In the past there were two chartered organizations operating within Obion County with the responsibility of generating new growth in the areas of Tourism, Housing, Commercial, and Industrial Development (The Obion County Chamber of Commerce since 1922 and the Obion County Industrial Development Corporation since 1987). In many instances these agencies encountered duplication in both program delivery and expenditure. In an effort to improve efficiency in programmatic and budgetary areas, in early 2004, the two agencies formed the Obion County Joint Economic Development Council (JEDC).

The JEDC acts as the administrative organization of the Obion County Chamber of Commerce and the Obion County Industrial Development Corporation. The JEDC’s overall objective is to keep abreast of municipal and county government activities and legislation dealing with commerce or infrastructure and changes in the law that will affect retail or industry.

Chamber Membership
- Business Matters
- Business After-Hours
- Annual Banquet
- Member Visits
- Recruit Volunteers
- Recruit New Members

Retail Recruitment and Retention
- Keep inventory list of buildings and land
- Attend retail trade shows
- Work with partners such as TVA, The Shopping Center Group, West TN Retail Alliance

Public Relations
- Distribute Obion County Guide and Map
- Website and Newsletter
- Resource kiosk offering numerous brochures from Chamber members

Existing Industry Retention
- Existing Industry Visits
- Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament
- Obion County Industrial Training Center
- Workforce Development

Industrial Recruitment
- Market existing industrial buildings and property
- Complete Requests for Information (RFI’s) from prospects, site consultants, State of Tennessee, Tennessee Valley Authority, West Tennessee Industrial Association

Tourism
- Discovery Park of America
- Mississippi River Corridor
- Reelfoot Lake Tourism Council
New Chamber Members & Ribbon Cuttings

2012 New Chamber Members and Ribbon Cuttings

Twin Oaks Technology
Inco Ag Irrigation
O’Neals Country Store and Antique Mall and More

NW TN Bonding Company
Center Point Business Solutions
Security Finance

Wildcat Communications
Suretest Home Companions
A&J Salvage (Grand Re-Opening)

Boys & Girls Clubs of NW TN
Melaleuca
Konica Minolta Business Solutions
AT&T (Launch of new service)
Business Matters
Business Matters is held the third Tuesday of every month. In December, one of our bigger crowds was drawn by Skipper Bondurant, CEO and Hospital Administrator of Baptist Memorial Hospital and Mary Nita Bondurant of Union City Insurance as they discussed Health Care Reform and Insurance Updates.

Business After Hours
In June, the Obion County Chamber of Commerce held it’s spring 2012 Business After Hours at the Obion County Chamber of Commerce. Area chamber businessmen and women attended the event for an evening of networking, food and door prizes sponsored by Commercial Bank. In November, First State Bank sponsored Business After Hours. The company announced that First State Bank is the first major sponsor for Discovery Park of America’s Children Gallery. Buckets sponsored Business After Hours in December for a holiday gathering.
Business Matters: Informative Networking Breakfasts

In today’s times, it is more important than ever for business owners and managers to commit to ongoing learning and skills training to maintain a competitive edge and stay abreast of the changing times. Business Matters provides Chamber members an opportunity to learn from community business leaders who come to share their subject matter and business expertise. This FREE monthly gathering is a great way to meet and network with other business people in the area. In 2012, we covered some very useful topics:

**January**
Presenter: Bill Sanderson  
Sponsor: Universal Contractors  
Topic: “Improving the Conditions of Small Business”

**February**
Presenter: Jim Thompson  
Sponsor: Buckets  
Topic: “Making Taxes Work for Your Business”

**March**
Presenter: Jacklyn McKinney  
Sponsor: Commercial Bank  
Topic: “Bridging the Gap: Applicant to Employee and Building Quality Applicants for Your Business”

**April**
Presenter: John Watts  
Sponsor: Thunderbolt Broadcasting  
Topic: “6 Common Marketing Mistakes in Advertising”

**May**
Presenter: Senator Roy Herron  
Sponsor: Baptist Memorial Hospital  
Topic: “Legislative Updates”

**June**
Presenter: Melissa Morgan  
Sponsor: Maverick  
Topic: “Upping Your Game Plan With Customer Analytics and Insights”

**July**
Presenter: Kathy Dillon  
Sponsor: Everett Stewart Airport  
Topic: “Your Union City Tax Dollars at Work”

**August**
Presenter: Randy Thetford  
Sponsor: Ameriprise Financial  
Topic: “Small Business Retirement Plans”

**September**
Presenters: State Representative Candidates, District 76 and 77. State Senate Candidates, District 24.  
Sponsor: First Citizens National Bank

