

## **INTRODUCTION**

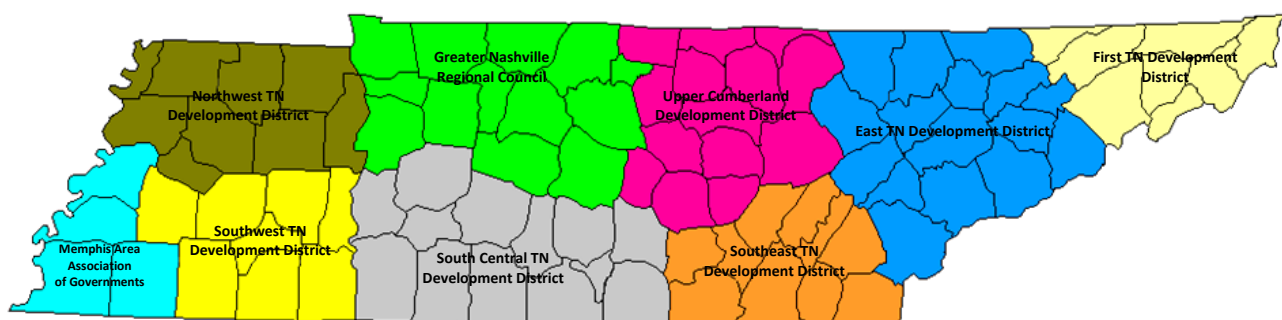
### **What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?**

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a regional planning document that looks beyond individual cities and counties and instead focuses on a regional approach to economic development. A CEDS is a result of a regional planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of our region.

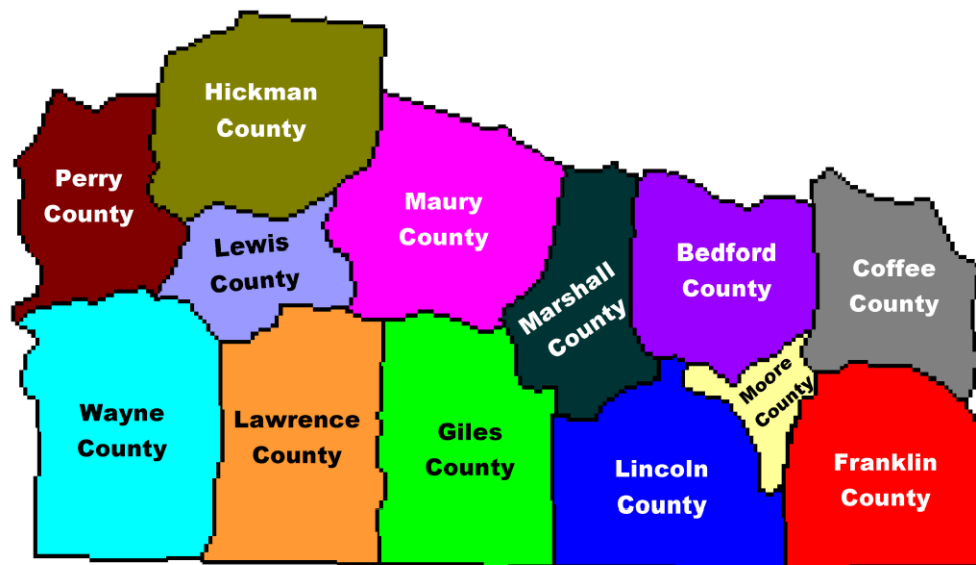
CEDS are developed in partnership with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). EDA designated Economic Development Districts (EDDs) are responsible for updating a region's CEDS. As the region's EDA designated Economic Development District, South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) has been the lead organization in the 2017 CEDS process. It has been developed by the SCTDD through a continuous planning process that engages both the public and private sectors. SCTDD's status as an EDA Economic Development District allows member communities to apply for EDA grant funding to support public works projects that have a job creation element as well as other EDA programs.

### **South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD)**

SCTDD is one of nine state-wide districts established under the Tennessee Development District Act of 1965. SCTDD has been an EDA designated Economic Development District (EDD) since 1975 and is currently staffed by 45 employees. Our staff has technical expertise in district management, economic development, community development, workforce development, housing, environmental and disaster planning, aging planning and disabilities, solid waste planning, transportation programs, grant writing, and public guardianship for the elderly.



