

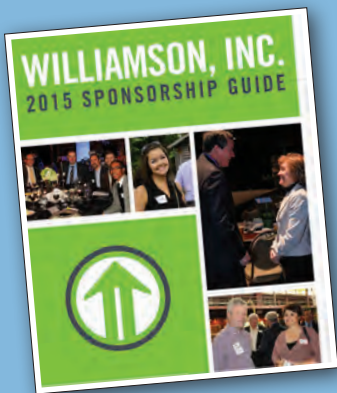
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**Read tweets
to stay
connected**

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**Learn about
Chamber
advocacy
activities**



**PICK YOUR SPONSORSHIP SPOT
WITH THE CHAMBER NOW!**

Get legislative insights at February luncheon

The 109th Tennessee General Assembly got underway in January, and it promises to put some controversial issues in front of the 132 legislators who will be proposing and voting on new laws.

The Williamson Chamber will get residents up close and in-depth on those issues at the Feb. 19 luncheon, when the Public Affairs Roundtable (PAR) takes the membership meeting spotlight at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs. The county's four elected legislators, in a panel led by Dave Crouch of the Chamber's Public Affairs Committee, will brief attendees

on key legislation expected to be on the Assembly's agenda.

"Many of the decisions made by our legislators produce changes that filter down to affect the businesses and people of Williamson County and Middle Tennessee," explained Williamson, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer Matt Largen. "The Chamber is embracing its role as a resource from which community members can find out about issues important to them."

Joining state Sen. Jack Johnson on the panel are the county's three House representatives – Charles Sargent, Glen

Casada and Jeremy Durham. All are Republicans. The legislators hold influential party leadership and committee positions, including seats on Insurance and Banking and the Fiscal Review Joint Committee. Johnson chairs Commerce and Labor in the Senate and Sargent chairs Finance, Ways and Means in the House.

"We have just moved the regularly scheduled monthly Public Affairs Roundtable to a new day – the last Friday of the month at the Williamson County Administrative Complex in Franklin," said Crouch. "We hope many

● CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Envision Williamson's future at Outlook event

All anyone has to do is drive down I-65 past Cool Springs to see how Williamson County is growing right before our eyes. Change has come, and even more is on the way.

Business and community leaders will come together on Tuesday, March 31, at the second Outlook Williamson event to consider how the county is changing, with input from experts who both create and monitor economic growth. Representing major global



The Cool Springs area of Franklin has seen enormous growth in the past few years.

—PHOTO PROVIDED BY VISIT FRANKLIN

brands, the featured speakers will impart a wide-ranging economic development picture, including what drives the decision when

corporations are looking to locate or expand.

Skanska is the premier presenting sponsor for the half-day forum, a Williamson

Chamber signature event, which will be held at The Factory at Franklin, 230 Franklin Road.

Additional meeting sponsorship spots are still available for the event, which attracted more than 250 attendees in its inaugural year. Four meeting sponsors already had signed on at press time: Metropolitan Nashville Airport

Authority, Transportation Management Association, Vanderbilt Health and Williamson Medical Center.

● CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

2015 OUTLOOK WILLIAMSON

MARCH 31 | 7:30 - 11:00 AM | THE FACTORY
www.willamsonchamber.com

PRESENTED BY:

SKANSKA

WELCOME new members

These companies and individuals have made a commitment to business growth and to their community by joining the Williamson Chamber. They will enjoy the benefits of a robust business directory listing on the Chamber website and referrals from our office and from fellow members. When you need products or services, please search the directory on the Chamber website and do business with a Chamber member.

JOIN THE MEMBER BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT THE WILLIAMSON CHAMBER – CALL US TODAY AT 615-771-1912.