**October**
Presenter: Landy Fuqua  
Sponsor: Commercial Bank  
Topic: “Lawful Employment in Tennessee”

**November**
Presenter: Carol Reed  
Sponsor: John Miles, Attorney at Law  
Topic: “Entrepreneur Center Northwest Tennessee”

**December**
Presenter: Skipper Bondurant & Mary Nita Bondurant  
Sponsor: Cox Oil  
Topic: “Healthcare and Insurance Updates for Obion County”
Annual Golf Tournament:
The Chamber of Commerce had its annual Golf Tournament last May with over 25 teams in attendance. First place team was Gibson Electric Membership Corporation. The second place team was Align Chiropractic and the third place team was Tyson.

Industrial Appreciation Dinner: The Obion County Joint Economic Council held its Industrial Appreciation Dinner last month to help give a special thanks to all the industries in Obion County and all they do.
Marketing Development

Marketing Outlets

- Obion County Website (www.obioncounty.org)
- Obion County Guide
- Obion County Welcome/Relocation Packets
- Obion County Chamber Membership Investment Brochure
- Obion County Marketing Guide - Identifies important Obion County demographics such as the “Trade Area” population, transportation, recent retail additions, annual wages, major employers, community patterns, and traffic counts. The guide has also been transferred to jump drive, providing convenience and ease of viewing when distributed at trade shows. It has also been put in a condensed Power Point format to be presented to prospective industry.

Various Print Media Outlets - Advertised specifically to entities within a certain area of the economy (particularly in terms of transportation due to the expansion of the Everett-Stewart Airport, the construction of the port facility at Cates Landing, and the availability of highway and rail) in hopes of getting Obion County’s name and position known to those who are primarily concerned with transportation.

Tennessee Vacation Guide - Obion County advertises in the Tennessee Vacation Guide which is distributed to approximately 550,000 visitors annually. The JEDC received a grant from the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development to assist with the cost of the ad.
Tourism Activities throughout Obion County

Obion County Cruise-In
Obion County Cornfest
Reelfoot Lake Bicentennial Celebration
Mississippi River Corridor—Great River Road Trail
Troy Pecan Festival
Kenton White Squirrel Festival
South Fulton Banana Festival
Numerous Sports Tournament
Cattle Show

Cornfest Annual Bed Race
Obion County Cruise-In
Discovery Park of America will be a multi-million dollar educational venue for children and adults, which will enable visitors to understand and celebrate the culture, spirit and accomplishments of the human race in nature, science, art and history.

The Robert E. and Jenny D. Kirkland Foundation is commitment to be the primary benefactor of Discovery Park of America and to help achieve the vision for DPA, developed by hundreds of community volunteers. The Kirkland’s had the vision for this wonderful venue as a place where children and adults could learn in an entertaining and pleasant environment. The Kirkland Foundation acquired the land and provided funds to begin construction and will continue to provide financing for completion of the construction and purchase of artifacts. To ensure successful operation, the Kirkland Foundation will also provide funding for the acquisition of artifacts as well as fund a portion of the operating expenses for the first 20 years.

Cooperation and Involvement
Discovery Park of America is a cooperative endeavor with broad participation by the citizens of Union City and Obion County and surrounding counties. Hundreds of dedicated volunteers are planning each themed area of the venue as well as needed services. Local and state governments are also taking an active role in the development.

Discovery Center
The centerpiece of the Park will be Discovery Center, a world-class museum that will offer a variety of exciting and stimulating learning experiences. Exhibits inside Discovery Park will educate children and adults about many current and historical aspects of the human race.

Similar learning and stimulation will occur outside Discovery Center. The 50-acre site will also feature botanical gardens, working farm plots and a Yester Year Village, an area devoted to preserving and sharing local historical structures and historical items associated with life in the mid-1800’s through the early 1900’s.

