

Commerce

A Publication of the Knoxville Chamber



Pinnacle Business Awards Re-cap

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300 Years of East TN Family-Owned Business Successes Honored at 2010 Pinnacle Business Awards

Honorees in nine categories were celebrated at the 2010 Pinnacle Business Awards presented by BB&T. Nearly 600 members of Knoxville's business community were on hand to help celebrate the winners.

Guests at the event, held at the Knoxville Convention Center ballroom, gave longtime Knoxville businessman Sam Furrow a standing ovation when he accepted the 2010 James A. Haslam II Leadership Award. The award is given annually to a business leader who exhibits strength of character, resolve, commitment to the community, and success in business. Furrow's business interests include Furrow Auction Company, Mercedes-Benz of Knoxville, Land Rover of Knoxville, Land Rover of Chattanooga, Jaguar of Chattanooga, and real estate developments and investments. He thanked family members, business partners, and employees for helping his companies become successful.

"I am the voice of the people that have made the activities that I've enjoyed all my life possible," said Furrow, Furrow Auction Company chairman and principal auctioneer. "I can honestly say with all the sincerity in my heart that the great joy that I've had is living in this community. It has been a joy to me to share our company's financial successes with this business community."

(Furrow is this month's Q&A feature subject. Read more about how he's achieved business success in the area by turning to page 53.)

Furrow's 40 years of business longevity in East Tennessee is more than matched by the 100 years of success enjoyed by 2010 Innovator Award honoree Schaad Companies, LLC. The family-owned real estate holding company co-founded the Zero Energy Building Research Alliance in 2008 with ORNL. The ZEBRAlliance developed a four-house demonstration project that includes every cutting edge building technique being studied at ORNL. Using what it has learned through its partnership with ORNL, Schaad was the first builder in East Tennessee to complete and certify a new, highly energy-efficient home that meets the Builders Challenge standard. The company is now applying these standards in the commercial building and renovation markets. Schaad's ability to adapt has been the key to its success over the years.

"A hundred years ago we were in business providing Amish chicken feed and seed to East Tennessee because that was what this area needed at the time," said Schaad CEO Jenny Banner. "I would say that if that's what we were providing today we wouldn't be up here on this podium and likely would not still be in business. So innovation? You bet. That's been our history for 100 years and I hope it will be our future for the next 100 years."

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Cherokee Distributing Company, Inc. was honored with the 2010 Large Business Excellence Award. Cherokee founded its family-owned and operated wholesale beverage distribution company in 1958. For over 50 years, the local company has offered its customers in 22 East Tennessee counties more than 200 beer and non-alcoholic products with a commitment to providing excellent customer service. Cherokee's revenue has grown from \$35 million to \$75 million over the past seven years. The company now employs 150 workers.

"Lots of times when you think about Cherokee Distributing you think just about beer but we're really about people," said Cherokee Secretary/Treasurer Mary Ellen Brewington. "Our family is all of our employees, all of our customers we serve, and our entire East Tennessee community."

With 40 years' experience in the local real estate industry, Partners Development helps clients realize cost savings from the very beginning of a project. The company received the 2010 Small Business Excellence Award. Beginning as a brokerage and property management firm, the business now offers comprehensive facilities planning, financing, and development. It has completed more than 100 projects in the Americas and Europe. Partners Development Chief Administrative Officer/General Counsel Christi Branscom and her brother Russ Watkins bought the company from their father three years ago.

"It's because of our dad's vision and leadership that I'm here tonight," Branscom said. "He was a hard worker and was dedicated. Little did we know the economy would take a nose dive when my brother and I bought the company but I'm happy and proud to say that not only have we been able to survive during these economically challenging times, we've actually flourished. It's been a great experience."

Analysis and Measurement Services Corporation President Dr. H.M. Hashemian has called Knoxville home for nearly 35 years. He started the company in 1977 and now serves a worldwide list of clientele. AMS received the 2010 Mid-Sized Business - Business Excellence Award.

"I did not like Knoxville at all when I first came here because nobody could understand anything I said and I couldn't understand them either," Dr. Hashemian said with a grin. "But I tell everybody that if you live in this town for six months or more you don't want to live anywhere else. Knoxville is a wonderful place to live and a great place to work because it has the best people in the world living here and the most loyal, honest, and hardworking workforce in the world."

AMS provides a unique set of equipment, services, and training to the global nuclear power industry and was recently cited by Business Tennessee magazine as one of the 100 fastest-growing companies in the state.

Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Center was honored as the first-ever recipient of the Woman-Owned Business Excellence Award, which medical director and CEO Kamilia Kozlowski, M.D. accepted. The award is given to an outstanding East Tennessee woman-owned company that is independently owned, operated, and controlled by a female. The winner was selected based on a demonstrated ability to compete in a non-diverse field. Dr. Kozlowski founded the business in 1983. The company has grown from two employees to 74.

"It has always been a passion of mine to find breast cancer as early as possible," Dr. Kozlowski said. "My great joy is that most of the time I get to tell women that everything is OK. I get to see the release of anxiety and the smiles that appear on patient faces."

KCBC continues to be a leader in providing quality breast care in Tennessee. In 1983 the company performed 650 mammograms and had billings of \$200,000. It performed 20,000 mammograms last year and had billings of \$19 million. It was the first to offer mobile screen-

ings in rural areas of Tennessee and Kentucky and moved into a new 40,000-square-foot facility in 2009.

