

# PUBLIC LIFE

August 2004 – Volume 1, Issue 3  
Owensboro, Kentucky

# Advocate

## OUR WHEEL OF PROGRESS

Balancing the spokes in  
economic development



The strategies that we set in motion toward a stronger employment base in Owensboro-Daviess County serve as spokes in our wheel of progress. Are we well-prepared for the road ahead? The *Advocate* examines the issue that tops all others in surveys and political campaigns: the need for better paying jobs. It's time to get past the political rhetoric and engage in substantive dialogue on this key community challenge.

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# PUBLIC LIFE *Advocate*

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## ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Public Life Foundation of Owensboro will convene periodically citizens from all walks of life to identify public concerns and examine the impact of the *Public Life Advocate*. We welcome the participation of all on this Advisory Council. If you are interested in serving, please contact us.

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

# Reaching Out to Involve All

by Rodney Berry

Working through the chaos of the crowd, the shy little girl approached us at the registration table. She wanted to know where you go if your name is called. We pointed her toward an official.

"All right! Congratulations!" we said, assuming she won a door prize.

"No, no... I, uh...I just wanted to know where to go *in case* they call my name."

This promise of a prize reflected the girl's guarded optimism that this may be her day, perhaps her year. And it captured the contagious excitement that typifies the start of every school year and this year's annual Rotary Readifest, held July 27th at the Executive Inn Convention Center.

Readifest gets kids ready for school. Eight buck immunizations, dental and vision checks, and sports physicals are available. As are haircuts, free haircuts. School displays promote clubs, sports, academic teams, and services of family resource centers. It's trick or treat with an academic twist: free notebook paper; pencils; bookmarks. Readifest features complimentary popcorn and soft drinks, suckers and apples while they last, and mascots that work the crowd flashing signs urging kids to stay in school.

Readifest welcomes all students and families, but the event appears to attract primarily disadvantaged students, many of whom are from single-parent households. Consequently, Readifest also attracts a good number of service agencies: Head Start; health department; literacy/GED programs; employment agencies; agencies that serve migrant workers; the local transit system.

Affluent families generally keep their distance from Readifest. They have no interest in the latest bus route schedule. Their kids get their immunizations at their pediatrician's office and their haircuts at the mall. It's not worth the hassle to pick up a few free school supplies.

Readifest (and going back to school) may be so popular with some students because – at least before adolescent peer pressure takes hold – school is such a

safe haven. When they step off the bus, students are greeted with smiles. Schools serve nutritious food and occasional snacks. Schools display colorful art along the halls and students sing songs during assemblies. Classes go on field trips. Little ones love story time in the library. They are nurtured, they laugh, they make new friends, they benefit from structure, and they get a reprieve from tensions at home.

In some homes in our community, there is no role model who goes to work every day. In many others, when there is a full-time worker in the home, their wages are below the poverty level. One-fourth of the jobs in Kentucky are in

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**Nearly nine out of 10  
individuals in families  
with incomes over  
\$75,000 vote in  
presidential elections  
compared to only half  
of those from families  
with incomes under  
\$15,000.**

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low-wage occupations. Many middle-class families are just barely staying afloat with two parents working. Increasingly, health insurance is not offered. Neither are retirement plans. These families don't have savings accounts; they get by from paycheck to paycheck.

In many of these homes, children have no books and are not read to before they go to bed. Parents cannot afford summer vacations. Many families move frequently, transferring students from one school to another, disrupting friend-

## Kentucky Occupations with Median Wages Below Poverty Level in 2001

| Occupation   | Total Employed | Median Hourly Wage | Median Annual Wage |
|--|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bartenders   | 4820           | 6.39               | 13,280             |
| Waiters and Waitresses   | 20180          | 6.41               | 13,330             |
| Baggage Porters and Bellhops   | 270            | 6.43               | 13,370             |
| Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food     | 36630          | 6.51               | 13,550             |
| Amusement and Recreation Attendants                                    | 1640           | 6.55               | 13,620             |
| Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession and Coffee Shop         | 5070           | 6.59               | 13,700             |
| Cooks, Short Order   | 2360           | 6.61               | 13,740             |
| Cashiers   | 1380           | 6.65               | 13,820             |
| Motion Picture Projectionists  | 15370          | 6.71               | 13,950             |
| Counter and Rental Clerks  | 50340          | 6.79               | 14,120             |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations                       | 70             | 6.85               | 14,240             |
| Service Station Attendants   | 5640           | 6.88               | 14,310             |
| Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers             | 140100         | 6.88               | 14,310             |
| Parking Lot Attendants   | 500            | 7.03               | 14,630             |
| Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop               | 3530           | 7.10               | 14,770             |
| Shampooers   | 40             | 7.13               | 14,830             |
| Child Care Workers   | 8110           | 7.20               | 14,970             |
| Food Servers, Non-restaurant   | 2050           | 7.21               | 14,990             |
| Crossing Guards  | 160            | 7.22               | 15,010             |
| Non-farm Animal Caretakers   | 1110           | 7.23               | 15,030             |
| Dishwashers  | 5240           | 7.30               | 15,180             |
| Library Assistants, Clerical   | 1430           | 7.31               | 15,200             |
| Personal and Home Care Aides   | 2030           | 7.32               | 15,220             |
| Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers                                       | 2990           | 7.35               | 15,290             |
| Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners  | 11390          | 7.39               | 15,380             |
| Funeral Attendants   | 420            | 7.42               | 15,430             |
| Animal Control Workers   | 120            | 7.55               | 15,700             |
| Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks                                   | 2380           | 7.56               | 15,720             |
| Locker Room, Coatroom, and Dressing Room Attendants                    | 30             | 7.63               | 15,870             |
| Food Preparation Workers   | 10140          | 7.67               | 15,950             |
| Announcers   | 980            | 7.72               | 16,060             |
| Retail Salespersons  | 52870          | 7.74               | 16,110             |
| Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials                      | 1630           | 7.75               | 16,120             |
| Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment                                     | 4290           | 7.79               | 16,200             |
| Shoe and Leather Workers and Repairers                                 | 100            | 7.81               | 16,240             |
| Fashion Designers  | *              | 7.81               | 16,250             |
| Tour Guides and Escorts  | 290            | 7.81               | 16,250             |
| Concierges   | 110            | 7.85               | 16,330             |
| Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs  | 1600           | 7.89               | 16,400             |
| Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria                                       | 11020          | 7.91               | 16,440             |
| Photographic Processing Machine Operators                              | 550            | 7.94               | 16,510             |
| Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products                             | 410            | 7.94               | 16,520             |
| Sewers, Hand   | 250            | 7.94               | 16,520             |
| Floral Designers   | 1070           | 8.00               | 16,630             |
| Security Guards  | 12730          | 8.00               | 16,650             |
| Home Health Aides  | 4990           | 8.03               | 16,700             |
| Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders                | *              | 8.04               | 16,720             |
| Telemarketers  | 4000           | 8.07               | 16,780             |
| Textile Bleaching and Dyeing Machine Operators and Tenders             | 350            | 8.08               | 16,810             |
| Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners          | 25800          | 8.11               | 16,880             |
| Pharmacy Aides   | 1060           | 8.15               | 16,950             |
| Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education                           | 6400           | 8.16               | 16,970             |
| Packers and Packagers, Hand  | 14730          | 8.16               | 17,020             |
| Photographic Process Workers   | 300            | 8.22               | 17,090             |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations              | 52490          | 8.22               | 17,100             |
| Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse                | 520            | 8.33               | 17,330             |
| Personal Care and Service Occupations                                  | 33050          | 8.39               | 17,440             |
| Sales and Related Occupations  | 173550         | 8.39               | 17,440             |
| Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, Except Emergency Medical Technicians | *              | 8.39               | 17,460             |
| Farmworkers, Farm and Ranch Animals                                    | 2740           | 8.45               | 17,570             |
| Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers                 | 600            | 8.45               | 17,570             |
| Teacher Assistants   | 17390          | *                  | 17,680             |
| Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers                                | 300            | 8.54               | 17,750             |
| Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers                           | 2720           | 8.55               | 17,780             |
| Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants                                | 21190          | 8.56               | 17,810             |
| Dancers  | *              | 8.58               | 17,840             |
| File Clerks  | 2750           | 8.58               | 17,850             |
| Cooling and Freezing Equipment Operators and Tenders                   | 60             | 8.59               | 17,870             |
| Travel Guides  | 30             | 8.62               | 17,920             |
| Cooks, Restaurant  | 8270           | 8.63               | 17,960             |
| Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers                                 | 8730           | 8.68               | 18,050             |
| Physical Therapist Aides   | 620            | 8.70               | 18,100             |

ship and learning patterns.

