

Sevier County Economic Development Council presents

Industrial **CAREERS**

of the Great Smoky Mountains

Serving Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville

*With boundless
entertainment
and natural beauty
at its back door,
there's still plenty
of work to be done
in Sevier County*

Smoky Mountain industrial jobs directory inside

From the desk of County Mayor Larry Waters

Manufacturing is a key component to our healthy economy in Sevier County. I hope you will look into all the great careers and benefits it offers.

We have many training and educational opportunities that are available to our citizens and high school students to obtain the skills necessary to be a part of this growing industry.

I thank our manufacturers for making Sevier County their home and hope that you will find this magazine helpful as you explore these great opportunities for you and your family!



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Five friends + 2 companies = dozens of jobs for community

No matter what type of construction, home or business service locals need, these guys can deliver

Born out of dreams in the basement of a Sevierville home 23 years ago, The Cherokee Group and Citadel Construction have grown into two of Sevier County's industry leaders.

Citadel Construction, which focuses on commercial and residential construction, grew out of The Cherokee Group, a wide-ranging service company that offers plumbing, HVAC and electrical installation, repairs and system maintenance.

"A lot of folks, I don't think know what we do in Sevier County," Chris Blanton, one of the companies five founders and owners, said. "We can compete with anybody. From a technical standpoint we have the talent, and we've been able to recruit that talent."

Blanton and his friends from Sevier County High School, Jimmy Taffer and Kevin Townsend, combined with Seymour HVAC pro Gary Litton and Craig Faulker, a Kentucky transplant who came to East Tennessee to play football for the Volunteers at UT, to form the nucleus for the two companies in 1996.

"Each one of us had different strengths and different weaknesses," Blanton said. "If you were to say we were successful, that's the reason why. We sort of compliment



Craig Faulkner, Kevin Townsend, Chris Blanton, Gary Litton and Jimmy Taffer started The Cherokee Group 23 years ago in Blanton's grandfather's basement. Today the company employs nearly 100 people.

each other. We understand the importance of teamwork."

That work has earned public respect for the businesses and has won it contracts and projects with some of the best-known businesses and entertainment venues in the market.

Between them, Citadel and The Cherokee Group employ 93 workers in a nearly endless list of jobs and skilled trade professions.

"I think that's why it's so important to go out and recruit these young guys and girls and get them in (the trades)," Blanton said. "We can get them in things like apprenticeship school and grow them and show them there is a career (there)."

With the cost of postsecondary education and rising levels of student debt, many young people are already seeing that value.

"We've really started working

with the high school over at the vocational center," Townsend said.

"(And) bringing in some of the kids that are still in school (for internships). We've been getting 3-4 every summer."

For some young people, like Gary Litton's son, Matt, it's opened up a whole new world of possibilities.

"Matt went to the field. He's got in touch with everything: construction, electrical and plumbing; and he already had some HVAC because of me," Litton said.

"Matt's been one of our success stories with the young guys we've brought through," Blanton said.

"This area is trade-driven," Litton said. "To be in those trades, the market is there."

To learn more about Citadel Construction or The Cherokee Group, visit citadelconstruction.com or thecherokeegroup.net.

Moore makes the most of opportunity, earns college degree, supervisory role

After years of working in retail, Jason Moore was looking for a little extra. The Sevier County High School grad was looking for more stability and structure; he was also looking for better wages and improved benefits.

In short, he was looking for a career. Moore found that in the Hodsden-Hicks Industrial Park with Federal-Mogul.

In 2004, Moore's career took off, as he started as a manufacturing technician working on the weekday night shift for the valve manufacturing company. Moore was responsible for operating production equipment used to produce engine valves for some of the world's largest auto manufacturers.

While working full time at night, Moore used his days to attend Tusculum College. There, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business management. He finished last May.

Thanks to his work ethic and the potential seen in him, Moore was offered a promotion to serve as an environmental health and safety representative while working toward that degree.

Last year, he was one of five employees selected to participate in the company's first-ever Leadership Development Program.

The program is designed to develop current talent for future leadership opportunities.

In that program Moore was paired with mentor Mark Reiner, Maintenance and Engineering Manager.

"Jason is a dedicated employee who has continued to demonstrate his leadership skills throughout his career here at Federal-Mogul," Reiner said. "Being part of the Leadership Development Group, Jason gained exposure to areas of the business he may otherwise not have had the opportunity to explore."

Recently, Moore accepted a promotion to environmental health and safety supervisor. He is now responsible for enforcing plant safety and environmental policies to ensure compliance with Federal-Mogul, local, state and federal



Whether managing staff or helping out in production, Jason Moore has earned his way into leadership at Federal Mogul with persistence and determination.



regulations.

