



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

Date: May 1, 2026 | **Time:** 4:30-5:12 p.m.

PRESENT: County Executive David Morgan. **Commissioners:** Randy Brewer, Rick Skillington, Shane Eaton, Chris Sutherland, Will Burnett, Delano Benefield, Scott Franks, Barry Luffman, Tim Clifton, Dave Ray, Travis Cauwels. Ryan Egly, Chandler Rose, and Ben Barnett with the **Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce; Sheriff** John Myers, Blake Grooms, Katy Eagle, Brenda Mallock, Anthony Washburn, and John Uzbasic.

Commissioner Brewer called the meeting to order.

PRAYER: David Morgan.

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

ABSENT: John Bradley.

Brewer introduced **Ryan Egly**, President of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce.

Egly stated that the Chamber will not be requesting additional funds this year.

Chandler Rose, Chamber Destination Marketing Manager:

- Chamber has created custom room key holders with QR code leading to the Visit Lawrenceburg site.
- The State of Tennessee is featuring Amish Country and Ethridge in some of its marketing.
- Success in boosting posts on social media and featuring photos as well as videos.
- Partnering with Main Street and Levitt to give away branded bags at free concert series.
- Descendants of Davy Crockett, 50-80 people, have chosen to visit Lawrence County this year.

- 50-minute historical documentary was grant funded through America 250. Preview set for October or November, then push out to classrooms. Limited showing may be offered at Crockett Cinemas.
- A new David Crockett State Park Visitor Center is in the early planning stages. Will be placed near the entrance to the park. **Egly** added it will be a \$12-15 million project, should be in engineering and design phase this year. City of Lawrenceburg owns the property, can be built up to get it out of the floodplain.
- Studies show that a visitor who comes for a day spends an average of \$86; those who stay overnight spend an average of \$330.

Ben Barnett, Director of Economic Development:

- Since last report there have been eight projects totaling 600 jobs and \$5.1 billion of investment. 320-340 new jobs from existing industry.
- Requests from potential projects total 9,900 jobs.
- Request for Information (RFI) process described

Egly: Lawrence County has about 20,000 workers and about 9,000 jobs. 11,000 people go out of town to work every day, and about half of those work in manufacturing.

Barnett continues:

- Sectors expressing interest in Lawrence County include Advanced Manufacturing, Robotics, Defense & Ammunition, Aerospace, Food & Beverage, Power infrastructure, Building Construction Equipment. Excited about this variety, hope to specifically recruit aerospace, advanced manufacturing, food & beverage.
- Related to 9,900 jobs potential - primarily big, single projects make that up.
- Expansions: Old South Wood, Graphic Packaging, local auto supplier, advanced manufacturing.
- Lunch & Learn Wage & Benefit survey, 35% of industries completed.
- June 18: Workforce Summit, first annual. Speakers include Dept. of Labor Commissioner Denise Thomas, TCAT, LCSS Director of Schools Michael Adkins.
- June 24 Ribbon Cutting at Craig Manufacturing expansion.

Data Center discussion

Egly: Submitted site plan to the City, will be eligible for build permit. It is a \$13 million investment

Cauwels: in hindsight, would you do anything differently?

Egly: No, I would not....probably would not be as proactive in educating the public about what a data center is, and its benefits to the community. Feels that stirred up the public outcry when it had already gone through the approval processes. Has been contacted by people throughout the state that were shocked that the city posted the size of the project and its intended use, because cities typically do not do that. Should have been more proactive in educating Commissioners.

Brewer: Some of the best economic development professionals will not let elected officials near a project. I don't mind not being briefed on every detail on every project.

Cauwels: Are there any data centers you can point to that are relatively the same size?

Egly: about 30 in Huntsville.

Morgan: 20,000 square foot one behind Co-Work Coffee.

Franks: there are eight in Cool Springs.

Egly: 12-story one in downtown Nashville.

It is not what everyone thinks it will be.

We would never bring anything here that would hurt the community. We don't make bad deals, we're not that desperate for jobs. If I had the opportunity to bring a \$2.4 billion data center that would add \$13 million annually to the county coffers, and it would generate its own power, and would not use up our water, off the beaten path, and no one would even drive by it on a daily basis, no incentives required. Is that a deal I should make?

Eaton: No.

Brewer: It's a deal I would have made, when I was in the business.

Egly: This data center will only have eight jobs, but they are good jobs. Has received many resumes from people wanting to work at it.

- Tax revenue on building and personal property tax on servers - \$450,000 total annually. Servers depreciate on a 7-year basis, but are replaced every year.
- Every \$10 million in investment generates \$90,000 in city/county property tax; \$60,000 county share. Data Centers are no longer considered economic development projects, but are very good for the tax base.
- All environmental due diligence studies have been done for the proposed data center.
- Channel 5 took information out of context about the center's diesel generators, which will be tested 40 minutes a month. No different from the hospital's diesel generators, Lawrenceburg's diesel generators, etc.
- Water cooling process will use about 1/3 of the Tidal Wave car wash.

Public Comment:

Clifton: Rules Committee established rules two weeks ago. One is that residents have to sign up before the meeting starts. Both potential speakers arrived after the meeting began.

Brewer: Wants to allow two ladies to speak.

Skillington: At Rules Committee meeting, those who arrived late were allowed to speak

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion; Skillington, **Second:** Sutherland

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

Katy Eagle

I am against the data center, asking for study of similarly-sized facilities. Asking for a moratorium so this can be studied before any further data centers come here.

Brenda Mallock

Would like to see a precedent set with this data center, to develop stricter regulations.

Minutes Submitted By: Nancy Brewer