G2 Engineering and Management, Inc. was honored with the 2010 Pinnacle Business Award for Minority Business Excellence. The award honors a minority business that has produced outstanding business results and growth, and overcome the obstacles of race while competing in a non-diverse field. Formed in 2000, G2 provides professional project management and technical support to a national client list. The company's business lines include technical staffing, security system installation and support, facility management, metal recycling, equipment reuse, emergency response support, construction, and utility infrastructure support. G2 Engineering and Management, Inc. President and CEO Mike Twine thanked the Chamber and the nomination and selection committees for the honor.

Hedstrom Design, LLC President Sara Hedstrom was named the 2010 Young Entrepreneur Award winner. She launched the firm in 2007 and placed strong emphasis on continuing education and collaboration. Hedstrom's community work includes service on the East Tennessee Community Design Center board and with UT's newly formed landscape architecture program and she has performed work for the Oak Ridge Children's Museum, Loudon County Habitat for Humanity, and Knox Housing Partnership. Hedstrom said her staff is integral in helping the company achieve success.

"I'm leader of the office but I don't always lead," she said. "I'm thankful and extremely fortunate to work with such dedicated and creative people. My success is not singular."

Hedstrom quoted Apple co-founder Steve Jobs to help express what business traits she feels are necessary to achieve success.

"Jobs once said stay hungry and stay foolish," she said. "I am going to add what is there but unspoken between the lines and that is be true to yourself. No matter what your position is right now if you're true to yourself, your dreams can become a reality. It may take some patience and will definitely take perseverance but it will happen, just look around you."

The 2010 Impact Award was presented to U.S. Cellular. The Impact Award is presented to a business that displays a commitment to making East Tennessee a better place to live through the development and support of a community project or program. In November 2008, U.S. Cellular launched "Calling All Communities" and in April 2009 began "Calling All Teachers." These programs allow the public to vote for schools and teachers of their choice and U.S. Cellular makes donations to the winners. More than \$450,000 has been donated to local education through these programs.

"On behalf of our 800-plus associates here in East Tennessee that continually support this community, thank you," said U.S. Cellular Regional Vice President Tom Catani. "We're delighted that we have the opportunity to participate in this community. What's more, with all the consolidation in our industry, we're not the biggest company but we're very proud to be what we think is a great company. We hope to continue to serve this community for many, many, many years."

Dinner and a silent-auction preceded the awards ceremony.

The Pinnacle Business Awards is one of Knoxville's marquee annual events. Attendees were once again treated to an exiting evening that included a reception and silent auction, followed by dinner and the awards presentation emceed by WBIR-TV's Robin Wilhoit. Additional sponsors included Bandit Lites, Greater Knoxville Business Journal, EnergySolutions, WSI Oak Ridge, Aqua-Chem, Covenant Health, Cellular Sales of Knoxville, LMBC, Lexus of Knoxville, Knoxville News Sentinel, Citadel Broadcasting, and WBIR-TV.

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It Doesn't Have To Be Difficult!

ATTEND May 18th's Chamber U – It Will Help You Master Difficult Conversations

Do you or your employees need to learn how to better understand and effectively handle difficult conversations? Do you want to learn about the tools that can help in gaining clarity to avoid misunderstandings in conversation? Do you want to know how to apply these tools in order to focus on positive outcomes?

If any or all of the answers to these questions is "Yes," you need make plans now to attend May 18th's Chamber U: Difficult Conversations. The event takes place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will be presented by Vergil Metts, Ph.D., Impact Associates, Inc.

This practical and interactive session will explain the dynamics of difficult conversations and provide simple tools to help you be more effective in the next difficult conversation you fac. It will discuss different types of conversations and how to handle each one by providing tips for making what you say more effective. It will also demonstrate conversational tools to increase clarity, avoid misunderstandings in a conversation, and achieve positive outcomes.

Register for the event by calling the events hotline at (865) 246-2622. The cost is \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. This Chamber U seminar will take place at the Knoxville Chamber, 17 Market Square. The Knoxville Chamber's Small Business Committee selects Chamber U seminar presenters, and the sessions are presented in cooperation with the Tennessee Small Business Development Center and sponsored by SunTrust.

UT Business School Hosts BAH at Haslam Business Building

Nearly 150 people attended April's Business After Hours (BAH) at the James A. Haslam II Business Building on the University of Tennessee campus. Members of the Knoxville business community and members of the UT School of Business Administration used the building's Stokely Hospitality Center to network with one another. Chamber Board of Directors Chair and UT College of Business Administration Fundraising Campaign Chair Michael Strickland welcomed guests and thanked them for attending.



Michael Strickland with Dean Jan Williams

"I've been to many business schools around the country including Harvard and I've never seen a finer business facility," said UT Chancellor Dr. Jimmy Cheek. "When undergraduate and graduate students come here to study business they can be assured that the faculty is very committed to high quality rigorous instruction. We are certainly proud of what our College of Business Administration students and alumni are doing worldwide."

UT College of Business Administration Dean Jan Williams said continuing to grow the partnership between the college, the Chamber, and the area's business community is of high importance. He also said the college's 6,000 current students benefit from faculty diversification.

"Seventy-five percent of the college's faculty are 'career academics,'" said Williams. "The remaining 25 percent are area businesspeople (retired or currently employed). This is a great combination that students tell us they love."

