

# Compete Connect

April 2024 Edition

## From the CEO's Desk



**Deborah L. Wince-Smith**  
President and CEO  
Council on Competitiveness

Dear Council Community,

April was a milestone month for the Council on Competitiveness, as we launched the first edition of our new [Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#) on April 25-26 in Nashville, Tennessee. This incredible dialogue — co-hosted with Vanderbilt University Chancellor Daniel Diermeier and University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Chancellor Donde Plowman, and engaging our Chair Emeritus Chad Holliday and Business Vice Chair Dan Helfrich — catalyzed a powerful, grassroots assessment of how one state and its many cities and communities are strategically positioning themselves for prosperity in a world of turbulence, transformation, and unprecedented global competition. We learned and witnessed that Tennessee — and its Grand Divisions, as represented by its three-starred flag — is well on its way along a new path, one characterized in the words of the University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd not by division but by grand alliances. His inspirational remarks mirror exactly the sentiment and intent of the Council's efforts to be incredibly creative and pathbreaking in re-defining and building a new approach to place-making innovation in every corner of our great nation.

But before sharing further reflections from Nashville, let me ask you to please mark your calendars for the **2024 Gala Dinner and National Competitiveness Forum**, scheduled for December 2-3 at the historic Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The Tennessee Competitiveness Conversation, held under the auspices of the Council on Competitiveness's flagship [National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers](#), brought together over 250 leaders and featured 40 speakers — including keynotes from Tennessee Governor Lee and Senator Hagerty, and a special video from Senator Blackburn. A slate of distinguished and cutting-edge speakers brought to life 13 insightful sessions — all geared toward uncovering Tennessee's ingredients for innovation in advanced energy, mobility, manufacturing, and more.

Chancellor Diermeier set the tone of the summit with his opening remarks, emphasizing the importance of “radical collaboration” — a sentiment echoed throughout our two days together. Chancellor Plowman reinforced that theme when she concluded that Tennessee is “going to become the next great hub of American innovation...because we have the people; we have the partnerships; and we have the place. We are the place.”

The opening "Pillars of Innovation" session may have seemed radical on paper, as it brought together fierce automotive competitors Jérémie Papin, Chairperson of Nissan Americas, and Pablo Di Si, President & CEO of Volkswagen Group of America, as well as Paolo Ferrari, Executive Chairman & CEO, Bridgestone Americas; Robert Carter, EVP & Chief Information Officer, FedEx Corporation; and Dan Helfrich, Deloitte Consulting Chair & CEO and Council on Competitiveness Business Vice Chair. Yet, through their dialogue, we gained a crucial insight: Radical collaboration across Tennessee's innovation ecosystem is a key differentiator for the state, and it is critical for every business' success. Despite competing fiercely in business, every enterprise relies on access to a rich talent base, robust transportation and R&D infrastructure, reliable and affordable energy, and markets, as well as a conducive policy environment for success. Businesses are increasingly finding this in Tennessee.

Throughout the summit, attendees engaged in positive discussions on forging partnerships, overcoming challenges, and devising an innovation roadmap for Tennessee and for the entire nation — as we heard from Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon and Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly, as well as the senior economic development leaders from Memphis and Nashville, in a session moderated by the Council's EVP Chad Evans. The agenda featured distinguished speakers and moderators representing academia, industry, government, and non-governmental organizations.

Additional highlights from the first day included deliberations on strategies to expand Tennessee's innovation ecosystem and sessions spotlighting the state's technological prowess. The second day saw discussions on powering Tennessee's future, strategies for cultivating a resilient workforce, and charting the course for Tennessee's competitiveness over the next 25 years.

So, thank you to all participants, speakers, sponsors, and partners whose enthusiasm and expertise contributed to the success of the Council's first Competitiveness Conversation.

Now, invigorated by the experiences gleaned from our time in Tennessee, I am excited for our upcoming [Competitiveness Conversations in Boise, Idaho \(August 6-8\), and West Lafayette, Indiana \(September 9-10\)](#). I hope to see many of you there. Invites coming soon!