Acuff & Associates

210 Westwood Place, Ste. 100
Brentwood, TN 37027
(615) 726-2410
acuff.net
Trina Gross

American Cancer Society

2000 Charlotte Ave.
Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 341-7302
cancer.org
JD Frattini

American Express

Franklin, TN 37064
(248) 854-0163
Jennifer Troxel

At Home

209 S. Royal Oaks Blvd.
Franklin, TN 37064
athome.com
Matt Storey

Caroline Pistole - State Farm

4115 Mallory Lane, Ste. 100
Franklin, TN 37067
(615) 550-0055
carolinepistole.com
Charlie Brooks

Carriage House Custom Homes and Interiors

354 Downs Blvd., Ste. 105
Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 241-1008
carriagehousecustomhomes.com
Sharon Hicks

Dale Carnegie Training of Tennessee

404 BNA Dr., Ste. 105
Nashville, TN 37217
(615) 399-5101
nashville.dalecarnegie.com
Allyn Walker

Good Findings

435 Main St.
Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 628-8495
Dawn Craig

Gros Executive Recruiters, Inc.

1550 W. McEwen Dr.
Ste. 300-32
Franklin, TN 37067
(615) 661-4568
grosrecruiters.com
Dennis Gros

Home and Country Realty LLC

4918 Main St., Ste. 8A
Spring Hill, TN 37174
(615) 392-8100
homeandcountryrealty.org
Michael Trigona

HR ProSourced Partners LLC

7840 Oscar Green Road
Primm Springs, TN 38476
(615) 943-2962
prosourcedpartners.com
Rod O'Mara

JettComm LLC

9312 Arrowhead Court
Brentwood, TN 37027
(615) 663-1695
philipjett.com
Philip Jett

JLS Designs

622 Stonewater Blvd.
Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 330-8633
windowsdressedtoimpress.com
Jennifer Smith

John Navin & Associates

4322 Harding Pike
Ste. 417, #130
Nashville, TN 37205
(615) 656-3170
johnnavin.com
John Navin

K-Tec Solutions

(Gogiro Middle Tennessee)
707 Helmsdale Place S.
Brentwood, TN 37027
(615) 689-0318
gogiro.com/midtenn
Thiru Ilanchelian

Like Family Home Care

1916 Patterson St., Ste. 502
Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 891-4644
likefamilyhomecare.com
Tara Bloom

Margaret Lantz LLC

407 Letitia Dr.
Franklin, TN 37067
(615) 613-7183
margaretlantz.com
Margaret Lantz

Morgan Stanley

2000 Meridian Blvd., Ste. 290
Franklin, TN 37067
(615) 764-4400
morganstanleybranch.com/
franklin.tn/
Ronnie McCoy

Planet Fitness Franklin

1113 Murfreesboro Road
Ste. 113
Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 647-4047
planetfitness.com
Chris Hicks

Price's Collision Centers - Franklin

1543 Columbia Ave.
Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 905-9109
pricescollision.com
Kayce Johnson

Southern Land Company

1550 W. McEwen Dr., Ste. 200
Franklin, TN 37067
(615) 778-1218
southernland.com
Jena Hollensteiner

The Hideaway at Arrington

6257 Patton Road
Arrington, TN 37014
(760) 230-8464
hideawayatarrington.com
Alexander Lange

The Sunshine Academy

100 Westwind Court
Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 791-5710
thesunshineacademy.com
Oliver Luo

Join the Chamber now, get a chance to win free meetings

All savvy business people want to get the most for their money, and the Williamson Chamber is offering new members a chance to do just that with its Smart Start New Member Passport program.

At the end of every quarter, those who have joined the Chamber in the previous three months will be entered into a drawing for free registration for four upcoming Chamber educational and networking meetings – Young Professionals, Women in Business, Nolensville Area Business Council and the monthly membership luncheon. The meeting package is worth \$88.

And during the first quarter, the winner also will receive a \$15 discount on the first Chamber signature event of the year, Outlook Williamson on Tuesday, March 31. This event will bring together the county's business and community leaders for a half-day economic forum reviewing current and future business trends and challenges. More than 250 people attended last year's inaugural Outlook event.

And, of course, Chamber membership always includes free registration for these popular sessions: First Friday, aimed at small-business owners and entrepreneurs; the monthly Public



The Chamber 101 educational session for new members or first-time company representatives of continuing members is held at the Chamber office once a month.

Affairs Roundtable featuring legislative and municipal leaders; and Member Connect! Leads Exchange, a monthly limited-attendance networking session.