This disparity of income, this disparity in life experiences, alienates the poor from the mainstream of community affairs. The poor don't participate in public life as do the privileged. They are not organized by members or represented by lobbyists. Policymakers don't hear them because the poor speak with a whisper.

They also tend not to vote. Nearly nine out of 10 individuals in families with incomes over \$75,000 vote in presidential elections compared to only half of those from families with incomes under \$15,000. The poor are much less likely to affiliate with organizations that take political positions, make contact with public officials, or participate in efforts to solve community problems. The poor are even much less likely to protest.

Not surprisingly, political parties and campaigns focus their resources on citizens who are affluent and already active politically.

As we approach another important political campaign season (culminating in the election of officials ranging from the president of the United States to the mayor of Owensboro, Kentucky), let us take steps as a community to connect with citizens from all walks of life, hear their voices, value their perspectives, and welcome them fully into our democratic process.

Let us focus on issues of economic disparity, take forums and debates into low-income neighborhoods, and target aggressive voter registration and "get out the vote" campaigns to low turnout areas. In so doing, we will foster good will, mutual respect, and a stronger sense of community. ■

*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Statistics. In 2001 a family of four required \$16,104/year or \$8.70/hour (full-time, year-round) to stay out of poverty.*

## Contributors



### Tom Gaston

"Perhaps the only thing harder than finding one's way out of addiction and rebuilding a shattered life is trying to live a normal life in close association with an addicted or alcoholic family member," reports Tom

Gaston, following his second *Advocate* story on substance abuse. "I gained an enormous respect for all those who struggle with this pernicious disease."

"The addicts, their family members, and the cadre of workers – volunteers as well as professionals – who expend untold hours helping them all manifest a quiet day-to-day heroism that is no less awe-inspiring because it goes unnoticed."

A former university educator, Tom retired eight years ago to be near family in Owensboro. A regular contributor to the *Advocate*, he is the author of three books and numerous published articles.



### Rodney Berry

"Citizens appear to be increasingly wary of candidates for local office who – in every campaign cycle – stress the need to bring good jobs to our community without offering substantive strategies. In this

article, I tried to get to the heart of the matter: What, if anything, should be done that is not being done? Do we need to step up economic development efforts? Do we need to shift some priorities? And if so, who decides? Who leads? Who makes it happen?"

"The article includes some strategic questions in an effort to stimulate community dialogue. Perhaps the article can be adapted for some candidate forums or roundtable discussions."

Berry is president of the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro.

## Editorial Board

### Rodney B. Berry

Rodney is president of the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro. He joined the foundation in 2000 following twelve years with RiverPark (performing arts) Center. His volunteer and civic experience includes work in education, health care, youth, social services, tourism, and community development. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University.

### Dave Boeyink

Dave is Associate Professor of Journalism and Director of Media Studies, Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions, Indiana University. He holds a B.A. degree from Central College and an M.T.S. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. From 1978-87, he was Editorial Page Editor for the *Messenger-Inquirer*. He has published articles in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *Newspaper Journal*, and *Journalism Quarterly*.

### John S. Hager

John established the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro in 1996 following the sale of the Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer* to the Belo Corporation (Dallas, TX). A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Michigan College of Law, he was a practicing attorney for 19 years prior to returning to the family newspaper in 1973. He has been involved in numerous civic initiatives, including a lead role in the establishment of the Owensboro Community College. In 1996, the Kentucky Press Association honored him with its "most valuable member" award. He was named to the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame in 2002.

### Ed Staats

Ed served The Associated Press for 41 years, as a reporter, editor and administrator in 10 AP offices, including the AP's headquarters in New York. He retired in mid-2002 ending a career that bridged the print, broadcast, cable, and online news businesses. At his retirement, he was in charge of AP's Kentucky operations, a position he had held since the mid-1980's. He is a member of the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame.

### Fran Ellers

Fran works as a writer, editor, and communications consultant. She is a former reporter with the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and was a frequent panelist on Kentucky Educational Television's "Comment on Kentucky." Her clients include the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, University of Kentucky Center for Rural Health, and the Kentucky League of Cities.

## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

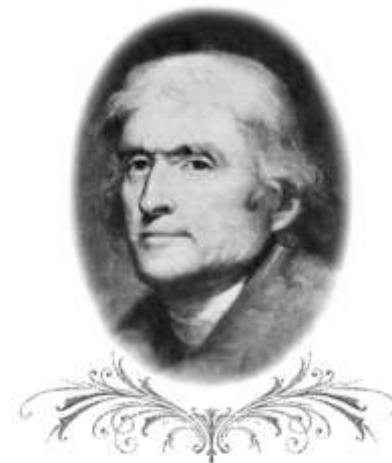
The *Public Life Advocate*, published monthly, is committed to be a trusted resource of information and analysis of public concerns and community issues. The *Advocate* is a community-driven publication, grounded in a commitment to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, Inc. is a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c) operating foundation (not a grant-making entity) founded in 1996 by John and Marjorie Hager. Mr. Hager is the former owner, editor, and publisher of the Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer*.

The foundation fosters broad, meaningful citizen participation in community decisions and public policy. We believe that open, accessible, and trustful institutions are essential to an enlightened and engaged citizenry and the democratic process.

Foundation activities are driven by the importance that people attach to issues. We are committed to the people's agenda. To assist citizens in solving problems and seizing opportunities, we facilitate a process of *information > deliberation > action*.



*"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education."*

*Thomas Jefferson*

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# OUR WHEEL OF PROGRESS

Balancing the spokes in  
economic development

by Rodney Berry

*The strategies that we set in motion toward a stronger employment base in Owensboro-Daviess County serve as spokes in our wheel of progress. Are we well-prepared for the road ahead?*

*The Advocate examines the issue that tops all others in surveys and political campaigns: the need for better paying jobs. It's time to get past the political rhetoric and engage in substantive dialogue on this key community challenge.*

**N**o community challenge looms larger than the recurring need for jobs that pay well. In surveys, focus groups, and forums, in leadership retreats and political campaigns, the creation, attraction, and retention of good jobs emerges consistently as our top community priority.

The strategies that we set in motion toward a stronger employment base in Owensboro-Daviess County serve as spokes in our wheel of progress. We ride this wheel through an array of prospects, infrastructure and workforce requirements, amid intense competition from other communities.

Are we well-prepared for the road ahead, or do we need new spokes to add strength, speed, or balance to our economic development machine?

### **We Cannot Sit Still**

**Are we a great place to do business or a low-wage town?** In Economy.com's recently published annual survey, Owensboro was listed as the cheapest place for doing business among cities in 15 Southern and Midwestern states. Is the low-cost of doing business here a reflection of competitive suppliers, low-priced land, taxes, and utility rates – or is it more connected to our labor costs? Is this ranking something to be proud of and promote, or does it reflect disturbing trends toward lower-skilled jobs and reduced take-home pay?

**Families have less to spend.** Adjusted for inflation, the effective buying income for

Owensboro families is \$14,000 less than 26 years ago, in 1977. Adjusted for inflation, today's minimum wage is \$1.42 cents per hour less than in 1978. In 2000, our average weekly wage was \$110 less than the national average.

**Employment is down.** Daviess County employment peaked at more than 48,000 in 1999. Five years later, in 2004, our number of employed workers is 46,900. Last year, our total county workforce dropped by 1,500 jobs; this is not likely to impress businesses looking to expand or relocate.

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**Last year, our total county workforce dropped by 1,500 jobs; this is not likely to impress businesses looking to expand or relocate.**

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**Many are working, but still struggling.** Nearly 5,000 Daviess Countians live in or near the poverty level despite living in homes headed by a full-time worker. Many

more live close to the edge; having a job doesn't mean they can pay their bills. The rapid growth of cash-advance businesses (more than a dozen are listed in the telephone directory, many others promote through the media and on the Internet) reflects the large number of workers who live from paycheck to paycheck.

### **There Are Encouraging Signs**

**Retail profits are up.** Despite these troubling conditions and trends, other reports rank Owensboro-Daviess County high in terms of disposable income. While retail sales are down from a peak of \$1.15 billion in 1999, net retail profits are up by nearly 50 million from 2002 to 2003.

**Homebuilders keep building.** New home sales in 2003 increased 17 percent, and during the first six months of 2004, single- and multi-family housing construction was relatively steady, totaling more than \$23 million. Most of this construction targets upscale buyers, while redevelopment programs focus on older neighborhoods.