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Wince-Smith  
President & CEO  
Council on Competitiveness

## Council News



### Competitiveness Conversations Across America: Tennessee

Some snapshots from the inaugural Competitiveness Conversation – which brought together 250+ leaders from across Tennessee and the country.



**Left to right:** Donde Plowman, Chancellor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Daniel Diermeier, Chancellor, Vanderbilt University; Deborah L. Wince-Smith President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness



**Left to right:** Robert Carter, Executive Vice President, FedEx Information Services, Chief Information Officer of FedEx Corporation; Pablo Di Si, President & CEO, Volkswagen Group of America, CEO of Volkswagen Brand North American Region; Paolo Ferrari BSAM Executive Chairman, Bridgestone West CEO, Bridgestone Corporation J GCOO; J r mie Papin, Chairperson, Nissan Americas, Member of the Global Executive Committee & Sr. Vice President, Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.; Dan



**Left to right:** Ted Townsend, President & CEO, Greater Memphis Chamber; Indya Kincannon, Mayor, City of Knoxville; Chad Evans, Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness; Tim Kelly, Mayor, City of Chattanooga; Jamari Brown, Director of Economic and Community Development, Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County



**Left to right:** Joe Hoagland, Vice President of Enterprise Relations and Innovation, Tennessee Valley Authority; Jason Maynard, Executive Vice President, Oracle; Susan Hubbard, Deputy Laboratory Director for Science and Technology, Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Deb Crawford, Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation, & Economic Development, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Lindsey Cox, Chief Executive Officer, Launch Tennessee



**Left to right:** Chad Holliday, Chair Emeritus, Royal Dutch Shell, Chair Emeritus, Council on Competitiveness, Co-Chair, Mission Possible Partnership; Stephen Streiffer, Director, Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Padma Raghavan, Vice Provost for Research and Innovation, Vanderbilt University; Katie Ottenweller, Southeast Lead for Energy Policy & Markets, Google; Jeff Lyash, President & CEO, Tennessee Valley Authority; Brent Baker, Vice President – Chief Customer and Innovation Officer, Nashville Electric Service



**Left to right:** Liliana Ramirez, Director of Workforce Development, Ford Motor Company; Deniece Thomas, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Jothany Reed, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Tennessee Board of Regents; Bill Hardgrave, President, University of Memphis; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement, Middle Tennessee State University

**Left to right:** Deborah Wince-Smith,



President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness; Stuart McWhorter, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development; Randy Boyd, President, University of Tennessee System; Daniel Diermeier Chancellor, Vanderbilt University; Donde Plowman Chancellor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

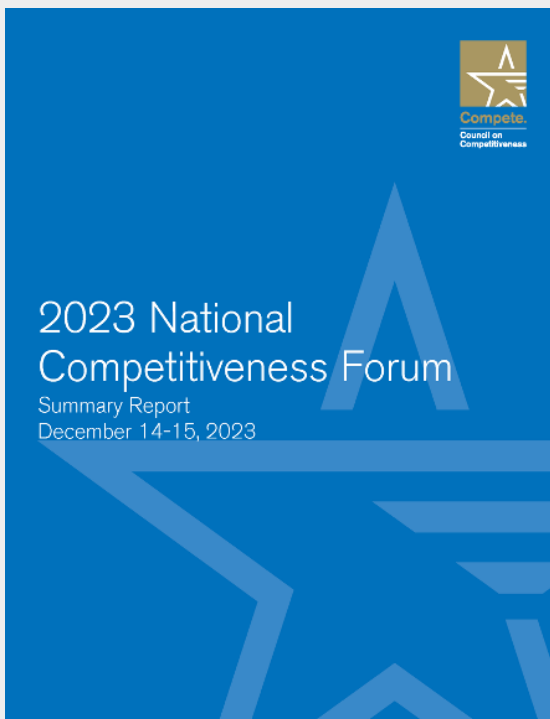


Tennessee Governor Bill Lee



United States Senator Bill Hagerty

## 2023 National Competitiveness Forum Summary Report Available



The 2023 National Competitiveness Forum summary report is now available. The NCF brought together over 250 leaders from business, academia, labor, and the DOE National Laboratories in Washington, D.C. to tackle pressing domestic and global competitiveness issues. The insights gleaned from keynote addresses and panel discussions offer new pathways for economic growth and prosperity across America.

