

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022

## Southwest Tennessee Development District



*Basic Plan*

Prepared by:



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This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
was prepared by –

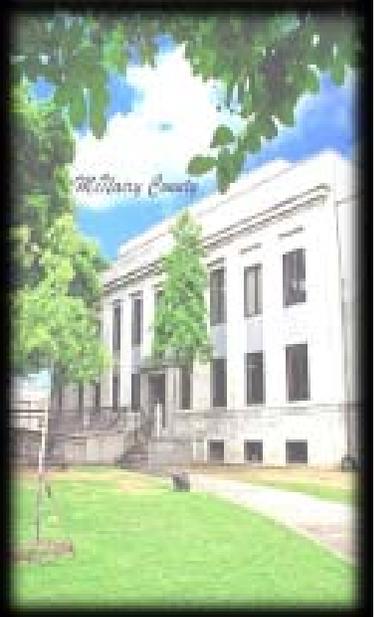
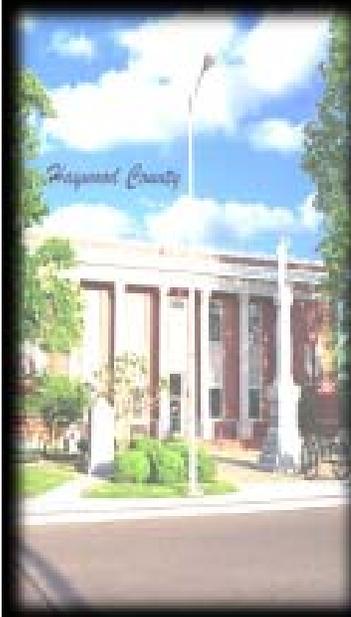
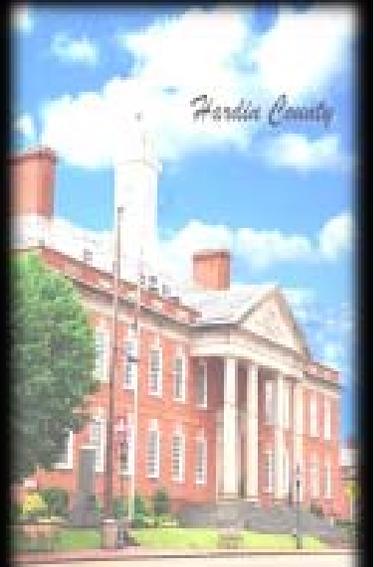
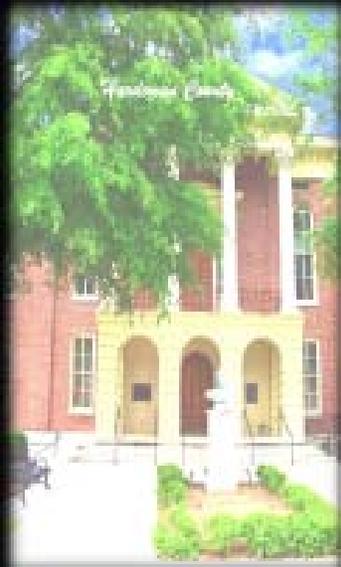
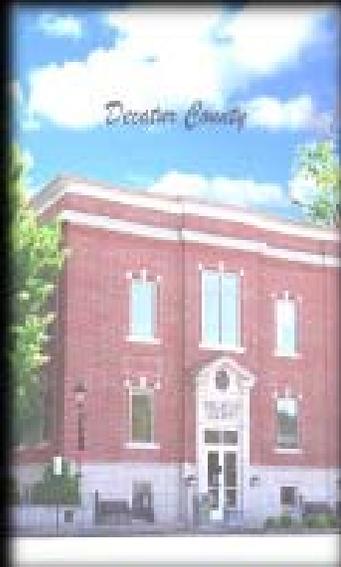
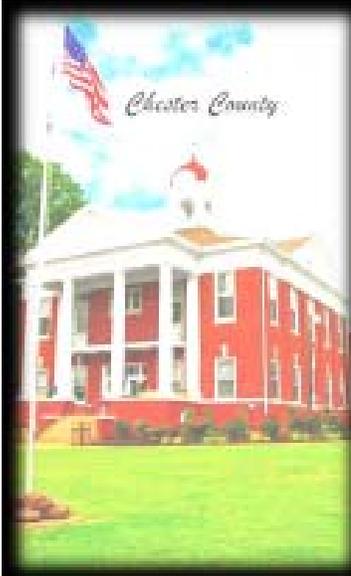


With planning grant funding provided by the



U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration

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*Southwest Region County Courthouses*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SWTDD is one of nine state-wide districts established under the Tennessee Development District Act of 1965. SWTDD was organized in 1971 and is currently staffed by 55 people. These people have technical expertise in district management, economic development, community development, workforce development, housing, environmental planning, aging planning, social work, nursing, grant writing, educational assistance, and public guardianship for the elderly.

