

## ***Some GREAT things that happened in Oak Ridge in 2011! Part 2***

**(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on January 24, 2012)**

Did you know? "In a national survey by the Gannett Corporation's Newseum, a poll of journalists and the public ranked the atomic bombs ending World War II as the top story of the 20th century, ahead of even the invention of the airplane, the Great Depression, and the first walk on the moon."

What other city has that kind of significance to draw upon? In my opinion, we are missing the boat by not taking full advantage of the potential of such strong recognition!

We can't even seem to admit we have achievements that impact the entire world. I am pleased to continue to remind us of the several significant positive accomplishments of 2011. Thanks to the many citizens who continue to respond to my request for examples of positive things that happened in Oak Ridge in 2011, there are many examples to choose from. The series will continue at least for a couple more weeks.

I know that Gordon Fee's remark on our propensity for negative stories and our lack of focus on the positive intended that accomplishments of the laboratory, Y-12 and other major entities in our midst be reported, but the thing that strikes me is the great examples of positive accomplishments in other areas of Oak Ridge. I do intend to include the major contractors and their accomplishments later in this series.

However, the response from other areas of achievements in 2011 has been so overwhelming that I think it more interesting to include that input first. So, keep those inputs coming! The series may run longer if you continue to submit positive accomplishments. I don't want to leave anyone out. Thanks for all the interest, emails and phone calls!

First let's begin with Roane State Community College. 2011 was a good year! Thanks to Gary Goff and Owen Driskell for providing the following positive accomplishments in 2011:

"Roane State kicked off its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. During the Tennessee Board of Regents meeting in September Roane State premiered the documentary *Roane State Community College: 40 Years of Class* by Roane State alumnus Keith McDaniel of Oak Ridge. Several of the college's first students, faculty and staff returned to the college for the celebration. Roane State also held a special event in November as part of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and has planned more events.

"The State Building Commission approved the design for a new building on Roane State's Oak Ridge campus. The new building will provide space for three new programs, include two large lecture halls and have a geothermal heating and cooling system. Ground-breaking on the \$11.5 million project is planned for spring 2012, and the building is expected to be ready by fall 2013. The expansion will give Roane State the space to offer new programs such as surgical technology, medical lab technology and ultrasound technology.

"Roane State received a \$1.64 million federal grant that will fund several initiatives designed to promote the growth of the composites industry in East Tennessee. The college was awarded the grant as part of President Obama's \$37 million Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge, a multi-agency competition to support the advancement of 20 high-growth, regional industry clusters.

"Partners with Roane State in the grant include the Oak Ridge Carbon Fiber Composites Consortium, University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, East Tennessee Economic Council, Innovation Valley Inc., Tech 2020, Tennessee Automotive Manufacturers Association, Toho Tenax, Composite Applications Group, Poly Carbon Industries, Scenic Industries, and boat companies represented by the Tellico Reservoir Development Agency. With the grant funding, Roane State is developing a project called the Advanced Composites Employment Accelerator, which will include several initiatives.

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"Roane State is also part of a 10-college National STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Consortium led by Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland. The consortium, which received a \$19.7 million U.S. Department of Labor grant, will develop one-year certificate programs in five science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields: composite materials technology, cyber technology, electric vehicle technology, environmental technology and mechatronics.

"Roane State's share of the grant is \$1.2 million. The college will use the funds to establish certificate programs in two of the five fields: composite materials technology and mechatronics.

Now, how about that? Our college is doing just fine, huh!

Mary Ann Damos, Executive Director of the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge reports on the positive accomplishments in 2011 such as the new parking lot, landscaping and *Kids Go Green!*-The Environmental Learning Center and Garden.

Mary Ann says, "The Children's Museum has long dreamed of having a paved and landscaped parking lot for the former historical Highland View Elementary School building where the museum resides.

"In 2011, this dream became a reality thanks to many donations and helping hands. The museum now has a 90 spaces in its front lot that are safe for children and adults with handicap parking, directional signs for bus tours, loading/unloading areas, beautiful landscaping and sidewalks.

"The museum thanks the following corporations and individuals that have graciously donated time, money, and expertise to this project: The Rock Church, Ed Schneider, Roger's Group, Dave Rechter, Gary Seep, CH2m Hill, Pat McMillian, Gina Inkelbarger, OMI, John Ragan, Terry Ethridge, R&R Properties, Richard Chinn, Ryan Chinn, Lackey and Associates, Inc., Gene Lackey, City of Oak Ridge Public Works Department, Gary Cinder, Steve Byrd, Rick Irwin, Mayor Tom Beehan, and City Manager Mark Watson who all helped to make the new parking lot and landscaping a reality.

"Children's Museum of Oak Ridge's Kids Go Green! Environmental Learning Center and Garden, located in back of the museum on  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre, has been constructed to help children and youth find a healthy connection with nature through gardening, outdoor exercise, cooking and nature studies. It consists of a rock garden, a meadow garden with birdhouses, fruit trees, berry bushes, 7 raised planting beds for vegetables, an herb garden, a pavilion, a fire circle, a water feature with pond and waterfalls, a gazebo, a variety of native trees and a garden shed.