The New Member Passport was first offered at the end of 2014. Trina Gross of Acuff & Associates was the

winner in the drawing for free meetings in that quarter.

To learn about this offer for new members and the many other benefits that come with joining the Chamber, contact Pam Von Ehr or Renee Shafer at (615) 771-1912.

ECONOMIC DASHBOARD - JANUARY 2015



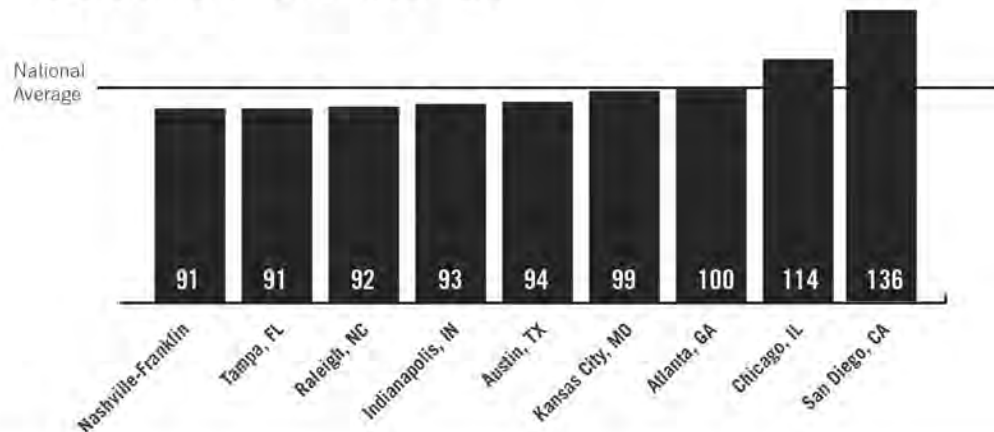
POPULATION

201,486

11.7% county 5-year growth
4.1% state 5-year growth
Nashville MSA: 1,778,500



COST OF LIVING Q3



INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN



NOVEMBER UNEMPLOYMENT

4.6% Williamson County
6.8% Tennessee
5.8% United States

101,630 Labor Force
122,552 Total Jobs
\$66,000 Avg. Earnings

LOCAL SALES TAX INCOME: DECEMBER- up 3% from 2013, up 12% from 2012

HOME BUILDING PERMITS

143 ISSUED in NOVEMBER



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (NOVEMBER)

Median SF home sale price was **\$387,930**, up **3%** from 2013
The # of SF home closings increased by 22.9% from 2013.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (Q4 2014)

	VACANCY RATE	CLASS A AVERAGE	VACANT SF
Brentwood	6.3%	\$23.92	308,401
Cool Springs	2.8%	\$27.00	179,702

Chamber greeters and new members gathered for this shot with Mark Smith, right, Shelley Moeller, Jack Mullen, Tracy Bailey, Randy Blue, Corinne Cronine, Sara Belleau, Kayleigh Ross, Sharon Hicks, Jeanne Hammontree and Jason Loggins.



Members took advantage of post-meeting time to exchange business cards and updates.



More than 250 attendees gathered to ponder how to keep Williamson moving as the county grows.

Michael Skipper, left, of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, joined the Chamber's Matt Largen and Board Chair Chris Czarka for the transit discussion.



Mac Hardcastle, left, visited with volunteer Royce Harrell.



During the meeting, Janet Norman and other attendees used "text to vote" to provide input on transit questions.

Transit talk is on the table

With economic success comes, well, traffic. And, yes, a whole list of other *good* things.

But traffic and how to manage it in the years ahead was the challenge more than 250 attendees were thinking about at the January Williamson Chamber membership meeting, when President and Chief Executive Officer Matt Largen asked this illustrative question: *How do we not become Atlanta?*

Of course, we admire our larger neighbor to the south, but anyone who's ever driven the loop around that sprawling city knows what we're talking about. With Williamson County expected to add 25,000 jobs in the next decade and Middle Tennessee projected to grow by 1.3 million by 2040, our bucolic hometown is headed for an even bigger time-and-money-draining traffic jam.