The SWTDD Executive Board consists of an Executive Director, member government officials, state representatives, and minority representatives from an eight-county region which includes Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and McNairy Counties. A twenty-four member Executive Committee meets six times per year to set policy and conduct business on behalf of the full board.

The Southwest region is located in the southern portion of what is commonly known as West Tennessee. The center of the district is approximately one and one half hours from Tennessee’s capital of Nashville and is dotted with dozens of small, rural incorporated and unincorporated communities.

### SWTDD Vision Statement

*To enable self-sustaining growth and ensure the personal well-being of all citizens in the areas we serve.*

### SWTDD Mission Statement

*As a planning organization, SWTDD’s mission is to promote the renewal and revitalization of both rural and urban communities through betterment of an economic base (Economic Development), physical infra-structure (Community Development), and quality of life (Area Agency on Aging and Disability), for the eight county area that we serve.*



## What is a CEDS?

“...an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen Regional economies.”

## SWTDD CEDS

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is designed to serve as a planning document for the eight counties in the Southwest Tennessee region. Our success as a region is dependent on our ability to work cohesively with the private sector to advance the goals and objectives of our district and the cities and counties we serve. We have studied the economic conditions in the region and looked at what issues affect us, what are our plans for future growth and expansion and how will we measure success? Information for this document was compiled by the SWTDD CEDS Steering committee and Executive Board through a series of meetings with stakeholders, surveys and one-on-one interviews.

Throughout our CEDS process, we have discovered that although our cities and counties may vary in size, in economic make-up, and topography, they all have similarities. It is these similarities that we are going to key in on to put our call to action together. The region has shown vision in its willingness to work as a region instead of individually so we will capitalize on this “shared strength” to put a plan together to address the common issues we all face. First and foremost, this region needs to concentrate on addressing the lack of education and skill shortages facing the existing workforce. Educational attainment is a big piece of this picture and SWTDD is working on several fronts to address this problem. The next biggest challenge in Southwest Tennessee is the lack of vision and planning on behalf of our communities. With the continued change in leadership, planning isn’t always a priority. We see a more reactive mode of operation rather than a pro-active mode although we are making big strides in this area. We are addressing this through the SOAR initiative and our new WTN Leadership Institute. Lastly, in order to compete as a region, we need to focus our efforts on expanding and increasing the availability of high speed broadband coverage in the region.



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## **CEDS Steering Committee**

Stewart Stanfill – Adult Educaiton

Ron Acree – TN Small Business Development Cneter

Jimmy Bell – LWOAII

Mark Chandler – SWHRA

Tracey Exum- State of TN ECD

Lisa Hankins – REDI Director, SWTDD

Randy McKinnon – TLM Associaites

Shelly Matthews – SWTDD Aging & Disability

Mike Smith SW Human Resource Agency

Kyle Spurgoen – Jackson Chamber of Commerce

Hal Crocker – HCB Corporation

Bancorp South – Jeffrey Lester

Vicki Bunch – Jackson Chamber of Commerce

Roe Hughes – USDA Rural Developnent

Dr. Lana Hamilton – Jackson State Community College

Glad Castellaw – Retired Military

Mary Beth Hopper – Tourism Assoc. of SWTN

Troy Kilzer – Chester County School System

Pat Riley – Gibson Electric

Jeff Sisk – TN Technoogy Center Jackson

Robert Wilson – Wilson Tire

Chelsea Scott – State of TN ECD

Matt Attobell – Jackson Downtown Development

Kristie Bennett – Department of Labor

# DISTRICT PROFILE SUMMARY

This section summarizes key characteristics of the region and provides background on the region’s economic development situation. In addition, the section outlines the region’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

## Southwest Tennessee Location

The SWTDD region is the eight-county area of Chester, Decatur, Hardin, Hardeman, Hardin, Henderson, Madison and McNairy Counties. The region is located in the western region of Tennessee between Nashville, Tennessee and Memphis, Tennessee.