"Jason has a unique skill set having been exposed to different areas of the plant throughout his tenure with Federal-Mogul," Tammy Roden, the company's Human Resource Manager, said.

"Because of this, Jason has earned respect amongst other employees as he better understands their point of view and now serves as their 'voice for safety'."

"Jason is an excellent example of how far hard work and determination can take you."

Electrical apprenticeship program helps provide the foundation for a great career

For Funderburk Electrical Services, sometimes the best employee is one you train yourself.

A leading provider of industrial contracting, new construction, renovations, upgrades and 24-hour on-call emergency services, Funderburk also trains many of their own staff members through a rigorous four-year apprenticeship program accredited by the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Center for Construction Education & Research.

Molding workers, shaping careers

As a younger teenager, Hunter McMillan wasn't sure what he wanted to do for a career.

But as a high school junior, he enrolled in an electrical vocational course at Sevier County High School, and a light switch flipped, literally.

"I didn't know I was interested in doing (electrical) until I started taking the class," McMillan said. "The little projects we would do, wiring up little boards, flipping a switch and lights coming on, it just tickled me."

McMillan has now worked for Funderburk for three years and is nearing completion of his apprenticeship.

He found out about the opportunity during his time at SCHS, as Mark Rouse, a Funderburk supervisor and the company's director of continuing education was speaking to vocational students there.

"We go five times a month, one night a week, and the fourth week we go two nights," McMillan said, explaining how the classroom education in the apprenticeship program well-complemented the situations he saw in the field.



Hunter McMillan is in his third year of apprenticeship with Funderburk and will be a licensed electrician when he completes the program, all while incurring no debt.

"It's been really good for me, making good money. Where else is someone going to find this?"

Hunter McMillan, apprentice, Funderburk Electrical Services

While the apprenticeship program does cost \$650 annually, that total includes books and all fees; apprentices are also paid a competitive wage while completing the program.

The ultimate reward is becoming a certified electrician, all while earning a good wage and benefits in an industry hungry for new

professionals.

"It's definitely a career (as opposed to a job)," McMillan said. "I'll be making good money to be 22 years old with zero debt and nothing to worry about. I just enjoy doing it."

Learn more about Funderburk or its apprenticeship program at funderburkelec.com or call 865-524-8615.



A superintendent overlooks progress on a heavy industrial excavating equipment maintenance shop with a 7.5 ton crane, 14 overhead doors and 3,500 square-feet of office space.

With a commitment to excellence, Joseph Construction is helping build a better Sevier County community

Founded by Joe Zappa in Knoxville in 1972, Joseph Construction has grown into one of the best-known builders in the region, and Sevier County businesses are some of the company's most notable local clients.

From the construction of the facilities for the Boys & Girls Club in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, to several of the large theaters in Pigeon Forge, Joseph has made a home in Sevier County and employs many local tradesmen on its job sites.

Currently Joseph is adding new classrooms, expanding Northview Academy and Sevierville Middle School and building onto Swaggerty's Sausage Company. It is also rebuilding the wildfire damaged Laurel Point condominiums in Gatlinburg, among a variety of other jobs.

"Our team has an impressive resume of

experiences including: commercial office, corporate headquarters, healthcare, industrial, research and development facilities, and projects of all types," said Deanna Hall, business development director.

And, when it comes to working for Joseph, Hall points out that we have several employees who have been with the company for over 30 years.

"Building Partnerships. Building Community' isn't just a slogan for us," Hall said. "It tells the story of who we are and our commitment to continued growth in this area.

"We are committed to and known for being a company of excellence; from how we take care of our employees, work with our subcontractors and owners, to how we give back in our communities."

For more information about Joseph, visit jcc1972.com.



KaTom: Where work ethic and new ideas pay

Keller joined as a new college grad; her ambition earned her responsibility

Ariana Keller wasn't sure what to expect when she accepted a job in the e-commerce department at KaTom Restaurant Supply in Kodak.

After all, the University of Tennessee graduate, who majored in English with a concentration on technical communications and rhetoric, didn't have any experience working in restaurants, let alone writing about restaurant supplies.

But she did have two big factors in her favor: a great team of coworkers and the drive to succeed.

"Over the last three and a half years, I've seen opportunities and grabbed them and refused to let go," said Keller, who is now in her fourth year with KaTom, one of America's 50 fastest-growing women-owned businesses.

"The development of Ariana's role is partly driven by company priority, but she drove a lot of it," Derek Hodges, KaTom's content manager and Keller's supervisor, said. "When she started (her position) was mainly for (writing) product content. Slowly we phased that out ... and she's gotten to do a lot of the blog and marketing work which were interests for her."