For more information about UT's College of Business Administration, visit its website at bus.utk.edu/cba.

Business in the Green Honoree Recognized during Earth Day a.m. Exchange

Chamber members and guests attended April's special a.m. Exchange sponsored by Thermocopy, which was held at the Knoxville News Sentinel. As a part of the event, Green Car and Courier, Inc. was recognized as the Greater Knoxville Business Journal's 2010 Business in the Green contest winner. The company is launching a bicycle delivery service for downtown Knoxville and the University of Tennessee after winning the \$10,000 competitive grant. Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB), Thermocopy, and Efficient Energy of Tennessee co-sponsor the Business in the Green program.

Green Car and Courier will provide businesses, including law firms, banks, and architectural firms, a fast, money-saving, environmentally friendly choice for courier services. It also plans to work with grocery stores and restaurants to provide delivery services for their customers.

In its third year, Business in the Green encourages businesses and nonprofit organizations to propose a green initiative that will have measurable results on their energy use, the environment, and their operations, either saving their organization money or creating a new revenue stream.

The re-launch of www.GoGreenET.com was also announced at the event. The website is an online resource and showcase for businesses seeking to become more environmentally friendly while also improving their bottom lines.

The event's door prize winner was Keller Williams Commercial's Ken Armstrong (green supplies tote bag courtesy of Thermocopy).

The Chamber hosts a.m. Exchanges across Knoxville so that it is more convenient for businesspeople in different parts of the community to attend. Attendees can enjoy a cup of coffee, interact with other members of the business community, and still get to work on time. Guests enjoy breakfast provided by a.m. Exchange breakfast sponsor All Occasion Catering.



Chris King (center), owner of Green Car and Courier, celebrates his \$10,000 award. Joining King are Greater Knoxville Business Journal editor Amy Nolan, Susan Edwards of KUB, Harvey Abouelata of Efficient Energy of Tennessee, and Mark DeNicola of Thermocopy.



PEELIN' EATIN' & POLITICKIN'



Presented By **Comcast** & **Comcast Business Class**

2010 Shrimp Boil Set to Kick Off Political Season

Summer means good times, and so does the 2010 Shrimp Boil sponsored by Comcast and Comcast Business Services. Entertainment is co-sponsored by Regal Entertainment Group.


The Chamber's good-time summer event is expected to be another dandy. Including shrimp and other good eats, the affair will include music and gobs of hand-shakin' and back-slappin'. State legislators, the U.S. congressional delegation, gubernatorial candidates, and local elected officials have all been invited to attend.

Peelin', Eatin', and Politickin' will be held at The Pavilion at Hunter Valley Farm, 9111 Hunter Valley Lane in West Knox County. It takes place on Thursday, June 24, from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. This fantastic setting will once again add to the event's unique flair. Casual attire is strongly encouraged!

In 2010, candidates for city council, county mayor, governor, and other offices will be on the ballot. The Shrimp Boil will be an excellent opportunity to meet other businesspeople and to jaw with politicians and candidates for these offices.

"Similar to last year's yip-yappin' good time, the 2010 Shrimp Boil will be a signature Chamber event and a 'must attend' for leaders from Knoxville, East Tennessee, and across the state," says Garrett Wagley, director of communications and government relations for the Chamber. "By combining great food, music, and politicking it is much more than simply a networking event."

Cost for attending the event is \$25 per Chamber members and \$35 per non-Chamber members and includes admission, food, and a limited number of beverages. To register please call the Chamber's events hotline at (865) 246-2622 or visit the online events calendar at www.knoxvillechamber.com.

Entertainment co-sponsored by  **REGAL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP**

hosted by



Pam Fansler First Tennessee Market President

Over the course of a career that spans three decades, Pam Fansler has seen banking highs, lows, and everything in between – and she's loved (almost) every minute of it. Named First Tennessee's East Tennessee market president in 2003, succeeding local banking stalwarts Lew Weems and Larry Martin, Fansler is the company's first female market president and is responsible for the company's largest banking franchise outside of its corporate office location. Fansler began her banking career at Valley Fidelity Bank and progressed through the ranks both there and in its successor, First Tennessee. As market president, Fansler is responsible for commercial, business, and retail banking as well as private client and trust services. She is a graduate of East Tennessee State University, the Southeastern School of Banking, the LSU Graduate School of Banking, and the Wharton School Executive Development program.



In an industry that is not without battle scars from the economic downturn, Fansler is optimistic that the economy is on the rebound and that First Tennessee is uniquely positioned to be on the leading edge of the recovery. "During the downturn, we chose to focus on the fundamentals that would help us succeed once the economy bounced back. Our commitment to excellent customer service has resulted in improved J.D. Power and Associates scores for the third straight year despite a difficult environment in which the industry average declined," says Fansler. In addition, First Tennessee was honored recently as one of 33 banks in the country to receive a 2009 Greenwich Excellence Award for services provided to commercial businesses. "While we celebrate the success of these awards, we know we can't rest on our laurels if we are to remain successful," continues Fansler. "Focusing on customer service will remain a key focus for us through 2010 and beyond."

Of course, a company cannot deliver great customer service without an excellent workforce. First Tennessee is proud to tout its experienced team of proven bankers – a growing team, in fact, to support the company's strategic expansion plans.