Figure 1.1: Map of the SWTDD Region



## Workforce Data



**(Memphis Regional Megasite)**



**(Teknor-Apex – Brownsville)**

The Economic viability of a region hinges on having good and abundant jobs, a skilled and/or trained available workforce and plenty of people who are willing and able to work. The southwest region has faced some challenging years economically with the downsizing and outsourcing of industry in the region, continued decreases in the population, high poverty levels, an aging workforce, low educational attainment levels and the lack of high-speed broadband access in many of the rural areas. Southwest Tennessee is not unlike many other rural areas in the state as it relates to economic development. Tennessee's economy depends more heavily on durable manufacturing (vehicles) and health care, compared to the U.S. economy. To remain competitive, the manufacturing sector will employ increasingly more complex technology. It will substitute advanced technology for lower skilled labor and increase future worker skill requirements. There is a strong correlation between knowledge based economy (kbe) industry sector growth and a skilled workforce with high Post-Secondary education attainment levels. For Tennessee to retain its competitive advantage in manufacturing, the State and the Southwest Region need to graduate more high school, college, and grad school students. We have both a great asset and a great liability in this region and it is part of our plan to capitalize on the asset in an effort to alleviate the liability. Southwest Tennessee is home to the only remaining industrial megasite in the state of Tennessee. This property, which sits in Haywood county, has the potential to house numerous large industries which can employ thousands of people from the region. The liability lies in the fact that our workforce isn't ready. Our existing industry is faced with an aging workforce and the younger population of the workforce doesn't have the work ethic needed to be successful. We realize the educational attainment levels in the region are much lower than the state average and we are addressing this through our REDI and Reconnect programs. The State has initiated two programs to address this as well, Drive to 55 and Tennessee Promise.

This region has experienced numerous plant closures and downsizing over the last few years. This loss of jobs has brought attention to the fact that the occupation trend is shifting to more knowledge based jobs and unfortunately, this region continues to be more dependent on non-KBE jobs. Future occupations will require much more education and training than yesterday's occupations. The Southwest TN economy is overly reliant on "Blue Collar" type occupations. In the region, 55.6% of our people are employed in blue collar occupations vs. 44.4% statewide and 39.7% nationwide. We only have 44.4% employed in white collar jobs vs. 55.6% statewide and 60.3% nationwide. Southwest TN needs to reverse the current job distribution trend and increase knowledge based jobs to reach parity with the state. To do this, we need to address the poverty rates in the region which are above the state level and reduce the people living below the poverty level by 20,506. In order to accomplish this, we need to add and retain 19,310 high school graduates and 32,864 college graduates...no easy feat.

## Population

County	2016 Est	2015 Est	2014	2013	2012	2011
Chester	17,453	17,324	17,379	17,349	17,210	17,212
Decatur	11,769	11,660	11,730	11,701	11,658	11,683
Hardeman	25,435	25,707	25,941	26,251	26,523	26,842
Hardin	25,679	25,756	25,843	26,002	26,014	25,886
Haywood	17,853	18,023	18,196	18,227	18,255	18,541
Henderson	27,822	28,015	28,017	27,976	28,025	28,032
McNairy	25,935	26,066	26,149	26,092	26,166	26,040
Madison	97,663	97,610	98,089	98,707	98,505	98,010

Population in the southwest region has gone up and down over the last ten years. When you look at the estimated numbers for 2015 in comparison to the 2010 census, there has been a decrease in population regionally. The continued loss of people doesn't bode well for the region as it relates to job recruitment. This factored in with the aging population of our workforce and the continued brain drain that we are experiencing makes the recruitment of new business and industry even more challenging.

## County Screenshots

### Chester County:

Population: 17,453  
 Land Area: 285.7 sq mi  
 Per Capita Income: \$19,440  
 County Seat: Henderson

### Decatur County:

Population: 11,769  
 Land area: 333.8 sq mi.  
 Per Capita Income: \$23,715  
 County Seat: Decaturville

### Hardeman County:

Population: 25,435  
 Land Area: 667.7 sq mi  
 Per Capita Income: \$15,671  
 County Seat: Bolivar

### Hardin County:

Population: 25,679  
 Land area: 577 sq mi  
 Per Capita Income: \$20,740  
 County Seat: Savannah

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**Henderson County:**

Population: 27,822  
Land area: 520 sq mi  
Per Capita Income: \$19,269  
County Seat: Lexington

**Haywood County:**

Population: 17,853  
Land area: 533.1 sq mi  
Per Capita Income: \$19,027  
County Seat: Brownsville

**Madison County:**

Population: 97,663  
Land area: 557 sq mi  
Per Capita Income: \$23,467  
County Seat: Jackson

