

Coffee county

BY STEPHANIE VOZZA

Located in south central Tennessee, Coffee County is ready to brew some new business. The first step they've taken is to streamline the process.

In July 2005, Coffee County officials consolidated three separate industrial boards—a county board as well as industrial boards for the cities of Manchester and Tullahoma—to create the Industrial Board of Coffee County.

“The name of the game is employing people,” says Ted Hackney, executive director of the Industrial Board of Coffee County. “The role of the industrial board is to attract new industry and to assist existing industry in whatever ways they can to grow and increase employment.”

“Streamlining efforts helps businesses by having one contact person

for the county,” says Diane Bryant, executive director of the Tullahoma Chamber of Commerce. “The goal is to make sure Tullahoma and Manchester get equal representation.”

Hackney says he’s recruiting new businesses to one of Coffee County’s five major industrial areas, including three industrial parks with a combined 1,600 acres of available space.

The largest industrial area is the Coffee County Interstate Industrial Park, with 795 acres. Located off I-24, the park is home to 20 companies that employ a combined 2,500 people.

Other industrial parks include the 400-acre Coffee County Joint Industrial Park, located between Manchester and Tullahoma, and the Manchester Industrial Park, with 405 acres. Hackney says the airport has industrial land near it. Bryant says the Tullahoma Industrial Park is full.

Coffee County is home to a broad variety of manufacturers, Hackney says.

“We have two cut-and-sew operations in Tullahoma that both work on government contracts,” he says. “We have a large casket manufacturer in Manchester that has made caskets for many years. The newer industries are primarily automotive suppliers. In fact, we’ve had a major gain in that sector over the last 10 years.”

One of those is VIAM (TN), which

recently announced its plans to expand its corporate headquarters facility, located in the Coffee County Interstate Industrial Park. VIAM opened its Tennessee operation in 1999, leasing a 95,000-square-foot building located on 10 acres. The new expansion will bring the company’s total square footage to 302,000.

“The headquarters had been located in Santa Fe Springs, Calif.,” Hackney says. “The president of the company moved here three years ago, and last year they added another 15,000 square feet of office space. The recent announcement will bring another 40

jobs to the area. VIAM manufactures floor mats and truck liners for domestic and foreign automakers that include General Motors, Ford, Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Mazda and Mitsubishi.”

Hackney says many other area companies



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TULLAHOMA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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From Tullahoma to the Stars

Located on the 40,000-acre Arnold Air Force Base, the **Air Force's Arnold Engineering Development Center (AEDC)** is the most advanced and largest complex of flight simulation test facilities in the world. The center, which is one of the mid-state's largest employers, is involved in the development and testing of aerospace systems that include jet engines, space systems, rockets and aircraft.

AEDC plays a key role in keeping America on the cutting edge of aerospace technology. As air and space systems protect our country, the center is vital to the nation's defense. However, the work force is predominantly contractor.

"AEDC's work force, which totals about 2,300 personnel, is about 90% contractor and is employed by Aerospace Testing Alliance (ATA), a joint venture between Jacobs Sverdrup, Computer Sciences Corp. and General Physics," says Claude Morse, ATA public affairs manager at AEDC. "Less than 100 active duty military and about 200 Department of Defense civilian personnel work here, with a one star general in command."

AEDC celebrated its 55th anniversary in June. The center was dedicated by President Harry S Truman on June 25, 1951, the 65th birthday of the center's namesake and only five star general of the Air Force Henry "Hap" Arnold.

"It was the first Air Force base to be dedicated by a sitting president," Morse says.

The center's testing capabilities, which includes aerodynamic and propulsion wind tunnels, jet engine test cells, space chambers, ballistic ranges and other specialized facilities worth more than \$7.8 billion, are world class. "Every NASA manned space system from Project Mercury to the space shuttle was tested here, and AEDC is in discussions with NASA about tests to support development of the replacement for the space shuttle," Morse said. "Additionally, we recently tested both engines for the new Airbus A380, which is being built in Europe. No testing facilities in Europe could test engines of this size under simulated flight conditions."

In recent years, up to 25% of the center's testing has been for commercial aircraft engine and aircraft manufacturers, such as Boeing, Pratt & Whitney and Rolls-Royce. The center also is currently testing engines for the Air Force's new F-22A Raptor and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter being developed for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps and several allied countries.

The Arnold Community Council, with representatives from 10 southern middle Tennessee counties, estimates the AEDC's annual, regional economic impact at \$680 million.

As one of the largest employers in the area, AEDC also helps attract other companies with a science and engineering focus to the region.

For more information about AEDC, visit the center's Web site at www.arnold.af.mil.



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influx of automotive suppliers, Hackney says he is promoting diversity.

"We are not targeting any one industry," he says. "We promote our county to all type of industries through trade journal advertisements, trade shows, the Tennessee ECD, Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Board and other regional groups, such as the TVA."