Another hallmark of First Tennessee's approach to business, commitment to the community, is embodied by Fansler herself. First Tennessee's top community investment priorities include education and economic development, and much of Fansler's community involvement follows these themes, including serving on the Tennessee Board of Regents and her past service as chair of the Knoxville Chamber. She also serves on the boards of Covenant Health and the Knoxville Symphony and as the Early Campaign Chair for the 2010 United Way of Greater Knoxville community campaign. A past chairperson of the Central Business Improvement District, she has served on the boards of United Way of Greater Knoxville, Leadership Knoxville, YMCA of East Tennessee, Girl Scouts of Tanasi Council, and Friends of Literacy, and as a University of Tennessee, Knoxville chancellor's associate. She also is a member of the Executive Women's Association.

"I am very proud that my company supports volunteer service and that my fellow co-workers share my passion for investing time in worthwhile community efforts," says Fansler. During 2009, 209 of the bank's East Tennessee market employees volunteered more than 7,300 hours for nearly 200 area organizations, including filling 50 board and 22 committee chair positions. As the Official Bank of the Vols and Lady Vols, First Tennessee and its employees are true "volunteers" in every sense of the word.

What Can Orange Do for You?

Since 1926, The University of Tennessee's College of Engineering has offered a cooperative engineering program for its students to enable them to gain real-world engineering experience before they graduate. University of Tennessee engineering students can augment your engineering team with new ideas and fresh perspectives, too.

The Engineering Professional Practice Program consists of both co-ops and internships for UT students. The most common co-op positions consist of three full-time work assignments that alternate with full-time study at the University of Tennessee, for a total of 52 weeks of work spread out over five semesters. Other combinations of work and school are possible as well. Internships are only for one semester and are typically performed during the summer. A core element of the co-op and internship program at UT is the educational relevance of work assignments, as the work students perform is directly related to their majors.

Bryce Walker, a civil engineering student currently on an assignment with Knoxville-based Messer Construction, has noted that his employer is very interested in seeing his engineering capabilities increase.

"Messer is dedicated to making sure their co-ops have every opportunity to advance the company in the field. When I arrived on site, the project engineer asked me to make a list of skills I would like to develop throughout my co-op. Since then, they have gone to great lengths to make sure that I get practice in the areas I listed."

While students benefit from their co-op assignment, employers also benefit. Many employers find that UT engineering students are enthusiastic and approach engineering problems from a fresh perspective using new ideas and methods, and very often can make an immediate impact on the company's bottom line.

At BSH Home Appliances Corporation in Jacksboro, UT engineering co-op students progress through increasing levels of responsibility during their three assignments. The first



Bryce Walker, a Civil & Environmental Engineering student working for Messer Construction Company on location in Walland, Tennessee.

assignment focuses on learning the manufacturing process and the second concentrates on a specific project under the direction of a lead engineer. On the third assignment, the co-op engineer is asked to lead a project team and give a presentation at the end of the term.

According to John Wilson, human resources manager at BSH Home Appliances Corporation, "We have found the use of UT engineering students to be rewarding for us and the students. Many of them have made significant technical contributions to BSH during their co-op assignments, leading to increased profitability for our organization."

While the Engineering Professional Practice office refers students for positions throughout the year, its engineering fairs are major recruiting events for employers and a primary method for students in the program to obtain co-op and internship positions. The next engineering fair will be held September 27, 2010, on the UT campus. Employers may learn more about UT's engineering co-op and internship program at www.coop.utk.edu and are invited to register for the Fall Engineering Fair by following the "Fall 2010 Engineering Fair" link.

"Though starting a successful employer co-op program has many elements to consider, such as management support, engineering leadership with a desire to mentor students, housing assistance considerations, plus salary and benefit decisions, numerous employers around

the country have co-op and internship programs in place and have been benefiting from UT engineering students for many years," says Todd Reeves, director of the Engineering Professional Practice Program.

The University of Tennessee can help your company create a co-op program or take steps to add UT to the list of schools with which you work. For more information about getting started with UT's Engineering Professional Practice program, contact Todd Reeves at treesves@utk.edu or (865) 974-5399.

Edwards Honored with Two Education Awards

Mike Edwards, president and CEO of the Knoxville Chamber, recently received two educational awards in recognition of his leadership in education and workforce development. They are a Tennessee PTA Life Achievement Award and the Partners in Education Becky Ramsey Award.

The PTA Life Achievement Award is the highest honor awarded by the Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers given in recognition of faithful and unselfish service in the interest of children and youth. The Becky Ramsey Award recognized Edwards' efforts to engage the business community in education.

"I'm truly honored to receive these awards," said Edwards. "Advocating for improved education in Knox County and across the state is important to the Chamber and the business community. It's great that the work the organization has done has been recognized by the PTA and Partners in Education."

The Knoxville Chamber under Edwards' leadership has pushed for higher educational standards, more meaningful standardized tests, and developed the Education Management Information System that Knox County Schools recently put into classrooms. EMIS

includes a data warehouse that brings together student and system data from multiple sources. It enables Knox County teachers and administrators to make data-supported and well-informed decisions about the future direction of the school system and each individual student.

The Chamber also played an integral part in the development of Dr. Jim McIntyre's strategic plan for the Knox County school system. The superintendent worked closely with Chamber staff to develop a plan that clearly establishes goals and initiatives that are regularly measured using a variety of methods and metrics.