**McNairy County**

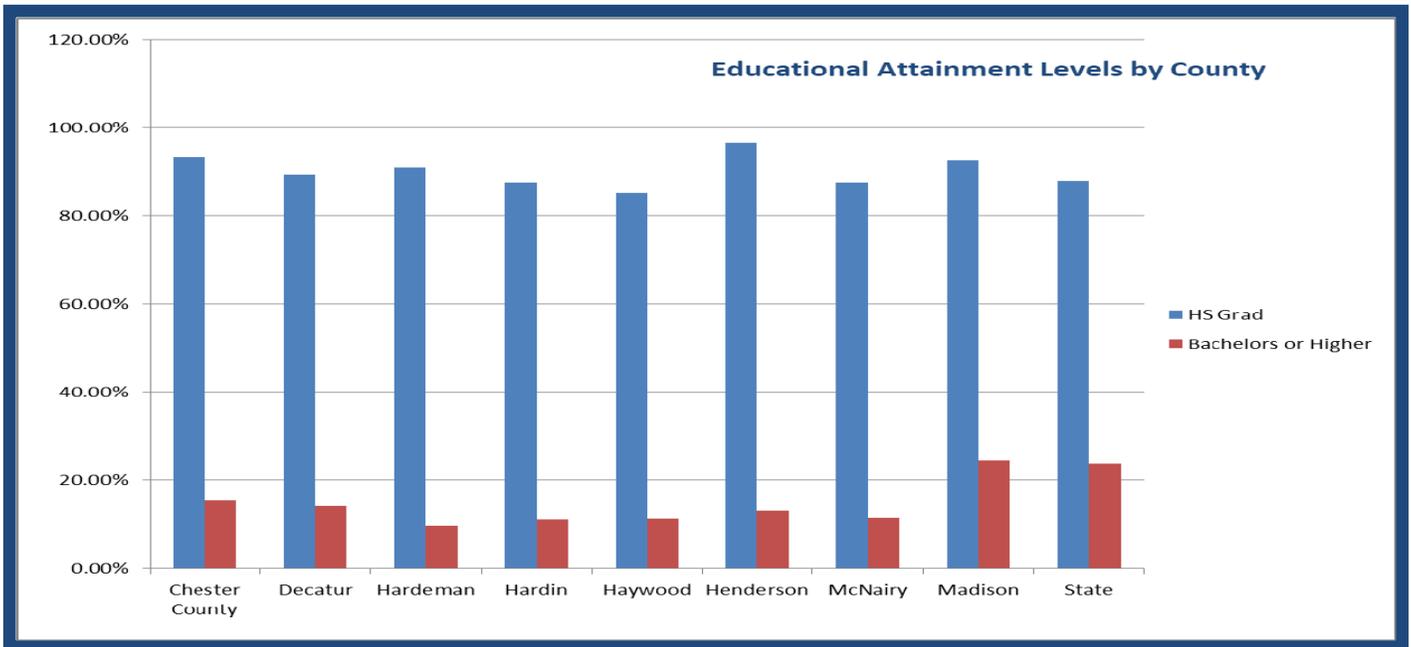
Population: 25,935  
Land area: 563 sq mi  
Per Capita Income: \$17,751  
Count Seat: Selmer

## Poverty

County	Poverty Rate
Chester	21.7%
Decatur	21.6%
Hardeman	24.8%
Hardin	23.3%
Haywood	22.8%
Henderson	21.5%
McNairy	20.7%
Madison	19.6%
State	17.6%
U.S.	15.5%

Southwest TN also needs to address the increasing poverty rates in the region. Putting an emphasis on education and the skills training needed should begin to address these levels as well. Statistics prove that an educated person will earn more in their lifetime than an uneducated person.

## Educational Attainment Levels



## Educational Initiatives

The Southwest region lags behind the state of Tennessee in educational attainment levels. This area is one of particular importance to SWTDD and all of its elected leaders and citizens. SWTDD began a program in 2010 known as REDI. REDI is an acronym for Regional Economic Development Initiative. REDI employs mentors who work with students during their senior year on the entire college exploration, application and enrollment process. The region currently has only 13.9% of its people 25+ with a Bachelor's degree or higher as compared to 23.8% statewide. REDI works daily with students to ensure they not only complete high school but they go on to some form of post-secondary education whether that is through vocational/technical training and certifications, an Associate's degree or a Bachelor's degree.



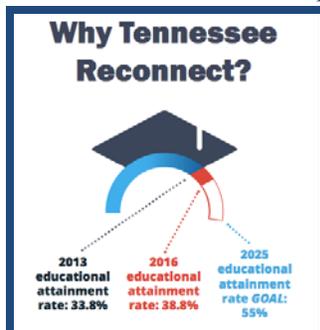
## Drive to 55

The State of TN has begun two programs that work hand-in-hand with what the Southwest region has begun. The Drive to 55 is an active and rapidly growing alliance of private sector partners, leaders and non-profits working together in support of the state's Drive to 55 initiatives to equip 55% of Tennesseans with a college degree or certificate by 2025. The goal of the Drive to 55 Alliance is to help generate greater private sector awareness, ownership and support for the long-term steps needed in college entry and completion, adult education and training and identifying and closing skills gaps to better prepare our workforce and our state for the future.



## Tennessee Promise

Tennessee Promise is both a scholarship and mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students that attend college. It provides a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by the Pell grant, the HOPE scholarship, or state student assistance funds. Students may use the scholarship at any of the state's community college, colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate's degree program. Students receive guidance from their Partnering Organization who is charged with the implementation, monitoring and record keeping of the program and its requirements. REDI is one of three partnering organizations in the state for this program. REDI mentor's provide programming such as College Knowledge, college visits, daily mentoring and assistance with choosing careers and applying to college, college simulations, financial aid workshops and assistance and many more services designed to educate not only the student but the parent as well. The addition of SWTN Reconnect, which serves adults 25- 64 with the same type of educational assistance only adds to our arsenal of tools to help change the educational culture of the region.



