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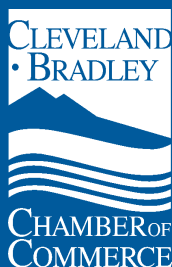
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“For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”  
—Colossians 1:29



### Robinson named Mel Bedwell Small Businessperson of the Year

Steve Robinson, president of Cleveland Plywood, received recognition as the Mel Bedwell Small Businessperson of the Year at the Business Development Month kickoff luncheon in early May.

Robinson is the ninth individual to receive the Small Businessperson of the Year award since its renaming to honor the contributions of the late Mel Bedwell. Bedwell was one of the most loyal and supportive members of the Small Business Committee, sponsor of Business Development Month.

Steve Robinson possesses those qualities necessary for a successful small business owner: commitment to quality, integrity, dedication to customer service, concern for employees, awareness of industry trends and a willingness to give back to the community that supports his business.



Steve Robinson, President, Cleveland Plywood

Cleveland Plywood opened its doors in 1968 under the ownership of Steve’s father, Eddy, with basic plywood and traditional lumberyard items. Soon the product line expanded, making necessary the leasing of four additional yard and warehouse spaces around the depot locations.

In early 1975 Robinson leased yet another building to start the fabrication of pre-hung and fitted doors. The management team quickly realized the company needed its own, specially designed facility to efficiently maintain the high-quality level of products, service and delivery that management had always required for its customers.

In 1976 the company acquired a 15-acre site with a railroad spur capacity for six cars, and the management team designed a new facility to become the main base of the operation. In February 1978 Cleveland Plywood officially opened at its new location.

*continued on page 3*

### Cleveland listed as 53<sup>rd</sup> best small place for business, careers

Those of us who call Cleveland home know it’s a great place to live and work. Now we have the credibility of *Forbes* Magazine to back it up.

*Forbes* recently listed their rankings of the country’s best places to do business and have a career, sorting the rankings by “Best Metros” and “Best Smaller Metros.” The ranking was done through research provided by Economy.com, a research firm owned by Moody’s.

Portland, Ore.-based researcher Bertrand Sperling provided other data. He considered the education of the workforce in each metro area, as well as such quality-of-life issues as crime rates and cultural opportunities. Cleveland, Tenn., was ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> in the small metro category.

*continued on page 2*

## Cleveland . . . a 'business-friendly' place

In addition to its high national ranking as a good place to do business, the Cleveland/Bradley community also ranks in the top 20 communities in Tennessee for its business-friendly environment.

In the March issue of *Business TN*, the Tennessee Center for Policy Research published its annual report of 50 cities in the state for their business friendliness. Cleveland ranked number 19 on the list. The vast majority of those communities ranking higher were located in the Nashville metroplex. Cleveland was one of six in east Tennessee in the top 20, and no west Tennessee community was higher than 25<sup>th</sup>.

Based on four criteria—business tax burden, strategic location, economic vitality and community allure—Cleveland has a “Business Friendly Rating” (BFR) of 52.12. The highest BFR was Spring Hill with a rating of 93.98. I noted with interest that Chattanooga rated at 37.78 and was ranked 48<sup>th</sup> on the list of 50.

These surveys are always interesting to read, especially when our community's ranking is good. However, we shouldn't rest on our laurels but understand that we can do better. We should also remember that those cities lower on the list are reading them also and will strive for a higher ranking the next time the survey is conducted.

Ours is a very good community. A lot of effort on behalf of elected officials, civic and community organizations, educational institutions and many conscientious volunteers is necessary to maintain our style and quality of life. The Chamber strives to do its part as well in making Cleveland and Bradley County a business-friendly community. Your support as members enables us to maintain our programs to that regard.—  
*Jerry Bohannon, Chamber President and CEO*



### STAFF

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## Class of 2007 receives Tennessee Scholars awards



Thirty-five Bradley Central High School students graduated as Tennessee Scholars after completing a more rigorous course of study.