**Unemployment is down.** Unemployment estimates are down from 3,000 in 2002 to 2,500 last year. There may be fewer total jobs available, but if people have given up looking for work, they would not be counted in the unemployment tally.

**Banks and developers seem bullish on Owensboro.** More than a dozen banking establishments have a local presence and others are expected to enter our market. Commercial ventures continue to sprout along major corridors and fringe areas, following the residential developments and spurring school construction.

**AirPark steadily adds tenants.** In nine years, eight tenants have built facilities on 207 acres of the 395-acre Mid-America Airpark industrial park contiguous to the Owensboro-Daviess County Airport. Toyotetsu Mid-America, now with more than 450 employees, is the most recent new plant to the complex and our community. A five-year tax abatement program, training and infrastructure assistance, and low utility rates facilitate AirPark development.

### **Are We Well-Positioned to Attract Jobs?**

**Appealing properties may help.** Nearly 190 acres can still be developed at the AirPark, but the site lacks rail access. The Green River Steel property east of the city, 98 acres recently purchased by the Riverport



**Less spending money.** Adjusted for inflation, the effective buying income for Owensboro families is \$14,000 dollars less than 1977.

Authority, has both rail and river access (and convenient access to I-64 via a widened US Highway 231 in 2007), but there are also environmental problems which could complicate development. The 147-acre Pleasant Valley Industrial Center (Ellis property), with rail access near the proposed east county corridor, is another marketable property.

**Can we compete for large plants?** Despite these assets, some claim that our economic development infrastructure is inadequate. A major industry that could transform our area economy – comparable to a Georgetown Toyota plant – would need many hundreds more acres, comprehensive infrastructure, and better access for workers and shipments than is available at the Mid-America AirPark and the other local industrial properties.

**Deficiencies may be inevitable.** Pragmatists urge us to acknowledge our inherent shortcomings and focus on achievable goals, small-scale investment, and business expansion. They conclude that large scale development hinges on close proximity to an interstate highway, the presence of a major university, and ample air service – assets and resources many have concluded are beyond our reach.

**Airport could be a niche opportunity.** Airport boosters are quick to point out that a planned runway extension and other improvements may get the attention of air cargo and maintenance hubs. Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce President Eric Davis says, “If we build it, they won’t necessarily come. But if we don’t build it, there is no way they will come.” Some airport users challenge the expansion plans. They conclude that the costs cannot be justified and are concerned about disruptions in service during construction.

### How Do We Move Forward?

**Are our existing efforts balanced?** Do we place too much emphasis on business recruitment over expansion? In the past five years, only one new major primary employer (Toyotetsu) located in Owensboro-Daviess County while dozens of local businesses (e.g., Texas Gas, Southern Star, US Bank Mortgage, Field Packing, etc.) expanded and created jobs. Attracting new business and industry is important, but it may be important to devote ample resources and professional attention to assist existing business expansions.

**Technology could give us an edge.** Are we well-positioned for the information-knowl-



**Airport opportunities.** Airport boosters project that a planned runway extension and other improvements will get the attention of air cargo and maintenance hubs.

edge economy? For states and communities that invest in technology, science, and workforce development, opportunities should be abundant. Studies indicate that by 2010, there will be 10 million more jobs than qualified people to fill those jobs.

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Kentucky is falling behind. A recent Milken Institute study ranked Kentucky 48th of 50 states in the likelihood to make economic progress in coming years. “It screams that we’ve got to do more (to attract high-tech jobs to Kentucky),” says Chamber executive Davis.

**Technology Center will be the centerpiece.** Many believe that the linchpin to economic development is the proposed \$24 million Advanced Technology Center at Owensboro Community and Technical

College. The Center is designed to not only prepare workers for high-tech careers, but to help existing and start-up businesses apply new technologies. Overcoming political hurdles to secure state government construction funding is the immediate goal, but the degree to which the center is embraced by area business and industry will also be a critical measure of success.

### Selecting Strategies, Assigning Resources

Beyond the Advanced Technology Center, what must be done? How much energy and resources should be directed toward the economic development options available to us? Which spokes will strengthen our wheel of progress? How do we create, retain, and attract the best jobs for our community?

The following options warrant consideration and raise a number of strategic questions for community dialogue. We welcome your impressions, ideas, and rankings.

### ALLOCATE MORE RESOURCES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Competitor cities (such as Paducah, which recently raised \$4 million for economic development) have significantly more funds to promote their community and attract business than does Owensboro-Daviess County. Our local Economic Development Corporation operates on a \$358,000 annual budget: approximately 70 percent public money, 30 percent private. Five other economic development organizations across Kentucky have larger budgets than Owensboro. Moreover, we compete with



# Our Wheel of Progress

communities regionally, even nationally, that have well-financed economic development machines.

More funds for economic development would allow for more research, more staff to call on prospects or customize proposals. It would mean more travel to corporate headquarters; more impressive presentations; more resources for infrastructure, training, or other incentives.

Some people see this as critical, saying Owensboro cannot afford to ignore funding disparities with competitive communities. Others argue that our community has adequate funds for these purposes and that salesmanship, networking, and target marketing relates more to skill and tenacity than big budgets.

## STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- Do we have ample resources for economic development?
- Should business and industry contribute more toward this purpose (through higher Chamber of Commerce dues, for example)?
- Should a local tax be designated for this purpose?

## RE-EXAMINE INCENTIVES AND REGULATIONS

Incentive packages for new or existing business vary from project to project. Some involve a postponement of taxes for a period of years. Others support workforce training or infrastructure. "Spec" buildings are used in many places to entice businesses that need space quickly.

Payback varies, and governments assume risk when offering incentives. Depending on how aggressive they are in economic development, communities and states establish different standards to determine which businesses are eligible for incentives. To some, incentives are seen as unnecessary subsidies that give unfair advantages over businesses that do not qualify. Others feel that incentives are justified to primary employers (jobs that bring new money into the community as opposed to redistributing dollars that are already in our economy). Some would limit incentives to businesses which pay their employees well or offer solid growth potential. To raise the bar on pay scales, more than 80 communities nationally have adopted living wage ordinances.

## STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- How far should we go in offering incentives to attract good jobs?



**Training the workforce.** Communities with better educated workforces attract higher paying jobs.

- Should governments only offer incentives when a financially responsible return on investment can be reasonably expected?
- Are "spec" industrial buildings prudent community investments?
- Should we build a "spec" office building to attract white collar firms?
- Should incentives only be offered to companies that pay substantially more than the minimum wage, or should we support all companies so they can be profitable and grow and ultimately offer greater compensation to their employees?
- Should we adopt a living wage ordinance?

## FOCUS ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Cities that attract investment and offer the best employment opportunities share a common characteristic: they have a highly educated workforce. The more college graduates a community can claim, the better the jobs, the higher the pay. Owensboro-Daviess County leaders have demonstrated an understanding of this correlation. They can point to several model workforce development programs: Kentucky Employment

Certificate Program, Skills Inc., Career Center, Discover College, etc. With the merger of community college and technical school programs, two-year associate degrees are accessible to most students and relevant to the needs of business and industry. (State budget cuts and the resulting tuition increases will make it more difficult for many students to enroll, however.)

At the same time, there are clear deficiencies in our rates of illiteracy (38 percent), adults with college degrees (17 percent), and high school graduation rate (75 percent).

Moreover, we are faced with challenges to train our increasing Latino population, and many retired workers may need to be retrained for second careers to meet the changing needs of employers.

## STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- Should our community norm be the completion of the 13th and 14th year of education? Can we provide this for all local students as part of our public education system?
- Should our school systems expand alternative programs to reduce the dropout rate?
- Is there more that families,

neighborhoods, businesses, civic and service clubs, churches, and others can do to promote education and lifelong learning? Can Owensboro-Daviess County gain further distinction by becoming the “Learning Community?”

- Should our local colleges and universities work together more closely and develop a “community” strategic plan for higher education?

## MAXIMIZE NICHE OPPORTUNITIES

The diversity of our local economy is a good thing. We are no longer a community whose employment base is anchored in one company, as we were in the 1960’s when General Electric employed 7,000 workers.

Other communities and regions experience boom or bust cycles depending on certain industrial phases: coal employment is down in Muhlenberg County; recreational vehicle assembly plants are thriving in Elkhart, Ind.