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## SWOT Analysis

SWTDD annually gets staff and partners together to take a look at what we are doing, how we are doing and what do we need to do. This exercise incorporates doing a SWOT analysis to get input, direction and critiques of current and potential programming. It is through this analysis that we discovered the areas that we will put our focus on in our CEDS.

### Marketable Strengths

- Low cost of Living
- Quality Schools
- Bible based
- Regional Partnerships
- Recreational Opportunities
- Interstate 40 with connecting 4-lanes
- Good infrastructure
- Friendly and receptive people
- Regional Megasite
- Centrally Located

### Region Weaknesses

- Educational levels
- Lack of broadband in rural areas
- Skill shortages
- City/County budgets
- No clear vision or long terms plans in counties
- Lack of Diverse Cultural Events

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## Region Threats

- Lack of broadband
- Education/Workforce Development
- Skills shortages
- Flood Plain issues
- Lack of affordable housing
- More Cooperation between City/County Leaders
- Downsizing or closing of manufacturing facilities
- Leadership development within the community

## Region Opportunities

- Improvements to the Economy
- Develop and Promote enhanced Educational Opportunities
- Improve Technology Infrastructure
- Increase Tourism efforts
- Recruit Retirement Communities
- County-wide Unification
- Recruit and Retain Younger workforce
- Increase Entertainment Opportunities for all ages
- Support existing retail and recruit small businesses
- Develop Public & Private Partnerships to ensure successful sustainability

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## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Action Plan outlines how the Southwest Tennessee Development District (SWTDD) plans address the issues and goals identified during the SWOT Analysis. This section presents the District's specific goals, objectives, strategies, and actions for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

### 1. Address the Educational Attainment Levels in the Region:

**SWOT Finding:** The quality of education in the region is satisfactory however, the availability of degreed workers in the region is low. In order to land a big project at the Industrial Megasite, the level of education and skills of the workforce in the region must be addressed.

**Trend Analysis:** The Southwest region only has 13.9% of people 25+ with a Bachelor's degree or higher in comparison to 23.8% in the state.

**Goal #1:** To change the educational culture of the region and produce a more educated worker we must increase both the number of traditional and non-traditional graduates in the region. We must work to ensure all students are going on to some form of post-secondary education in an effort to get the educational attainment levels in Southwest Tennessee to reach parity with the state.

### 2. Implement programs to address the lack of and shortage of skilled workers:

**SWOT Finding:** The employers in the region all share that they can't find the skilled workers they need to fill their open positions. According to the 2011 Harvard Graduate School of Education report, roughly half of all Americans reach their mid-20s without the skills or credentials essential for success in today's increasingly demanding economy. The current workforce in the region is aging and younger workers lack the education, training and work ethic to effectively do the job.

The most common pathway to a career is not always a college diploma, for some it is an alternative such as technical training.

**Trend Analysis:** More and more of the jobs in industry today rely on technology. With 55.6% of our people trained in low-skill, blue collar occupations, we need to work to prepare our workforce for the 21st Century Economy where all sectors use more knowledge-based economy skills.

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Tennessee has joined a multi-state consortium known as Pathways to Prosperity. This initiative is aimed at addressing the “skills gap” that threatens the preparedness of young Americans entering the workforce. SWTDD applied for and received a grant to implement Pathways in the Southwest region. To complement these efforts and expand them in the region, SWTDD also recently was awarded a new grant through the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP). The grant is a collaboration among SWTDD, the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT), sixteen high schools, sixteen industries, and numerous government agencies in West Tennessee.

**Goal #2:** By utilizing rigorous academic/career pathways linked to economic and labor market needs and trends, we will increase the skills and educational levels of the workforce. Pathways Southwest will provide students the opportunity for career exploration, work experiences, and the opportunity to earn college credit and industry certifications while in high school.

**Goal #3:** Increase the opportunity for high school Career & Technical Education students to start their learning process and accelerate their progress in high schools while earning industry-recognized certifications through the LEAP program.

### **3. Assist communities with Economic Resiliency through Strategic Planning and Visioning:**

**SWOT Finding:** The communities as a whole have not implemented a strategic planning process since the requirement went away with the Three-Star program. Lack of planning keeps the communities from being pro-active and makes them more reactive. The Mayors in the region have been working for several years to achieve resiliency through the current program of work at SWTDD. In addition to assisting the communities with grants to purchase equipment such as fire trucks, ambulances, tornado sirens, etc., SWTDD is working to help them be more prepared through planning. The SOAR program which began in 2016 is a key piece to this puzzle. There also needs to be a piece that assists the community leaders with education on how to be a better leader, be more prepared and how to create a vision that will take them successfully into the future.

**Trend Analysis:** It is proven that planning helps you focus emphasis on the important things. It allows you to set realistic goals and objectives, recognize potential opportunities and develop a road map to see where you need to go and how to get there. A good strategic plan can help a business, community or region to make better decisions and place focus and plans where they are needed rather than to merely react to a situation.

