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PlanET Symposium Spotlights Regional Competitiveness Opportunities, Challenges, Success Stories

Maximum-Capacity Crowd Participates at East Tennessee History Center

Knoxville, Tenn. – A maximum-capacity crowd of 250 registrants joined business, government and organizational leaders Wed, Jan. 9, for Plan East Tennessee’s (PlanET) regional competitiveness symposium, in partnership with Knoxville-Oak Ridge Innovation Valley, with sponsorships from ARCADIS and Red Chair Architects.

Moderated by Ted Abernathy, executive director of the Southern Growth Policies Board, the symposium gave panelists, attendees and social media participants an opportunity to examine how East Tennessee can best position itself competitively for the future.

Panelists shared their insights on preparing East Tennessee’s workforce and positioning the region for prosperity by capitalizing on quality-of-life assets essential to keeping and attracting talent, recruiting industry and retaining businesses in a global marketplace.

Among just some of the featured panelists were Bob Booker, senior manager at **DENSO Manufacturing**; Kevin Anton, corporate chief

sustainability officer of **Alcoa**; Carol Evans, executive director of **Legacy Parks Foundation** and **Outdoor Knoxville**; David Mansouri, director of advocacy and communications for the **State Collaborative on Reforming Education** (SCORE); Dr. Thom Mason, laboratory director of **Oak Ridge National Laboratory**; Matt Murray, director of the **Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy**; and Ted Wampler, Jr., president of **Wampler’s Farm Sausage**.

“This event proved exceptionally valuable as we seek to gain more and more community input and active involvement to establish a shared understanding and direction about where our region’s competitiveness stands now, what its assets are, and how East Tennessee can position itself to be competitive long-term at a global level,” said PlanET Board of Mayors Chairman Tom Beehan.

The public can view video segments of the panel sessions at www.planeasttn.org and everyone is encouraged to follow PlanET and continue the conversation about regional competitiveness on Facebook, and on Twitter via @PlanEastTN (hashtag #ETCompetes).

Plan East Tennessee (PlanET) is a regional partnership of communities building a shared direction for the future of Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon and Union counties.

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