Nevertheless, we should maximize niche opportunities when uniquely suited to do so. Our tobacco heritage and production capabilities caught the attention of Biosource (now Large Scale Biology). Lincoln Mortgage (now US Bank Mortgage) developed and expanded a back office processing center. Can we build upon these successes and attract more companies like them?

Owensboro-Daviess County is central to automotive manufacturing plants in Princeton, Ind.; Georgetown, Ky.; Bowling Green, Ky.; and Smyrna, Tenn. Such proximity was no doubt important when Owensboro landed suppliers such as DANA and Toyotetsu.

Our community may not ever attract a medical school, but Owensboro Medical Health System is a large hospital with significant resources. Spin-off niche opportunities could include medical research connected with the new cancer center, specialty centers, or an expanded regional presence into underserved counties.

With the completion of a four-lane connection to I-64 in 2007 and I-69 at some point 25 miles to our west, our central location may attract the attention of companies looking for wholesale distribution facilities to regional markets.

### STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- Should economic developers apply additional resources toward recruiting niche businesses and industries?
- Will we attract the seed funds necessary to maximize the potential of the local biotechnology industry?

- Should special incentives be developed to attract businesses and industries in these target areas?

## ENHANCE OUR “PEOPLE CLIMATE”

In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, researcher-author Richard Florida examines growth trends, livability, and the emerging “knowledge economy.” He postulates that communities that hope to attract and develop knowledge economy jobs should focus on the “people climate” over the traditional “business climate.” Florida concludes that the amenities and contemporary livability of cities is the key factor in where knowledge workers choose to live.

Highly educated workers tend to gravitate to trendy metropolitan communities to look for work and start businesses. Austin, Seattle, San Francisco, Washington, D.C. are among the cities that lead the pack in capturing this “creative class.” Owensboro does not rank well in Florida’s index, nor do many other small cities.

Florida urges community leaders to shift resources from tax incentives and massive infrastructure expenditures to lure industry toward the development of a distinctive local music scene, arts districts, parks and bike paths, bustling urban plazas and street life rich in diversity and spontaneity.

### STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- Owensboro is often referred to as a great place to raise a family. Is this fundamental attribute, reflected in good schools and safe neighborhoods, good enough to retain or attract quality businesses and jobs of the future?
- To gain distinction and improve contemporary livability in order to attract the highly educated knowledge worker of tomorrow, do we need to:
  - Develop our riverfront?
  - Create an arts and entertainment district?
  - Create a bluegrass music hub, with multiple clubs, record companies, recording studios, etc.?
  - Allow casino gambling?
  - Promote high design standards for architecture, public spaces, streetscapes, etc.?

## GROW OUR OWN

The proposed Advanced Technology Center at Owensboro Community and Technical College includes a business incubator component, but some communities are designating entire districts to assist promising entrepreneurs. Competitor cities provide courses,

mentoring and venture capital for entrepreneurs; they sponsor fairs and forums to connect “idea people” with banks and venture capitalists.

General Electric (formerly Kenrad), Texas Gas, Western Kentucky Gas (now Atmos Energy), Premium Allied Tool, Owensboro Grain, Wyndall’s Enterprises, Executive Inn Rivermont, Titan Fabricating, and Wax Works are among important companies that were developed locally. Are there hints of which new businesses will burst forth in the next generation?

### STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- Why would an entrepreneur launch a business in Owensboro? Do we provide ample support to promising new businesses? What more can be done to assist entrepreneurs?
- What more can be done to fund the Advanced Technology Center and ensure that a business incubator component is included in the facility?
- Should local banks and government establish a venture capital fund for promising entrepreneurs?
- Should the Chamber, government, and business groups develop occasions to connect “idea people” with prospective investors?

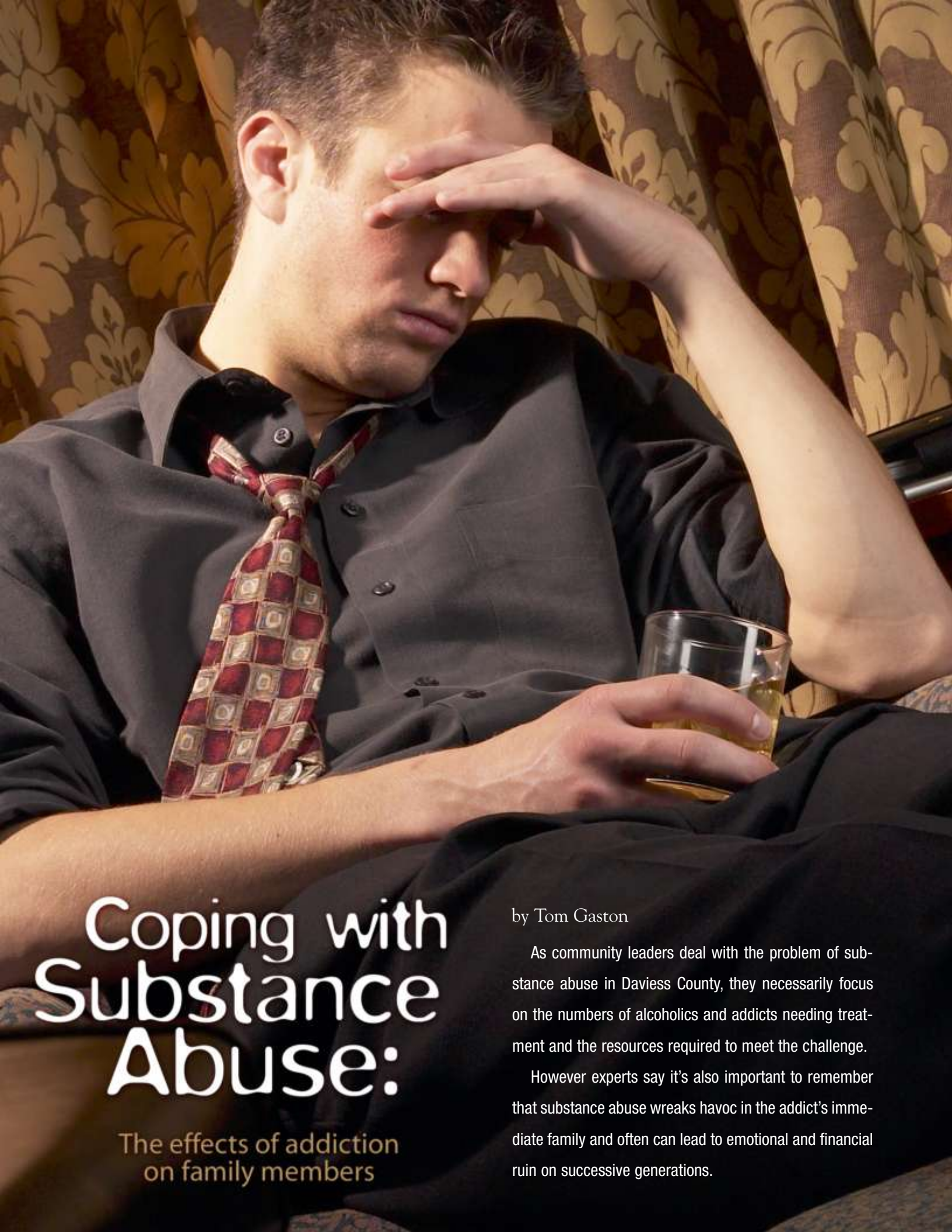
## What are your rankings?

Which strategic areas should be our highest priorities? Which warrant higher levels of funding and more staffing? How would you rank them? Are there other strategies you would add to this list?

- Allocate more resources for economic development
- Re-examine incentives and regulations
- Focus on workforce development
- Maximize niche opportunities
- Enhance our “people climate”
- Grow our own

What are the roles of the business community, labor, government, and the broader community in meeting this economic development challenge? When it comes down to it, what – if anything – do we need to do differently?

Are the spokes in our wheel of progress strong and balanced enough to create, attract, and retain the best possible jobs for the future of Owensboro-Daviess County? We challenge citizens to learn, to participate in the dialogue, to get involved. ■



# Coping with Substance Abuse:

The effects of addiction on family members

by Tom Gaston

As community leaders deal with the problem of substance abuse in Daviess County, they necessarily focus on the numbers of alcoholics and addicts needing treatment and the resources required to meet the challenge.

However experts say it's also important to remember that substance abuse wreaks havoc in the addict's immediate family and often can lead to emotional and financial ruin on successive generations.

## Secrecy and shame

Mary Lawrence, now a community development specialist with Audubon Area Community Services, recalls the pattern of family disintegration from her former work as a family advocate at the agency. As the addiction grows, she says, the addict denies to himself and others that he has a problem. He becomes secretive, deceitful and manipulative.