**Goal #4:** In 2016, SWTDD implemented an economic preparedness program in the region known as SOAR...Strategic Opportunities to Advance our Region. Four counties completed this program and are currently in the implementation phase of their strategic plans. One county is in process. The remaining 3 counties will begin this process soon. SOAR is designed to assist rural communities in evaluating, planning, and implementing strategies for economic sustainability. SWTDD will work to implement the SOAR

program in the remaining southwest counties and continue to assist those that are complete to implement their plans.

**Goal #5:** SWTDD, working with many partners, is in the planning stages to develop a WTN Leadership Institute to help develop leaders, their skills and assist with job creation opportunities.

## 4. Explore possibilities for Broadband Expansion

**SWOT Finding:** Southwest Tennessee lacks the level and accessibility to high speed broadband access in comparison to other regions.

**Trend Analysis:** Tennessee is the 29th most connected state as it relates to broadband. 85% of Tennesseans have access to broadband 25 mbps or faster. 83% of Tennesseans have access to broadband 100 mbps or faster. The average state-wide speed is 38.0. In the southwest region, our coverage ranges from 8.6% to 95.1%, a huge disparity between the region. There are 993,000 people in Tennessee without access to a wired connection capable of 25mbps download speeds.

**Goal #6:** SWTDD will work with area broadband providers, Connected Tennessee and other technology providers to identify ways and funding to assist the counties in the region to increase both the number of providers and the speed of broadband access. This improvement in service will make our communities more resilient and allow for quicker response time if and when a natural disaster were to strike such as the more common flooding and tornados which are frequent in the area.



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## **ACTION PLAN**

### **Action Item 1 –**

SWTDD is actively working with the region to change the educational culture to one of urgency and necessity. Our goal is to have a strong, educated workforce. SWTDD's REDI and Workforce program are key in these efforts.

REDI is a college access program working in sixteen high schools in the region. REDI is also an official partnering organization for the State of Tennessee's TN Promise scholarship program. TN Promise provides a last-dollar scholarship for high school seniors towards tuition and fees to attend either a community college or a TN College of Applied Technology for 2 years. REDI provides informational meetings on various aspects of post-secondary education in an effort to take the fear out of the process. Mentors work daily with a combined total of around 3,000 seniors and their families to navigate the entire college process from career exploration to application to enrollment. REDI uses activities like financial aid workshops, scholarship boot camps, and college summits to activities such as Any College Simulations, an inter-active exercise, which simulates the first week of college and College Signing Days just to name a few. REDI is also over the operation of 8 American Job Centers which deliver services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. These centers work daily with people who need assistance with training, education and career opportunities.

We will work to serve more students and adults and ensure that all students continue their education by either attending a two-year, four-year or technical school upon graduation. TN Promise is one of the components of the Governor's Drive to 55 Initiative which is working to get 55% of all Tennesseans with some type of post-secondary certification by the year 2025.

### **Action Item 2 –**

SWTDD has many partners in the region which play a vital role in our success. The WIOA works with area employers and us to implement programs which will ensure a better worker with more skills. The partnerships with our TCAT's (TN College of Applied Technology) are also key to identifying and implementing programs that are needed in the current industrial landscape of Southwest Tennessee. The Pathways and LEAP programs will provide the programming and initiatives needed that will link our regional economy to the current labor market needs. We will continue to meet regularly with employers to see what types of skills and technology are needed in their facilities so that we can encourage and help change the curriculum at our post-secondary institutions to those that will produce a better-trained, more adept worker.

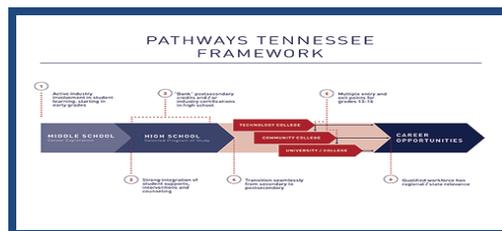
The Pathways framework is comprised of:

- Active industry involvement in student learning
- Strong integration of student supports, interventions and counseling
- Utilization of early warning indicators and remediation strategies
- Allows students to acquire postsecondary credits and/or industry certification in high school
- Supports seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary education
- Program completers are competitive in Tennessee’s fastest growing sectors.

Pathways Southwest TN has identified Advanced Manufacturing and Information Technology as the most needed areas to strengthen student readiness and create employment opportunities for our youth.

