



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## COOKEVILLE-PUTNAM COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

---

COOKEVILLE  
PUTNAM COUNTY  
VISITORS  
BUREAU

COOKEVILLE  
PUTNAM COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HIGHLANDS  
ECONOMIC  
PARTNERSHIP



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 President & CEO's Message
- 3 Putnam County At A Glance
- 4 2023 Achievements
- 5 Membership
- 7 Visitors Bureau
- 9 Highlands Economic Partnership

**Our Mission**  
...to strengthen the region by cultivating a vibrant economy and enhancing quality of life.

**Our Vision**  
...to strive to be a catalyst for collaboration.



# MEET OUR BOARD

## 2023 EXECUTIVE BOARD



PAST CHAIR  
**MIKE PORTEN\***  
TENNESSEE TECH



CHAIRMAN  
**DR. PHILIP OLDHAM**  
TENNESSEE TECH



CHAIR ELECT  
**JAY ALBRECHT**  
SEVEN SENSES FOOD & CHEER

Philip Clemmons, Wilson Bank & Trust  
Jasen Knight, Flowserve Corporation  
Amy New, Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber  
Brandon Parrish, FirstBank Mortgage  
Ben Rodgers, UT County Technical Assistance Service  
Geoff Root, Ford Lincoln of Cookeville  
Cheryl Sandlin, SmartBank

## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ethan Bernhardt, ATC  
Gina Billings, Averitt  
Kellie Fitzpatrick, Lenny & Eva/The Monarch\*  
Amber Flynn-Jared, The Real Estate Collective  
Elizabeth Fournet, One Bank  
Mandy Perhay, YMCA  
Ian Robson, FirstBank  
Camron Rudd, Hörmann  
Josh Stites, J & S Construction\*  
Hinal Tanwar, Saffron Development  
Imon Uduehi, Cummins Filtration  
Tommye Rena Wells, CRMC\*  
Kosta Yepifantsev, Home Caregivers  
Nicole Ziegler, McGriff Insurance Services\*

\*Retiring in 2023



# FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



As we gather for our annual meeting, I am honored to be here with you and this amazing team, as the President and CEO of the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce. This occasion provides us the opportunity to reflect on our achievements, express our gratitude, and set our sights on an even brighter future together.

Putnam County continues to make major gains in both population growth and financial growth in business and government. There are several factors behind this growth and success of our companies. Among these are high-quality business leadership, the excellence of our schools from kindergarten to post-secondary, a skilled and highly educated workforce, some of the lowest property tax rates in the state, a low crime rate, and an exceptional quality of life.

Collaboration has been the cornerstone of our success. Throughout the past year, our members, business and education partners, and non-profit organizations have shown unwavering commitment to working together for the betterment of our community. At its core, 2023 represented teamwork for the benefit of a better tomorrow.

As we step into 2024 and beyond, I am filled with optimism and excitement. Our economic and workforce development efforts create prosperity for everyone in Putnam County, including our friends, families, and neighbors, by creating a pro-business environment that encourages investment in its workforce and community. Please review the information provided throughout this report and on [www.cookevillechamber.com](http://www.cookevillechamber.com). Do not hesitate to contact the Chamber team if we can assist you and your business in any way. We thank you for your investment in Putnam County and appreciate all you do to grow our economy and create career paths for all our citizens.

Together, we will continue to build bridges, forge strong partnerships, and create an environment that nurtures the growth of businesses, both large and small.