[1. Summary report available here.](#)

[2. YouTube videos of sessions available here.](#)

Also, the Council is launching a social campaign featuring the excellent sessions. Please reshare the posts as you see them.

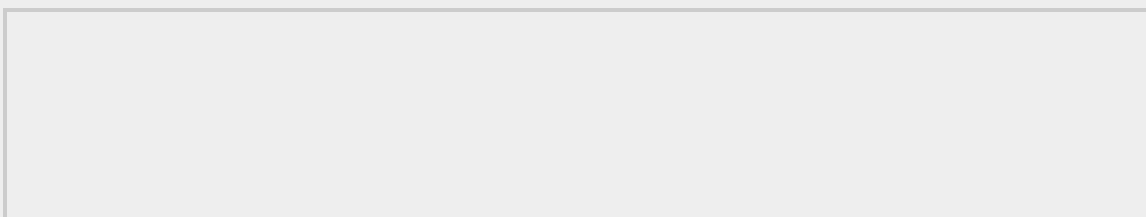
Deborah Wince-Smith co-led the closing session of the STS forum's 2024 European Workshop in London. The Workshop, hosted at the Royal Society, focused on the future of the global bioeconomy — and the “lights and shadows” of innovations across agriculture, food production, and healthcare. Wince-Smith focused her remarks on the massive, global productivity advances that could come from innovations driving healthier lives across a longer period of time. Participants also reviewed and co-developed agenda items for the upcoming, October 2024 STS forum in Kyoto, Japan.



### Council CEO and EVP Lead Two Conversations at the 9<sup>th</sup> Delphi Economic Forum

Council President and CEO Deborah Wince-Smith and Executive Vice President Chad Evans participated in and led two conversations during the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Delphi Economic Forum, April 11-13, 2024 – engaging a range of leaders from the Council, the Global Federation of Competitiveness Conversations, and across the public and private sectors of Europe.

Wince-Smith engaged a distinguished leadership group of European public and private sector leaders in a provocative discussion focused on “Competing in the Next Economy: A Comparative Look at Innovation and Competitiveness Initiatives across Europe.” The wide-ranging conversation focused on a range of political, regulatory, economic, and social barriers to innovation across Europe – and identified a range of opportunities to advance innovation-based growth across the Continent.





**Left to right:** Deborah Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness; Lulzim Basha, Chairman of the Democratic Party of Albania; Kalin Peshov, Chairman of Glavbolgarstroy International, a Bulgarian headquartered construction firm, and a GFCC Member; Athina Chatzipetrou, Non-Executive Director of the Board of the Ellaktor Group, the largest infrastructure group in Greece, and a GFCC Fellow; Simos Anastasopoulos, President of the Council on Competitiveness of Greece, a GFCC Member, and Chairman and CEO of Petsiavas SA

Evans and his fellow panelists focused their wide-ranging conversation on “Building the Research, Technology, and Innovation Infrastructure for the Future.” The conversation spanned unearthing the underpinnings of a new approach to place-making innovation, as well as building a pathway to AI-enhanced productivity growth engaging more citizens in the innovation economy.



**Left to right:** Kyriacos Sabatakakis, the Country Managing Director of Accenture in Greece; Chad Evans, Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness; Georgios Nounesis, Director and Chairman of the Board of Greece’s National Centre for Scientific Research or “Demokritos;” Nikos Efthymiadis, Chairman and CEO at



**Left to right:** Josh Parker, Chair and CEO of Ancora L&G, a Member of the Council, and a Council National Commissioner on Innovation & Competitiveness Frontiers; Chad Evans, Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness; Nikos Efthymiadis, Chairman and CEO at Thess INTEC – the Thessaloniki

Thess INTEC – the Thessaloniki Innovation & Technology Center; Josh Parker, Chair and CEO of Ancora L&G, a Member of the Council, and a Council National Commissioner on Innovation & Competitiveness Frontiers

Innovation & Technology Center

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## Council Community News

### **Dr. Rick Muller to be IARPA Director**

Dr. Muller will oversee Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity, the high-risk, high-payoff research programs to address the intelligence community's most challenging intelligence gaps and provide our nation with an overwhelming intelligence advantage. The [release can be found here](#).