The answer to this problem – thoughtful planning way ahead of time, said featured guest speaker Michael Skipper. He spends most of his waking hours pondering transportation challenges and solutions for seven counties in Middle Tennessee as the executive director of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

So, what, just add more lanes to move more cars?

"There's no way to build our way out of this congestion," Skipper said. He pointed to rapid transit options and workplace flex scheduling as ways

to reduce the dependence on individual automobiles and ease congestion.

People see 2040 – 25 years from now – as far in the future, Skipper said, but infrastructure takes a long time to design and build. As a comparison, young Taylor Swift has become a superstar in the same number of years, he noted.

As is so often the case, one roadblock to solving the looming transit problems is money, Skipper explained. With a federal gas tax that hasn't been increased since 1997, funds to support infrastructure projects are stretched impossibly thin.

Based on anticipated growth, especially in Williamson and Rutherford counties, in the next few decades the local area is expected to have a population density equal to three times what Nashville is today, Skipper said.

Largen suggested residents should view transit needs as an economic development issue, since lifestyle and access are keys to that. But on a more personal level, he added, time spent traveling takes away from time at home with family.

Chamber Board President Chris Czarka echoed the concerns of the day, but added a lighter note. The Nissan executive explained that his family moved to Williamson County from Los Angeles – "so just put that in perspective."

The January membership meeting was presented by Vanderbilt Health.

**"TWO WEEKS
AGO TODAY
I HAD A
MASSIVE
HEART
ATTACK."**

–ELIZABETH TYER

#MYWMCSTORY
MYSTORY@WMED.ORG



4321 CAROTHERS PARKWAY • FRANKLIN
williamsonmedicalcenter.org



Public Affairs Roundtable kicks off 2015 with new day, record attendance

The Public Affairs Roundtable debuted with a record crowd on its new day in January – the last Friday of the month – when the county's four legislators went in-depth with moderator Dave Crouch about the governor's proposal to extend health care options for lower-income residents.

The roundtable is broadcast live on WC-TV, the county's government and education channel, and archived to view at any time at youtube.com/user/wctvnet. The sessions are being presented by the Vanderbilt Office of Community, Neighborhood and Government Relations.

Other issues expected to dominate the work of the 2015 General Assembly will be detailed in conversation with these public officials at the monthly membership luncheon on Thursday, Feb. 19, when the Chamber's expanded advocacy efforts also will be discussed. Register online now to attend this in-depth briefing.



The first Public Affairs Roundtable meeting of 2015 boasted a record crowd attendance of over 60 people.



Rep. Charles Sargent speaks with county Chief of Staff Diane Giddens after the session.



what's new IN WILLIAMSON

WE CELEBRATE WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AS THEY OPEN, EXPAND AND RENOVATE!



BELMONT UNIVERSITY

310 Billingsly Court • Franklin

Ribbon Cutting – Jan. 13 • 1 employee

Numerous full- and part-time faculty members will be serving professional and nontraditional adult students in this new Belmont University space, which also offers facility and meeting room rentals. The university, ranked No. 5 in the Southern region, has plans to expand graduate course offerings and other classes.



GOODALL HOMES LOCKWOOD GLEN

510 Cobert Lane • Franklin

Ribbon Cutting – Jan. 29 • 75 employees

Goodall Homes revealed a new townhome model, just one of many options the company is building in six Williamson communities, including Franklin and Nolensville. Named top builder for 2014 by *Professional Builder*, Goodall is one of the state's 25 fastest-growing, privately held companies.



GUARANTY TRUST

214 Centerview Dr., Suite 205 • Brentwood

Ribbon Cutting – Jan. 28 • 7 employees

A locally owned, billion-dollar mortgage lender, Guaranty Trust is among the top 100 mortgage companies in America. The Brentwood location, one of seven in the Middle Tennessee region, reflects steady growth in Williamson County. Guaranty is a market leader in residential mortgage lending and customer satisfaction.