Amy B. New

President and CEO  
Cookeville-Putnam Co. Chamber of Commerce





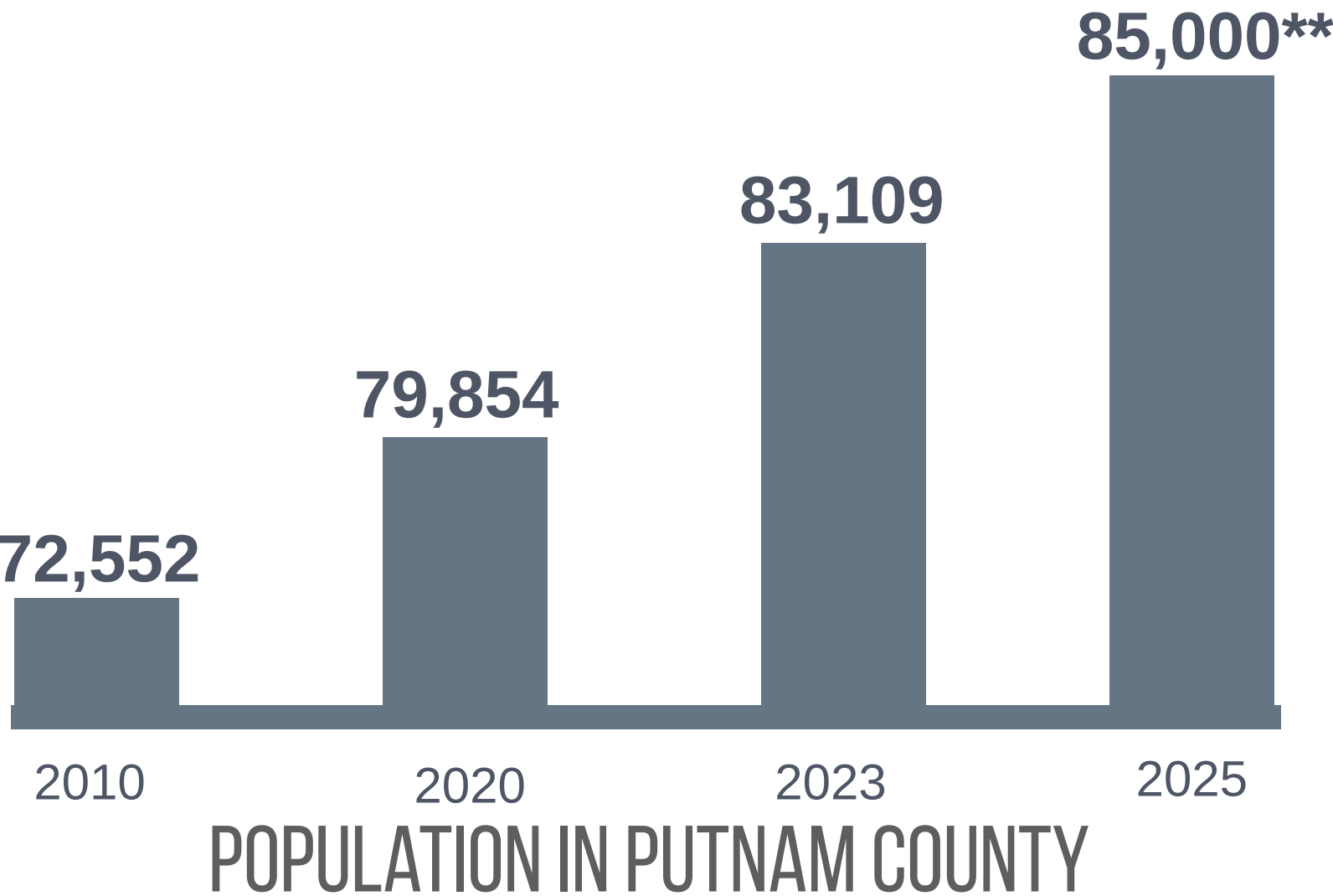
# PUTNAM COUNTY AT A GLANCE

9.1% Increase in median household income\*

\$82M \$82 million in new construction efforts\*

85% Adults under 65 are actively employed\*

In 2023, Putnam County, Tennessee, experienced remarkable economic growth. Over **100 new businesses** emerged, injecting fresh energy into the local economy and creating numerous job opportunities. The county's diverse sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, and technology, all contributed to this growth. **Millions of dollars** in investments were made in infrastructure, improving commercial spaces, and transportation networks. Putnam County's dynamic entrepreneurial environment and supportive business climate set the stage for continued growth and prosperity.



