capabilities to meet our nation's science, technology, and security needs. These evolving science, national security, energy, and technology missions are and will be regional and national assets, attracting a valuable supply chain of large and small businesses. The removal of legacy facilities and contamination is essential to (1) protect workers, the public, and the environment, (2) to protect the investments in modernization, and (3) to enable ORNL and Y-12 to continue to support missions of national importance and regional benefit.

In 2009-2010, the cleanup program was given a strong boost through funding from the American Renewal and Recovery Act (ARRA). "Shovel ready" projects were completed, buildings were demolished, and sites of harmful contamination were cleaned up and made ready for other uses. We now need to

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Economic Development: *Competitive and flexible incentives relevant to new economy companies*

Tennessee has made improvements to its economic development incentive package over the past few years. However, other states have enhanced incentives as well. While incentives should never be the sole reason for a business locating a facility, they often help solidify Tennessee's advantages. Therefore, our regional coalition of Chambers supports:

- The creation of a Governor's Closing Fund. Using set aside bonding capacity, create a pool of funding that may be tapped to cover additional needs for new, expanding, or retaining industry.
- Enhancement of infrastructure and training incentives. Increase the cap of FastTrack Infrastructure Development Program and Job Training Assistance Program grants to local communities to help meet requirements for new or expanding businesses. Current limit is \$750,000 per project.
- Establishment of technology-driven incentives. Create incentives to attract business and industry focused on research, development, production, and deployment of technologies to support Tennessee's renewable and alternative energy leadership. Programs such as DOE's Electric Vehicle Project and Knoxville's Solar America Cities programs are bearing fruit, however incentives must be created to build on this momentum and leverage efforts already underway.

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Education: *Strong education for personal and economic success*

A skilled, well-prepared workforce is the key to our regional success in the global marketplace. Tennessee is reforming K-12 and higher education to better prepare students for college and the workplace. Reform efforts include the Tennessee Diploma Project, the Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010, and the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010. In addition, Tennessee has received \$500 million in federal Race to the Top funding. The real work of implementing these reforms has begun and we must diligently follow through in order to reap their full benefit. Therefore, we support the following priorities and recommend them to members of the General Assembly:

Pre- K through 12

- Protect the higher academic rigor and realistic cut scores implemented by the State Board of Education and defeat any attempts to weaken standards, particularly in light of a temporary dip in scores on annual Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Assessment Tests.
- Insist on consistent and thorough updates from the First to the Top Advisory Council on the progress and effect of implemented or proposed reforms.
- Establish a deadline for reporting TCAP scores, including individual, district, aggregate and value added results, making scores available before the end of the school year. Parents, educators, and policy makers need timely results in order to affect change that will be meaningful to current students.



- Reject any proposal to allow for the election of directors of schools. Professional school superintendents need to have academic improvement and execution of strategies to increase the skills of graduates as their singular focus. These professionals cannot be distracted by periodic elections.
- Oppose efforts to establish mandatory school start dates. Setting the academic calendar for the school year should be a local decision made by informed school board members and educators with student achievement as the chief concern.
- Adjust the state law to allow local education agencies the opportunity to establish charter schools.
- Oppose mandatory mergers of school systems within Tennessee counties.
- Continue to fund the voluntary Pre-K program.

Higher Education

- Remain unwavering in the support of the reforms in the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, supporting two and four -year institutions in its implementation and resisting any efforts to weaken the reforms.
- Protect the Tennessee Education Lottery funds and ensure that moneys are limited to the original intent of the legislation – namely higher education scholarships.
- Restore base funding for public universities and community colleges as soon as budgetarily possible. Tennessee must continue to be a major funder of higher education.
- Support initiatives designed to position the University of Tennessee as a “Top 25” research institution.