Edwards' motivation for his involvement in education is that businesses need highly skilled workers in the new, technology-based, global economy. It is incumbent on public education systems across the state to matriculate students that are prepared for the workforce or additional education and training.

The Life Achievement Award was presented at the Knox County Council PTA's annual celebration and awards presentation. The event was held on April 22.



Q&A WITH Sam Furrow

2010 James A. Haslam II Leadership Award Honoree

Knoxville businessman Sam Furrow was honored with the 2010 James A. Haslam II Leadership Award at the 2010 Pinnacle Business Awards gala presented by BB&T. Furrow joins Mike Campbell (Regal Entertainment), Pete DeBusk (DeRoyal), Bill Sansom (H.T. Hackney Company), F. Rodney Lawler (Lawler-Wood), and James A. Haslam II (Pilot Travel Centers) as recipients of the award. The award is presented to a longtime business leader that exhibits strength in character, resolve, commitment to the community, and exemplary success in business. Furrow was born in Roane County, holds undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Tennessee, and is a graduate of Repperts School of Auctioneering and the Certified Auctioneers Institute of Indiana University. His business interests include Furrow Auction Company, Mercedes-Benz of Knoxville, Land Rover of Knoxville, Land Rover of Chattanooga, Jaguar of Chattanooga, and real estate developments and investments. He is past chairman of the United Way, the Knoxville Chamber, and the Knoxville Zoo boards of directors. He is past president of the Tennessee Auctioneers Association. Commerce recently spoke with Furrow about the Pinnacle Business Awards honor, what he feels are keys to business success, and about *Hits Happen*, a book he wrote to help businesspeople overcome obstacles.

Q: What does being honored with the James A. Haslam II Leadership Award mean to you?

A: It was meaningful in that it recognizes the effort that our companies are making in trying to live to a standard that the award establishes. What's more, I'm honored that the selection committee felt we are qualified to meet those standards. Jim Haslam is too often referred to as the individual as opposed to the overall standard of leadership and excellence that our entire business community can identify with. This is why it's meaningful to me, not because it's Jim but because of the standard that he represents.

Q: Have you attended any previous Pinnacle Business Awards galas?

A: This was the first Pinnacle Business Awards gala that I've attended. I enjoyed seeing each guest exude great enthusiasm on a night designed to bring the business community together to recognize the nominees as well as the winners.

Q: What have been the keys to your business successes?

A: It's no secret, success doesn't come easy and it doesn't come without effort, support and great friends. If all of these things are in place and you do the right things then you generally see the payoff – whether that's in great dollars or great relationships.

Q: Is the necessity to cultivate great business and personal relationships underrated?

A: It's a fundamental necessity. Having great business and personal relationships is what makes your reputation what it is. It's what supports everything that you're trying to accomplish. It's

really more than just the tip of the iceberg that most people see. It's what's below the surface that has a lot to do with successes. I just happen to be the person that receives the rewards but the real rewards and successes come about due to the accomplishments of many people's efforts.

Q: Has becoming a successful businessperson within the auction industry been a life-long dream of yours?

A: I had no great vision of Furrow Auction Company being a great business. I'm more of a reaction-oriented businessperson than a planner. When I see something I feel is right for me or when I see something I want to work at, whether that means buying an old building or getting involved in a particular company, I usually follow my instincts. Getting into the auction business was an after-result of going to auction school with the idea that doing that would help me become a better business thinker on my feet. I liked politics in college and thought attending auction school would help any future endeavors in that field. I began to support myself by working auctions and continued to do so after attending law school. By that point I had a full-blown auction business up and running and stayed with it.

Q: What is your opinion of East Tennessee's business environment?

A: It's stable, we never boom and we never bust. We see these economic ups and downs but we don't experience larger movements either way. I think this area's business environment is well built and I think that our good, steady lifestyle is really paying off now, during this challenging period.

Q: What can readers expect when they pick up a copy of *Hits Happen*?

A: The book is meant to help anyone who's taken hits in their lives. Everyone of us will get hit in some way, whether that's financially hit or in other ways. What I've done is put together a nice little instruction book full of checklists to follow for people that are recovering from hits in their lives.

Q: Was the book written for businesspeople or for everyone?

A: I started the book out as a business directive but it actually applies to every element of our lives. It includes a list of rules with the first rule called The Golden Rule: never lie to yourself. In the book I ask readers to either accept this rule or to send me the book back for a full refund. Readers that don't accept this rule have wasted their money. The book is a compilation of 35 similar rules for managing and recovering from financial and personal catastrophes that I've learned from following my own financial and personal challenges over the years.

(Furrow is the first featured speaker in a new Chamber Storyteller Series that begins May 19, 4:00 p.m. at the Chamber. The series allows the area business community to hear from successful local businesspeople about the lessons they have learned on their journeys to success. Visit the "Chamber Events" page at www.knoxvillechamber.com or call the events hotline at (865) 246-2622 to register for the event.)

Armstrong Gives April Legislative Briefing

Tennessee State Rep. Joe Armstrong spoke to Chamber members about Governor Phil Bredesen's proposed state budget and the recently passed federal healthcare reform bill during April's legislative briefing sponsored by AT&T and First Tennessee. The legislative briefing series is designed to help Chamber members stay updated on the ongoing Tennessee legislative session.