\*Information sourced from census.gov  
\*\*Estimated growth





# 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- BANNER YEAR FOR MEMBERSHIP
- ROBUST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS
- NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In a world where collaboration and innovation reign supreme, the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce has emerged as a true trailblazer in its field. With an awe-inspiring membership count surpassing 800, this organization stands tall as a testament to the power of unity and shared vision. With a strategic focus on workforce development,



LYNNE MATTHEWS, VP OF OPERATIONS  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS AT THE CHAMBER



this visionary collective has taken proactive steps in recruiting businesses, nurturing economic growth, and cultivating a vibrant community. Brace yourself for a journey through the triumphs and accomplishments of the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, an organization that embodies the spirit of innovation and boundless ambition.

**35,669**  
PARTICIPANTS IN CVB  
SUPPORTED EVENTS

**807**  
CHAMBER MEMBERS

**5,612**  
LIVES IMPACTED BY  
HEP PROGRAMMING



# A BANNER YEAR FOR MEMBERSHIP

## 800 STRONG: COOKEVILLE-PUTNAM CHAMBER'S ECONOMIC VITALITY



With a membership count surpassing **800 businesses**, the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce stands as a shining beacon of a healthy and vibrant economy. This impressive number of members serves as a testament to the strength and vitality of the local business community. It signifies the unwavering determination and entrepreneurial spirit that thrives within the region, attracting a diverse array of industries and professionals.



Along with the staff and board at the Chamber, 2023 was greatly supported by the impressive group of over 35 Chamber Ambassadors who volunteer their time at events, attend ribbon cuttings, recruit new members and so much more. The 2023 Ambassadors recruited over **20 new members** to the Chamber.



2023 AMBASSADOR OF YEAR:  
KIM TAYLOR, FIRST NATIONAL BANK



The Chamber is proud to partner with Putnam County Schools to manage the "Adopt-A-School" program. This program has been connecting local businesses to our schools for nearly 15 years. In 2023, the Chamber assisted in facilitating **4 school adoption ceremonies with 11 new adopting businesses!**



# NEXT LEVEL EVENTS

## CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY



Throughout the year, the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce hosted a remarkable lineup of **33 member events**, each designed to provide immense value to its members. These events served as an invaluable platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and fostering strategic partnerships. From informative workshops and industry-specific seminars to engaging panel discussions and keynote presentations, members had access to a wealth of resources aimed at enhancing their business and propelling growth.



# 33

 EVENTS

# 12

 WORKSHOPS

# 90

 RIBBON CUTTINGS

In addition to the impressive roster of member events, the Chamber also proudly facilitated over **90 ribbon-cutting ceremonies**. These celebratory events marked significant milestones for businesses within the community- either a new business opening or an existing business celebrating.



After graduating **28 participants** in May of 2023, Leadership Putnam hit a record-high number of applicants in the 2023-2024 class that started in August, a **38-participant class**. This program studies all aspects of our community and highlights what makes Putnam County one of the best places to live!





# ROBUST TOURISM

SHOWCASING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE



From the majestic waterfalls cascading down rugged cliffs to the winding hiking trails that lead to breathtaking vistas, the abundance of outdoor experiences is a testament to the captivating allure of this picturesque destination. **As the significance of tourism as an economic driver becomes increasingly apparent, the need for a robust and visionary tourism strategy in Putnam County has never been more crucial.** With its wealth of natural wonders and the potential for growth, the region stands poised to harness the transformative power of tourism, stimulating economic prosperity, fostering community development, and preserving the very essence of its pristine landscapes for generations to come.

