



James Fenton's column— June 19, 2014

Mr. Fenton is the Director of the Gallatin Economic Development Agency

Firing on All Cylinders

When you live in a city and see it every day, it's often hard to realize the change and growth that occurs. Some projects take years to complete, and by the time they are done they have become the norm. Less than eight years ago, Vietnam Veterans Boulevard wasn't open all the way into Gallatin – you had to take Nashville Pike. Sumner Regional Medical Center's award-winning patient tower opened just six years ago. And, the new gateway 109 Bridge that opened less than three months ago is now the everyday trip for some travelers.

Gallatin is firing on all cylinders spurring growth that's getting national and international attention. But, when companies look to relocate or expand, they look at more than new roads or new buildings as they drive through town. They look at many layers of a city – and some of those layers you can't see:

- The fact that Gallatin was recently named the 12th safest city in Tennessee is important – it matters.
- The fact that our Fire/EMS/911 response-times are excellent matters.
- The fact that we have more than 600 acres of parks that are vibrant matters.
- The fact that we have excess water and sewer capacity matters.
- The fact that we have the lowest electrical rates in the TVA service area matters.
- The fact that we're in the top 20 of business-friendly cities in Tennessee matters.
- The fact that Gallatin is a city of people who care about their community and its future – it matters.

In the past 18 months, the City of Gallatin has seen \$129 million in capital investment and 1,000 primary jobs announced in the manufacturing sector along with \$68 million invested and 200 jobs created in the medical arena – \$29-million by Sumner Regional and \$39-million by NHC. And the growth is diverse. Along with manufacturing and medical, it includes distribution, automotive, and industrial. These statistics don't even include the retail growth that is driven by job growth in the community. We have new retail, new restaurants, and new services.

Congratulations are in order to the elected officials whose vision, guidance and investment over the years have put the city in position to take advantage of a recovering economy and bring growth to Gallatin. Congratulations to the community as a whole for being a part of the process – for maintaining the history and character of the city while welcoming the future. And congratulations to those existing businesses and retailers who helped establish Gallatin as a city on the move.

These investment and job announcements in such a short time span are unprecedented in Gallatin's history, but they are an indicator of what is on Gallatin's horizon. With continued diligence and investment, the City has established a framework from which Gallatin can flourish.