In addition to blogging about most any food-related topic for the company, Keller also writes about the restaurant equipment the company sells, including informative guides about using the products.



Ariana Keller started with KaTom's e-commerce team 3 1/2 years ago. Through her determination, she's climbed the ranks, earning new responsibilities and the ability to write her own story with the company.

"(They) help people find what they need to know, what they didn't know that they needed to know," Keller said with a laugh. "A large part of what I do for the blog is actually interviewing people. I interview business owners, business operators (and) professionals in the food service industry."

Part of KaTom's 13-member e-commerce content group, the team Keller leads works specifically on writing assignments that range from foodie-focused feature stories to basic category content: descriptions of product categories and what customers should look for to meet their specific needs.

Say you search KaTom's huge selection of supplies for a pizza pan; you'll find 384 results. You will also find a handy guide explaining almost all you'd ever need to know about the functions of a pizza pan — things like the specific pros and cons of aluminum versus anodized aluminum or even cast iron. You'll also learn why

some pizza pans have holes in them (it's to wick away moisture for a crispy crust).

Stories like those are written by Keller and her teammates.

And all of that writing seems to be helping KaTom's explosive growth. Sales have soared to over \$158 million annually, and KaTom ranked No. 14 on the 2018 Distribution Giants list released by Foodservice Equipment & Supplies. The company expects to be even higher when the next list is released.

Like Keller, most employees who come to work at KaTom — there are over 170 employed at the Kodak facility today — have no prior knowledge of the restaurant supply business.

"We're always hiring," Hodges said. "Our HR director has a white board on her wall with all the open positions, and there's always something (posted)."

To learn more about KaTom Restaurant Supply, visit KaTom.com.

Whether you are relocating to the area, a new high school graduate or an adult hoping to better your quality of life, Sevier County may hold the educational tools to help you achieve.

There are many educational opportunities in Sevier County, with plenty of scholarships and grants available to help with expenses.



Sevier County Partners in Progress Education Foundation makes it possible for students that reside in Sevier County and graduate from one of our high schools to complete a Bachelor's degree from East Tennessee State University in Sevierville without ever leaving the county and with little or no tuition debt.

The collaboration between the cities of Sevierville, Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, Sevier County, Walters State Community College, East Tennessee State University and Partners In Progress makes this unique opportunity possible.

For additional information, visit www.seviercountypip.com or call Janice Bettis, Executive Director at 865-428-2212.



Reconnect offers all citizens – both high school graduates and adults – the chance to earn a postsecondary degree or certificate free of tuition and fees. The purpose of Reconnect is to build and sustain economic growth. Go to www.TnReconnect.gov for additional information

Sevier County School System	Tennessee College of Applied Technology	Walters State Community College
provides opportunity for students to take a wide variety of Career and Technical Education courses at each of the five public high schools spread throughout the county. For more info contact a guidance counselor.	(TCAT) offers a wide variety of full and part-time programs available both during the day and in evening, making their training accessible for almost anyone. tcatmorrystown.edu	offers associate degrees and technical certificates in a variety of programs. While the school is based in Morristown, students can take a majority of their courses at the Sevier County Campus. ws.edu
Sevier County Schools	TCAT	WSCC
Agriculture Collision & Repair Cosmetology Criminal Justice Culinary Arts Digital Arts & Imaging Health Science Hospitality & Tourism Human & Social Services Marketing Management Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Structural Systems Teaching K-12 Work-based Learning	Administrative Office Automotive Aviation Maintenance Certified Nursing Assistant Collision Repair Computer Aided Design Computer Information Cosmetology Digital Graphic Design Heating, Ventilation, AC & Refrigeration Industrial Electricity Industrial Maintenance Machine Tool Pipefitting and Plumbing Practical Nursing Welding Building Construction (fall 2019)	Agriculture Clean Energy Technology Computer Information Technology Computer Science Electrical Engineering Technology Engineering Systems Technology Engineering Technology Production Horticulture

East Tennessee State University at Sevierville

ETSU at Sevierville is a small, intimate campus dedicated to serving the educational needs of Sevier and the surrounding counties. It offers undergraduate and graduate programming for 16 different degrees in business, marketing, education, social work, nursing and medical technologies.

Continuous improvement, of company and people

For the leadership and employees of Kodak and Morristown auto parts manufacturer OTICS USA, the term kaizen is more than just a company motto: It's a way of life.

In Japanese, kaizen means always improving. At OTICS, changing for the better is a constant goal for all, from new workers to those running the international company.

"It's not just improving the company," Caitlin Santefort, human resources specialist, said. "It's improving (people's) opportunities. It's bettering the company and bettering careers. Never settling for what we are and not accepting complacency.