## 23%

Increase in lodging compared to 2022

## 42

Events supported by CVB in 2023

## 14,917

Visitors to CVB shop in 2023

## 15,716

Participants/competitors in CVB supported events

## 9.3%

Increase in visitors spending as compared to 2021 Economic Impact data

## 35,669

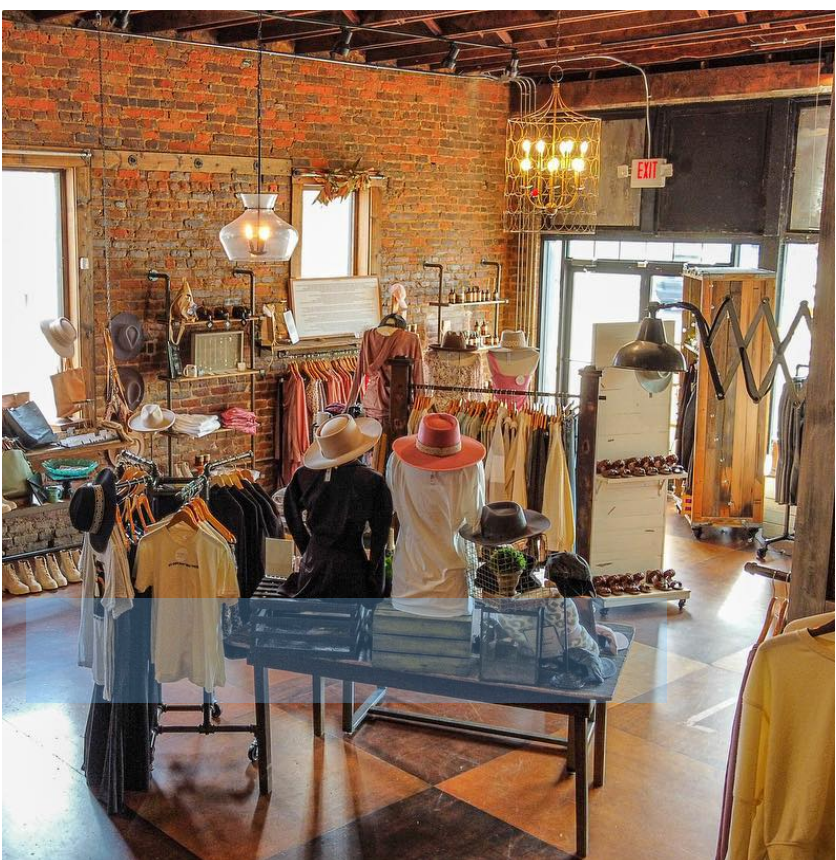
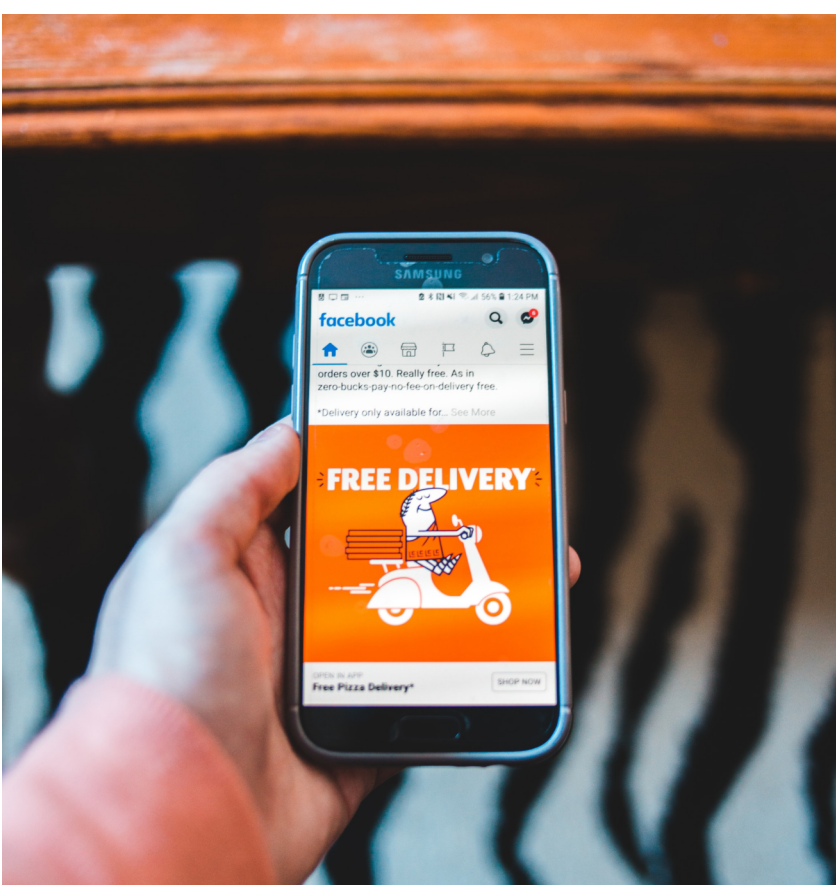
Visitors/spectators that attended CVB supported events