The SCTDD Executive board consists of an Executive Director, member government officials, state representatives, and minority representatives from a 13-County region which includes Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, and Wayne Counties. A twenty-four member Executive committee meets four times per year to set policy and conduct business on behalf of the full board.



Southern Middle Tennessee rests between Interstate 24 and the Tennessee River with Interstate 65 flowing through the middle and a four-lane state highway stretched across the southern counties. With such great transportation arteries and close proximity to Huntsville, Alabama and Nashville, Tennessee, the area has witnessed a lot of growth and offers rich opportunities for businesses.

This CEDS outlines a vision for our thirteen counties in the South Central Tennessee region and sets forth a plan to prepare our communities long-term resilience and prosperity. Our strategy is updated by the CEDS Committee and staff at the South Central Tennessee Development District.

Representatives on this Committee are invited to attend based on input from local elected officials and partner organizations throughout the region. Various inputs helped develop our CEDS including a review of existing documentation relating to economic development and planning within the region. Interviews, surveys, and focus groups were conducted as part of a stakeholder engagement process with representatives of business, government, and institutions throughout the area. Field reconnaissance was conducted and information collected on existing conditions.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report acknowledges the assistance of the South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) and its staff in coordinating logistical resources to help guide this process. The report also acknowledges the participation and guidance of the CEDS Steering Committee established for this CEDS. Steering Committee members included the following individuals, representing key organizations and institutions, and providing their time and attention.



### The CEDS Steering Committee

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Category Represented</b>
Ted Hackney	Economic Development Organization
Mayor Robby Moore	Local Government
Mayor Bill Webb	Local Government
William McNairy	Minority Representative
Bill Shuff	Economic Development Organization
Kelli Kea-Carroll	Higher Education Representative
Tony Beyer	Workforce Board member
Dr. Mark Short	Small Business-Northside Animal Hospital
Eddie Hall	Consultant-Retired HR Manager
Betty Superstein	Small Business-Middle TN Foot Associates
Joe Brandon	Consultant-Retired Store Owner
Jim Green	Plant Manager-Richland, LLC
Jackie Axt	Small Business- Southern Marine

Steering committee members, along with representatives of various chambers of commerce, industrial development boards, and other organizations in the region helped provide input and assistance where possible.

SCTDD's CEDS follows the new guidelines released by the U.S. Economic Development Administration in February 2015. The CEDS is a strategy-

driven plan developed by a diverse workgroup of local representatives from private, public and nonprofit sectors that promotes resiliency and includes:

1. Summary Background of economic conditions in the region;
2. SWOT Analysis to identify regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats;
3. Action Plan incorporating tactics identified through planning process, other plans, and stakeholder feedback to develop the priority strategies for the region;
4. Data driven performance measures associated with the plan.

## **Summary Background**

A summary background of the economic development conditions of the region is the first step towards the development of a regional strategy. The demographics of the thirteen county region of South Central Tennessee continue to be very similar to most of rural Tennessee. Overall, the economy of the region is healthy and growing, but the region still has pockets of poverty levels that are a result of changes in the economy from agrarian, and cut and sew type manufacturing to advanced manufacturing that requires higher levels of education and skill sets.

The population growth rate from 2011 to 2016 is between the rate of the United States and the state for the same period. Between 2010 and 2016, the SCTDD population grew from 423,343 persons to 438,994 persons. This represents a 3.6% population increase over the six year period and is less than the overall statewide growth of 4.5% and the United States at 4.3%. Counties near the urban core experienced percentage gains while rural counties grew at a much smaller rate or experienced a population decline. The growth rates range from a high of Maury County's 10.5% population increase to a low of growth rates for the Counties of Giles, Hickman, Lewis, Moore, and Wayne. Today's modern society is very mobile and you would think that most would commute into the urban areas from the rural areas. However, the urban areas have attracted younger professionals to live close to their work and not commute.