Rep. Armstrong is supporting House Bill 3310, an annual coverage assessment fee that area hospitals have proposed to help alleviate expected cuts to TennCare. Covenant Health, Mercy Health Partners, The University of Tennessee Medical Center, and others have voluntarily and collaboratively assessed themselves a 3.52 percent fee on net revenue. (The bill passed the House in late April and the Senate on May 5.)

"This bill is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that I have ever carried," Armstrong said. "This bill will raise over \$700 million and restore the cuts and services that were proposed in the governor's budget presented in February."

Armstrong suggested Tennessee's next governor keep tax revenue restructuring a high priority. The state currently has 22 consecutive months of negative tax collections. Never before has the state suffered negative revenue collections for this period of time.

"We are facing unprecedented times," said Armstrong. "We are hemorrhaging because of our tax structure that relies on revenues based on what people spend not on what they make. It's too easy for residents who live close to other states to spend money in less-taxed states."

Armstrong is also supportive of the recently passed federal healthcare reform bill. He

pointed out that this year over 66,000 small businesses in Tennessee will become eligible for tax credits at a percentage of their contribution to their employees' health insurance. Over 400,000 Tennesseans are expected to benefit from the new legislation. He's also happy that more than 175,000 Tennesseans who've reached Medicare Part D benefit limits will be receiving extra funds for care. What's more, he is pleased the bill inhibits health insurance companies from excluding preexisting conditions for adults and children.

"There are over 100,000 Tennesseans that are currently uninsurable due to preexisting conditions," said Armstrong. "This new health reform bill allows for these people to obtain affordable healthcare by creating a special pool of money to provide coverage for them."

Further, Armstrong supports the bill because it will allow nearly 360,000 Tennesseans access to Medicaid. According to Armstrong, the new bill is expected to create 5,000 – 8,000 new jobs in Tennessee.



Monthly Economic Indicators

(March 2010)

Note - Knoxville MSA includes Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon, & Union Counties

Workforce

Resident Labor Force	March 2010	March 2009	% Change
Knox Co.	226,240	223,320	1.3
Knoxville MSA	356,640	353,070	1.0
Tennessee	3,000,200	3,018,100	-0.6

Non-Ag Employment

Knoxville MSA	March 2010	March 2009	% Change
Knoxville MSA	317,500	321,800	-1.4
Tennessee	2,584,100	2,634,600	-2.0

Available Labor

	March 2010	March 2009	% Change
Knox Co.	20,440	17,970	13.7
Knoxville MSA	34,720	31,820	9.1
Tennessee	356,900	328,900	8.5
U.S.	15,678,000	13,895,000	12.8

Unemployment Rates

	March 2010	March 2009	Change in % Points
Knox Co.	8.2	7.3	0.9
Knoxville MSA	8.9	8.2	0.7
Tennessee	10.8	9.9	0.9
U.S.	10.2	9.0	1.2

Sources: Tennessee Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development/U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Sales Tax Revenue

State Sales Tax	March 2010	March 2009	% Change
Knox Co.	\$37,361,490	\$36,178,712	3.3
Knoxville MSA	\$52,071,409	\$50,296,694	3.5
Tennessee	\$463,153,635	\$467,202,958	-0.9
Local Sales Tax	March 2010	March 2009	% Change
Knox Co.	\$10,455,359	\$10,247,516	2.0
Knoxville MSA	\$14,527,914	\$14,278,521	1.7

Source: Tennessee Dept. of Revenue

Air Service (McGhee Tyson Airport)

	Feb. 2010	Feb. 2009	% Change
Passengers	106,109	107,233	-1.0
Cargo	6,931,537	5,884,975	17.8

Source: Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority

Housing Market

	March 2010	March 2009	% Change
Residential Closings	938	757	23.9
Residential Inventory	16,454	15,627	5.3
Median Residential Price	\$142,225	\$140,250	1.4

Source: Knoxville Area Association of Realtors

Consumer Price Index (CPI) – All Items

	March '09-'10	March '08-'09	Change in % Points
*Southeast Region Avg.	2.7	-0.4	3.1
U.S. Avg.	2.3	-0.4	2.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics *South – City Size Class B/C

Finalist Named in TDC Start-Up Business Plan Competition

America's small business community provides the foundation of its economic strength and supporting entrepreneurs is a cornerstone of the economic development mission of The Development Corporation of Knox County (TDC). In recognition of the importance of small business vitality, energy, and innovation to the nation and to East Tennessee, TDC is holding the second annual Start-up Business Plan Competition.

The Start-up Business Plan Competition highlights some of the best and brightest local business concepts and rewards competing businesses that have the most potential for growth and job creation in the greater Knoxville area. Applicants making it past the first cut of the application process were given a chance to learn how to fine tune their start-up plans through the Idea Launch Seminar Series, provided by the Center for Entrepreneurial Growth. After completing the seminar series, finalists that provided the best executive summaries of their business plan ideas were selected.

The six finalists in this year's competition are

- **Boulder Booties:** product to protect the specialized climbing shoes worn while rock climbing
- **SpringBox:** compact computer server and related support service that acts as a stand-in for an information technology department in small businesses



- **Streamline Group:** first and only business source for the full spectrum of electronic and physical mailing, shipping, and receiving solutions and services
- **Knoxville Robots:** retail, training, and public meeting facility for robot enthusiasts, engineers, inventors, and educators
- **Heavenly Critterz:** web-based business that sells personalized stuffed animals and provides a purely Christian, on-line, educational, as well as fun, interactive experience for children.
- **NuGenRe (New Generation Recycling):** management of electronic waste (e-waste).