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### **National Commissioner And Lab Partner John Wagner, Director, Idaho National Lab, Testified to the House Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security**

The hearing, "American Nuclear Energy Expansion: Spent Fuel Policy and Innovation" included Lake Barrett, former principal deputy director for the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management under the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Daniel Stetson, chair of the SONGS Community Engagement Panel, and Greg White, executive director for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. Director Wagner and other experts discussed opportunities to enhance long-term spent fuel policy and explored innovative approaches to cement American leadership in nuclear energy. [Read Director Wagner's testimony here](#).

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### **To Revitalize America's Semiconductor Leadership, the Biden-Harris Administration Teamed with Micron to Boost Domestic Chip Production in Boise**

The Biden-Harris Administration preliminarily agrees to provide Micron Technology \$6.14 billion to boost U.S. DRAM chip production, and Micron plans to invest \$25 billion in a DRAM fab in Idaho, which will be co-located with Micron's R&D facilities in Boise, Idaho, and create approximately 6,500 facility and construction jobs. The initiative aims to strengthen U.S. semiconductor competitiveness and national security. The Council community will learn more during its upcoming edition of "Competitiveness Conversations Across America," which will take place at Boise State in partnership with the Idaho National Laboratory. [Read more here](#).

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### **Venado Installation Opens the Door for AI Applications at Los Alamos National Laboratory**

Los Alamos National Laboratory, Hewlett Packard, and NVIDIA have debuted Venado, the Lab's latest supercomputer. Powered by NVIDIA Grace Hopper Superchips, Venado advances national security and basic research with integrated



AI. It is the first large-scale U.S. system with NVIDIA Grace Hopper Superchips (2,560 in all). “Venado adds to our cutting-edge supercomputing that advances national security and basic research, and it will accelerate how we integrate artificial intelligence into meeting those challenges,” said Thom Mason, director of Los Alamos National Laboratory and Co-Chair of the National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers. [Read more here.](#)

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### **Darryll Pines, National Commissioner and President of the University of Maryland, Recognized as an Esteemed Alumnus of U.C. Berkeley**

President Pines received the Distinguished Alumnus Award for the UC Berkeley California Alumni Club of Washington, DC.

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### **Council Academic Vice Chair and University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Joan Gabel Inducted to American Academy of Arts and Sciences**

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences recently announced its newest members, with Chancellor Gabel and four distinguished colleagues from the University of Pittsburgh among the honorees. The academy, renowned for its excellence and leadership across various disciplines, boasts a membership that includes over 250 Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, and has previously honored luminaries such as Benjamin Franklin and Martin Luther King Jr. The academy will induct Chancellor Gabel and other awardees during ceremonies in September in Cambridge, Massachusetts. [Read more here.](#)

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### **CEO of Deloitte Consulting: Workers Are Not as Scared of AI as You Might Think**

Deloitte's 2024 Global Human Capital Trends Report suggests that workers are not as scared of AI as you might think, estimating that just 28 percent of workers worry about AI threatening their jobs and a whopping 70 percent are open to offloading work to AI. Deloitte Chair and CEO and Council Business Vice Chair Dan Helfrich spoke with *Fast Company* Staff Editor AJ Hess about the findings and worker sentiment around AI, worker surveillance, and how we can all adapt in the age of AI. [Read the story here.](#)

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### **Pentagon's Defense Innovation Unit Receives \$945M Boost Amid Urgent Call for Tech Integration**

