Despite the predictions for bad weather, more than 20 people attended the launch event of the Mid-Tennessee chapter at the Omni Hotel in Nashville. ACAMS members from many parts of the state were in attendance, along with representatives from both the private and public sector organizations.

The formal program for the evening kicked off at 6.30, with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres available from 6.00. Jeannie Guillory, Chapter Co-chair, opened the formal program, welcoming our guests and launching the new Chapter. Our Chapter Mission statement was introduced, along with the Board members. She also recognized the work of Sam Adams from Colorado Federal Savings Bank, who has been one of the drivers in getting the new Chapter off the ground, who could not be there for the event. Although John Byrne was unable to attend our launch, he did take time to record a podcast for the Chapter, which was played for all.

The first key note speaker was Christopher Pikelis. A former IRS investigator, Chris currently works for UBS in Nashville. He spoke about the importance of the Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) and their role in the various investigations he had conducted for the IRS. He emphasized the importance of “telling the story”, when writing the SAR details. Having the full story was critical to many of the cases with which he dealt.

The second key note speaker was Carolyn Vick, Chapter Co-Chair. With more than 30 years of international banking experience, she spoke about the potential impact of the FATF Mutual Evaluation of the US completed in 2016 on companies involved in real estate transactions. The level of AML/CFT regulatory oversight of real estate companies, trust companies and law firms was
explicitly mentioned by the FATF in their findings as being insufficient. Her presentation can be found on the ACAMS website at http://www.acams.org/acams-chapters/mid-tennessee/.

Carolyn also concluded the formal part of the program, thanking all for their interest and attendance, and inviting them to stay for a closing cocktail and networking session.