

Tom Ferguson to Lead the Greene County Partnership Once Again

NASHVILLE – GREENEVILLE, TN -- Tom Ferguson, who was instrumental in forming the Greene County Partnership in 1993 and served as its president until 2001, has been named by the Partnership Board of Directors to once again lead the organization as its president/CEO.

Ferguson, a native of Oklahoma, came to Greene County in June of 1992 by way of Miami, FL, and spearheaded an effort with numerous community leaders to create the Partnership, an umbrella organization housing the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, Tourism and Keep Greene Clean. Partners In Education was formed as an additional entity within the organization in 1995.

With the assistance of the Partnership Board, local community leaders, and regional and state organizations, Ferguson formed an industrial recruitment team that, in the eight years of his tenure with the Partnership, relocated 16 new industries to Greene County, including DTR Tennessee and Wal-Mart Distribution, and assisted numerous local industrial expansion efforts. These new industries alone created more than 5,000 jobs for local and area individuals during a time when Pillsbury (the former Pet, Inc.) closed its doors and major employee cutbacks were taking place with Five Rivers Electronic Innovations, long a major community employer. These industrial relocations also generated more than \$450 million in new capital investment.

During that time, the Partnership itself became a model for other communities across the country, resulting in numerous formations combining Chambers, Economic Development departments and smaller entities using the Greene County Partnership model.

Ferguson also initiated the idea of a community forum to address topics of interest and concern, organizing the community's first "goals conference" where several issues were selected and individuals from across the community were invited to participate in determining the future direction of the community.

Ferguson and his wife, Terry, remained residents of Greene County after his departure from the Partnership in March of 2001 when he opened his own consulting firm in Greeneville. For the past 22 months, he has served as the interim president of the Regional Alliance for Economic Development, an organization responsible for marketing a 10-county region including Greene.

"We're very proud to announce the return of the economic developer that was responsible for some of the most successful years of industrial recruitment and expansion in Greene County's history," said Partnership Board Chairman Randy Rumbley. "Tom's economic development skills and his knowledge of Greene County will be the perfect combination to lead the Partnership into the future. His professional leadership abilities and determination are exactly what is needed in these tough times to help Greene County improve its economic status."

Greeneville Mayor W. T. Daniels, who served as a local alderman during Ferguson's earlier tenure with the Partnership, stated, "One of the key elements in maintaining a progressive town is establishing an aggressive economic development program. The Town of Greeneville is very pleased that the

Partnership has hired an economic developer with Tom's abilities and aggressive approach to industrial recruitment. Tom can use his 30 years of experience and his knowledge of the county, region and state to 'hit the ground running' and help to make some good things happen in our community. We look forward to working with him, local community leaders and officials across the state to improve our economic condition and the quality of life for all of our residents."

Greene County Mayor Alan Broyles also made reference to Ferguson's history in Greene County. "Having worked with Tom Ferguson as Greene County mayor and a member of the local industrial recruitment team in the '90s, I was able to observe his unique talent for economic development recruitment. His aggressive approach to clients and his knowledgeable salesmanship of our community often provided the deciding factors in the relocation of numerous industries during that time, and helped to take Greene County's unemployment rates out of the double digits. We plan to assist Tom in every way possible in bringing new jobs to Greene County through both relocation efforts and expansions for existing industries."

Commenting on his return to the Partnership, Ferguson said, "It's a privilege to be invited back as part of the Partnership Team, and I sincerely appreciate the confidence of the executive committee and the board of directors. What we learned in the '90s is that when you get everyone in the community working together as a team, you can be successful creating jobs. Regardless of today's economy, if we can recreate that same team synergy we will be successful during this decade as well. To the members of the Greene County Partnership, the Town of Greeneville and Greene County government, on half of the Partnership staff, we are committed to doing our part in this team effort."

Ferguson plans to begin work with the Partnership on September 27.

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