"We manufacture engine and suspension parts for Toyota," Santefort said. "We're a Tier 1 supplier, so we send the parts directly to Toyota. (Parts) go from us right into their assembly."

Many of the parts OTICS makes are for Toyota's most common American-built models, like the class-leading Camry, the compact Rav-4 SUV and the always-popular Tundra and Tacoma lines of pickup trucks.

With sales of those vehicles always robust, demand for the company's work goes up as well, creating a multitude of opportunity for OTICS workers. Even now the plant is being expanded, as parts orders continue to grow.

"There's going to be more jobs and more movement up in the company," Santefort said. "Every opening that we get we post in-house first, so there's constant openings for people to actually build a career."

Just looking at the Kodak and Morristown leadership, there is plentiful evidence of that fact. Santefort said 19 managers at the facility started out as team members. And most of those workers had no special training before joining OTICS.

"Most of them have a high school or equivalent education, no secondary education," Santefort said. "Quite a few of our maintenance team members and team leaders went through our maintenance apprenticeship program. That's another big position that opens up every once in a while."

The most important factors to gain employment and move up with the company, she said, are good work ethic, dependability and flexibility.

"We have two different shifts and lots of overtime," she said. "Being able to work those shifts is important. A lot of our promotion jobs do shift rotations throughout the year; so they'll spend three or six months on one shift and switch at certain points of time.

"If you're dependable with good work ethic, there's going to be opportunities for you to have a long-term career and build a better life for yourself without having to go somewhere else,"



Melissa Davis, foreground, and Allison Sada work on a production line at OTICS USA.

Santefort said.

At times, she said, employees are even trained for a promotion before it becomes available, just so they're ready to go once it does.

One of the available opportunities is the OTICS maintenance apprenticeship program, which is provided in part through TCAT, the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology campus in Morristown.

"We work with (employees') course schedule," Santefort said. "If they have class during working hours, we pay them part of their hourly pay while they're in class since they're doing it for work. And we cover a portion of the cost of going through that program, depending on performance and grades."

Santefort said once they've completed the program maintenance workers are one of the key positions at OTICS.

"They're the ones troubleshooting the machines," she said. "If there's ongoing problems they're our problem solvers. They are a major part of a kaizen process."

OTICS is currently hiring. Information on jobs and the company may be found at OTICSUSA.com.

You don't have to leave your home behind to find a professional career

Just months after helping the Sevier County High School basketball team to one of its most successful seasons ever, Weston Underwood was unsure of what he wanted to do with his life.

A good student who didn't feel the drive to leave home for a far-away school like some of his friends, he enrolled at Walters State Community College.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I was going for a business degree," Underwood said in a quiet office at Parker Trutec in Sevierville. "I figured that was the most broad."

Underwood took a job with Parker Trutec MMI about the time he finished his associate's degree, starting at the ground floor with a plan to grow in the company.

As he worked, he also worked on completing his bachelor's degree in business management at King University one night a week at Walters State.

As he earned the bachelor's, he slowly began easing his way into supervision for the 31-year-old.

Parker Trutec MMI is a growing member of the Sevier County industrial community, yet few Sevier Countians know what the business actually does.

Instead of building products, they treat products for leading companies from around the country to make those company's products stronger and more durable.

"It's a form of heat treatment," Underwood said. "It basically hardens (the products) and makes them more abrasion resistant."

The facility provides the service for appliance manufacturers like



Weston Underwood examines a part treated by his team members at Trutec. A 2013 graduate of Sevier County High School, Underwood grew up just miles from where the factory is today.

Whirlpool, firearm companies including Springfield Armory and Taurus, and even their next-door neighbor Federal-Mogul.

And, overall, business is good.

The company announced in February that it would be opening a second location in Sevier County.

Phil Whaley, president of Parker Trutec MMI, said a plan is in place to build a 50,000-square-foot facility on a 10-acre tract in the John L. Marshall Technology Park.

The property for the expansion has already been purchased.

The current facility employs 65

people, Whaley said, and the new operation could eventually have between 40-50 new workers.

Whaley said he recommended the move based on the strength of the work force here.

"It's really easier to attract good labor here as opposed to other parts of the country," he said. "The employees here seem to be more loyal, and we've got probably the best work force that we've had here since I've been here."

For more information about Parker Trutec, visit parkertrutec.com.

What does QSG do? A little bit of everything

When it comes to industrial work, Quality Solutions Group is a quintessential jack of all trades.

From professional warehousing services to customized odd jobs for big industrial customers, QSG handles a variety of projects for corporate names big and small.