Thirty-nine Walker Valley High School seniors graduated as Tennessee Scholars in 2007.



Twenty-three Cleveland High School seniors completed the criteria necessary to graduate as Tennessee Scholars.

## Cleveland 53<sup>rd</sup> best small place

*continued from page 1*

In the category “Best Small Places for Business and Careers,” Cleveland was only one of three communities in the top 75, following Johnson City (10<sup>th</sup>) and ahead of Jackson (69<sup>th</sup>). In the larger metro area rankings, Knoxville ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, Nashville ranked 9<sup>th</sup> and Clarksville ranked 102<sup>nd</sup>.

According to Forbes, “For the second straight year the Southeast placed five metros in the Top 10 of our Best Places for Business and Careers.”

## Robinson named Mel Bedwell Small Businessperson of the Year

*continued from page 1*

Throughout those early years, Steve worked in all areas during school vacations and fulltime in sales following his graduation from the University of Tennessee in 1977 with a bachelor's degree in accounting. Following his father's death in August 1978, his broad experience in the business made him the logical candidate to assume the reins of director and subsequently resulted in his election as president of the company.

Steve's steady guidance of the company since that time, following the sound business principles laid down by his father and aided by the key management group, has led to continued growth and financial strength.

"Steve Robinson has grown Cleveland Plywood into the largest locally owned building material company in Cleveland," nominator Christy Griffith, senior vice president of Bank of Cleveland, said.

"Since he assumed the role of president in 1978, the company has experienced several expansion phases and continually expanded its product line."

In 1988 door styles and lighting options significantly improved with a 40-percent expansion of the manufacturing building and the incorporation of new equipment. Material handling techniques, including new forklift industrial trucks for more rapid unloading of boxcars, and transportation and delivery equipment, are continuously improved. Two-way radio units used by drivers improved delivery service.

To streamline the operation, Cleveland Plywood installed its first computer system in 1990 and has continued to keep step with changing technology.

The company's human resources department has also continued to grow in experience and depth, with care taken to ensure Cleveland Plywood is a good place to work. In addition to benefit programs, employees have a vital interest in the company's performance and growth as they benefit from a

Profit Sharing Program initiated in November 1983.

"I feel fortunate to work here," Judy Wilson, Robinson's secretary, said. "Steve's door is always open, whether it's a customer or an employee. His caring and patient attitude is infectious to those around him."

Wilson added that her boss empowers his employees to do their best and to take the initiative and that he believes in doing what is best for the customer.

In addition to making Cleveland Plywood a great place to work and to do business, "Steve has consistently given back to our community, not just financially, but through the investment of his time, serving on the boards of many local nonprofit organizations to lend his expertise, support and guidance," Griffith pointed out.



Chamber president Jerry Bohannon, Bedwell Award nominator and Bank of Cleveland senior vice president Christy Griffith, Bedwell Award winner Steve Robinson and keynote speaker Moore Hallmark. Hallmark is executive director of the Southeastern Region of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Steve serves on the Board of Trustees of Cleveland State Community College and the Board of Directors for the Cleveland/Bradley Chamber of Commerce, Cleveland Public Library and Bank of Cleveland. He served on the Building Committee for the Chamber's new facility and on the Business and Foundations Committee of the Bradley Healthcare Foundation.

In addition, Steve served on the Board of Directors of Christmas in April.

"I have known Steve for many years," his nominator said, "beginning with his involvement with Christmas in April of Bradley County. His generosity to others is unmatched."

She continued, "His is always willing to help those in need and others around him, yet he will never take any of the credit. That's just the type of person he is."

Griffith concluded, "In the likes of Mel Bedwell, Steve always has a kind word to say to others and about others."



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## Hardee's to sponsor 7<sup>th</sup> annual bluegrass festival

Presenting sponsor for the seventh annual White Oak Mountain Bluegrass Festival is Hardee's.