Judges from the entrepreneurial development, small business, and venture capital industries will evaluate finalists on commercial potential, innovation, feasibility, and on their ability to pitch their business plans at a public forum. Finalist presentations will be held at the Goins Auditorium at Pellissippi State Technical Community College on Tuesday, May 11, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.

First- and second-place honorees will receive business development packages including complimentary business consulting services from local providers, cash for start-up costs, and free rent during their start-up at Fairview Technology Center – the TDC managed business incubator. For more information about the competition visit the TDC website at www.knox-development.org or contact TDC Executive Vice President Todd Napier at (865) 546-5887.

Cellular Sales of Knoxville Opens 300th Store Chamber's Official Wireless Provider Focused on Customer Service

From Maine to Florida to Texas – and everywhere in between, Verizon Wireless Retailer, Cellular Sales of Knoxville is the nation's largest retailer of Verizon Wireless products and services. The company celebrated its 300th store opening in Maryville in April. In recent years, Inc. Magazine has named the company one of the nation's fastest growing retailers.

In spite of the tough economy, Cellular Sales continues to open 30 to 50 new stores every quarter. The company generates more than \$300 million in annual business and maintains an annual growth rate of more than 150 percent. It has over 2,000 sales consultants across the country.

"Cellular Sales is a testimony to customer service," said Dane Scism, founder and CEO of Cellular Sales of Knoxville. "Our business model is based on treating every customer as if they were our only customer. People notice it when you take care of them. We're proud of the way we take care of customers, and we know it is the reason we are growing."

For the past 16 years, Cellular Sales has consistently outperformed the rest of its industry, and is now the nation's largest retailer of Verizon Wireless. By year end, Cellular Sales plans



to open 50 to 75 additional stores, bringing the company's total number of locations to nearly 400.

For more information about Cellular Sales of Knoxville, visit the company's website: www.cellularsales.com or call (865) 588-3855.

Premier Partners Helping UT Student-Athletes Make Transitions

Knoxville Chamber Premier Partners have partnered with the University of Tennessee Athletic Department and UT Career Services Center to launch a Career Transition Mentoring Program. The program is matching UT student-athletes with area businesspeople who have similar interests. Mentors become off-campus advisors to students and are able to introduce students who are well schooled in theory to the real and practical world of business. UT Assistant Director of Student Development Jacqueline Schuman designed and implemented a similar program at Florida Atlantic University prior to coming to UT.

"Starting this program was one of the first things that I wanted to do when I was hired here four years ago," says Schuman. "Our student-athletes are really enjoying the opportunity to

meet with area businesspeople to learn more about industries that they have an interest in."

Participation in the program has numerous advantages. Mentors benefit from building relationships with student-athletes, connecting with the University, and perhaps the opportunity to find future interns or employees.

The entire local community gains because this program helps Knoxville keep the best and brightest young people working in and contributing to the local economy after graduation.

Current Chamber Premier Partners that would like more information about this program may call Lori Fuller at (865) 637-4550 or email her at lfuller@knoxvillechamber.com.



Elavon, Inc.



Delivering Highly Individualized Service since 1992

Elavon, a wholly-owned subsidiary of U.S. Bancorp and formally known as NOVA Information Systems, provides end-to-end payment processing services to merchants and financial institutions in the United States, Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico, and throughout Europe. The company's payment products include credit and debit card processing, electronic check services, gift cards, dynamic currency conversion, multi-currency support, and cross-border acquiring all backed by industry-leading technology and security that enable businesses to keep up with the changing payments landscape.

The North American Operations facility for Elavon has been located in Knoxville since 1992, serving as a cornerstone for Elavon's promise to deliver highly individualized service. The location at 7300 Chapman Highway is where over 1,200 of the company's 3,000 employees work to insure that Elavon professionally handles every aspect of the acquiring relationship – from transaction processing, risk and underwriting, and settlement to equipment deployment, chargeback management, reporting, and customer service.

Through the company's partners and third party sales channels – of which many are located in the greater Knoxville area – Elavon supports more than one million merchants worldwide and processes more than two billion transactions annually. These partners and third party sales channels service a wide range of markets including retail, restaurant, hospitality, airline, government, healthcare, education, and e-commerce sectors.

Elavon is a proud Premier Partner of the Knoxville Chamber and believes that serving the community is extremely important for the company and its employees who support and volunteer at numerous Knoxville-area organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House, American Heart Association, East Tennessee Children's Hospital, Second Harvest Food Bank, Dogwood Elementary, and The United Way. Through these organization's continuous support and dedication, Elavon is able to build lasting relationships with local companies and help fuel success and growth in and around Knoxville.

"Our award winning staff is the backbone of our North American Operations," said Elaine Baker, Executive Vice President of North American Operations for Elavon. "The sense of community, drive to go above and beyond, and dedication to excellence shows in our collective accomplishments."

Elavon is committed to providing customers and partners with reliable and secure payment solutions that drive growth and is always looking for new talent to join the team. Elavon is a great place to work, and continues to seek innovative, professional people who can provide more efficient ways to bring value to merchants, shareholders and the community.