County	2010 Population	2015 Population Est.	2016 Population Est.	June 2016 Unemployment	June 2017 Unemployment
Bedford	45,058	47,956	47,484	5.8%	4.8%
Coffee	52,796	54,694	54,682	4.1%	5.2%
Franklin	41,052	41,533	41,700	5.6%	4.3%
Giles	29,485	29,329	29,307	4.4%	4.0%
Hickman	24,690	24,745	24,295	5.1%	3.8%
Lawrence	41,869	42,125	43,081	6.4%	5.0%
Lewis	12,161	12,048	11,904	6.3%	4.9%
Lincoln	33,361	34,965	33,645	4.4%	3.9%
Marshall	30,617	32,027	31,915	5.1%	3.8%
Maury	80,956	87,681	89,981	4.4%	3.9%
Moore	6,362	6,295	6,323	4.3%	3.9%
Perry	7,915	7,988	7,964	6.8%	5.0%
Wayne	17,021	16,849	16,713	7.2%	6.1%
SCTDD	423,343	438,235	438,994	5.4%	4.5%
Tennessee	6,357,000	6,607,016	6,651,000	5.2%	4.2%
United States	309,300,000	321,370,000	323,100,000	5.1%	4.5%

The region is very diverse in economic development from advanced manufacturing like General Motors in Maury County, Nissan in Franklin County to rural areas like Lewis, Perry, and Wayne Counties that rely upon more traditional manufacturing and forestry jobs for employment. With few exceptions, unemployment rates for our region have consistently trended downward since the peak of the recession in 2009. The new unemployment numbers for June 2017 show that 7 counties in the region are below the unemployment rate for the U.S. and 6 of the counties are below Tennessee's unemployment rate. The more populated areas of the

District had the lowest unemployment rates with Maury County having the 9th lowest average in the State. The more rural areas in our region still have some of the higher unemployment rates in the State, but have also seen improvements over the last few years. Wayne County has the highest unemployment rate in our region at 6.1% and is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest average in the State. We continue to see new employees being hired by companies specifically from the automotive industry and on a smaller scale the food industry, as well as other manufacturing sectors. Even with these new jobs there continues to be a need for more employment opportunities in the region.

<b>County</b>	<b>2014 Poverty Rate</b>	<b>2015 Poverty Rate</b>	<b>2015 Median Age</b>	<b>Population with High School Degree</b>	<b>Population with Bachelor's</b>
Bedford	19.1%	17.0%	36.6	80.6%	13.8%
Coffee	16.8%	15.9%	39.7	87.7%	18.9%
Franklin	16.5%	15.0%	41.5	86.0%	19.1%
Giles	16.9%	16.1%	42.9	85.8%	15.7%
Hickman	20.2%	20.4%	40.7	81%	10.9%
Lawrence	21.8%	18.9%	39.9	85.2%	13.6%
Lewis	20.3%	17.9%	43.5	85.3%	13.9%
Lincoln	16.5%	16.0%	42.9	85.2%	17.2%
Marshall	15.5%	13.8%	39.4	84.2%	14.4%
Maury	15.5%	13.2%	38.6	90.5%	20.5%
Moore	12.5%	11.8%	45.5	90.4%	19.2%
Perry	23.6%	22.3%	43.7	80.2%	12.5%
Wayne	23.3%	25.4%	42.2	81.2%	8.7%
SCTDD	18.3%	17.9%	38.0	85.6%	16.4%
Tennessee	18.2%	16.7%	38.6	88.3%	27.3%
United States	15.5%	14.7%	38.0	86.7%	29.8%

As the Baby Boomers across the country get older, the overall average age of the population continues to increase. Within the SCTDD region, 8 of the 13 SCTDD counties had an average age of over 40 which means that the labor force is aging and will be constricting in the not too distant future and skill sets must be replenished. The percentage of High School Graduates and those with Bachelor's degrees and higher are slightly lower than the state's total. Per capita income figures for all of the SCTDD counties are lower than both the state and national figures. For 2015 our region's 5 year average ACS Per Capita Income is \$21,384 while the national average is \$28,930. Also for 2015 our region's average BEA Per Capita Personal Income is \$34,873 while the national average is \$48,112. This exemplifies the recovery that the region has experienced since the recession of 2007-2008. It is clear that incomes have not fully recovered from the recession and the impact of the economic decline hurt regardless of the rural/urban character of the local area. Replacing jobs lost in the manufacturing sector continues to be a challenge for all rural Tennessee communities. Although the national trend is the replacement of manufacturing jobs with jobs in the service sector, most of those are in and near the metropolitan areas and usually pay lower wages.