The festival, set for July 14-15 at Tri-State Exhibition Center, will expand this year to two days with nationally known headliners confirmed for Saturday and Sunday. Organizers credit the expansion to the generous support of Hardee's.

"We're excited about our involvement with the White Oak Mountain Bluegrass Festival," Brenda Eckard, vice president of marketing at J&S Restaurants Inc., said. "We have over 40 Hardee's throughout our region, and we know that bluegrass and acoustic music appeals to a wide range of our customers. The festival is going to be a true family event that fits the values of our company, and we are so proud to be a part of it."

The festival will also feature a "Warm-up Party" on Friday, July 13, at Hardee's on Keith Street with a bluegrass band

competition from 6 to 9 p.m. The winner will kick off the festival the next day by performing first in a great lineup of talent. US-101 will broadcast live from the Warm-up Party.

Full details on how to enter the competition are listed on the new festival website, [www.whiteoakbluegrass.com](http://www.whiteoakbluegrass.com), or are available at the Chamber of Commerce.

For a couple of weeks prior to the festival, discount admission coupons will be available in all 42 Hardee's owned by J&S Restaurants.

"We hope to draw music fans from neighboring counties and states," festival co-chair Melissa Woody said. "Working with Hardee's and all their locations will help spread the word about the festival. This is a great relationship, and we appreciate the folks from Hardee's and their enthusiasm."

Organizers will announce the talent lineup in the coming days.



presented by 

## Two schools, businesses forge new BEST partnerships

The Chamber of Commerce continued its emphasis on BEST partners for 2007 during presentations at Lake Forest Middle School and Ocoee Middle School recently.



From left are Jerry Bohannon and Randy Morris, Chamber of Commerce; DeWayne Morrow, United Community Bank; Principal Ron Spangler, Ocoee Middle School; and OMS students Olivia Howard, Sarah Beaty and Chris Foy.

BEST is the acronym for Business and Education Serving Together, a program that unites the efforts of a business and a selected school and involves a commitment of time, energy and expertise.

The purposes of the Chamber's BEST program are to strengthen the quality of the educational process through the utilization of community resources, to foster better understanding between the business community and the schools, and to expand learning opportunities for everyone involved in the partnership effort.

The two newest partnerships forged are between Lake Forest Middle School and Wal-Mart (South) and Ocoee Middle School and United Community Bank.

Each public school in the Bradley County and Cleveland City School Systems has one or more local business partners.

For information about becoming a business partner, call Randy Morris, director of existing industry and workforce development, at 472-6587.

Principal Ritchie Stevison, Lake Forest Middle School (second from left), and Jason Taylor, Wal-Mart (South), celebrate their official designation as BEST partners. Jerry Bohannon (left) and Randy Morris (right) made the partnership presentation.



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## Small businesses vital to local economy

By Rick Platz

*NOTE: These remarks were presented during the Small Business Month kickoff luncheon by Rick Platz, director, Small Business Development Center, Cleveland State Community College.*

Two statistics stand out with regard to small businesses—52 percent and 75 percent. Small businesses employ 52 percent of the private workforce, which is more than half of all the non-farm and government employees, and nationwide small businesses provide 75 percent of the net new jobs.

These numbers tell the story of how important small business is to our economy in terms of jobs and job growth.

Now let's look specifically at two numbers in Bradley County.

The first number is 90 percent. There are approximately 3,000 businesses in Bradley County. Of these, 90 percent employ less than 10 workers. And among these 90 percent, many are sole proprietorships with only the owner counted as an employee. So the vast majority of businesses in Bradley County are very, very small.

Our small business owners need your help if they are to survive. According to a recent study by Dun and Bradstreet, 66 percent or two-thirds of all business startups will not survive their first four years of existence. And of those that don't make it, 70 to 80 percent will close in the first year.

Why do they fail? According to the same Dun and Bradstreet study, the main reason startup businesses don't survive is lack of business and management experience . . . lack of planning . . . lack of understanding business finances . . . lack of aggressive marketing.