Tampa, Fla.-based Architectural Wall Products has purchased a 40,000-square-foot building in Tullahoma, with plans to start production in a few months. The new company will initially employ about 25 people.

Another of Coffee County's industries is aviation. The Arnold Engineering Development Center (AEDC), located between Manchester and Tullahoma, has served as a catalyst for other aviation firms. (See sidebar.)

"Being home to the AEDC has been a big advantage in attracting aircraft businesses to our area," Hackney says.

Goodrich Corp., located in Tullahoma, manufactures aircraft landing gear for aerospace, defense and homeland security markets.

"They've just announced that they're in the process of an expansion," Hackney says.

On the retail front, the chambers of commerce help with retail business recruitment and listen to existing businesses and help with their needs.

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SOURCE: Industrial Board of Coffee County

idated our industrial boards,” Bryant says. “But we still listen to what businesses need, and we try to help address those needs.”

Manchester and Tullahoma officials work to provide a good quality of life. Coffee County Mayor Ray Johnson says he’s working to put in water lines, a new rural sewer system and building a new health department in Tullahoma.

Besides its obvious benefits to residents, Coffee County’s natural beauty and many activities also attract plenty of visitors, making tourism a big industry for the county.

“We are located in the middle of the Tennessee Backroads Heritage region and have a rich civil war history, state parks, and a spirits and wine trail,” says Mayor Johnson.

The Old Stone Fort State Park and Golf Course is located in Manchester and features picturesque waterfalls.

The George Dickel Distillery is located in Tullahoma and offers tours. Tullahoma is home to the Fine Arts Center and Regional Art Museum. The

Manchester Arts Center features performances and gallery exhibits.

Bonnaroo, a four-day multi-stage musical event held each June on a 700-acre farm in Manchester, is one of the largest festivals in Tennessee. The festival, which began in 2002, features dozens of contemporary artists and attracts more than 100,000 to the area. The festival site is transformed into a village, and includes an Internet café, arcade, cinema tent and dozens of food and craft vendors from across the country. *Rolling Stone* magazine named Bonnaroo one of the 50 moments that changed rock-and-roll history.

Workforce & Education

Coffee County is served by three school districts: Coffee County Schools, Manchester City Schools and Tullahoma city Schools. **Coffee County Schools** have a student

body of approximately 4,200 and are comprised of five elementary, one middle and one high school. **Manchester City Schools** are made up of two elementary and one junior high school, with a student body of more than 1,200. **Tullahoma City Schools** is made up of four elementary, two middle and one high school, and serve a student body of approximately 3,600. Tullahoma city schools are currently working on a bond referendum that will raise money to complete school building and renovation projects. If passed, the referendum will fund the replacement of East Lincoln



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Elementary School, and renovations to East Middle School and Jack T. Farrar Elementary School and Tullahoma High School.

Two private schools are located in the county: **St. Paul's Catholic School** serves kindergartners through the eighth grade and **Temple Baptist Christian School** serves grades pre-K through 6.

Motlow State Community College is a two-year college located in Tullahoma. Serving an 11-county area, the school has a student body of approximately 4,000, participating in degree and non-degree programs that include education, business, industry, government and health professions including a registered nursing program. MSCC also offers workforce development training. Classes are held at its Tullahoma campus as well as in Moore County, Fayetteville, McMinnville and Smyrna.

The University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI) is located adjacent to the AEDC and offers research and graduate study for engineering, physics, mathematics and aviation. Students can earn a master's or PhD degree. An internationally recognized institution, approximately 1,500 students have been awarded degrees through UTSI since it was established in 1964.

Three technical schools, located in Shelbyville, McMinnville and Murfreesboro, supply training to employees in the area.

Services & Infrastructure

Natural and Propane Gas: Elk River Public Utility District, (931)455-9311 or (931)728-3332.

Electricity: Duck River Electric Membership Corp., (931)728-7547; Tullahoma Utilities Board, (931)455-4515.

Water & Sewer: The Duck River Utility Commission, (931)455-6458; City of Manchester, (931) 728-7171; Tullahoma Utilities Board, (931)455-4515.

Telecommunications: BellSouth, (931)557-6500.

Transportation

Interstates: I-24; U.S. Highway 41A; and State Highways 53, 55, and 130.

Railroad: CSX Transportation, Caney Fork & Western.

Water: The Cumberland and Tennessee rivers with nine-foot channel depths.

The nearest port is South Pittsburgh, 40 miles away.

Air: The Tullahoma Regional/Northern Field has a 5,000-foot asphalt and concrete runway. The nearest commercial service is approximately 70 miles away at the Nashville International Airport, with more than 400 daily flights.

Health Care

Residents of Coffee County have three health care facilities to choose from: **United Regional Medical Center** and **Medical Center of Manchester** in Manchester and **Harton Regional Medical Center**, a member of the Tenet Healthcare chain, in Tullahoma. All facilities offer comprehensive services, including emergency departments, physical therapy, outpatient services and laboratory services. **tn**

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