"Addiction impacts the whole family. The spouse or partner covers for the addict until something happens." For instance, addicts may "steal from family members and friends, borrow money they can't pay back, or their parenting suffers - something like that." Then the secret is out - and someone must address it.

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**Scores of Owensboro grandparents are now the sole caregivers of grandchildren whose parents -- addicts, alcoholics or both are incarcerated or wandering the streets.**

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This happens at all socio-economic levels. "It's just that those without much money feel the effects quicker," Lawrence says. "And often, somebody else -- an agency or some relative -- ends up raising the children."

Scores of Owensboro grandparents are now the sole caregivers of grandchildren whose parents -- addicts, alcoholics or both -- are incarcerated or wandering the streets.

Erika Cheatham, coordinator of youth and organizational services at Community Solutions for Substance Abuse, says that an estimated 39,000 Kentuckians (880 in Daviess County) are raising grandchildren, according to the 2000 census—up 11,000 from 1990.

## Codependency – the other disease

Another disorder often develops among the addict's loved ones: codependency, also called enabling. The enabler is most often a spouse, "significant other" or parent who helps the addict avoid the consequences of his actions.

The impulse is natural. Enablers do not want the family to be shamed. They need the addict to keep his job. They want to believe that his latest bad check or drunken driving citation really will be his last.

RonSonlyn Clark, director of substance abuse at River Valley Behavioral Health, views enablers through the lens of



**An easy trap to fall into:** Codependency, or enabling, can trap a spouse or other loved ones into an abusive relationship.

a therapist. "I will almost go so far as to say the enabler is the sickest person in the family," she said.

As the daughter and former wife of alcoholics, Rosemary Lawson, director of the Boulware Mission, remembers the verbal abuse that kept her trapped in codependency. "It's horrible. You lose sight of yourself as a human being. You can't recognize who you are."

"It's . . . brainwashing. That is part of the alcoholic's control over the codependent spouse, the ability to implant fear of the unknown. . . .If you leave me, there ain't nobody gonna take care of you. You and the kids are gonna starve in the street. Who in the world would have you?"

"It took me several years to climb out of that," Lawson said. "I enabled both (my mother and my husband), but I will never do that again."

## The enabler's plight

The addict often manipulates the enabler by pretending to try a comeback, said Rita Sanders (not her real name), an 80-year-old grandmother whose daughter, three grandsons and nephew are all

addicts.

A regular churchgoer since childhood, Rita said she never drank. Only one of her nine siblings was a heavy drinker, and he stopped years before his death.

But Rita's husband was an alcoholic, though he never missed work because of his drinking. "He just drank at night and weekends," she recalled. He died, at 60, from liver damage.

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**The addict often manipulates the enabler by pretending to try a comeback...**

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Thus Rita has been coping with substance abuse in her household for decades, and her story illustrates the pervasive damage alcoholism can do not only to generations of a family, but its community. Court records on Rita's three grandsons show a total of 33 arrests for 61 felonies ranging from drug possession to armed robbery.

In the most recent of a long series of betrayals, the oldest grandson, 30, went to Rita and claimed to have a job. The only problem was that he needed a car to get to work, he told her. Rita took that as a hopeful sign from a grandson who, in recent years, had held no job for more than six months. She gave him \$100 towards the car only to discover, later, that he also took and forged some of her checks for an additional \$200.

There was, of course, no job and no car. "They were going to buy drugs to resell, but that didn't work out," Rita said. "They just had a big drug party."

Five years ago, another grandson stole money from an aunt's purse and forged \$3,000 worth of checks from his mother's bank account. When he got out of prison, he lived with Rita for two weeks. "Then he stole his mother's car and sold it for drug money," she said.

In an interview in her modest, immaculately-kept home, Rita looked like the confused, long-suffering grandmother she is, thin, wan and tired. She seemed hurt and perplexed.

Her Christian religion tells her to turn the other cheek, but the advice from groups like Al-Anon and Families Anonymous is to "detach with love" and leave addicts to their own devices.

"Tough love" is not an easy concept for her, however. It is altogether too easy for her to try, one more time, to help.

# Coping with Substance Abuse



**A difficult habit to break:** Don't be afraid to seek help for a loved one suffering from an addiction. A drinking or drug habit can quickly spiral out of control if proper assistance is not obtained.

## Support for tough love

Earl Loney knows firsthand about the wrong kind of help. Loney, 65, serves in a volunteer capacity as director for Lighthouse Recovery Services. His avocation now is helping others fight the disease that nearly killed him.

"I started drinking socially when I was a teenager. Drinking became a mental obsession for me. Life was a total roller coaster. I was jailed, lost my job, got six DUIs, went through two marriages.

"All the time, something keeps telling you, 'Bring me another drink.' For me to try to tell somebody without the disease what it's like would be like a woman trying to tell a man what it's like to have a baby."

What saved Loney, ironically, was the death of his parents. "I drank heavily from 1952 until 1979. My parents kept bailing me out. Then, in 1978, both my parents died. Six months later, I was sober, and I haven't had a drink since.

"There's not a doubt in my mind that, if they had kept on protecting me, I would be dead. Instead, I got sober by the grace of God and had a spiritual awakening."

Loney's work with relapsed and recovering addicts is legendary. People come from other communities to seek the advice from one who knows both sides of the addiction story.

The cure for codependency, said Lawson of the Boulware Mission, is self-realization. The best place for that, according to Clark, of River Valley Behavioral Health, is a 12-step program like Al-Anon or Families Anonymous.

Those who love alcoholics and addicts must eventually accept the hard truth repeatedly emphasized in the literature of those groups: "I can change myself. Others, I can only love."

## To find support for addicts and their families

If you or people you know are suffering because of alcoholism or addiction -- their own or someone else's -- help is readily available. Every week in Owensboro, 82 groups of abusers and family members meet anonymously and use the 12-step program of personal growth to help each other stay sober and find tranquility. Just go to any of the open meetings listed here.

*The following groups hold simultaneous open meetings at 8 p.m. Tuesdays at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 600 Locust St:*

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** for people of all ages whose primary addiction is to alcohol.
- **Al-Anon** for family members and others with problems caused by someone else's addiction to drugs or alcohol.
- **Alateens** for children with parents or siblings with substance abuse problems.

**Families Anonymous** meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Owensboro Christian Church, 2818 New Hartford Rd. Families Anonymous is also for family members and others in close relationship with an addict or alcoholic. Participants say the local FA group does not adhere as closely to the 12-step program but is particularly good at supporting parents of adult abusers.

**Narcotics Anonymous** meets Sundays and Mondays at 7:30 p.m. at Central Presbyterian Church, 426 St. Ann St. Narcotics Anonymous is for those whose major addiction is to other substances.

**Special help for grandparents raising children of addicts.** Professionals in law, counseling, health care, education, and other aspects of caregiving will each give ten-minute explanations of grandparents' rights and responsibilities and out-

line the help available to them through local agencies from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 21, at the First Baptist Church, 230 J. R. Miller Blvd.

No reservation is necessary for this free workshop, organized by Community Solutions for Substance Abuse. For additional information, call Community Solutions at 691-6023.

For immediate assistance, anytime, call the Crisis Line at 1-800-433-7291.

## Community Solutions gets money for prevention services

Weeks after the joint city-county commission announced allocation of funds received from the Owensboro Medical Health Services reorganization -- and surprised community leaders and some council members by giving a local coalition, Community Solutions for Substance Abuse, none of it for a proposed wellness initiative -- the key decision makers quietly reconsidered.

In early July, Daviess County Fiscal Court granted Community Solutions the \$100,000 that had been earmarked for prevention services and education in its \$2.2 million proposal.

Daviess County Judge Executive Reid Haire explained that he and Owensboro Mayor Waymond Morris decided to release the money so that Community Solutions could fund public schools' purchase of prevention education materials in time to use them this year.

That money will come from \$300,000 the city-county commission allocated to address substance abuse prevention. At the time, the commission did not name a particular agency as recipient, and said it would hold additional hearings on how to spend the money.

Debbie Zuerner Johnson, Community Solutions executive director, said the organization is using \$10,000 of the released money to enable schools to train teachers and buy supplemental materials for two years of the prevention curriculum in grades 6-8.

Another \$10,000 will fund activities by the Champions against Drug Abuse clubs now activated in all middle and high schools.

