



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

Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 | **Time:** 5:00-5:58 p.m.

PRESENT: County Executive David Morgan. **Commissioners:** Randy Brewer, Rick Skillington, Chris Sutherland, John Bradley, Shane Eaton, Barry Luffman, Phillip Heatherly, Barry Luffman. **Chamber President** Ryan Egly, **Chamber ECD Director** Ben Barnett, **Chamber Tourism Director** Chandler Rose, and county resident David Uzbasic.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Randy Brewer, Vice-Chair Rick Skillington, Shane Eaton, John Bradley, and Chris Sutherland

PRAYER: Randy Brewer.

Purpose of meeting: to provide update on Chamber activities and get feedback from Commissioners. Presentation included in folder.

Egly & Rose: Tourism

- Attended TN Hospitality Governor's Conference – Nominated as statewide destination marketing organization of the year, named runner-up.
- Named Regional Destination Marketing Organization of the Year.
- Working to increase Influencer/Travel Writer Marketing (Amish featured in National Geographic Traveler's "Backroads & Buggies" feature).
- Social Media marketing report, 10% growth since July 1.
- **Rose:** One video post a week, Plowboy Produce Auction reel is most popular.
- Style Blueprint Story: BBQ trail (like well-known wine, whisky trails).
- Leaning heavily into promoting food and cuisine and sports tourism next year. Play Tennessee sends out requests for tournament hosting. Goal is to host 3-4 a year. Have already won one: next year's Bicycle Ride Across Tennessee will come through here, 500 bicyclists at the park.
- America's 250th birthday – State grant, awarded \$25,000 to produce a 45- to 75-minute film about the history of Lawrence County. End of next year, beginning of 2027 will have a movie premiere. Will be doing fundraising to finish. Will be called "The Original Frontier." Working with Nelson Video to produce.
- Amish Country outreach: much change in past 6-8 months, new buggy tours, couple from Oregon here. New Amish Country map will be produced.

- Grant will be paying for custom room key holders for hotels and other merchandise.
- David Crockett State Park is our largest tourist attraction. Visitor Center – goal of the state park. Chamber can help stock and staff. Their master plan includes a Visitor Center. Upcoming \$5-6 million investment by the state. Hope to be included in state budget 2026-27 for a 2031 project. It would be located behind the main sign – Park Manager Ann Paley would like to put the restaurant there, also, and convert existing restaurant to conference space.
- Huge growth in lodging tax. \$90K in 2015 to \$250,000 most recent.
- The Chamber would like to have a lodging tax agreement, percentage share. Will be asking for the same thing with the City of Lawrenceburg. This is also being looked at for Economic Development. This would provide a 3–5-year certainty.
- **Commissioner Brewer:** Lodging tax, when enacted, was promised to be used for tourism.
- **Commissioner Skillington** suggests newspaper articles. Egly states improving communication is a priority.
- **Commissioner Brewer** suggests Garden & Gun magazine

Egly & Barnett: Economic Development

- Three projects are “hot,” existing industry expansions, data centers
- Expect more aerospace inquires.
- Data Center – 10 acres of Sharp property, across from Magna on Flatwoods Road.
- Project Clear View – pause on this. True for most Asian projects. 3-4 x greater cost to build here than in South America.
- Food project – we are one of top 3 in the country.
- MTIDA (Middle TN Industrial Development Association) is doing a Wage & Benefit Survey this spring.
- **Barnett** and **Egly** are now Certified Economic Developers
- Chamber Board agreed to create an additional Economic Development staff member. Existing industry and workforce development.
- Industries are asking for Lunch & Learns. Several are planned in the spring.
- June 18, 2026 - Lawrence County Workforce Summit. Inviting Commissioner of Labor & Workforce Development.
- Priorities defined by consultant, Chamber will be working to combine these into three.
- Holistic Economic Development Approach.
- Streamline industrial recruitment and retention.
- Consistent communication, unified action.
- Stronger member relationships and relevance – 500 Chamber members
- Organizational resilience during transitions.
- Predictable funding and future stability.
- County land-use policy.
- Site-ready future industrial sites.
- Talent pipeline aligned with modern industry needs.

- Placemaking – improved livability and talent attraction.
- Five-year strategic plan for the county – bring everyone to the table.
- Retail growth and entrepreneurship.
- Open digital potential for small businesses.

Executive Morgan – people all over the state brag about our Chamber. Very proud of that. Thankful to Commission for support.

Magna consultant said in 30 years of work, his experience in Lawrence County was his best ever.

Adjournment.

Motion: Eaton. **Second:** Sutherland.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

Minutes Submitted By: Nancy Brewer

Formatted By: Christian Tyree