The museum is expected to have exciting exhibits and interactive experiences in the following areas:
- Regional History
- Native Americans
- Natural History
- Science, Space, & Industry
- Transportation History
- Art
- Military
- Children’s Exploration
- Enlightenment Area
- Travelling Exhibit Area
- Energy
Economic Development

Existing Industry

Throughout the year, the JEDC staff was intricately involved with the local industrial base in an effort to assist in new employment growth and to preserve existing jobs. Much of this work came in the form of being involved in statewide forums/initiatives and the support of regional/statewide policy that promotes Tennessee as a positive climate in which companies can prosper economically. To further support existing industry, the JEDC makes existing industry visits throughout the year. As a result of these visits, information can easily be shared regarding other facility’s operations and how those can help increase productivity in other plants. Topics are also covered by the various economic development partners that are beneficial to the businesses.

BAPTIST MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - Modern Healthcare Magazine included Baptist Union City in its “Best Places to Work 2010, 2011 & 2012” list. To be named to the list, hospital employees had to complete an in-depth survey, which was evaluated based on eight core areas: leadership and planning, culture and communications, role satisfaction, working environment, relationship with supervisor, training and development, pay and benefits and overall satisfaction. Baptist Memorial Hospital was also named a 2012 Summit Award winner by Press Ganey Associates, Inc. The Summit Award recognizes top-performing facilities that sustain the highest levels of patient satisfaction performance for three consecutive years. The Press Ganey Summit Award is one of the health care industry’s most coveted symbols of achievement.

Industrial Recruitment

The Obion County Joint Economic Development Corporation is very aggressive in its efforts to bring additional industry to Obion County. To assist in the attraction of additional outside capital to the community, an ample set of resources and marketing materials are utilized, including flyers, presentations, and website information. Over 30 proposals were sent to companies and industries that expressed interest in Obion County as a potential place of location.

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Transportation Assets

Everett-Stewart Regional Airport

ESRA is a par of the Tennessee Aviation Association, which is a statewide coalition of airports and other aviation organizations dedicated to the growth and improvement of Tennessee’s aviation infrastructure, both public and private. Jo Ann Speer, Manager of Everett-Stewart Regional Airport in Union City has been elected as the 2013-2014 President of the organization.

Mrs. Speer was named Tennessee’s Airport Manager of the Year by the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission at the 2012 Tennessee Airports Conference last year. She has also served on the Board of Directors of The Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame. Everett-Stewart Regional Airport Board received “The Governing Body of the Year Award” during the 2011 Awards of Excellence Banquet held during the Tennessee Airports Conference. Everett-Stewart Regional Airport received Tennessee Airports 2011 Red Carpet Award.

Port of Cates Landing

A new port is under construction on the Mississippi River. Located five miles north of Tiptonville, the Port of Cates Landing is a joint project of Lake, Obion and Dyer counties. The first phase, dredging a 9,000 lineal foot harbor, was completed in 2010. The second phase, funded by $13 million from the TIGER II Stimulus Program, and a $7 million dollar State of Tennessee grant is underway for the landside development. This construction project includes extensive port dock terminal and mooring structures.

Early next year, the Tennessee Department of Transportation will begin construction on an $18 million super-two lane highway connecting the port site to Tiptonville. When complete, the port will be a huge asset to industry in northwest Tennessee. In addition to the port construction, Lake County has purchased 350 acres of adjacent property for an industrial park to compliment the port. The port and industrial park at Cates Landing are both expandable and flanked by more than 4,000 acres of land, currently privately-owned, elevated above the 100-year and 500-year flood plains.
Northwest Tennessee Regional Marketing Initiative

Gov. Haslam’s Jobs4TN plan established regional "jobs base camps" in each of nine regions across the state. One of those nine regions is Northwest Tennessee. The Obion County JEDC was heavily involved in the creation of the regional plan for northwest Tennessee. Part of the plan included specific marketing efforts, one of which was a new website [www.northwesttn.com](http://www.northwesttn.com). This website includes the regional strategy, available sites/buildings, partners, interactive maps, and contact information for each of the nine counties.

Ken-Tenn Regional Alliance

The Ken-Tenn Regional Alliance (KTRA) is a six-county partnership incorporated across state lines in rural Northwest Tennessee and rural Southwest Kentucky. Players involved are Lake, Obion, and Weakley Counties in Tennessee, and Carlisle, Fulton, and Hickman Counties in Kentucky. The KTRA was formed out of a specific need to address pressing issues such as extremely high unemployment, poverty, infrastructure improvements and development, and population loss. The KTRA is focused in our shared assets: the Mississippi River, three River Ports, future Interstate 69, rail access, and what each county has to offer the regional partnership. [www.kentennalliance.com](http://www.kentennalliance.com)

Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneurship Center

The Obion County JEDC has also been instrumental in the new entrepreneur center. The Northwest Tennessee location is one of several such centers being opened across the state. They are being structured to help promote economic development. The center will work with potential entrepreneurs and help them find start-up funding, develop business ideas, create a business plan and overcome any obstacles. Funding for the entrepreneur center is coming through the state Department of Economic Development. The center is located in Martin. It will serve Obion, Lake, Benton, Carroll, Gibson, Crockett, Weakley, Dyer and Henry counties. The local entrepreneurship center will rely on support from the state’s new LaunchTN program as well as from officials with other entrepreneur centers across the state. Two of the key goals for the entrepreneurship center will be recruiting “angel investors” and business mentors to work with the program. Angel investors will be used to help financially support individual projects that are developed through the entrepreneur center. Mentors will be recruited to work with emerging entrepreneurs to help them develop their business plan. The mentors will come from such fields as law, health care, retail, marketing and communications, manufacturing and agriculture.
Retail Development

New Retail Establishments

Information regarding Obion County was continually sent to various retailers and restaurant establishments to keep them informed of the actions occurring within the county, to make connections, establish relationships, and to keep Obion County’s name and community information in front of these investors. The JEDC also worked with local businesses in locating space, identifying markets, and other resources. As reported by the Obion County Tax Assessors office, the businesses below obtained a business license in 2012.

A&D Beauty Supply
Aaliyah & Makala Center
Abrea Garwood Photography
Advanced Mechanical Services
AGS Appearance
Alexander Auto Detailing
Allcare Medical Troy PLLC
Answered Prayers Farm
Atlantis Pools & Spas Inc
Autrys Trenching & Trachoe
B&J Concession
Baja Fresh Mex Grill
Baker Heating & Air
Bellas
Blue Marble Club
Best Donuts
BS Inc
C & S Investments
Cains Bar & Grill
Carters Cleaning
Center Point Business Solutions
City Chick BBQ Sauce
Clanton Contractors LLC
Creations Full Service Salon
David's Lawn Care Service
Davis Auto Body
Double Vision Bar & Grill
Duffys Consignment Shop
Dugger Paving
Elipz Hair Salon
Fleming Fabric & Wire LLC
Froggy Smiles Daycare
From the Heart Gifts, Décor,
Ramsey's Wireless Rep
H&R Agricultural Power
Hair Line Salon
High Note Solutions LLC
Hopkins Investments
Hornbeak Service Center
HTS Mixing LLC
Inco Well Services LLC
Inside Out Home Maintenance
Insignia Ink
John Sharps Furniture
John's Tire and Lube
Johnson's Roofing
Jones Chicken
Just 2 Guys & A Truck Construction
K2 Enterprises LLC
Kellys One Stop
Ken Tenn Boat Works
Kenn Tenn Video
Kenneth E Brewer
Kenton Mart
Lady K Apparel
Lake Road Diner
Lifetouch Church Directories & Portraits Inc.
Lindsey Contractors
Little Birds The Word
Lorri's Jewelry
Lorretta's
Maggie's Used Books
Matt & Kats Snack Wagon
McCloud Electric Company
Mid South Auto Dynamics Inc.
Monogram Me
Motor City
Muchies Food Service
Murray Fabrication Broker
Nancy's Custom Framing Antiques & Crafts
National Auto
NWTN Bonding Company
Odds & Ends Home Improvement
O'Neals Country Story Inc.
Papa Jacks Soul Food and BBQ
Patio Grill LLC
Persnickety's Consignment Shop
Pipeline Products of Tennessee Inc.
PO Boys BBQ
Portrait EFX By Family Focus
Q Photography
Razor Sharp Shears LLC
Revive Restoration
RPG Physical Test Labs LLC
Rudd Taxidermy
Salon Arabella
Salon B
Shabby Mommas and Etc.
Tate Medical Management LLC
Tattoo Varrou
The Andersons Inc.
The Cool Spot
Theriac Industries Inc
Tony Randalls On Broadway
Tracey Armstrong
Trues Yard Service
Two Twenty Six
UC Antique and More Mall Inc.
VC Designs
Venerable Operations LLC
Warren Collins
We Recovery LLC
Weed Wizard Inc
Wildcat Communications
ThreeStar

The Three-Star Program assists Obion County with achieving excellence in economic and community development (ECD). The county is guided through a comprehensive plan of essential benchmarks with the assistance of the JEDC’s Three-Star coordinator and an ECD team member. The goal of the program is to create new employment opportunities, preserve existing jobs, increase family income, and improve quality of life. Meetings were held to discuss the importance of participation in the community for the Three-Star report. Achieving Three-Star status in Obion County is important, particularly to willing state grants. Following a review, Obion County was once again named a ThreeStar Community.