If you are interested in learning more about Elavon as a company or as a potential employer call (865) 403-7300 or visit www.elavon.com and click on "Careers."

To find out more about becoming a Premier Partner, please call Michelle Kiely at (865) 637.4550 or email mkiely@knoxvillechamber.com.

Chamber Ambassadors, Staff Help With River Rescue Efforts

Members of the Knoxville Chamber's Ambassadors' Green Committee and Chamber staff recently participated in Ijams Nature Center's 2010 River Rescue. The River Rescue is an annual local waterfront cleanup effort coordinated by Ijams Nature Center and endorsed by Keep Knoxville Beautiful and Keep Blount Beautiful. The event mobilizes more than 800 volunteers to collect litter along approximately 50 miles of our otherwise beautiful Tennessee River and tributaries. The group helped collect 15 tons of trash and 95 tires from the Tennessee River shoreline in Knox, Blount, and Loudoun counties.



Top Achievers are recognized for their countless volunteer hours and dedication to the Ambassador Program's mission of serving as an active volunteer extension of the Knoxville Chamber to cultivate, promote, and maintain positive relationships between the Knoxville Chamber, its members, and the community.



■ **JANA DAVISON**
Humana



■ **RENA AMERSON**
Tillman Companies, LLC



■ **DANNY HASTABA**
WATE-TV 6



■ **BENTLEY BRACKETT**
Servpro of North Knoxville

June

- 8 New Member Reception**
Knoxville Chamber
4 to 6 p.m.
- 15 Chamber U - Digital Marketing Plan**
Knoxville Chamber
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- 24 Peelin', Eatin' & Politickin' - Legislative Shrimp Boil**
The Pavilion at Hunter Valley Farm
5 to 7:30 p.m.

For more info, click on "Chamber Events" at www.knoxvillechamber.com or call (865) 637-4550.

New Members / New Premier Partners

A Better Courier Service, Inc.
(615) 320-3905
Courier Services

Associa Morris Property Management, Inc.
(865) 692-0930
Property Management

Author "By the Light of the Foxfire"
(423) 762-0262
Authors

Bohan Advertising and Marketing
(865) 824-2759
Advertising
www.bohanideas.com

Calhoun's
(865) 673-3444
Restaurants
www.calhouns.com

Center for Business Transformation
(865) 776-8088
Consultants - Business & Management

Century 21 Dott Baker Agency
(865) 384-2050
Real Estate

Cherokee Grill
(865) 436-4288
Restaurants
www.cherokeegrill.com

Chesapeake's
(865) 673-3433
Restaurants
www.chesapeake.com

Copper Cellar
(865) 673-3411
Restaurants
www.coppercellar.com

Country Oaks Apartments
(865) 584-8918
Apartments/Apartment Management

Fluttertoday, LLC
(865) 951-0498
Internet Marketing & Advertising

G & P Alliance
(865) 332-4467
Government Services

Genera Energy, LLC
(865) 974-8258
Energy-Alternative

Legends at Oak Grove
(865) 688-4881
Apartments/Apartment Management

Liberty Mutual Group
(865) 539-0039
Insurance

Lisa Foster Floral Design
(865) 951-0660
Florists

Movies 4 Sale, LLC
(865) 531-0773
Retail Specialty

Oral Surgery Specialists of Tennessee
(865) 482-5811
Physicians & Surgeons - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
www.osstn.com

Outpost Solar, LLC
(800) 416-8374
Solar Services

PPG - Pittsburgh Paints
(865) 525-2222
Paints - Coatings

Pure Romance
(513) 248-8656
Retail - Specialty
www.pureromance.com

Russell's Pest Control
(865) 584-8549
Pest Control

Sherry Fetzter, Feel Good Communications
(865) 604-5352
Coaching - Personal & Business

Smoky Mountain Brewery Knoxville
(865) 288-5500
Restaurants
www.smoky-mtn-brewery.com

St. Joseph's School
(865) 689-3424
School - Parochial

The Carpetbag Theatre
(865) 544-0447
Theaters

Wal-Mart Store #2310
(865) 544-7710
Retail - Department Stores

Xerox Corporation
(865) 690-4071
Printing - Commercial
www.xerox.com

Bronze

Copper Cellar Family of Restaurants
(865) 673-3400
Restaurants
www.coppercellar.com

NES Rentals
(865) 637-4441
Rental Service
www.nesrentals.com



BB&T presents **Knoxville Chamber**

PINNACLE

BUSINESS AWARDS

The Knoxville Chamber Congratulates
the 2010 Pinnacle Business Award winners

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Schaad Companies

**SMALL BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE AWARD**
Partners Development

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U.S. Cellular

**MINORITY-OWNED
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD**
G2 Engineering & Management, Inc.

**WOMAN-OWNED
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD**
Knoxville Comprehensive
Breast Center

**BUSINESS EXCELLENCE
AWARD – MID-SIZED BUSINESS**
Analysis & Measurement
Services Corporation

**BUSINESS EXCELLENCE
AWARD – LARGE BUSINESS**
Cherokee Distributing Co., Inc.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARD
Sara Hedstrom, Hedstrom Design LLC

THE JAMES A. HASLAM, II CHAIRMAN'S LEADERSHIP AWARD
Sam Furrow, Chairman and Principal Auctioneer, Furrow Auction Company

For sponsoring the 2010 Pinnacle Business Award, the Knoxville Chamber would like to thank the following

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