SCHMITTER FAMILY DENTAL

115 Penn Warren Dr., Suite 500 • Brentwood

Ribbon Cutting – Jan. 7 • 3 employees

A family dental practice, this office serves patients ranging in age from young children to seniors with an aim to treat them like family. Committed to tailored care for each patient, Schmitter offers routine dental care and a range of special services, including whitening, veneers and crowns, and adult braces.



WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER GROUP AT TOLLGATE FAMILY MEDICINE

1106 Elliston Way, Suite 202 • Thompson's Station

Ribbon Cutting – Jan. 20 • 10 employees

Dr. Rand Hayes serves patients of all ages, along with longtime physician assistant Anna Herring. The practice includes internal medicine, general surgery and more.

HOST A RIBBON CUTTING!

It's a great way for Chamber members to kick off a new business or to celebrate a major expansion or renovation of an existing business with customers, employees and other supporters.

The Chamber and the business community are ready to support your business as you open, expand and renovate!

To learn more, contact Liz Long at liz@williamsonchamber.com or 615-771-1912.

events&meetings

The CHAMBER OFFICE is located in Cool Springs at 5005 Meridian Blvd., Suite 150, Franklin.

- FEB 12 FUTURE MEMBERS INFO SESSION**
9 a.m., Chamber office
- FEB 12 NOLENSVILLE AREA BUSINESS COUNCIL**
11:30 a.m., Providence Baptist Fellowship
1668 Sunset Road, Brentwood
Speaker: Ken McLawhon,
Nolensville Town Administrator
Presented by Williamson Medical Center
- FEB 18 YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CONNECT**
5 p.m., Bunganut Pig
1143 Columbia Ave., Franklin
Presented by Saint Thomas Health
- FEB 19 MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON**
11 a.m. late registration and networking
11:30 p.m. lunch and program
Franklin Marriott Cool Springs
700 Cool Springs Blvd. E., Franklin
Panel: Williamson County legislators
Presented by Vanderbilt Health and
Williamson Medical Center Walk-in Clinic
- FEB 23 INFO SESSION FOR FUTURE MEMBERS**
4 p.m., Chamber office
- FEB 26 WOMEN IN BUSINESS**
11 a.m. late registration and networking
11:30 a.m. lunch and program
Brentwood United Methodist Church
309 Franklin Road, Brentwood
Speaker: Ellie Westman Chin, Williamson
County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Presented by CareCore-MedSolutions
- MAR 4 MEMBER CONNECT! LEADS EXCHANGE**
Two sessions – members only
7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Chamber office
- MAR 6 YOUR SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE:
FIRST FRIDAY**
7:30 a.m., EISPACES
1550 W. McEwen Dr., Ste. 300, Franklin
Speaker: Jim Lackey, EnableComp
Presented by FirstBank
- MAR 10 CHAMBER 101 MEMBER ORIENTATION**
3:30 p.m., Chamber office
Presented by First Citizens National Bank
- MAR 11 YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOCUS**
11:30 a.m., Tractor Supply Company
5401 Virginia Way, Brentwood
Speaker: Bill Lee, Lee Company
Presented by Saint Thomas Health

RIBBON CUTTINGS

- FEB 12, 11:30 a.m. • At Home
FEB 20, 11:30 a.m. • Firestone Complete Care
FEB 26, 12 p.m. • Goodall Homes - Bent Creek
FEB 27, 3:30 p.m. • Brookdale Franklin
MARCH 11, 8:30 a.m. • Belk Men's and Kid's

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE
FOR UPDATES AND MORE INFORMATION.

Learn why vacationers are visiting

Sure, vacations are fun, but they're also big business for the state and for Williamson County. With an annual economic impact of more than \$16 billion, tourism is one of Tennessee's biggest industries.

Williamson ranks as one of the top ten places to visit in the Volunteer State, and the county's Convention and Visitors Bureau (WCCVB) is working to attract even more history, music, food and nature buffs in 2015 and beyond.

At the helm of the WCCVB for less than a year, Ellie Westman Chin will share some specifics of that effort at the Feb. 26 Women in Business (WIB) luncheon at the Brentwood United Methodist

Church, 309 Franklin Road. The luncheon, this month on Thursday, is being presented by CareCore-MedSolutions.