The SCTDD has significant assets which can be utilized to promote economic development. Our region has a diversified mix of various types of industry. This is due in part to the movement from an agricultural to an industrial economy. The infrastructure in the SCTDD region is adequate to satisfy the physical needs of industries which locate here. Perhaps most important is the availability of a mobile labor force with a work-ethic. The district's transportation facilities are good and provide the means for workers to be employed outside their county of residence. Other regional assets for our area include plenty of land and water, super highways, a good living environment and a plentiful labor supply.

However, there are certain regional vulnerabilities which retard economic development. The most significant problem is the limited acreage of developed industrial sites. Future economic development will require more developed sites than are presently available and these efforts will be hampered if sites do not have immediately available water, sewer, telecommunications, and access roads. The time has passed when a company would purchase a cornfield with promises from local government to provide the necessary utilities. Thus, the importance of providing



controlled, improved, industrial sites cannot be over-emphasized. Another vulnerability is disaster planning and resiliency. Local Emergency Management Agency's, SCTDD, and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency have been actively engaged in disaster planning and resiliency, but it takes continued active vigilance.

It is increasingly important for communities to look at advanced manufacturing jobs as well as non-traditional ways of creating employment opportunities. We are encouraging communities to invest in public industrial parks as well as to look at entrepreneurship, tourism development, local artisan development, call centers and data centers, green energy, retirement attractions, agribusiness, and other non-traditional economic development strategies.



### **SWOT Analysis of the South Central Tennessee Development District:**

SWOT analysis is an in-depth examination of the region's strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats in the region as identified through data analysis and public outreach in the region as identified in the table below and then elaborated on in more detail. This analysis can play a

critical role in the development of a regional strategy and the successful implementation of that strategy. The development strategy should be built on the region's strengths while recognizing that weaknesses exist and threats to successful implementation must be identified. The SWOT results show us where our region is today and highlight opportunities for future progress. Below the table is a discussion of the SWOT analysis and is by no means all inclusive and will focus on the highlights. This discussion will continue on an ongoing initiative, as it's a dynamic process.

## **STRENGTHS**

Strong Work Ethic  
Transportation Access  
Central Location  
Good Infrastructure  
Low Cost of Living  
Low Taxes  
Effective Local EDO's  
Safe with Low Crime Rate  
Outstanding Rural Quality of Life  
Supportive Education System  
Higher Education Opportunities  
Suitable Proximity to Commercial  
Air Transportation

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Workforce Educational Programs  
Tourism  
Infrastructure  
Business Expansion  
Targeted Industrial Development  
Agribusiness Development

## **WEAKNESSES**

Lack of Broadband Access  
High Skilled Worker Shortage  
Aging Workforce  
Youth Retention  
Aging Infrastructure  
Childcare Availibilty  
Rural Business Attraction  
Education and Skill Levels

## **THREATS**

Lack of Broadband Access  
Education Levels  
Workforce Turnover  
Aging Infrastructure  
Youth Flight  
Natural Disasters  
Entry Level Skill Gap

### **SCTDD Strengths:**

Most of the SCTDD communities share common strengths. Most have a strong workforce with a good work ethic. Most have good locations and easy transportation access, and most have good economic development organizations with a full time economic development professional. Several communities (Ardmore, Bell Buckle, Elkton, Chapel Hill, Columbia, Cornersville, Lewisburg, Lynnville, Manchester, Pulaski, Spring Hill, Tullahoma, and Wartrace) are less than fifteen miles from an interstate highway. The larger communities have sites that can easily be developed with adequate utilities. The rural lifestyle and friendly people are trademarks of nearly all rural Tennessee communities. Most residents of SCTDD are within an easy drive to a technology college and/or a community college.

### **SCTDD Weaknesses:**

Weakness that have been identified for SCTDD communities include lack of trained workforce, past reliance on one or two major companies, lack of utility service throughout the county, overall appearance of the community, and a lack of cooperation and a unified economic development effort on the part of local governments. Many SCTDD communities do not have countywide zoning and land use. Some of the less populated counties are too far from an interstate highway to be attractive for manufacturing facilities. Some of the smaller counties suffer from a lack of ability to finance economic development projects. Sometimes this is because of a shortage of entrepreneurs, sometimes because of lack of support, and sometimes because of inability to secure financing. Some of the less populated counties are too far from an interstate highway and too sparsely populated to be attractive for manufacturing, warehousing, and/or distribution facilities. The educational attainment level of the general population is often a limitation. Projects that require employees with technical skills and/or experience are difficult to justify. If a certain number of employees with specific skills are a requirement for consideration for a potential project, many communities in the SCTDD region get eliminated early in the process. Many of the small communities and the more sparsely populated counties in SCTDD suffer from a lack of consensus in the community on what should be done to improve the local situation and from

a lack of leadership. As a result, Leadership development must be an ongoing process in rural communities.

