

## **Gallatin Joins Nashville Foreign Trade Zone**

Federal approval gives economic developers unique tool for business recruitment and expansion

The effort took a little more than two years and a great deal of man hours, but its payoff has arrived and given local and regional economic developers another tool with which to recruit companies and bring jobs to the area.

Gallatin joined Clarksville and a privately-owned warehousing facility in La Vergne, as the Nashville Foreign Trade Zone #78 was expanded. The communities were officially notified by federal officials of the approval on June 30 and have been working in the days since to establish fee schedules and processes. The Gallatin Industrial Center, including the original 167-acre park and the 207-acre second phase, represent Gallatin's FTZ property.

"We have been marketing the idea of an FTZ for some time, which has generated a great deal of interest, particularly among site location consulting firms," said Clay Walker, Executive Director of the Gallatin Economic Development Agency. "Most of them, predictably, said to let them know when it was approved. We're now doing that and working out the details as to how companies can implement the program."

Foreign Trade Zones, first formed in the 1930s, encourage international commerce by postponing, reducing, or eliminating tariffs on goods shipped to and from companies located within the zone boundaries. It also streamlines and reduces administrative costs and fees on product coming into the country.

The partnership, in which costs were evenly divided between the communities, hired Mike Michalski of MCS Strategies to guide them through the rigorous application process. Besides the tangible benefits the impacted properties can now offer companies, economic development leaders say that it strengthens Middle Tennessee's reputation for regional cooperation and pro-business values.

"Cooperation amongst the various economic development entities in the greater Nashville area is critical to the overall success of the region," said Matt Wiltshire, Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic and Community Development in Nashville. "The success of this effort demonstrates how regional cooperation can meaningfully improve economic vitality."

The Gallatin Economic Development Agency is working with at least two companies in the industrial center on activation as well as marketing the added benefit to expanding companies and site location firms.

"Gallatin now offers an essential benefit to companies currently located as well as those seeking to locate in its industrial park," Michalski said. "Due to the vision of local leadership and the unique sense of regional responsibility, Gallatin is now a player in the global competition for jobs and investment."

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