Help our Bradley County small business owners in every way you can. In your everyday life and in your professional lives as established small businesses, bankers and educators, you can help small business owners and the future generation of small business owners.

How? Shop at local retailers. Buy products made locally. More importantly, participate in the many opportunities that already exist to help small businesses and future small business owners.



Rick Platz, Director, Small Business Development Center

Learn what's going on in our high schools—some wonderful programs allow students to learn and practice business principles and to compete in statewide and national contests.

Participate in Junior Achievement. This is another wonderful program that reaches down into middle schools to teach young people about personal finance and the free enterprise system.

Participate in Chamber activities such as the Small Business Development Committee, Job Shadowing and Youth Leadership, as well as the many opportunities to network.

Finally, and perhaps most important, become a mentor to a fledgling small business. Share your business experiences with someone who has just started a small business or is thinking of starting one. The value and advice you can give will be priceless and may well

make the difference between success and failure for someone. And the personal satisfaction you will feel will be well worth the effort.



Tabletop exhibits showcase the products and services of Chamber members. Bill Davenport and Kelly Meeks with PromotionsPlus are "regulars" at the Business Development Luncheon, presenting the vast array of advertising specialties available through their company.



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## Welcome our newest Chamber members

The Chamber Board of Directors and staff welcome the following new Chamber members as of May 9, 2007:

### **AFLAC**

*Joe Cannatella, Agent*  
1159 Harrison Pk Apt 2007  
Cleveland TN 37311  
423-303-8999  
*Insurance Agencies & Services*

### **Airgas South Inc.**

*Dennis Sneed, Manager*  
3025 Overlook Dr NE  
Cleveland TN 37312  
423-614-7620  
*Welding Supplies*

### **Center for Executive Education**

*Kimberly Mallory, Assistant Director*  
702 Stokely Management Center  
Knoxville TN 32996-0575  
865-974-5001  
*Colleges & Schools*

### **Cleveland Imaging**

*Sue Kilpatrick, Administrator*  
1710 Gunbarrel Rd  
Chattanooga TN 37421  
423-553-1220  
*Hospitals & Healthcare*

### **Ergonomic & Therapy Associates Inc.**

*Dean Coulter, Owner*  
2307 Napier Rd Ste 103  
Chattanooga TN  
423-894-0014  
*Physical Therapy*

### **Professional Respiratory Services LLC**

*Vickie Nakdimen, Co-owner*  
650 25th St Ste 402  
Cleveland TN 37311  
423-614-0297  
*Hospital Equipment & Supplies*

### **Roots Hair Salon**

*Pat McGowan, Owner*  
2025 Chambliss Ave  
Cleveland TN 37311  
423-473-2588  
*Beauty Salons & Spas/Supplies*

### **Shoney's**

*Greg England, Vice President of Operations*  
3475 Keith St NW  
PO Box 3730  
Brentwood TN 37024-3730  
423-479-9691  
*Restaurants*

### **Affiliate**

David Carrasquillo, Crye-Leike

## Access Integrated partnership offers member benefit

The Chamber has partnered with Access Integrated Networks to offer Cleveland/Bradley Chamber members a 5-percent discount on their business local phone, long distance and DSL service rates.

Access is an industry-recognized leader for quality low-cost phone service and great customer care.

Access Integrated Networks Inc., headquartered in Macon, Ga., is the communications service provider of choice for over 1,000 communities in the Southeast for a wide variety voice and data services.

Access is the first in its class to deploy its own private IP network utilizing soft switch technology to deliver high-quality, affordable communications services to businesses and consumers.

For more information on the Chamber benefit, call Randy King at 473-0058.



At left are Gary Payne (in hat), Cleveland Tubing maintenance manager; Lars Hondorf, Cleveland Middle School; and Robin Slack, Hopewell Elementary School. The three discuss "education goes to industry" during a recent meeting at the Chamber to kickoff this year's Teachers Academy. See the story on the next page.