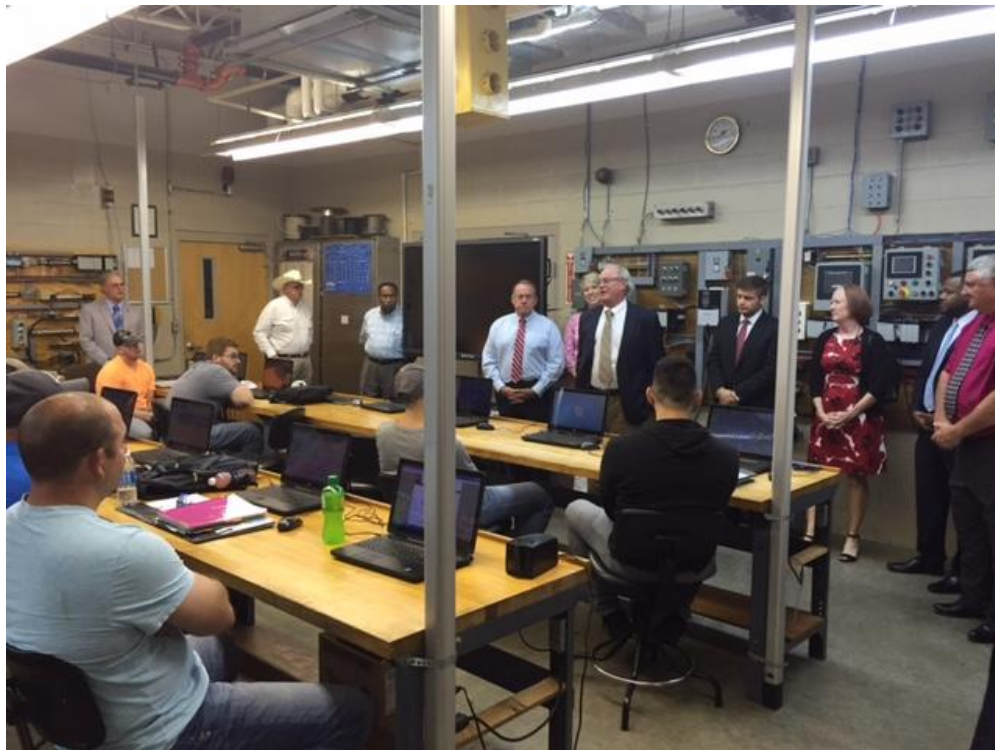
### **SCTDD Opportunities:**

The counties and communities within the SCTDD region have a number of opportunities for further growth and development for their respective communities. The opportunities afforded by the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) for the areas around Huntsville could continue to add to the mission of Redstone Arsenal. A number of our southern counties have citizens that travel to this area on a daily basis for work. The impact of this base is spread out over several neighboring counties. The challenge for Southern SCTDD counties and communities continues to be maximizing the benefits for their respective communities. Another opportunity for the SCTDD region would be some spin-off business venture related to the aerospace industry tied to Arnold Engineering Development Center or the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI) which offers numerous short courses. The Arnold Engineering Development Center does much of the testing in the United States for solid fuel rockets as well as military and commercial jet engines and models in its massive wind tunnel test cells. There must be some commercial ideas that could be developed in Tennessee. The residential and commercial growth in Spring Hill, northern Bedford County, northeastern Hickman County, southern Lincoln, southern Lawrence counties are well under way and seem to be moving with a good head of steam. There is an explosion of retail, commercial, and service businesses in the Spring Hill area. The location in the middle of the triangle of Nashville, Huntsville, and Chattanooga is certainly a positive for the SCTDD area. There are opportunities to produce goods (in a lower cost environment) that can be delivered and sold to residents in these metro areas. There are numerous opportunities for tourism throughout the region. There are several tourist attractions such as the Jack Daniels, George Dickel, and Prichard's Distilleries, the Walking Horse Celebration in Shelbyville, the Tennessee River and marina at Clifton, canoe friendly rivers and streams, and agritourism sites. Festivals, County Fairs, and the antebellum homes in Maury County draw tourists to the area. The statewide Tennessee Center for Profitable Agriculture is located between Columbia and Spring Hill and the South Central Tennessee Tourism Association is located in Lewisburg. Working with these organizations, there are surely some opportunities to develop some attractive sites

as food processing facilities, or working farms that could host tours and field trips.