It's primary function, however, is quality assurance: inspecting third-party parts to ensure its customers get only parts that independently meet specified expectations. Their work allows companies to know they're getting exactly the parts they need, without costly mistakes getting through to consumers.

"That's our forte, visual inspections for defects in the automotive industry," Adam Miles, general manager of QSG's Sevierville operations, said. "Ford, GM, all of the big auto manufacturers ... they don't want failures out in the field. So we come in and they use us as a separate third party between (parts makers and the auto company).

"We look at (the parts), and we make sure everything is done correctly. We're dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's and then sending it on to the end customer."

In many cases, that end customer is the automaker. That's how QSG started in their home base of Buffalo, New York, doing quality inspections for General Motors.



Employees at Quality Solutions Group inspect parts before shipping them off to a U.S. automaker. The company, which specializes in quality assurance, also does many other customer "odd jobs" for companies across the country.

"The business started up there and grew really rapidly," Miles said. Eventually, they opened the Tennessee location in 2003, where they inspected valves from TRW (now Federal Mogul).

After gaining a foothold in Sevierville, QSG bought a warehouse and began doing professional warehousing services for local manufacturers like Federal Mogul and Classic Cookies.

Doing so allows their clients to use their own space for more important work than storage, like expanded manufacturing.

When customers need product stored at QSG they place an order, and QSG delivers it to their door the same day.

The company also provides repackaging services, taking parts manufactured overseas and reconfiguring them for easier automation in manufacturing lines for companies here.

Though the company's corporate headquarters is still in Buffalo, work in the south, including Sevierville, has grown tremendously over the years; and so has the company.

"In 2006 we bought this building, then in 2012 we doubled the size of it," Miles said. "It went from 35,000 (square-feet) to 70,000, and we're kind of running out of space already."

QSG typically employs around 30 people in Sevierville, but, depending

on jobs, that number can swell to 60 with three shifts running each day.

Miles said the most sought-after quality he looks for in employees is adaptability.

"I would say somebody who's moldable, who can change the way they do things currently to the way that we're asking them to do them," the GM said.

"To me, it's so important when you take care of the customer, you've got to do what they want. Be flexible, be moldable and learn to do things differently than what you have set in your mind."

"To me, that's a big thing," Miles said.

Learn more about Quality Solutions Group at qsgtech.com.

Skilled trades paved the road to the top for REP's Williams

At Sevier County's newest industrial business, one member of the management team is an excellent example of grabbing every opportunity to succeed.

Derek Williams, Rep Corp's vice president of sales, in charge of the United States, Canada and Mexico for the rubber injection company — has risen to his position through one key factor. He calls it "stick-to-it-iveness."

It all started with his realization that he didn't want to be a baker.

"My great-grandfather was a baker, my grandfather owned a commercial bakery," the relocated Canadian said. "And when my father finished college he chose to enter a much larger commercial bakery, Pillsbury Bakeries as a baking chemist. Following my grandfather's retirement and ultimate selling of his bakery there wasn't a natural progression into the family business for me. I wasn't wasn't white-collar material. In high school, I lacked some clear directions."

But he did listen.

"We had these career days where everybody would file into the auditorium and listen to somebody speak," he recalled. The speaker talked about the value of trade careers.

Getting a start working in the baking industry with help from his dad, he eventually became a technician and then an industrial mechanic. That led to a job with the Neilson-Cadbury chocolate factory.

From there, Williams took over a manufacturing plant that specialized in rubber molding.

"I knew nothing about rubber molding, but I had a foundation of technical skills," he said. At that facility, the ownership gave him a budget and



As a kid, he worked on motorcycles and snowmobiles in his native Canada. After starting as maintenance technician, Derek Williams is now vice president of sales for Rep Corp, covering the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

tasked him with acquiring equipment to grow the company.

Seeking the most for his money, the 24-year-old got to work buying used and run-down machines from the U.S. He would then scour the countryside for parts he could rebuild to bring them back to life, often good as new.

One day a salesman from French company REP International, the manufacturer of those very machines, paid a visit to Williams' plant.

"He saw the (injection) press," Williams said. "The last time he saw it, it was in somebody's warehouse covered in dirt because it was worn out. And here it is (good as new). They offered me a job."

Today, he's the national sales director for REP International's North American subsidiary, REP Corp.

That's why Williams is a big advocate for technical education and the opportunities it can provide to modern job seekers.

"It's important for the young kids today

to see that instant gratification doesn't exist," he said. "But, if you start with the fundamental foundation of a technical skill, apply yourself with additional education that you've earned, nobody can take that skill away. It can transcend industries and can be applied to many disciplines.