Westman Chin brings a 20-year career in marketing and event management to her position as WCCVB president and chief executive officer. Most recently, she served as vice president for philanthropy for The Women's Foundation of Colorado. Prior to that, she did business development and event management for the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The new executive sees her role as three-fold: raising awareness of

Williamson County as a world-class travel destination, growing visitor spending to increase its economic impact and working with local officials to continue to develop the county's unique attractions and experiences.

The luncheon costs \$22 for members and \$30 for non-members, who may register as guests. Sign up before noon on Jan. 23 to avoid the \$5 late fee. Networking and late in-person registration is from 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., when the luncheon will begin. Learn more and save your space at williamsonchamber.com.



Ellie Westman Chin

Young Professionals FOCUS and CONNECT

The panel at the January Young Professionals FOCUS luncheon at Jackson National Life Insurance Company attracted a full house with their discussion about getting hired and promoted. The speakers' tips on compensation are captured in these tweets, at right, from @williamson_inc. Young Professionals is presented by Saint Thomas Health.

To read the Chamber's full stream of tweets in real time, go to twitter.com/williamson_inc. It's a great way to get key takeaways from meetings and events.

 @williamson_inc

- In general, our HR professionals say that not as many people negotiate (their salaries/compensation) as should or could.
- When it comes to negotiating your compensation, don't be too pushy. This is an indicator of how you might treat others as an employee.
- Another option is to ask to be paid fairly, and also let the interviewer know you're flexible.
- If an interviewer asks for your salary expectation, be sure you've done research to know the industry standard.
- In an interview, avoid asking anything about compensation and benefits. Wait until you are offered the position to ask those questions.



The Young Professionals gathered for their first-ever "active" CONNECT session at Title Boxing Club in Cool Springs. About 50 fitness buffs gloved-up for the January exercise session.

Membership luncheon (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

residents will join us this year for this free session, which also will feature some local municipality updates later in the year. All community members are invited."

The PAR also is broadcast live on WC-TV, the county's government and education channel, and archived to be viewed at any time on the station's YouTube channel. The WC-TV link is available under the "Community" menu button

at williamsoncounty-tn.gov.

The January luncheon is being presented by the Vanderbilt Health and Williamson Medical Center Walk-in Clinic. The cost is \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members, who may register as guests. Members who sign up by the registration deadline – noon on Monday, Feb. 16 – will avoid the \$5 late fee and also receive a pre-meeting list of regis-

tered attendees to use when considering networking opportunities. Networking and late registration is from 11 to 11:30 a.m., when the luncheon program will begin. Go to williamsonchamber.com to register and learn more, or call the Chamber at (615) 771-1912.

Attendees may submit a question for the legislators ahead of the meeting by emailing jenna@williamsonchamber.com.

Chamber to grow advocacy efforts, involve members

In The Point Q&A this month, Public Affairs Committee Chair Bryan Echols highlights some first steps of the Chamber's expanding advocacy activities.

● What guidelines will the Chamber use in advocating for the interests of the business community?

The Chamber Board has adopted a new policy to guide the advocacy initiative in recognition that advocacy on behalf of the business community in Williamson County is a core service for our members. The Board wants to ensure that our efforts are consistent and reflect an informed understanding of the issues. To support that goal,

the document provides an overview of the best means of advocacy related to specific issues that might arise.

● Will Chamber members have the opportunity to provide input related to advocacy activity? What other research will inform the process?

When surveyed, members wanted the Chamber to keep them informed about issues and to gather input when making advocacy decisions. To that end, the Public Affairs Committee and the Chamber staff have been working on ways to increase two-way communication.

The Chamber has contracted to use the Votility software platform. Using this

software, we can ensure that members have access to information about current legislative and other initiatives, and even provide feedback so that the Chamber can understand their positions on issues. Attendees will learn more about this software at the February membership meeting, which will have a public affairs focus.

We also are considering other timely means of communicating about issues of interest to the members, which may include blogs or other social media platforms.