"Projects soon to be completed are a greenhouse and a grassy area for outdoor activities and party tents. This beautiful garden is entirely organic with children participating in composting, planting, harvesting, cooking and eating garden produce. Garden Manager and Educator, Bucky Smith oversees the garden and its programs.

"The garden is coupled with educational programing that reaches to surrounding East Tennessee counties. Outreach programs are introduced through museum traveling cases that are presented by museum educators. In-house programs on gardening, the environment and healthy living are shared with the museum's After School Club, Youth Advisory Committee, classes & workshops and in summer camps. Specialized tours will soon be developed to accommodate school tour groups.

"Through a grant for \$150,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Museums for America Grant, Children's Museum is able to engage children and their families in fun, hands-on, creative and worthwhile activities that promote healthy living, environmental responsibility and an appreciation of nature.

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Ken Mayes, Deputy Director of the American Museum of Science and Energy reports the following positive accomplishments for AMSE in 2011:

"Our big accomplishment this year was kicking off the East Tennessee Middle School Science Bowl. 2011 was the first year as we transitioned from Energy Bowl to Science Bowl. We had 12 teams compete and Norris Middle School, the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner of the regional competition, went on to compete at the National Science in Washington DC.

"Other big events we had were 6 days of free admission over spring break sponsored by B&W Flour, in which over 6,000 people visited in 6 days.

"1,500 people participated in the public bus tour.

<http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/External/DesktopModules/PAO/release.aspx?id=15390>

"AMSE participated in the Blue Star Museums program for the first time this summer which allows active duty military personnel and retired veterans with proper identification in free of charge between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

"AMSE Foundation purchased a tree stump kiosk to compliment the biodiversity towers, located in the lobby of the museum.

"We hosted an exhibit on Gary Powers and has his son Gary Powers Jr, come speak at the museum. TVA opened a new permanent exhibit, Energy Station.

David Bradshaw provided the following positive accomplishments for the Oak Ridge Playhouse:

"Just over three years ago, the Oak Ridge Community Playhouse began an ambitious endeavor to honor the contributions and the memory of Mr. Paul Ebert, Playhouse director for over 36 years. The purpose of this endeavor was to raise sufficient funds to renovate the Playhouse auditorium and lobby and consequently improve the quality of the physical condition of the Playhouse to match the quality and excellence of the productions.

"Because of tremendous support from our community, led corporately by UT-Battelle and individually by many season subscribers and community members, key Phase One improvements began on December 6, 2010, immediately after the final performance of 'Scrooge!'. Key improvements included:

- Installation of a new electronic marquee
- Installation of new carpet and upgraded lighting in the auditorium and lobby
- Refinishing of the original hardwood floors
- Brand new seating and house curtain in the auditorium
- New interior painting in the lobby and auditorium
- Installation of a permanent sound operator booth
- Installation of synthetic wood siding and complete exterior painting
- Restoration of lobby windows

"According to David Bradshaw, Capital Improvement Co-Chair, corporate support for the performing arts in the Oak Ridge community has been fantastic. He said, 'Our lead donor was UT-Battelle, whose early contribution and unflagging support of the project truly pushed the project from only a dream to certainty.'

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"Oak Ridge National Lab Director Thom Mason said, 'For citizens of all ages in Oak Ridge, the Playhouse is a thread that provides a link between our past and our future. The renovation project means that the Playhouse will continue to be a wonderful community asset for years to come.'

"Other key corporate supporters include Oak Ridge Associated Universities, B&W Y-12, URS Corporation, EnergySolutions, The Community Reuse Organization of East TN, ORNL Federal Credit Union, EI Review/Street Legal Industries, Perceptics Foundation, and SunTrust Foundation.

"Mary Ann Hardy, Board President, remarked that the long-time support provided by season subscribers continued with this capital project. 'Our season subscribers and long-time Playhouse supporters are why we did this project. Focus groups early in the process helped identify major capital needs, and once identified, our membership stepped forward and supported the needed improvements.'

Anne Marie Hamilton-Brehm of the Center for Oak Ridge Oral History provided the following 2011 Accomplishments:

"Issued two contracts, one with a professional firm for the production of 100 oral histories and a second with the Office of Scientific & Technical Information to preserve digitized oral histories and streaming video online.

"More than 60 audio and video oral histories were accessed at the Oak Ridge Public Library and online. Oral history media was obtained from Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Display cases and scanned materials were provided for the Scarboro Recreation Center Memorabilia Wall.

"Numerous education and outreach activities with local schools and organizations, graduate students, community members, visitors, and the National Archives & Records Administration were provided.

"Promotional materials including a brochure and posters for display at the Secret City Festival and the American Museum of Science & Energy were created.

"Participated in the feasibility study for the renovation of the Oak Ridge Public Library by providing a needs analysis for COROH and the Oak Ridge History Room.

Our library is positioned for expansion and transformation into the next generation public library.

Next week we will continue with positive accomplishments from the major contractors.

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The chairs were stripped out and new ones installed - Photo by David Bradshaw



The work is completed satisfactorily and the party scheduled marking a completely renovated Oak Ridge Playhouse – Photo by David Bradshaw