Rep Corp occasionally offers opportunities for employees with similar technical skills. The facility in Kodak will be hub for sales, service and replacement parts and rebuilding activities for all of North America.

Its machines are used for all manner of molded rubber injection. Customers use the custom-built presses for a nearly limitless number of applications, including automotive engine gaskets, fuel system O-rings and even the gaskets that cushion your closing car doors.

REP has relocated its headquarters from Bartlett, Illinois, to Kodak, and the company will employ roughly 20 people at the Sevier County location.

When the weather's at it worst, Sevier County Electric System workers are at their best

When storms roll through Sevier County, there's a dedicated group of professionals waiting at the ready should power need to be restored.

The linemen for the Sevier County Electric System are a crucial part of the SCES commitment to customer service; taking their skills into the field during the most harsh conditions Mother Nature can bring.

"When they're in those high-wind events, electrical storms and things of that nature and it's just monsoon raining ... those are unnerving times," SCES Superintendent Allen Robbins said about his employees, with a touch of awe in his voice.

For the system's highly trained top-level field specialists, however, it's all in a day's work.

In fact, even during the 2016 wildfires — as they were witnessing the most catastrophic disaster in county history — Robbins' crews kept their wits.

"During the wildfires our guys were in some pretty hairy situations — life-threatening situations — and due to their training and how they handled themselves, they did a great job (staying safe)," Robbins said.

That level of excellence doesn't come by coincidence. The top tier of the SCES field staff have spent much of their lives becoming some of the best in the power business. Preparation like that is expected after all; in their line of work their lives, and those of others, can often be literally in their own hands.

"There's a lot of safety training that we do now and a lot of protocols put in place to try to prevent injuries," Robbins said. "Every day they're handling something that can be life-threatening. For example, each year we do pole-top rescue training and every lineman must qualify to meet the

requirements established by OSHA."

While some general laborers are still hired out of high school and work their way up through the SCES apprenticeship program to become linemen, more and more employees are coming from different sources, like the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Oneida, where

students can train in a formal lineman education program.

While the men in hard hats on electrical poles in bucket trucks are the typical utility workers who come to mind for most, Robbins said there are many other opportunities for workers with SCES.

"(Of 107 employees) probably 52-53 of those are in the field," Robbins, who himself started with the company 27 years ago after completing a business degree at University of the Cumberlands, said. "The others are engineers and office personnel."

For many reasons, those workers — engineers, accountants, human resources personnel, customer service and cashier representatives — are just as crucial to keeping the lights on for residents across the area.

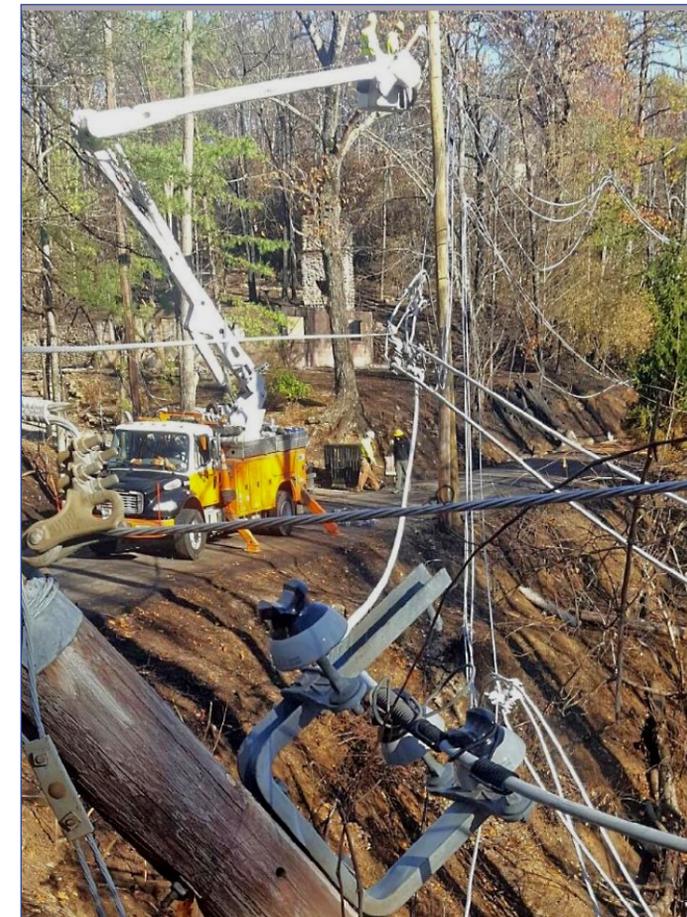
Communication and math skills are two of the most important things Robbins and the SCES board are looking for when hiring employees.

