FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayors Kelly, Wamp Announce The Chattanooga Company

The Chattanooga Company will streamline operations, increase accountability, and strengthen efforts to attract investment, jobs, and opportunities for residents

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. – Thursday, Nov. 12, 2026: Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly and Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp today announced the creation of the Chattanooga Company, a unified organization designed to build a stronger local economy by consolidating tourism promotion, business recruitment, the convention center, and investment/talent attraction under one entity to increase efficiency, accountability, and opportunities for Chattanooga and Hamilton County.

The Chattanooga Company was created today as the successor organization to the Chattanooga Tourism Company by action of the Chattanooga Tourism Company Board of Directors. The Sports & Events Corporation will be rolled into the Chattanooga Company, and its current sports efforts will be unified as part of tourism. Lastly, the Chattanooga Company will integrate the Convention Center's sales, marketing, and booking functions. The Chattanooga Company will initially fulfill its business recruitment and investment responsibilities through an arrangement with the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce.

These consolidations will create a single organization with one voice to promote our community and strengthen Chattanooga's national brand as a destination to live, work, visit, and invest. At the same time, the new organization will reduce duplication, improve fragmented coordination, and ensure public resources are used more effectively.

Former U.S. Senator and Chattanooga Mayor Bob Corker will serve as Chair of the Chattanooga Company's Board of Directors. The Board will immediately begin a national search for a qualified and distinguished leader to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the Chattanooga Company.

Today's action follows months of collaboration among city and county leadership, business and civic leaders, and economic development stakeholders. As part of this process, a national advisory firm, PFM, was hired to evaluate Chattanooga's existing organizational structure and identify opportunities to improve coordination

and performance based on practices in other successful communities. A central finding of that report was that our community could see increased efficiency and economic outcomes through consolidation and better coordination.

A key component of the proposal is a multiyear joint-funding framework between the City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County, beginning in fiscal year 2028. The framework is designed to provide predictable funding, reduce fragmented spending, and establish clearer accountability for economic development and tourism investments.

The proposed framework, which will require approval by the Chattanooga City Council and Hamilton County Commission, includes:

- Allocating 50% of the city and county's respective hotel and short-term vacation rental tax revenues to tourism operations.
- Dedicating 1% of each government's respective hotel and short-term vacation rental (STVR) tax revenues for retention and attraction of major tourism events.
- Directing 100% of each government's current Chamber of Commerce economic development allocation to the Chattanooga Company.

City and county leaders will work with the Chattanooga City Council, Hamilton County Commission, and community stakeholders to advance the proposed governance and funding structure.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

"Chattanooga has a strong foundation for economic growth, but I believe the Chattanooga Company will be a vehicle for even more job opportunities for even more Chattanoogans," said **Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly**. "By bringing related efforts under one strategy and under one roof, we will reduce duplication, strengthen accountability for public dollars, and better position our community to compete for new jobs and investment. Ultimately, this is about delivering better results and more opportunities for the people we serve."

"The Chattanooga Company represents a new, powerful partnership between the city and the county that will align our messaging and resources to create more opportunities for our citizens," said **Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp**. "Through this consolidated structure, we will be well positioned to put our best foot forward as a community from business recruitment to tourism promotion, while ensuring greater accountability for taxpayers."

"Our greatest successes have come when we've had a bold vision and the courage to act decisively in pursuit of our highest potential," said **Bob Corker, former Chattanooga Mayor and U.S. Senator**. "The Chattanooga Company presents an opportunity to chart the next chapter of our community's growth by further establishing Chattanooga as one of the greatest places in America to live, work, visit, and invest in."

"By aligning tourism and economic development efforts, Chattanooga and Hamilton County will be better positioned to attract jobs, talent, and investment," said **Stuart McWhorter, Tennessee Deputy Governor**

and Commissioner of Economic and Community Development. "I applaud Mayors Kelly and Wamp for working together to strengthen the region's competitiveness and create more opportunities for Tennesseans."

"Economic development is most effective when business recruitment, talent attraction, and community marketing are working toward the same goals," said **Charles Wood, President and CEO of the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce**. "A more coordinated approach will help Chattanooga and Hamilton County compete more effectively for investment and jobs while ensuring that the resources we dedicate to economic development are focused on delivering results for local businesses and residents."

"Tourism generated $1.9B of economic impact in Hamilton County in 2025. The Chattanooga Company is an opportunity to build on the strong work already taking place across our community," said **Susan Harris, Interim Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer, the Chattanooga Tourism Co.** "A unified organization will provide improved collaboration, clearer direction, more consistent accountability, and the resources needed to support a more efficient approach to promoting everything Chattanooga and Hamilton County have to offer."

"Sporting events bring thousands of visitors to Chattanooga each year, supporting local businesses, creating jobs, and generating economic activity that benefits our entire community," said **Jon Kinsey, former Chattanooga Mayor and chair of the Chattanooga Sports and Events Corporation**. "Integrating the Sports and Events Corporation into the Chattanooga Company will help us build on our past success by better coordinating our efforts to attract major events, strengthen Chattanooga's reputation as a premier destination, and create lasting economic benefits for local residents."

"Tourism is one of Chattanooga's strongest economic engines, and its impact extends far beyond hotels and restaurants. It supports local jobs and small businesses, attracts investment, and enhances the quality of life for those who call Chattanooga home," said **Mitch Patel, Founder & CEO, Vision Hospitality Group**. "The Chattanooga Company represents an opportunity to align tourism and economic development around a shared vision for our region's future, creating new opportunities for residents and building a stronger, more vibrant community for generations to come."

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