● What is the benefit of Chamber advocacy as it relates to business in Williamson County, and why is it important at this time?

community as a key service of the Chamber. Legislative and regulatory proposals at the state, county and municipal levels often have the potential

for significant impact on our members. Individual members typically don't have time to monitor, understand and respond to these matters. The Chamber will be working to monitor pertinent issues, research their potential impact, gather member input and develop responses – as deemed necessary – to be an informed advocate for the business community and economic development.

Q&A



J. BRYAN ECHOLS, Partner
Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis LLP

The members have identified advocacy on behalf of the Williamson County business

Outlook Williamson (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

“Any business interested in learning more about becoming an Outlook Williamson sponsor can email or call me or Abby Bass, the Chamber's meetings and events director,” said Chief Operating Officer Cindi Parmenter. “Information on the benefits of sponsorship also is posted on the Chamber website.”

And, once again this year, Outlook Williamson attendees will get the first copies of the staff-developed, award-winning Trends Report, which is packed with statistics and charts that detail

the economic climate in the county and anticipated areas of growth. This year's report will include a look at the skills gap workforce issue – what competencies are lacking in workers compared to what jobs need to be filled.

In the speaker lineup, Amy Gerber of Jones Lang LaSalle will lead off the Outlook Williamson event. Based in Atlanta, she specializes in state incentive and tax negotiation and implementation as an executive vice president in the Business and Economic Incentives practice. Gerber has led and managed both office and industrial projects, with a client list that includes Williams-Sonoma, Medtronic, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Capital One, Cisco Systems and Westinghouse. Jones Lang LaSalle employs more than 52,000 people across 200 corporate offices in more than 75 countries.

Next up will be a panel of commercial real estate presidents whose companies are involved in projects around the world: Doug Brandon of DTZ, Janet Miller of Colliers and Stephen Kulinski of CBRE.

The event's keynote speaker is Reggie Walker of PwC. Walker is managing partner of the company's greater Atlanta market, overseeing more than 1,600 professionals who deliver assurance and audit, tax and advisory services to clients in the region.

PwC was created in 1998 with the merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand.

The cost of the half-day economic forum is \$60 for members, \$35 for students with ID and \$75 for non-members, who may register as guests. A \$10 late fee will be added for registration after noon on Friday, March 27.

Late registration and networking will be from 7:30 to 8 a.m., when the program will begin. A buffet breakfast, included in the registration fee, will be available before the program starts and at breaks between the 45-minute presentation segments.

Chamber and community members can learn more and register now at williamsonchamber.com. To discuss sponsorships, contact Parmenter or Bass at 615-771-1912 or email abby@williamsonchamber.com.



New resource expands Chamber's advocacy role

Following the directive of the strategic plan to be a leading business advocate, the Williamson Chamber will be providing members with information about hot-button issues on the national, state and local level using software developed by a Brentwood company.

Votility's online platform helps membership organizations and others educate and engage the people who will be most affected by pending legislation, policies and regulations. Described as “grass-roots advocacy” software, the product provides an accessible way for users to learn about issues that might affect their business or the community in which they live.

Using Votility, members will be able to log on and see a summary of pending bills and regulations that the Chamber is watching. The list may include legislation or regulations that other groups are following – such as the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce – as well as local issues that will be identified and posted by the Chamber's Public Affairs Committee. The focus will be on topics related to business and the broader economy, such as taxation, economic development, health insurance and education.

Members may be asked to weigh

in on issues and have the opportunity to link to elected officials to share their views. The Chamber also would be able to use feedback from users to judge the interest and opinions of its members on issues of importance to them.



“The Chamber's primary role in the community is to promote business formation and growth, so it makes sense that we inform our members about pertinent issues being discussed at the local, state and national level,” explained President and Chief Executive Officer Matt Largen. “Our members told us during the formation of the strategic plan that they wanted the Chamber to be an influential business advocate and an information resource about governmental actions that might affect businesses. This software will enable the Chamber to share key information in timely manner and offers the opportunity to get valuable feedback from our members.”

Elizabeth Fox, left and Cathi Aycock of StyleBlueprint take a minute with Shanna Jackson, chair of the Women in Business Steering Committee.