"We've got to communicate with our public, and then we've got to communicate with each

other," Robbins said. "All of those things are very important. Because we are public power, we don't pay stockholders: We exist to take care of our customers."

All in all, it makes for a great life for many SCES workers, the superintendent said.

"We're a tight-knit group, and there's a lot of pride in the work that we do serving (the community)," Robbins said. "It's a rewarding career. Ninety-five percent of the time, when someone hires in here, they don't leave until they retire."



SCES workers work to restore power following the November 2016 wildfires.



SCUD employees gather for a photo with then-Governor Bill Haslam for the opening of the fueling station in 2014.

With natural gas thriving, SCUD continues to grow

With over 90 employees, Sevier County Utility District has positions spanning the gamut from general laborers, welders and mechanics to professional office staff including accountants and information technology professionals.

It's only to be expected in an industry that's growing like natural gas. The International Energy Agency expects demand to increase in the U.S. by 70 percent from 2017 to 2023.

"We have general laborers, people laying pipe and fusing pipe, welders, mechanics and engineers," SCUD President Matt Ballard said. "Technical guys in the field who work in above-ground regulator stations and on meters.

"We also have accountants, human resources, customer service representatives and a marketing

department."

Employees also staff the new SCUD Homestore, a retail storefront which offers the utility's customers the latest and highest quality in home and outdoor appliances.

For those employees, SCUD provides great benefits, health care and retirement, Ballard said.

It also provides the opportunity to work for a stable company in a solution-based industry that meets the energy needs of the 21st century with a clean, efficient product.

SCUD has operated in Sevier County since 1955 and serves nearly 14,000 customers, including some outside the county limits in Walland and the edges of Seymour.

The utility's rapid growth over the past decade is thanks in part to the environmentally-friendly alternative

natural gas can provide for powering everything from home appliances to fleet vehicles.

An abundant domestic fuel, natural gas can operate home appliances with high levels of efficiency while also reducing a home's carbon footprint by as much as 50 percent. Those benefits can also be seen at the fuel pump.

In spring of 2014, SCUD opened a self-service natural gas fueling station in Sevierville, one of only a handful in Tennessee.

The station is an unattended, self service, commercial, fast-fill facility for public and private use. Through the station, SCUD is helping area businesses transition their fleet vehicles to compressed natural gas, a readily available domestic energy source that produces far fewer tailpipe emissions than traditionally fueled vehicles.

A new company priority — employee wellness

In January 2017, SCUD started a wellness program to encourage employees to be more aware of their health and wellness.

The program rewards employees based on their level of participation by reducing their insurance premiums.

Wellness points are awarded for preventive activities including biometric testing and annual health screenings, attending educational activities including quarterly lunch and learn events, as well as fitness activity points for working out and participation in our company organized activities, like hiking, mountain biking, bowling, kayaking, and playing coed softball.

So far, nearly 90 percent of SCUD employees have participated in the program. President Matt Ballard only expects those numbers to increase as the company adds a gym for employee use.



Another shipment of Swaggerty's Farm premium sausage products rolls out for nationwide delivery.

Swaggerty's business keeps on cooking

Since 1930, the Swaggerty family has been making premium pork sausage that is quite possibly the best in the market.

A traditional family values focus, combined with continual commitment to their employees, clients and customers has resulted in an extraordinary company known for its integrity, quality and long-term community involvement.

This third-generation, family-owned business believes that investing in their employees, the process and the product is a winning philosophy.

The company fosters a positive organizational citizenship with its highly-valued employees through maintaining a culture of mutual respect and proving on a daily basis that they have a vested interest in the personal and professional success of all of their employees.

Employees at Swaggerty's enjoy affordable health insurance, a myriad of insurance options from which to choose, paid vacation days, paid holidays and birthdays, attendance bonus, perfect attendance awards, years of service awards, a Christmas bonus, catered meals for hitting milestones and much more.

The key to Swaggerty's success is the employees. And there is a good reason that a company that has over 400 employees rarely has an opening: It's because those employees stay for the positive culture, opportunities for advancement,



Swaggerty's chairman Kyle Swaggerty and his sister, Trena Swaggerty Woods, stand with Doug Swaggerty, Swaggerty's president and CEO.

competitive pay and benefits and the chance to be part of a winning team.

Come by and see what all the excitement is about, or contact HR@Swaggertys.com.

Index of Sevier County industry

Charles Blalock and Sons, Inc.

409 Robert Henderson Road
Sevierville, TN 37862
865-453-2808
info@blalockconstruction.com
www.blalockcompanies.com

Our operations divisions include highway and bridge construction, site excavation and utilities, asphalt paving and production, ready mix concrete production, concrete and precast construction, equipment rentals and building material and sales.