The balance is being used to provide training in treatment of adolescent substance abusers. Local substance-abuse treatment providers are identifying staff members to go through the training. Community Solutions has identified such treatment as a local need. ■

# Should we pass a clean air ordinance?

While the link between tobacco use and disease appears to be a debate of the past, communities – including our own – are now wrestling with how far regulations should go to protect the nonsmoking majority from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

## THE FACTS

### Smoking is harmful.

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of premature death in our nation. Smoking causes the deaths of 440,000 Americans (approximately 150 deaths in Daviess County) every year. Lung cancer, almost exclusively caused by smoking, is the leading cancer killer for both men and women in the nation. Moreover, smoking has been conclusively linked to heart disease, emphysema, asthma, impotence, cervical cancer, high blood pressure and stroke.

### Kentuckians lead the nation in smoking; Daviess County is doing better.

The adult smoking rate in Kentucky leads the nation at nearly 33 percent. Not surprisingly, Kentucky leads the nation in lung cancer and smoking-caused death rates.

The U.S. adult smoking rate is 23 percent. The Daviess County adult smoking rate has dropped significantly in recent years and is nine percent lower than the other six counties in the Green River district. Yet 25 percent of adults in Daviess County (or 17,256 adults) still smoke daily, and youth smoking is an ongoing problem.

### Secondhand smoke is also harmful.

Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death, killing more than 50,000 Americans each year (16 deaths in Daviess County). Research documents that secondhand smoke emits 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cause cancer. It is devastating for children. Nationwide, secondhand smoke worsens

asthma in up to one million cases annually (325 cases in Daviess County); it causes up to 300,000 lower respiratory infections in infants (98 cases in Daviess County); it increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, bronchitis, pneumonia, colds, and ear infections.

In Kentucky, 363,000 children are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes (more than 8,200 in Daviess County).

### We all pay dearly for smoking.

Smoking in Kentucky results in \$1.17 billion in direct health care costs every year (\$26,442,000 in Daviess County). Kentucky taxpayers pay \$380 million (\$8.6 million in Daviess County) directly into the Medicaid program annually. Moreover, \$1.84 billion in productivity is lost each year in Kentucky (\$41,584,000 in Daviess County) due to smoking.

### We are creating a new generation of smokers.

Each year, 13,400 Kentucky youth (303 youth in Daviess County) become daily smokers. The tobacco industry spends \$436,712 every day in Kentucky to market and promote their products. The top three advertised brands – Marlboro, Camel, and Newport – are the same top three brands smoked by youth.

### An increasing number of area workplaces and public areas are smoke free.

Due to a great extent by the efforts of the Green River Tobacco Control Coalition, 41

restaurants in Owensboro and 57 percent of restaurants in our seven-county region have adopted smoke-free policies. (Many others have restricted smoking to separately ventilated rooms.) In the Green River region, 37 percent of workplaces are also now smoke-free.

Owensboro Medical Health System, RiverPark Center, Towne Square Mall, and the Owensboro Sportscenter are among the major community facilities that have gone smoke-free in recent years. Sun Windows, Kimberly Clark, and Dana are among the workplaces that now prohibit smoking.

### Many communities have adopted clean indoor air ordinances; others resist.

As of July 1, 2004, 1,727 U.S. municipalities restrict where smoking is allowed, and 312 of these (18%) have a 100 percent smoke-free provision in workplaces, restaurants, and/or bars. Ten states now require 100 percent smoke-free workplaces, restaurants, and/or bars.

Some cities, such as Lexington, Kentucky, have approved ordinances to prohibit smoking in all public areas. A clean indoor air ordinance is currently under consideration by the Metro Louisville government.

Other communities have voted down such proposals or have taken no action.

*Note: Daviess County estimates are calculated as a percentage of the Kentucky/U.S. population.*

## OPTIONS, COSTS & CONSEQUENCES

### 1. PROMOTE AUTONOMY AND CHOICE.

We presently have choices in our community. One can patronize a smoke-free restaurant if that is their preference, or they can choose an establishment that includes a place for smokers.

If our community chooses this option, smokers will be pleased and not feel ostracized. Customers that like to smoke with their meal or while they have a drink will have more places to go. Business owners and managers that believe they need to cater to smokers will not feel threatened.

However, every day thousands of citizens will still be exposed to the dangers of secondhand smoke, including many children and workers, who do not have a choice. We will continue to absorb the health and economic costs associated with increased

exposure to smoking.

### 2. ENCOURAGE MORE SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC AREAS.

Advocates can step up promotion of smoke-free establishments without imposing obligations on private business.

If we choose this option, education and consumer patterns – and not intrusive regulation – will influence policies and business decisions. This option will be less divisive and more sensitive to economic implications of smoke-free policies.

To be effective, this option requires continued (if not additional) funds for consumer education and advertising. Tobacco companies have been forced to provide funds for this purpose, but over the long term, it may be difficult to secure adequate funds to affect consumer patterns

and workplace policies. And in the meantime, many citizens will still be exposed to secondhand smoke.

### 3. ADOPT AN ORDINANCE TO BAN SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES.

An ordinance would make smoke-free compliance mandatory. Businesses, workplaces, and other owners of public spaces would be fined if smoking bans were not enforced.

This option would dramatically reduce exposure to second hand smoke, although it would have no effect on second hand smoke in homes and other private settings. It would also require the development and funding of an enforcement mechanism. Some establishment owners would resist and point to the ordinance as the reason for declining business and layoffs.

## Seeing Both Sides:

### Opposition & Support of the Clean Air Ordinance Proposal

#### THOSE WHO OPPOSE

Smokers have rights, too. They should not be viewed as second-class citizens.

A clean indoor air ordinance would hurt local businesses, particularly bars and restaurants that serve alcohol.

Smokers should have the right to patronize restaurants that others do.

Currently consumers have a choice; it is good to have this choice.

We have made progress encouraging business to be more sensitive to the impact of smoking on their customers. We don't have to make this such a divisive thing by making it mandatory.

A clean indoor air ordinance would be a slap in the face to local and area tobacco farmers and solid companies, such as Swedish Match and tobacco warehouses that compensate their employees well, pay taxes, and support many charitable and community causes.

Where will this regulation end? Will we be outlawing ice cream next, fast food? When will it be illegal to smoke in one's own home?

The cost and practicality of enforcement will ultimately become another burden on taxpayers.

#### THOSE WHO SUPPORT

People have the right to smoke, but they do not have the right to pollute the air that others breathe.

Nearly 70 percent of Daviess Countians do not smoke; their rights should be paramount to any rights of smokers.

Second-hand smoke is a serious matter. We need to take every step possible to reduce risk and improve the health of the community, particularly the vulnerable children who do not have a choice.

When it comes to health and wellness, we should set the highest possible standards for our community.

Other progressive communities – like Lexington (in the heart of tobacco country) – have demonstrated that it can be done. Owensboro-Daviess County can gain distinction and project a progressive image through this initiative.

Our major public areas have taken the important and difficult step to go smoke-free; we need to take it the next step to provide protection for people in other places as well.

In a number of objective studies, smoke-free policies have no negative economic effect on businesses.

According to the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers, no feasible ventilation system can reduce secondhand smoke exposure to safe levels.

## TO LEARN MORE

### Green River Tobacco Control Coalition

P.O. Box 309  
Owensboro, KY 42302-0309  
270/686-7747 (ext. 5617)  
Contact: Becky Horn or Don Crask  
becky.horn@grhd.org or doncr@adelphia.net

### Kentucky Department for Public Health Kentucky Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Program

275 East Main Street  
Mail Stop H51C-B  
Frankfort, KY 40621-0001  
Contact: Irene Centers  
Irene.Centers@ky.gov

### Center for Disease Control National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Office of Smoking and Health  
4770 Buford Highway N.E., MS-KSO  
Atlanta, GA 30341-3724  
1-800-CDC-1311  
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/  
tobaccoinfo@cdc.gov

### American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation

2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite J  
Berkeley, CA 94702  
510/841-3032  
www.no-smoke.org  
anr@no-smoke.org

### Kentucky Farm Bureau

9201 Bunsen Parkway  
P.O. Box 20700  
Louisville, KY 40250-0700  
502/495-5000  
Area Program Director: Tony Holloway  
tholloway@kyfb.com

CONTINUED PAGE 20 | TO LEARN MORE

# Kentucky Commonwealth Conference on OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY, AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

October 18-19, 2004 ■ Executive Inn Rivermont ■ Owensboro, Kentucky

Keynote Speaker: **Paul Loeb** – *Author, Soul of a Citizen*

## PURPOSE OF CONFERENCE

Openness as a critical requirement is no longer limited to government institutions. The collapse of Enron, Global Crossing, World Com, Adelphia, and Arthur Anderson chillingly testify to the costs of closed corporations. A policy of openness in the Roman Catholic Church would have virtually eliminated decades of suffering protected by secrecy. In recent years, universities, foundations, athletic programs, hospitals, nonprofits, as well as governments, have all resisted openness in practice and policy.