The luncheon was catered by Puckett's, represented by Claire Crowell, left, who is shown here with Abby Rorex and Meghan O'Rourke.

CareCore-MedSolutions, presenting sponsor for the luncheon, was represented by Kimmy Do, left, Dianne Conlee and Jane Smith-Stage.



Fashion choices enhance career

If you're unhappy conforming to the wardrobe expectations in your workplace, you might consider looking for a new job.

That's what style diva Cathi Aycock advised a packed crowd at the January Women in Business luncheon. Pointing to the well-known workplace attire adage "dress for the job you want," Aycock said that means you need to emulate your female superiors.

"If you don't want to do that, then you may not be working in the right place," she explained.

Aycock recently was named Williamson County editor for StyleBlueprint, an online lifestyle publication. She formerly was a columnist with *The Tennessean*, where she created the Daily Crave retail feature.

StyleBlueprint boasts about 750,000 readers, mostly women between 25 and 60. Started in Nashville in 2009 by Elizabeth Fox and Lisa Graves, the company now covers four other Southern cities – and Williamson County – and also offers a Southern edition.

Aycock's advice to start job hunting if you don't want to

conform to office dress expectations came in response to an audience question about advising young workers about appearance. Her succinct directive: "You need to be polished."

Aycock said she agrees it's not fair that people are judged by how they look.

"We choose our leaders based on visual perceptions," she explained. "You are being chosen, in part, based on your appearance. You've just got to get past it."

Scientific research backs up this connection, she added.

"Who would have thought that science and fashion would go hand in hand, but they do," she said. "Science says it takes about 7 seconds to form a first impression." While how you look won't lead to a job offer without credentials, appearance might very well nix an employment opportunity, she suggested.

Her tips for hitting the wardrobe bull's-eye – invest in a well-fitting jacket in black or another neutral.

"A jacket gives you authority," she said. "It's not just a fashion piece."

And since bodies are

different, the shape and length has to fit the person, Aycock explained, detailing what women should look for if they're petite, voluptuous or curvy.

Trend styles like bootie shoes and leather jackets paired with the right pieces can be acceptable office wear, she said.

"If you're in a creative field, it's part of your job to show your creativity," she observed.

Women in the 30-to-60 age range often wear clothes that are too large, she said, while the 16-to-30 set errs in the other direction.

"Taking more fashion risks can make you look youthful, but it's all about your comfort level," she advised older women.

"I'm sorry as women we have to struggle so much about what we wear," she concluded. "We've got a lot to offer. I don't want it to be all about our clothes, but I don't want our clothes to be our stumbling block."

The January Women in Business luncheon was presented by CareCore-MedSolutions.

Group forming for Austin educational trip in September

After hosting nine visits in four years from other economic development groups wanting to learn the secrets of the county's success, Williamson, Inc. will be hosting its first venture to visit and learn from a peer city from Sept. 28 to 30.

The Williamson Forward expedition is aimed at bringing together top business and community leaders who will listen and learn and bring back innovative ideas to help address local business and infrastructure issues. The group will include chief executive officers or a designated representative, government officials and influential community leaders.

The three-day event costs \$2,000, including

airfare, hotel and most meals. The agenda is filled with presentations from local leaders, tours of large commercial developments and local landmarks, and an inside look at San Marcos – an Austin neighbor that is reminiscent of Williamson's own Franklin.

Business or community leaders interested in learning more about the Williamson Forward expedition can email Chief Operating Officer Cindi Parmenter at cindi@williamsonchamber.com for more details.

Austin is one of a handful of geographic locations that often goes head-to-head with Williamson County when it comes to recruiting new or relocating businesses. This is the first visit to a competitor city for Williamson, Inc., which incorporates both the Chamber and Economic Development. Throughout the trip, the team will be exploring a range of topics, including commercial development, housing, transportation and education.

Chambers of commerce and other community groups have found bringing together local leaders



The Williamson, Inc. educational trip to the Texas capital city is set for September and includes airfare, hotel and most meals.



in this format both benefits individual professionals, who forge solid connections, and the community at large as the participants apply what they've learned in their work and other leadership roles.