

## Tullahoma, TN, “Rolls Out” its Five-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development

June 3, 2005

There was a large crowd gathered at **Tullahoma High School** on Thursday night. There wasn't a football game...there wasn't a PTA meeting...it wasn't an open house....no – it was the site for the City's unveiling of its five-year Economic Development Strategic Plan.

AngelouEconomics was hired by the Tullahoma Industrial Development Board (TIDB) in January to analyze the City's and Board's current situation, help craft a strategy to move the small town of about 20,000 people forward, and structure the plan to help create jobs in the process.

The project manager for AngelouEconomics, Lee Ann Woods, bragged about the firm's client: **“Tullahoma, TN, is a little-known ‘jewel’** – the town is home to the University of Tennessee Space Institute, Arnold Engineering Development Center (world's largest and most complex collection of flight simulation test facilities), Jacobs Sverdrup, and other aerospace and aviation entities. Additionally, Tullahoma has a strong and growing medical community; it has become a destination for retirees; and it supports the Southern Automotive Corridor with labor and facilities.” According to Woods, “Tullahoma has a strong sense of community, with a state-recognized educational system that also includes an outstanding junior college, Motlow State Community College.”

**The founder and president of AngelouEconomics (AE), Angelos Angelou,** was on hand Thursday, June 2 for the unveiling of the plan. Angelou discussed the global, national and regional trends that impact the State of Tennessee and specifically Tullahoma. He painted a very positive future for the State and Tullahoma, though he made certain the **message of “education”** was heard loud and clear. “Education is the cornerstone of economic development,” stated Angelou. “An educated and skilled workforce is what will bring and keep jobs in any area, and education is certainly the backbone of the community, too,” he said. Angelou also emphasized “entrepreneurship” – AngelouEconomics estimates 70% of all future jobs in this country will develop from entrepreneurial efforts.

As to Tullahoma's future, Woods identified their recommendations for Target Industries: Medical Specializations, Senior Services, Aviation/Avionics, Automotive Parts (Aftermarket), Specialty Foods/Processing, and Specialty Retail. And with the community becoming a part of the county wide (Coffee County) consolidation for Industrial Board activity, Woods emphasized the need for Tullahoma to create an entity that would take the firm's recommendations forward.

The **key recommendations** made by AE included: Strengthening the Medical Offerings, Embracing the Senior Community (including creation of a SCORE office), Engaging the Youth (multiple programs were presented), a Redevelopment of Downtown through an immediate creation of a Downtown Partnership, undertaking Redevelopment of the Airport to an Executive Airport, and creating Industry Teams (using existing business leaders' skills) to generate expansion and recruitment activity. There was an overriding focus on EXISTING business. AE indicates that 80% of all new jobs created in any one community come from existing businesses. The firm emphasized that this is not to be overlooked and in fact should be where initial efforts are placed for job creation and development in Tullahoma.

On hand for the event were Tullahoma Mayor Steve Cope, Coffee County Mayor Ray Johnson, TIDB Chairman Jeff Fishman, several of the City's aldermen, representatives from the Tullahoma Utilities Board, the State Department of Economic & Community Development, Tullahoma Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Diane Bryant, and many other local business and community leaders.

Fishman and Bryant, it was announced Thursday night, will co-chair the initial efforts of moving the Strategic Plan forward. Their work will begin with identifying various city leaders who will dedicate personal resources toward promotion and execution of the plan.

“The evening was quite exciting,” exclaimed Mayor Cope. “It was terrific to see the enthusiasm for Tullahoma's future, with many attending committing – on the spot – to working with us to move the Plan forward,” he said.

Additional information on the Strategic Plan and how anyone can become involved can be found on the project's website: [www.launchtullahoma.com](http://www.launchtullahoma.com).

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