When people, as stockholders and citizens, are not given information allowing them to engage in critical decisions, both our economic and political systems become vulnerable to corruption and abuse. When leaders manipulate or misrepresent information to boost stock prices, sustain an image, or shield the public from scandal, a chasm of distrust is created between institutions and the public they serve or depend upon.

Openness is essential for our democratic process. In October 2004, citizens from across Kentucky and the region will assemble to examine the theoretical and practical dimensions of openness,

transparency, and the public interest. They will examine the need for, benefits from, and challenges inherent in practicing greater openness and transparency in the affairs of their organizations.

## TOPICS, PRESENTERS, AND PANELISTS WILL INCLUDE:

### Ethics of Openness

**David Smith, Ph.D.**, Poynter Center for Ethical Studies (retired)  
Scholar-in-Residence, Yale University

### Journalism's War Against Secrecy

**Kim Greene**, First Amendment Attorney  
**Marilyn Thompson**, Editor, Lexington Herald-Leader  
**Ed Manassah**, President and Publisher, Louisville Courier-Journal (invited)  
**Bennie Ivory**, Executive Editor, Louisville Courier-Journal  
**Buck Ryan** (Moderator), UK First Amendment Center

### Sacred Institutions: Secret Transactions Serving Sacred Trusts?

**William Craig**, Attorney and Parish Committee (clergy sexual abuse cases)  
**Rev. Dwight Moody**, Georgetown College Chaplain  
**Peter Smith**, Louisville Courier-Journal (reported on archdiocese scandal)  
**Rev. Dr. Bob Darrell** (Moderator), Methodist Minister, Professor of English Emeritus

### The Constitution and Matters of Openness and Transparency Today

**Robert O'Neil, Ph.D.**, Former President, University of Virginia  
Director, Jefferson Center for Protection of Free Expression

### Government and the Public Interest

**Madonna Flood**, Louisville Metro Councilwoman  
**Marilee Fowler**, Vanderburgh County (Ind.) Visitors and Convention Bureau  
**Sylvia Lovely**, Kentucky League of Cities  
**Judith Clabes** (Moderator), Scripps-Howard Foundation

### Education Institutions and the Media: Practicing Openness

**Jon Fleischaker**, Attorney, Louisville Courier-Journal  
**Pam Johnson, Ph.D.**, WKU School of Journalism and Broadcasting  
**Bart Darrell**, Attorney for several Kentucky school systems  
**David Hawpe** (Moderator), Editorial Director and Vice President, Louisville Courier-Journal

### A Case Study: Openness and the Merger of Two Community Hospitals

**Bill Conroy, Ph.D.**, Professor of Government, Kentucky Wesleyan College

### **Luncheon Speaker: H. Peter Karoff**

**Founder and Chair, The Philanthropic Initiative (Boston)**

### Corporate Openness: Continuing Challenges and Opportunities

**John R. Hall**, Retired President and CEO, Ashland Oil  
**H. Peter Karoff**  
**Beth Barnes**, Chair, UK School of Journalism  
**Bracken Darrell**, Vice President, Gillette Corporation (Boston)

### The Media on the Media: How Open, How Transparent Are We?

**David Boeyink**, Professor of Journalism, Indiana University  
**Al Cross**, UK Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues  
**Ed Staats**, Retired Associated Press Bureau Chief  
**Bob Ashley** (Moderator), Editor, Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer

### **Who Should Attend**

Elected Officials; Government Officials; Corporate Executives; Public Affairs and Public Relations Executives; Editors; Publishers; Reporters and Broadcasters; Attorneys; Community Leaders; Ministers and Church Leaders; College/University Trustees, Presidents, and Administration; Nonprofit Boards and Administration

### **Schedule**

The conference will run from 1:30 p.m. on Monday, October 18th through 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 19th.

### **Cost**

Registration Fee (by September 1): \$100  
Registration Fee (after September 1): \$150  
Student Registration: \$35  
Includes all sessions, Monday night banquet, break refreshments, Tuesday continental breakfast and lunch, conference proceedings, and a complimentary copy of Paul Loeb's book, *Soul of a Citizen*. (Lodging not included.)

### **How to Register**

Registration form is available:  
Online: [www.plfo.org](http://www.plfo.org) (not yet available)  
By fax: 270.685.6074  
By phone: 270.685.2652

### **Hotel Accommodations**

Room reservations should be made through the Executive Inn Rivermont: [www.ExecutiveInnRivermont.com](http://www.ExecutiveInnRivermont.com) or 270.926.8000 or 1.800.626.1936

For discounts, mention the Kentucky Commonwealth Conference on Openness, Transparency, and the Public Interest.

### **Continuing Education**

CEU approval from the Kentucky Bar Association is pending but expected.

### **Sponsors**

Public Life Foundation of Owensboro  
Scripps-Howard Foundation





# Citizens Speak: LEADERS RESPOND

Approximately 50 citizens attended a July 8th community meeting to learn more about the proposal to build a new \$14-15 million Daviess County Public Library. Participants reviewed an issue brief (independently developed by the foundation) that sets forth the facts, circumstances the library board is facing, options under consideration, costs and consequences of each option, and points made by proponents and opponents of the proposal. They also participated in hour-long small group discussions prior to completing a questionnaire.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS:

| GENDER              |     | AGES        |     |
|---------------------|-----|-------------|-----|
| Women               | 65% | 45-64       | 55% |
| Men                 | 37% | 65 or older | 24% |
|                     |     | 30-44       | 17% |
|                     |     | 18-29       | 5%  |
| EDUCATION LEVEL     |     |             |     |
| College Degree      | 90% |             |     |
| Some College        | 5%  |             |     |
| High School Diploma | 5%  |             |     |

## CITIZENS SPEAK OUT ON LIBRARY PROPOSAL

The key question: Do we need a new library and are we willing to absorb a 1.5 cent tax increase (\$15 on a \$100,000 house annually) to pay for it? The results of the 43 questionnaires that were completed were as follows:

The Daviess County Public Library is a vital institution: 88 percent strongly agree; 12 percent agree.

The public library reflects the importance our community places on education: 79 percent strongly agree; 21 percent agree.

The public library is adequate as it is: 51 percent disagree; 35 percent strongly disagree; 12 percent neutral; 2 percent strongly agree.

The public library expansion is needed and justified: 67 percent strongly agree; 29 percent agree; 5 percent neutral.

Visibility is important for the library. A Frederica Street location would be an ideal one: 58 percent strongly agree; 40 percent agree; 2 percent neutral.

Inadequate parking has been a problem at the library: 67 percent strongly agree; 23 percent agree; 8 percent neutral; 3 percent strongly disagree.

The public library should renovate or expand at its current location: 43 percent strongly disagree; 16 percent disagree; 10 percent neutral; 5 percent strongly agree; 3 percent agree.

The public library should build one or more branches instead of expanding at a new location: 63 percent strongly disagree; 28 percent disagree; 7 percent neutral; 2 percent agree.

Library priorities should be on electronic information rather than collections: 46 percent disagree; 23 percent strongly disagree; 21 percent neutral; 5 percent agree; 5 percent strongly agree.

People who use the library should pay an extra fee to use it: 65 percent strongly disagree; 19 percent disagree; 14 percent neutral; 2 percent agree.

Supporters of a new library should be expected to raise private funds to cover a significant portion of the facility expansion plans: 53 percent strongly disagree; 19 percent disagree; 16 percent neutral; 4 percent agree; 7 percent strongly agree.

I support the 1.5 cent tax increase proposed by the public library trustees: 65 percent strongly agree; 33 percent agree; 2 percent neutral.

*"Clearly this was not a scientific sample, but it was a good faith effort to reach out and involve a healthy cross-section of our community. All citizens were invited and welcomed. All had an opportunity to see the facts, options, pros and cons independently and objectively presented. The voices of all were valued. And when the participants were asked to come to judgment on the library proposal, it was an informed judgment," said Rodney Berry, president of the Public Life Foundation. "Whenever possible, whenever our community is faced with an important decision or choice, we would be well-served to engage in this kind of exercise. It is a community building experience rather than a divisive one," he said.*

## Library Chairman Responds:

"Regardless of the outcome of the questionnaires, I place great value on the input received from citizens from this kind of forum. The small group discussion created a relaxed and open feeling that produced candid remarks, but respectful of others participating. It was less intimidating than a public hearing when so often an overbearing person dominates.