UT Martin REED Center/TSBDC

The Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center (REED Center), housing the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC), was established to meet the needs of existing and potential business owners through one-on-one consultations and interactive training programs. The Obion County JEDC has a strong partnership with the REED Center. In 2012, the REED Center presented two seminars at Business Matters with over 60 attendees and served approximately 50 individuals in Obion County through one-on-one consulting and small business seminars.

Mayors Economic Development Meetings

Obion County has an active Mayors Economic Development Executive Roundtable, as required by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD), and the state of Tennessee’s Three-Star Program, with meetings held on a quarterly basis by a host city. At each meeting, the mayors, city managers, and economic development partners discuss their strengths and weaknesses. This collaboration has proven to bring unity within the overall community.

Main Street Union City

Main Street of Union City helped the community sustain and press forward in the toughest of economic times while dealing with Obion County having the state’s highest unemployment rate. Main Street did this by working with economic development groups and local civic organizations. In 2012 it partnered in events with the Union City Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Masquerade Theatre, Boys and Girls Club and the Obion County Chamber of Commerce.

Shop Local, Save Local!
$68 out of every $100 spent local, stay local
For the JEDC to become and remain an effective resource to/for the local community, the organization (its staff and its Board of Directors) must establish and maintain an effective working relationship with elected officials at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. In addition, strong ties must be formed with regional, state, and federal agency personnel to ensure the strongest advocacy possible for the local community. Active liaison between these groups is essential for success and is an ongoing integral part of the JEDC work scope.

**Organizational Memberships**

To be an effective advocate for the community, it is essential that the JEDC maintain membership and an active presence in the following organizations:

- International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)
- International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
- Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC)
- Tennessee Economic Development Council (TEDC)
- Tennessee Economic Partnership (TEP)
- Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives (TCCE)
- West Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives (WTCCE)
- West Tennessee Industrial Association
- West Tennessee Retail Alliance

**Staff Training & Community Participation**

- Adult Leadership Obion County Board of Directors
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Patient/Advisory Council
- Boys and Girls Club Board Member
- HeadStart Policy Council Member
- Hometown Walk of Hope Committee
- Union City Main Street Board of Directors
- United Way Board Member
- WestStar Alumni Council Member

**Conferences & Meetings**

All state and federal agencies, private sector business development organizations, as well as regional advocacy groups distribute information to their membership and to the general population through regular and annual seminars and conferences. It is essential that JEDC staff attend all such events to keep abreast of new information program changes that will affect funds delivery or impact local business, and to maintain a strong relationship with service providers. During 2012, JEDC staff attended the following events:

- Governors Conferences (Tourism, ECD)
- I-69 Meetings
- ICSC Conferences & Networking Events
- Mississippi River Corridor Meetings
- Port of Cates Landing Meetings
- SEDC Meet the Consultants
- TCCE Spring & Fall Conferences
- TEDC Spring & Fall Conferences
- TN Business Retention & Expansion Course
- TN Chamber Institute
- TN Economic Development Course
- TVA Valley Forum & Rural Leadership
- US Chamber Institute
- UTM/DSCC Economic Development Summit
- West TN Allies Meetings
Education
New educational facilities
Low pupil-teacher ratios
Southern schools accredited
Scholarships & Financial Assistance
After school activities

Quality of Life
Cultural activities
Outdoor Recreation
Fishing & Hunting
Reelfoot Lake
Thriving Downtown
Southern cuisine and more!

Medical Facilities
Baptist Memorial Hospital
Cancer Care Facility
Nursing Homes
Assisted Living Facilities

Obion County

Multiple Industry Sites
548-acre “certified” industrial park
Available Building Program
Over 750 acres available for manufacturing/distributing

Quadramodel Transportation System
Air, Water, Rail, Road

Location
500 mile equal distant travel to over 75% of the nation’s population center

Available, Abundant Workforce

Colleges & Training Facilities
Colleges - 4 colleges within 1 hour’s driving time
Industrial Training Center

State Incentives
No State Income Tax
Third lowest taxed states in the United States
Tennessee Tax Incentives
Right-to-Work State