# GLOBAL REACH

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT



The Cookeville Visitors Bureau has captivated audiences with its remarkable online presence. With **239,000 total clicks** on their website, [visitcookevilletn.com](http://visitcookevilletn.com), visitors eagerly sought out information and inspiration to plan their journeys. The bureau's Facebook page boasts **10,965 followers**, while their Instagram account has amassed an impressive **following of 10,437**. Their social media outreach has resonated globally, captivating audiences from every corner of the world. In addition to their digital impact, the bureau's global reach extends further, as the team has distributed **1,564** visitor guides to individuals looking to explore the community. Through captivating content and engaging storytelling, the bureau has effectively showcased Cookeville's natural beauty, vibrant culture, and rich history, leaving a lasting impression on visitors and enticing them to embark on their own unforgettable journey to this remarkable destination.

## OUTSIDE OF THE U.S., THE VISITORS BUREAU HAS INTERACTED WITH TRAVELERS FROM:

Australia	Canada	Germany	India	Nigeria	Scotland
Belgium	Colombia	Haiti	Italy	Peru	South Africa
Brazil	England	Iceland	Mexico	Philippines	Sweden



# LASTING IMPACT

SHAPING THE FUTURE GENERATION



The Highlands Economic Partnership entered into its first year of Phase V with momentum and vision. The steering committee has **grown nearly 200%** from Phase IV to Phase V; and with even more aggressive goals on the horizon, HEP needs as many supporters as possible. Below is a summary of the programming and the impact made as an organization in 2023.

## 5,612 LIVES DIRECTLY IMPACTED

360

Financial Literacy  
Participants

190

Industry Roundtable  
Participants

4,100

Career Exploration  
Participants

64

Physician/Executive Tours

118

High School Job Fair  
Participants

230

Leadership Development  
Participants

550

Networking Participants

9

Legislative Agenda Items





# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## HIGHLANDS TRAINING CENTER



The Highlands Economic Partnership actively contributed to a community impact initiative, securing a grant from the State of Tennessee to support individuals receiving government assistance. The primary objective of these funds is to address the challenges associated with poverty, with a specific focus on improving the prospects of children. Leveraging the grant, the **HEP established the Highlands Training Center**, a dedicated facility concentrating on workforce re-entry. The main focuses are on skill development, vocational training, and mentorship programs, aiming to equip individuals with the essential tools for successful integration into the workforce. The HEP views the Training Center not only as a solution for immediate workforce needs but also as a catalyst for sustainable community development and positive economic transformation.



## TESTIMONIALS

"Due to my time at Highlands, I have gained a lot of self confidence when it comes to learning. I feel like I can actually walk into those rooms with people who I admire that have degrees and not feel out of place." - Keisha R.

"My time at Highlands Training Center was an awesome opportunity. It helped me by offering the opportunity to refresh my skills within mathematics and problem-solving. Also giving me an idea of what careers best fit my personality and skills." - Krystal C.

"I found out I was good at things I would have never thought to even try. My experience with them I felt was tailored just for me." - Jamie B.





# CONTACT US



@CKVLCHAMBER



@VISITCOOKEVILLE



@HIGHLANDSOFTN

📍 ONE W 1ST STREET, COOKEVILLE, TN 📞 931-526-2211

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 1350 ft.



THE TOTAL FOOTAGE  
OF RIBBON CUT IN  
2023 AT CHAMBER  
RIBBON CUTTINGS!