So often in public meetings, a group will come to a meeting and one person – usually the person who holds the most extreme views – will speak for the group. Other members of the group who often have more moderate views are reluctant to speak up and challenge that person. Such forums bring little in the way of cognitive analysis, but rather are emotionally based positions.

In the Public Life Foundation forum (in which the Conversations Café format was used), everyone had an opportunity to speak. Everyone contributed. At our table, at least one person changed their mind about the issue after they heard all the facts and had a chance to hear the other views. Sometimes people need a chance to think things through."

Frank Brancato  
Chairman  
Daviess County Library Tax District



# AUGUST/SEPTEMBER Public AGENDA

Meetings, hearings, and forums open to the public. To list your organization's events contact us at 685-2652 or [info@plfo.org](mailto:info@plfo.org). (Meetings are subject to change.)

# PRIDE Riverfront Improvement Workshop

Citizens deliberate during a PRIDE workshop on the proposed riverfront improvements.

PRIDE seeks to enhance community appearance through citizen involvement. The organization has more than 500 members.

## AUGUST

- 3 Owensboro City Commission**  
5:00 p.m.  
City Hall
  
- 5 Chamber of Commerce "Rooster Booster"**  
7:30 a.m.  
Executive Inn  
Report Card on Regional Vision 2001 (completed in 1996)
  
- Daviess County Fiscal Court**  
4:00 p.m.  
Courthouse
  
- 10 Green River Health Council**  
9:00 a.m.  
Green River Area Development
  
- 12 Citizens Health Care Advocates**  
5:30 p.m.  
Health Department  
Topic: Navigating the Diet Maze
  
- Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission**  
6:00 p.m.  
City Hall
  
- 16 Airport Board**  
4:30 p.m.  
Airport Conference Room
  
- 17 Owensboro-Daviess County Tourist Commission**  
7:45 a.m.  
215 East Second Street
  
- Owensboro City Commission**  
5:00 p.m.  
City Hall
  
- 18 Daviess County Public Library Board**  
5:00 p.m.  
Library
  
- 19 Daviess County Board of Education**  
Time: TBA  
1622 Southeastern Parkway

- OMU Board**  
Time: TBA  
2070 Tamarack Road
  
- 25 Rotary Club**  
12:00 p.m.  
Owensboro Country Club  
Topic: PRIDE  
(Must be a guest of a Rotary member)
  
- 26 Housing Authority**  
11:30 a.m.  
2161 East 19th Street
  
- Owensboro Board of Education**  
4:30 p.m.  
1335 West 11th Street
  
- 27 Riverport Authority**  
12:00 p.m.  
1771 River Road

## SEPTEMBER

- 9 Citizens Health Care Advocates**  
5:30 p.m.  
Health Department  
Topic: TBA
  
- 16 PRIDE**  
5:00 p.m.  
Location: TBA  
Speaker: Pam Miller, Former Mayor of Lexington, Ky.
  
- 27 PRIDE Workshop**  
5:00 p.m.  
Location: TBA  
Enhancement of community entrances from the Natcher Bridge and the airport





# Citizen Action UPDATE

The Public Life Foundation promotes broad and meaningful citizen participation in community decision making and public policy. Grass roots action is a reflection of an informed, engaged, empowered citizenry. We welcome updates from all citizen initiatives, whether an established organization or an ad hoc group. Contact us at 685-2652 or [info@plfo.org](mailto:info@plfo.org).

## TO LEARN MORE

continued from 16

**Kentucky Restaurant Association**  
133 Evergreen Road, Suite 201  
Louisville, KY 40243  
800/896-0414  
[info@kyra.org](mailto:info@kyra.org)

## GET INVOLVED

**Green River Tobacco Control Coalition**  
P.O. Box 309  
Owensboro, KY 42302-0309  
270/686-7747 (ext. 5617)  
Contact: Becky Horn or Don Crask  
[becky.horn@grdhd.org](mailto:becky.horn@grdhd.org) or [dconcr@adelphia.net](mailto:dconcr@adelphia.net)

## SHARE VIEWS

**City of Owensboro  
Mayor Waymond Morris**  
101 East Fourth Street  
Owensboro, KY 42303  
687-8560 [mayor@owensboro.org](mailto:mayor@owensboro.org)

**Commissioner Charles Castlen**  
101 East Fourth Street  
Owensboro, KY 42303  
687-8550 [ccastlen@juno.com](mailto:ccastlen@juno.com)

**Commissioner Mimi Davis**  
101 East Fourth Street  
Owensboro, KY 42303  
687-8550 [mimidavis@mindspring.com](mailto:mimidavis@mindspring.com)

**Commissioner Al Mattingly**  
101 East Fourth Street  
Owensboro, KY 42303  
687-8550 [ALHVAC@aol.com](mailto:ALHVAC@aol.com)

**Commissioner Jim Wood**  
101 East Fourth Street  
Owensboro, KY 42303  
687-8550 [jwoodlaw@aol.com](mailto:jwoodlaw@aol.com)

**Daviess County Fiscal Court  
County Judge-Executive Judge Reid Haire**  
P.O. Box 1716  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42302  
270/685-8424 [rhaire@daviessky.org](mailto:rhaire@daviessky.org)

**Commissioner Bruce Kunze**  
524 Ben Ford Road  
Utica, Kentucky 42376  
270/733-4175 [bkunze1@aol.com](mailto:bkunze1@aol.com) or  
[bkunze@daviessky.org](mailto:bkunze@daviessky.org)

**Commissioner Jim Lambert**  
1650 Copper Creek Drive  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42303  
270/685-2137 [jlambert@daviessky.org](mailto:jlambert@daviessky.org)

**Commissioner Mike Riney**  
9429 State Route 56  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301  
270/229-0210 [mriney@daviessky.org](mailto:mriney@daviessky.org)

### The Citizens Committee on Education

**Marianne Smith Edge, Co-Chair**  
[msedge@smithedge.com](mailto:msedge@smithedge.com)

- produced a 30-day campaign to inform citizens of the impact of proposed state education budget cuts on local schools
- released a study that examined financial and student population trends resulting from a landlocked city school district; facilitating city-county dialogue
- launching "The Learning Community," a program to instill a higher value of education and lifelong learning into the fabric of community life
- facilitating a community vision for higher education that will integrate and transcend the individual strategic plans of our local colleges and universities

### Citizens Health Care Advocates

**Dale Taylor, Chair**  
[dalet@www.com](mailto:dalet@www.com)

- sponsored forums on the tobacco excise tax and cuts in the midwife program
- recognized Dr. Andrew Ward for the R.C. Neblett Service Award
- supporting efforts to expand health care services for the uninsured and underinsured residents of our area
- developing a series of articles on health and health care

### Goodfellows Club

**Barry Carden, President**  
[bcarden@messenger-inquirer.com](mailto:bcarden@messenger-inquirer.com)

- contributes approximately \$100,000 annually for clothing, coats, shoes, and emergency assistance for disadvantaged youth
- continues the Christmas Eve party tradition for

local children

- supporting dental sealant program for disadvantaged youth
- held a benefit tennis tournament

### Maceo Concerned Citizens

**Patsy Hawes Gordon**

10038 Kelly Cemetery Road, Maceo, KY 42355

- working on the cleanup and beneficial redevelopment of a former hazardous waste disposal site in east Daviess County

### Owensboro Area World Affairs Council

**Rodney Berry**

[rodney.berry@plfo.org](mailto:rodney.berry@plfo.org)

- sponsored presentation by Witness for Peace activist Lorena Parker at Kentucky Wesleyan College: "Plan Columbia: Throwing Gasoline on the Fire"

- developing 2004-05 series to begin fall

### PRIDE

**Susie Tyler, President**

[grand.view@adelphia.net](mailto:grand.view@adelphia.net)

- completed successful membership drive (550 members)
- PRIDE delegation attended a seminar on design and community appearance
- met with architects of proposed public library, Wal-Mart, Fifth-Third Bank, and OMHS Cancer Center
- held a member work session to solicit ideas for enhancing the new community entrance from the Natcher Bridge and West Parrish Avenue from the airport

### Unity Coalition

- sponsored presentation by activist Carlos Earhardt: "Challenges Facing the Latino Community"