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## Businesses prepare to welcome teachers to 'summer school'

Following an application and interview process, 11 area educators will participate in the ninth annual Teachers Academy program this summer at eight area business locations.

The program places teachers in a four-week summer internship at a local business/industry site where they work on special projects for the company.

While each business receives one or more knowledgeable, eager consultants for a modest price tag, each participating teacher gains invaluable business experiences they can use in the classroom.

This year's participating businesses and their teacher(s) include the following:

- *Arch Chemicals*—Alan Ledford, Bradley Central High School
- *Bowater Newsprint, Calhoun Operations*—Dawn Steele, Cleveland State Community College
- *Bradley County Health Department*—Agnes Colon, Bradley Central High School, and Paula Giron-Escobar, Cleveland Middle School
- *Cleveland Utilities*—Brooke Snyder, Charleston Elementary
- *Cleveland Tubing*—Lars Hondorf, Cleveland Middle School, and Robin Slack, Hopewell Elementary
- *Eaton Electrical*—Norrissa Martin, Bradley Central High School, and Jake Willcutt, Bradley County Schools
- *Olin Corporation*—Julie Carson, Stuart Elementary
- *Whirlpool Corporation, Cleveland Division*—Jeremy Mann, Bradley Central High School

## Economic Indicators

March Unemployment Rate				
	2006	2007		
Bradley County	5.3%	4.8%		
Tennessee	5.1%	4.7%		
United States	4.7%	4.4%		
April Building Permits				
	2006	2007		
Residential				
Number Issued	72	52		
Permit Value	\$10,043,800	\$6,740,028		
YTD Number Issued	248	205		
YTD Permit Value	\$33,914,032	\$27,495,028		
	2006	2007		
Commercial				
Number Issued	11	8		
Permit Value	\$2,477,995	\$1,834,846		
YTD Number Issued	43	23		
YTD Permit Value	\$16,490,818	\$4,791,546		
Local Sales Tax Collected				
	Apr 2006	Jan-Apr 2006	Apr 2007	Jan-Apr 2007
Local Sales Tax	\$1,694,909	\$6,641,327	\$1,795,938	\$6,978,070
Retail Sales				
	Sep 2005*	Jan-Sep 2005*	Sep 2006*	Jan-Sep 2006*
Bradley County	\$88,948,577	\$798,616,538	\$91,777,001	\$834,276,141
Tennessee	\$6,715,297,843	\$58,623,416,942	\$6,971,931,929	\$62,513,275,411

\*Unemployment rates, local sales tax and retail sales figures are the latest state-provided figures. Numbers for building permits are obtained from city and county records.



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## member memo

... BOWATER EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION (BECU) has added over 32,000 surcharge-free ATMs to their network by joining Allpoint, the nation's largest network of surcharge free ATMs. After June 6, any ATM displaying the Allpoint logo will be free to all BECU members using their ATM card or Visa CheckCard. With 10 ATMs in the city of Cleveland and almost 100 within 50 miles of Cleveland, this network will prove to be a huge convenience for BECU cardholders. "Since we now offer financial services to the employees of many local companies, we needed a free, convenient way to serve those members," DENLEY HINES, CEO of BECU, said. "We strive to offer convenient low-cost financial services to our members, and joining the Allpoint network is a perfect way to accomplish this goal." To find out more, please call the BECU Main Office at 423-336-7268 or email them at info@bowaterecu.org.

... Please be sure to send your important announcement—a new product or service, a new employee, a special celebration—to Nancy Neal, director of communications, by the middle of the month for inclusion in the next month's "member memo" section of the newsletter. All it costs is the time you take to send the information. You can email your information to NNeal@clevelandchamber.com or fax it to 423-472-2019.

## What's NEW with YOU?

Send us your news or press release for "member memo."

Name of business \_\_\_\_\_

Service/product provided \_\_\_\_\_

No. of employees \_\_\_\_\_ No. of years in business \_\_\_\_\_

Notes of interest \_\_\_\_\_

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