Southwest is thrilled to begin work with the LEAP program. Together with the TCAT’s in the area, we will focus efforts on starting and/or expanding programs of study for career pathways in Advanced Manufacturing at thirteen area high schools. The goal is to increase the opportunity for these students to start their learning process in Machining and Welding Technologies, accelerate their progress through these programs while earning industry-recognized certifications, and complete credit hours toward a diploma with a TCAT while still in high school. Equipment will be purchased and installed that will create a “hands-on” environment as students learn and hone skills in these areas. Sixteen area industries have also pledged to participate in paid work-based learning experience for students, for TCAT credits towards a diploma as well. By eliminating the gaps in the skills needed by manufacturers and other companies and the types of degrees and courses offered by local community and technical colleges, we can strengthen our workforce to meet industry demands and create a more prosperous and education region.

The Memphis regional megasite, a 4,100 acre site, has been key in bringing attention to the region. The potential of landing a large industry which would employ upwards of 2,000 would mean the entire region would benefit from jobs. There are currently 2.1 million people within a 90-minute drive of the megasite and 24 postsecondary institutions within a 90-minute drive. When you combine all the efforts going on in the region to improve education and increase the skills of the workforce, Southwest Tennessee has a bright future.





### **Action Item 3 –**

SOAR (Strategic Opportunities to Advance our Region) was launched in 2016 as a new way to help the communities in Southwest Tennessee learn to be more pro-active and formulate ways to plan for the future. SOAR is an economic preparedness program designed to assist rural communities in evaluating, planning, and implementing strategies for economic sustainability.

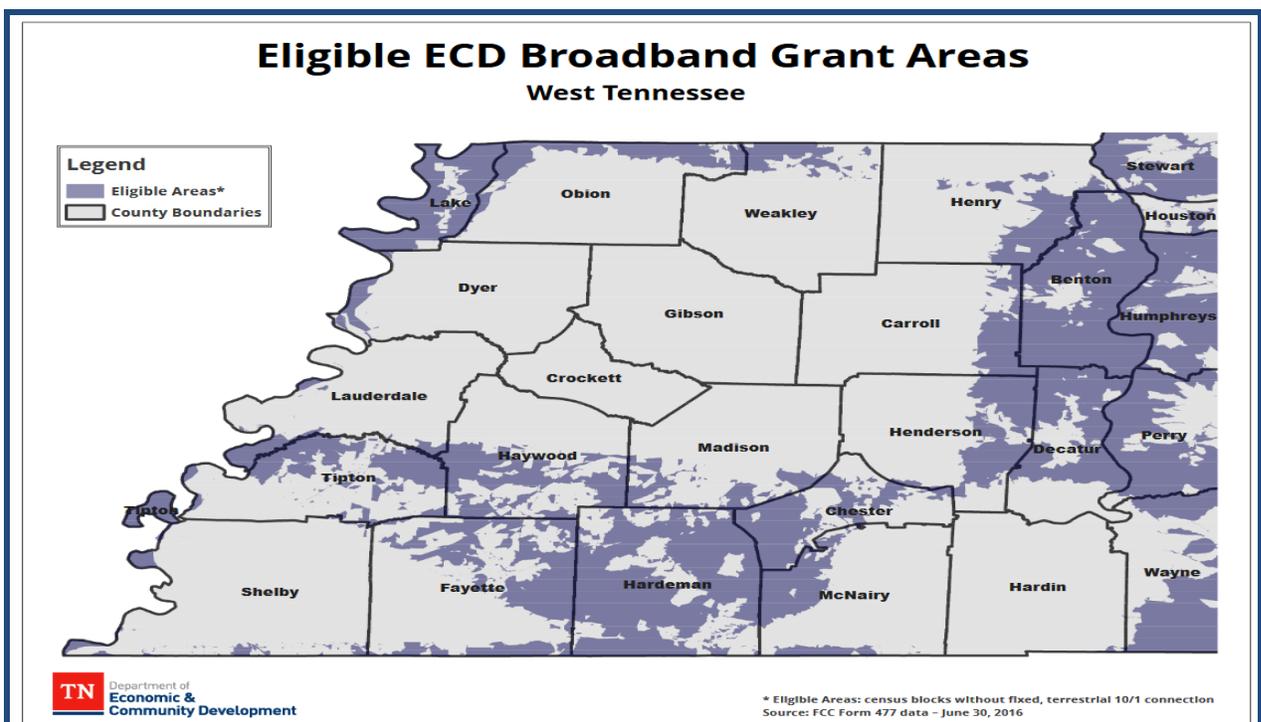
SOAR uses a four-pronged approach that utilizes local leadership in developing a customized asset-based strategy for success. The key component in developing a roadmap for success in each county is local leadership. Step one requires local leaders to attend a presentation on Economic Development for Rural Leaders and an overview of the program. Step two is an economic development preparedness assessment that is administered by a team of professionals with expertise in the 6 key areas. These assessments evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the participating county in each of the categories and a report is then issued on findings and recommendations. Step three utilizes the report to engage the community in an asset-based strategic planning process to help develop their “Roadmap for Success”. The last step is the actual implementation of the plan. SWTDD completed the SOAR process in Henderson, McNairy, Decatur and Chester counties and is currently working with Hardeman County. Plans have been developed and SWTDD is overseeing the implementation of the plans to ensure the communities stay on track and move forward. Three of the southwest counties remain to participate and work will begin with these as the current one is complete.