The potential developments along the south side of the 840 southern loop around Nashville are in the foreseeable future for Maury and Hickman Counties. Developments on connector roads along the south of the loop appear to hold the best promise.

Another opportunity is the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) which was passed into law in 2013, and is a statewide, comprehensive structure enabling students in Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) and community colleges to participate in technical training developed with input from area employers. SCTDD is pleased to have worked with TCAT-Shelbyville and TCAT-Hohenwald in establishing 8 Industrial Maintenance Technology satellite classrooms and being awarded over \$2 million in grant funds and donations from neighboring employers.



### **SCTDD Threats/Limitations:**

In developing an economic plan for the area, one must be aware of the threats to future successful development and recognize these limitations which must be either overcome or minimized.

Heavy dependence in the past by communities on one or two major employers and heavy concentration in manufacturing have limited the willingness of residents to embark on the path of “lifelong learning”.

Lack of interstate highway access for some parts of the region is a handicap for both industrial development and retail/commercial development.

The national trend of decreasing numbers of employees in the manufacturing sector is predicted to continue. As businesses struggle to be competitive and profitable in the global economy, labor costs must be replaced by more automated processes. Even manufacturing companies that are still in the area may be forced to cut employment while increasing production and output. Also there is a significant labor workforce issue of underemployment. As a result many companies experience very high turnover rates.

The combination of low density population, lack of certain skills in the workforce and limited availability of high speed internet all contribute to the difficulty in attracting and keeping businesses in the rural areas. Retail and service businesses will only locate in an area that meets certain thresholds of population or incomes. Companies that rely on equipment and machinery that use the latest technology need trained technicians. If those are not available in the area, they have to pay a competitive salary to get employees to relocate to the more rural areas. Lack of or limited availability of high speed internet and related services can be a hindrance in attracting businesses to the area and also an obstacle in persuading recent college graduates to return to the area to live and work.

### **ECONOMIC RESILIENCE**

Economic resilience is the ability to withstand and recover from economic shocks such as natural disasters, downturns in an industry that a region is reliant upon, the closure of a major employer or any other national or global

market shift. When applied to economic development, resilience includes a multi-phased approach that anticipates risk, evaluates the potential impact on key assets, and develops a response to risk. EDA provides guidance on integrating regional economic resilience through a two-pronged approach:

1. Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals and actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region, and
2. Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges.

SCTDD strives for resilient communities and for our region to prosper. Making our region more resilient is a top priority and is included in our CEDS goals and objectives.









## **Regional Economic Development Goals and Objectives**

### **SCTDD Vision Statement**

The vision of The South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) is for all of the residents of the communities within the SCTDD region to have opportunities for: education that will allow them to develop their skills; employment that will be challenging and financially rewarding; housing that is adequate and affordable; an environment that will be suitable for raising their families, and the choice to live in communities that offer a high quality of life.

**Goal 1: SCTDD will encourage and support activities that will provide for adequate development of infrastructure to support proposed projects for future growth and development.**

**Objectives:** Provide assistance and support for the improvements to water and sewer systems extensions of service lines necessary for specific projects and future growth.

Provide assistance for communities with regular round Community Development Block Grant Applications for water and sewer projects.

Continue to be active in the Rural Planning Organization (RPOs) which Provide support and assistance for transportation projects that can provide better access for communities, particularly regional transportation projects that can positively impact several counties and/or communities.

Provide assistance and support to any community that would like to provide high speed internet to residents of the region.

**Goal 2: SCTDD will promote and encourage the development of factors that contributes to a high quality of life for residents of the thirty-five incorporated communities and thirteen counties within the region.**

**Objectives:** Provide support and technical assistance for community development and recreation projects within the region.

Provide encouragement and assistance for greenway and park projects that are undertaken by local communities.

Work with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and local organizations to Promote and support issues and projects that will enhance the quality of life for Senior Citizens of the area.

**Goal 3: SCTDD will encourage and support activities that will provide for training and development opportunities for the workforce of the region.**

**Objectives:** Support and encourage utilization of the training assistance available through the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee College of Applied Technology, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Workforce Investment ACT Boards.

