



Although announcements of new company locations garner most of the headlines and fanfare, about 80% of new job growth comes from existing business and industry. In order to more effectively serve our existing industry base, we have created the **FIRST program**. The program's name represents our prioritizing of our outstanding corporate citizens – putting existing business and industry first – and is an acronym of the value system on which the program is built: **Focus, Innovation, Results, Synergy, Together**.

Focus

Our Focus is on our customers, the existing industries throughout Sullivan County. These corporate leaders continue to determine how the program evolves. Participating in FIRST means that you have our attention and full support.

Innovation

Our economic development team offers years of experience and a track record of coming up with innovative and creative solutions to complicated issues facing companies in today's challenging market. We deal with challenges in partnership with our industries and continually work toward perfecting our business climate.

Results

Our work is measured by how well we help our companies. Obviously, the goal of most existing industry programs is to have successful retention and expansion projects. However, our success is ultimately judged by the value our initiatives bring to our area businesses.

Synergy

In bringing our companies together and establishing a support system, programs after which FIRST is modeled have proven records of remarkable success. The mitigating factor in these successes is the

sharing of information and experiences, which provides participants with solutions and knowledge well beyond their own.

Together

Perhaps the most significant common denominator of the FIRST acronym; all of the stakeholders in this program – companies, economic development and chamber of commerce professionals, educators, and city leaders – are dependent upon each other. The FIRST program brings these people together in an environment that fosters open, candid dialogue so that we can continue to make our community the best place to do business.

Let us be the first to work for you!

In order for us to honor our pledge of putting existing industries first, we need you to do one thing for us: participate! Please attend FIRST meetings whenever possible and pick up the phone or drop us an email to let us know how we can be of service to you. The foundation of this program is that we are here to serve you, not the reverse, so don't hesitate to reach out to us as we continue to prove that we are "Where Tennessee Begins Its Business Day!"

FIRST is a free program for existing industries in Sullivan County. For more information, please contact Brian Ritz at [This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.](#)

If you represent a Hawkins County existing industry, please contact Rebecca Baker about the REAP program at [This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.](#)