The Cherokee Group

1866 Country Meadows Drive
Sevierville, TN 37862
865-428-6919
kjenkins@thecherokeegroup.net
www.thecherokeegroup.net

The Cherokee Group is a licensed electrical, mechanical (Plumbing and HVAC) contractor performing electrical, HVAC and plumbing installations for both residential and commercial customers. We also provide planned maintenance agreements and 24 hour electrical, plumbing and HVAC on-call repair services to both residential and commercial customers.

Citadel Construction

1866 Country Meadows Drive
Sevierville, TN 37862
865-286-2699
ktownsend@citadelconstruction.com
www.citadelconstruction.com

Citadel Construction is a licensed general contractor performing general construction services for both residential and commercial customers.

Federal-Mogul/Tenneco

128 River Bend Drive
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865-428-8415
www.federalmogul.com

Manufacturer of engine valves for original equipment manufacturers such as GM, Ford, Nissan, and Toyota. We are fast paced, highly automated manufacturing.

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Knoxville, TN 37918
865-524-8615
jlfunderburk@funderburkelec.com
www.funderburkelec.com

Funderburk Electrical Services is a regionally owned full service electrical contracting company specializing in

industrial contracting, new construction, renovations, upgrades and 24/7 on-call emergency services.

Joseph Construction Company

115 Allensville Road Suite #100
Sevierville, TN 37876
865-428-7900
dhall@jcc1972.com
www.josephconstruction.com

Joseph Construction is a Commercial General Contractor. We work closely with the client, architect, engineer and sub-contractors during all phases of the project. We manage the project to make sure we build facility on budget and on schedule.

KaTom Restaurant Supply, Inc.

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Kodak, TN 37764
865-225-1545
ebush@katom.com
www.katom.com

KaTom Restaurant Supply is a national leader in providing high-quality equipment and supplies to the foodservice industry. Our team is dedicated to helping customers find what they need to be successful as they pursue their dreams in the culinary world.

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Kodak, TN 37764
865-940-5200
info@us.liseqa.com
www.liseqa.de/en/

LISEGA, Inc. is a manufacturing and metals fabrication company that produces support structures and vibration control systems for chemical and nuclear plants worldwide. We employ over 170 welders, machinists, fabricators, engineers, accountants and quality professionals.

Mannon Specialty Foods, Inc.

1830 Jack Delozier Drive
Sevierville, TN 37876
865-286-1090
contact@classiccookie.com
www.classiccookie.com

Established in 1989, Mannon Specialty Foods, Inc. is a nationwide manufacturer of Classic Cookie® branded frozen and baked cookie products for fundraising, retail, foodservice and school-nutrition markets.

Mountain Mold and Die

127 River Bend Drive
Sevierville, TN 37876
865-428-3611
sales@mtnmold.com
www.mtnmold.com

Mountain Mold and Die is a plastic injection molding and Mold Making Company. 37 year history of world class injection molding products that show up in the hands of millions of consumers.

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3787 Snyder Road
Kodak, TN 37764
865-225-0255
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www.oticsusa.com

OTICS USA, Inc. is a Tier 1 auto part manufacturing company. Our commitment to continuous improvement with our products, processes, and employee development ensures satisfaction with our customers and employees.

Parker Trutec MMI

134 River Bend Drive
Sevierville, TN 37876
865-453-9183
ssouth@parkertrutec.com
www.parkertrutec.com

We provide a surface treatment process in order to extend the lifetime and increase the durability of metal components. Our treated components can be found in appliances, tools, automobiles and heavy machinery.

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Adam@qsg.bz
www.QSGtech.com

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847-697-7210
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www.repinjection.com

REP was established over 111 years ago and is the leader in rubber injection technology and machinery. REP operates globally, and Rep Corporation located in Kodak, TN, is the executive office, sales and service center for the USA, Canada and Mexico

Sevier County Electric System

315 E. Main Street
Sevierville, TN 37862
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info@scses.net
www.scses.net

Power Distribution to over 56,000 customers in Sevier, Blount and Jefferson Counties.

Sevier County Utility District

P.O. Box 4398
Sevierville, TN 37864
865-453-3272
Matt.ballard@scud.org
www.scud.org

We are a natural gas utility district providing an economical and reliable form of energy to our community in a manner that is safe and environmentally responsible.

Smoky Metal Works, Inc.

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Sevierville, TN 37862
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sam@smokymetalworks.com
www.smokymetalworks.com

We are a sheet metal fabrication and welding company.

Southern Casting Company

148 River Bend Drive
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865-453-6151
info@southerncastingcompany.com
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Swaggerty Sausage Company

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