



Lawrence County
**NONPROFIT/TOURISM/ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Date: Tuesday, September 11, 2025 | **Time:** 5:15-5:45 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Sandy Newton, Dave Ray, Chris Sutherland, Rick Skillington, Phillip Heatherly, Scott Franks, Randy Brewer, and Barry Luffman. **Chamber President** Ryan Egly, **Chamber Tourism Director** Chandler Rose, **Chamber ECD Director** Ben Barnett, **Sheriff** John Myers, **Court Security Lieutenant** Jason Runnels, Michael Wheeler, Anthony Washburn, and other county residents.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Randy Brewer, Vice-chair Rick Skillington, and Chris Sutherland.

ABSENT: Shane Eaton and John Bradley

Commissioner Brewer called the meeting to order

Ryan Egly, President & CEO of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce.

- Presented a report on industrial development and tourism.
- JECDB and IDB have met this week. Egly plans to make regular reports to the Commission in line with those meetings.

NEWS:

- Fayetteville won a modular wall construction company that will employ 110. Its site offered better road access.
- 300 jobs went to Manchester with a company that will grow lettuce, due to the size of the site.
- GM at Spring Hill will be laying off 700 in the coming months.
- Space Command is coming to Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal, with 1400 jobs. Study showed approximately 20 direct jobs will be filled by Lawrence County residents. Working with Appalachian Regional Commission, partnering with Franklin County on getting defense projects.
- Some companies have to be next to Space Command, others do not. We are in the area being considered for defense contractors.
- Our unemployment rate is 3rd highest in Middle Tennessee. Our rate is 5.6%, which translates to 1,500 out of work, plus another 4,000 driving out of town for industrial jobs.

- There is a lot of shifting going on economically, we have to continue working hard on economic development. A lot of companies are looking for new locations.

INDUSTRIAL PROSPECTS:

- A Korean automotive parts supplier is moving to the U.S. due to tariffs. They initially believed they needed 40 acres, but actually need more, so they agreed to look at more sites in Tennessee than first planned. They visited our site, and we are now their #1 pick in Tennessee. Winchester is #2. We are also competing with a site in Georgia. Their customers are currently in Georgia and Alabama, which gives them an edge, but they are looking to expand their customer base, which gives us an edge.
- It is an automotive glass company. They would bring in sheet glass, stamp and shape it. It might go directly to an automobile manufacturer, or to a company-like Plasma that finishes out glass components for automobiles. It would be a \$700 million investment, 400+ jobs.
- They are looking at acreage behind the newest land purchased. County IDB (Industrial Development Board) has optioned 100 acres at the back of the new land, which would give us more options for federal- and state-funded improvements at the entire site.
- Current trend is an increase in data centers. We were not previously interested in those projects because they would be placing heavy demands on supplies of electricity and water (to cool down servers). These new data centers are not big electric or water users. Lawrence County is well-positioned for data centers, and they are no longer looking for tax breaks or incentives. Four different data centers are currently looking at Lawrence County.

EXISTING INDUSTRY:

- Blickman first announced 40 jobs, now up to 87 jobs, and still growing. Located in former Tridon building.
- Unnamed project, building a 500,000 square foot warehouse, \$30 million investment, 70 jobs. They have asked for Payment in lieu of Tax (PILOT), negotiating that deal, which will come before
- Magna will be finishing out their offices, another \$8 million investment. 160 employees
- Lorik Automation is building a new facility, a homegrown company.

TOURISM:

- In 2021, the federal government gave funds to help with tourism because of effects of COVID on that industry. County and city money has helped filled the gap since that money ended. Has made us a model in the state.
- In 2024 tourists spent \$32 million in our community, reflecting 7.9% year-to-year increase.
- 266 tourism/hospitality jobs in Lawrence County.
- Hampton Inn will be a great tax provider and is projected to open in March 2026.

Motion to Adjourn.

Motion: Skillington. **Second:** Sutherland.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 3/0.

Minutes Submitted By: Nancy Brewer

Formatted By: Christian Tyree