Promote and encourage further development and expansion of programs for technical training.

Provide assistance and support for job-creation initiatives of the two Workforce Investment Act Boards that serve the area.

Support development of more programs to train existing workers for new opportunities both with the current employer and potential future employers.

**Goal 4: SCTDD will work with communities and provide assistance to promote the area as a good place to do business.**

**Objectives:** Work with Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association and local community representatives to promote and market the multi-county region as a good place to do business.

Provide support to local industrial boards, chamber of commerce, and local governments in their efforts to promote their respective communities.

Provide up-to-date census and demographic data for local officials and economic development professionals in the region.

Provide specific statistics and research when requested by local officials or economic development professionals.

**Goal 5: SCTDD will promote and support the development of opportunities for tourism, retail, and non-traditional economic development within the district.**

**Objectives:** Support initiatives to encourage tourism and the growth and development of projects designed to increase tourism opportunities.

Support the development of retail businesses through seminars, workshops and supplying of data and demographic information for local retail recruitment efforts.

Promote and support entrepreneurial development initiatives, particularly those that have high growth potential.

Promote and support the development of agribusiness and agritourism opportunities within the region.

Work with the Center for Profitable Agriculture and Rural Development-USDA to promote the opportunities for value-added agricultural products including food processing.

**Goal 6: SCTDD will encourage and support activities that will help maintain a comfortable, safe, and pleasant environment for residents to live and raise their families.**

**Objectives:** Encourage and support efforts of local governments to develop strategic plans, land use plans, and land development strategies.

Provide assistance and support for efforts to resolve solid waste disposal and other environmental issues for local governments.

Provide assistance for local governments through the CDBG regular round to provide sanitary sewer service to areas where septic systems are failing and to develop a better grid system for potable water.

Promote community resiliency and preparedness for disasters and severe economic shocks, including the preparation of communities and the continuing recovery efforts of disaster affected communities.

**Goal 7: SCTDD will support the development of a business climate that promotes the growth of businesses in all of the District's thirteen counties.**

**Objectives:** Encourage utilization and provide assistance to various financing programs that can assist and help to insure the success of new and expanding businesses.

Work with area bankers and accountants and acquainting them with the benefits of the economic development financing programs that are available.

Provide assistance to local officials and economic development professionals in structuring financing for potential projects and expansions that can provide the most conducive financing package for the business utilizing various state, regional, and federal economic development programs.

Provide assistance to potential businesses owners in developing business plans that are realistic.

Provide counseling and technical assistance for existing businesses that might be struggling to survive.

Provide support and assistance for local communities to apply for federal and state financial assistance to establish incubators for small businesses.

**Goal 8: SCTDD will support and encourage programs that provide better housing opportunities for residents of the district.**

**Objectives:** Provide support and assistance for local communities to apply for federal and state financial assistance to provide home ownership opportunities.

Provide assistance and support for programs that can improve the quality of existing housing in the communities.

Provide assistance for developers and builders who are willing to build affordable housing units for residents.

**Goal 9: SCTDD will assist local governments in preparing and adapting to the changes resulting from worldwide competition thus helping them to find their niche in the global economy.**

**Objectives:** Work with local communities to help retain as many of the existing employment opportunities as possible, particularly those in the manufacturing sector.

Provide community leaders with as much information and statistics as practicable to help plan and prepare for the changes in employment opportunities as a result of global competition.

Work with state, local, and regional organizations and congressmen to try to get them to recognize what the impacts that some of the federal policies and legislation have on local communities.

Work with local communities to help them figure out where they can and should fit in the global economy.

**Goal 10: SCTDD will promote economic resilience and enhance the region's capability to quickly recover from natural or man-made disasters as well as economic downturns.**

**Objectives:** Identify opportunities for interconnection of public utilities in order to provide redundant sources of public services.

Diversify the region's economy while strengthening specialized sectors.

Continue to support business resiliency planning and preparedness efforts at the local level.

Adopt plans to ensure essential government services are provided in emergency situations.

### **SCTDD Action Plan:**

SCTDD submits annual reports to EDA which reflect the work that SCTDD staff will engage in over a one-year period. The work program is tied directly to the goals and strategies laid out in the SCTDD five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The following work program reflects the activities SCTDD will implement over the upcoming fiscal year:

Work closely with counties, cities, chambers of commerce, industrial development boards, tourism organizations and other economic development entities to implement the goals and objectives established within the current CEDS document and cooperate with local lead agencies to implement the priority projects identified in the CEDS.