SWTDD continues to work with the distressed counties in the region to identify ways to improve the local economic outlook. It has become abundantly apparent that leadership is the key piece in our sustainable economic development puzzle. To help address this, SWTDD is in the planning phase for a West Tennessee Leadership Institute. SWTDD is working with numerous area partners, including local postsecondary institutions, such as the University of Tennessee at Martin, which will offer a curriculum to develop and enhance leadership skills and to also provide a venue for research and development of programs for job creation opportunities in rural areas. The goal of this program is for rural leaders to attend a certificate program that will make them more effective in developing successful economic and community development strategies and have a better grasp on how to make their communities more resilient. SWTDD is proposing to renovate the third floor of our existing building (approximately 7000 square feet) to house the leadership center that will serve the current and future leaders from West Tennessee. SWTDD will seek funding partners and will work with legislative leaders to secure funding for renovation and seed money for start-up costs of the Leadership Institute. The goal is to have funding secured in FY2016/17 and renovation and program implementation in FY2017/18.

## Action Item 4 –

In total there are 88 broadband providers in Tennessee. There are 993,000 people in Tennessee without access to a wired connection capable of 25mbps download speeds. There are 808,000 people in Tennessee that have access to only one wired provider, leaving them no options to switch. Another 215,000 people in Tennessee don't have any wired internet providers available where they live.

County	Percentage of Population with access to 25 MBPS
Chester	49.30%
Decatur	52.40%
Hardeman	37.00%
Hardin	63.30%
Haywood	8.60%
Henderson	68.10%
McNairy	50.80%
Madison	95.10%
State	85.00%

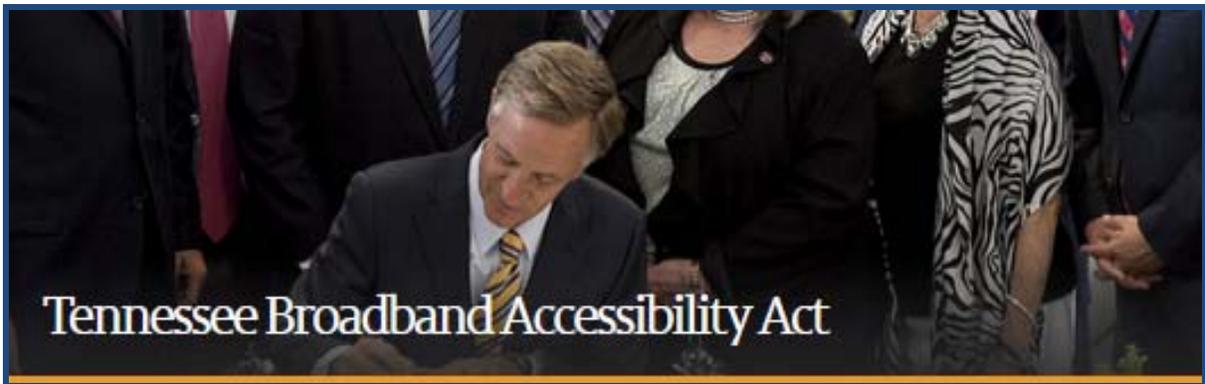


(Blue shaded areas on map are underserved areas without fixed, terrestrial 10/1 broadband)

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connection)

SWTDD will work with area broad-band providers and communities to make them aware and ensure they are taking advantage of the TN Broadband Grant Initiative. Governor Haslam has established the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act which provides \$45 million over three years through grants and tax credits that focus on providing broadband to the states unserved areas. The Broadband Accessibility Grant Program is designed to offset the capital expenses in the deployment of broadband in unserved areas. The goal of this program is to facilitate broadband access to all Tennesseans while promoting practices that increase deployment and encourage adoption. Funds will be targeted to areas that are unlikely to receive broadband service without grant funding.



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## Evaluation Framework

### Performance Measures

SWTDD will conduct an annual review of the program of work to ensure we are following our goals and strategies and make adjustments as necessary. We will closely monitor area demographics (listed below) that affect or impact our Plan of Action and Goals.

- High School Graduation Rate
- Number of FAFSA's completed
- Number of students going on to some form of postsecondary education
- College retention rates
- Skills inventory
- Employer surveys
- Completion of SOAR Process by County
- Increased access to Broadband

### Resources

- TN Higher Education
- TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development
- U.S. Census Bureau
- American Factfinder
- Connected Tennessee
- LWDA 11
- EDA.gov/CEDS
- DRA
- HTL Advantage
- Memphis Regional Megasite
- State of TN ECD
- NADO.org/CEDS

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This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
was prepared by –



With planning grant funding provided by the



U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration

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