Congress passed a \$825 billion defense bill, significantly boosting the Pentagon's Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) budget to \$945 million for 2024. DIU bridges Pentagon and commercial tech, focusing on rapid integration of cutting-edge technologies like AI and space systems. The increase reflects Congress's urgency for faster tech adoption. Most funding supports transitioning successful prototypes into operational use. DIU's expanded role and influence, marked by direct reporting to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, signal a push for swift tech implementation to maintain America's competitive edge. [Read more here.](#)

## Council Insights

### Responding to the AI-led Surge in Power Demand

*Presented in Partnership with Keybridge Research*

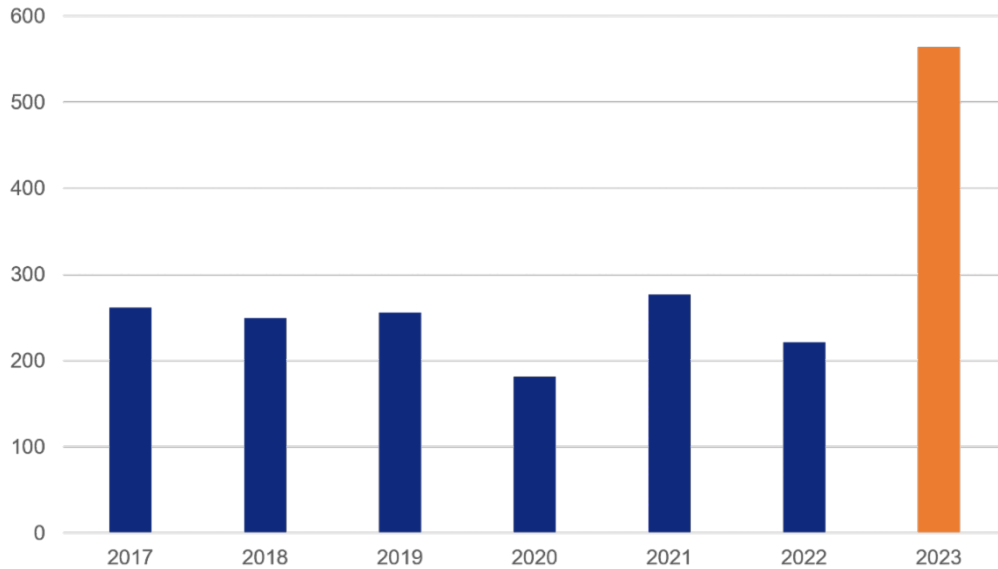
U.S. power demand is surging for the first time in more than 20 years. Many observers point the finger at the artificial intelligence (AI) boom, which has spawned hundreds of data centers across the country. According to an analysis by the Boston Consulting Group, electricity demand at U.S. data centers could triple by 2030. In addition, transformations associated with the clean energy transition—clean energy manufacturing, electric vehicle adoption, and widespread electrification—are coalescing to massively increase power demand over the next decade. In 2023, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation more than doubled its decade-long demand projection from the previous year.

While economic transformations that drive up power demand are certainly not new, the current trend is different in several important ways. First, the increase in power demand is regionally concentrated. Second, data centers' need for 24/7 service places a new kind of strain on utilities and regulators. In Georgia, which has a large concentration of data centers and new factories, projections for the next decade were revised to 17x the previous estimate. Projections for surging demand have led many utilities to delay the closure of coal-fired power plants and announce plans for new gas-fired plants, which could add emissions to our energy mix for decades.

Meeting surging power demand without compromising on climate goals will require rapid advances in energy efficiency alongside novel solutions like emerging grid-enhancing technologies. While some experts are confident that the right solutions can prevent power shortages, there is an urgent need for widescale grid improvements and permitting reform to enable faster siting, development, and construction of renewable energy production and expanded grid infrastructure.

# Projections for New Energy Demand in North America Doubles

9-year growth forecast for demand for new electricity (1,000 GW hours)



Source: North American Electric Reliability Corporation Long Term Reliability Assessment, 2017-2023.



## International

**Save the Date**  
**Global Innovation Summit 2024**  
November 11-15  
Belfast

**GIS 2024**

CO-HOSTS

- GFCC Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils
- QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
- Centre For Competitiveness

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