Provide technical assistance to communities and local economic development organizations with economic and community development issues of local and regional importance. This activity could include providing information, giving presentations on local economic and community development strategies, coordinating discussions with state regulatory and funding agencies.

Provide grant application and grant administration assistance to communities wishing to apply for funding through the Economic Development Administration, the State of Tennessee CDBG Funds, Tennessee Site Development Grant Program, or the Tennessee FastTrack Infrastructure Development Program. Assistance provided by the District

will include project design and review, prospect consultation, application packaging, project liaison functions, and project administration.

Provide staff assistance for the South Central Tennessee Business Development Corporation (SCTBDC) for the closing of business and industry loans, for general management, secretarial work and loan packaging, processing, and servicing. Administer SCTBDC's Revolving Loan Fund (Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program) and SCTDD's EDA Loan Fund to stimulate small business development and expansion throughout the region. Continue to administer funding from the Tennessee Department of the Treasury that capitalized a loan program that primarily benefits minority and women owned business enterprises. Continue to work with SBA's 504 program to help businesses acquire the necessary financing for real estate and equipment.

Work with communities and provide technical assistance for development and improvement of green space and recreational projects including preparation of applications for funding. As well as work with the Center of Profitable Agriculture Tennessee Department of Tourism and Rural Development-USDA to identify and assist agritourism projects, especially those that can draw people from outside the region.

Under contract with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, coordinate the activities of two Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) that have been established in the SCTDD region. SCTDD will coordinate meetings, facilitate communications between TDOT and the RPO's, provide direction for transportation project planning, and perform any other administration activities deemed appropriate by the RPOs and/or TDOT.

The SCTDD will continue to work with our partners to strengthen the workforce by meeting industry demands. We will be working toward a more prosperous and educated region. This will include working with counties, cities, chambers of commerce, industrial development boards, workforce boards, employers and higher education entities in our region. The focus will be on efforts to implement workforce development programs which will ensure better skilled workers. The statistics for our area show that our region's workforce development efforts should seek to eliminate gaps in the skills needed by manufacturers and other companies. Thus, the



District's CEDS will endeavor to prepare our workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy utilizing knowledge based skills.



### **Performance Measures:**

SCTDD will conduct an annual review of the program of work to ensure that our goals and strategies are being followed and make adjustments as necessary. Many of the activities that have been identified in the process of formulating a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will not result in the creation of jobs or by themselves directly attract any private sector investments. However, we believe most of them to be important in order to have communities that are deserving and worthy of private sector investments. But, we also realize that the best way to gauge successful progress of implementation of a plan to quantify some things that can be quantified and tracked. The easiest things in economic development to observe and quantify are number of projects, jobs retained, jobs created and new private investments. Although some of the factors that can have the greatest impact on economic development are difficult to

isolate and quantify. These would include the local business climate, cooperation of agencies and units of government, work ethic of the workforce, education, and availability of support services.

For the purposes of measuring progress and success in economic development as a result of implementation of the SCTDD CEDS, we will primarily use-number of projects, amount of private sector investments, number of jobs retained, number of jobs created. We will also report on the number of new students and classes in Industrial Technology. This works to fill a critical shortage of industrial workers in the following areas: robotics, hydraulics and pneumatics, mechanics, electricity & electronics, welding, programmable logic controllers, fluid power, and math & schematics. If our assumptions and analyses are on target, we believe the greatest increase in those categories identified will come in the second and third years and beyond.

As a result of implementation of the Plan of Action, we would expect in the next twelve months to see at least three new investments (new projects and expansions), totaling \$15 million in new private investment, with the retention of one hundred jobs and the creation of two hundred new jobs. In addition, we expect to have the following deliverables to demonstrate progress on the items identified: completion of the survey of infrastructure needs of the region (including transportation, schools, local governments, utility districts, etc.); and presentations to five representative so business to discuss financing possibilities.

Our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee continues to stay engaged in the activities of our region and reviews and updates our CEDS goals and objectives as needed. This committee also gives us leads on prospective new businesses and industries and keeps us abreast to all that is going on in our communities. Also the committee shares with communities and businesses the services and programs that we offer and how we can help assist.