

PUBLIC LIFE

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Advocate

Unexpected Obligations:

When Grandparents Get the Kids

About our Editorial Board



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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.



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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*.



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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.

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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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Substance abuse claims another victim: Grandparents who step in to care for children when their addicted son or daughter is in jail, rehab, or simply not up to the task of parenting.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

A Place for Beauty



by Rodney Berry

In this issue we examine the most ambitious community project of our time: the Owensboro Riverfront Master Plan. Phase two is nearly complete because of Mitch McConnell's wizardly extraction of funds from Washington despite record deficits. Twenty million dollars, maybe thirty million, will get us from RiverPark Center to the Executive Inn. Then it's maybe that much more, depending on who you talk to, to take the new look along the riverbank to the old lock and dam site at English Park.

The rationale has merit:

- The Ohio River is our city's greatest (perhaps only) natural asset, and for too many years, we've turned our back on it.

- Developing the riverfront will enhance Owensboro's livability – to locals, to visitors. It's the obvious mechanism to effectively redevelop downtown, and the private sector needs the public sector to take the lead.

- We're only going to do this once; we should set high standards for design and development.

The riverfront design was coordinated by Edward D. Stone and Associates (EDSA), a Florida firm selected over others in a nationwide search. The plan, less than three years old, has already evolved and will again, as conditions change and opportunities arise. As a linchpin for community development and image building, it has been proclaimed one of three top priorities of the Chamber of Commerce and most every city, county, and state elected official or candidate for office.

Do they speak for the people? Is the riverfront plan a priority of the public?

Most community surveys in recent years point to low-paying jobs, drainage, and health care as the top concerns of citizens. Neighborhood groups are generally more concerned about safety, drug dealing, or dilapidated housing than a sparkling new riverfront. PRIDE workshops, exhibits, and surveys that attracted input from thousands of citizens, community groups, and students about what they envisioned for the riverfront were launched after community leaders already zeroed in on the riverfront and were well into the process of selecting a

design firm.

Despite the top-down dimension of the riverfront initiative, there appears to be ample grass roots support for the plan or officials would be backing off. Sometimes the public responds well when leaders lead and challenge us with new and exciting possibilities.

Of course, there are those who object to the use of taxpayer dollars for anything beyond basic services. How can we, in good faith, spend public funds on frills when we have a shortage of deputy sheriffs and teachers are threatening to strike over cuts in benefits? How can we accept federal grants for the riverfront and further contribute to the monstrous deficit our children and grandchildren will inherit?

As principled as these positions may be, they are naïve. If we turn down federal funds – be it for parks or bridges or public housing – we will not lessen the deficit; those funds will be redirected to projects in other cities. Moreover, we have little flexibility: we cannot shift highway funds to schools, grants for water lines to the judicial system.

Perhaps it's important to remember that, while we can always do more, generous individuals, government agencies, relief organizations, churches, and foundations direct significant resources every day to humanitarian projects here and around the world. Our riverfront project is a mighty mountain to climb by our standards, but it's a molehill in the federal budget when compared to what is spent on defense, health care, social services, and other human needs.

Maybe it's because we are aware of so much suffering, because we are relentlessly bombarded with news of war, disease, and disasters that we need a glimpse of beauty in the frantic and often tragic landscape of our lives. We need music and dance and poetry. We need flowers and fountains and art in public places. We need to bring forth the blossoms from within our creative selves. All of us, rich and poor, young and old, black and white and brown and yellow, need inviting waterfronts and places to gather, stroll, and watch a sunset.

Enhanced public places. To enrich our public lives.

Contributors

Tom Gaston

Tom expands his examination of substance abuse with a closer look at the impact on overmatched grandparents who must often step in to care for the children of their addicted sons and daughters. Powerful stories and a growing Daviess County problem.



Tom is a regular contributor to the *Advocate*. A former educator, he has been an Owensboro resident for eight years.



Making a DIFFERENCE

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

Voter Turnout Canvassing October 23

Volunteers representing Neighborhood Alliance groups will conduct door-to-door canvassing in eight target areas on Saturday, October 23 to encourage residents to vote in the upcoming general election on November 2nd. The target areas are precincts in which the voter turnout was less than 30 percent in the last election.

“Be the Difference – Go Vote” is the campaign theme, organized by the Public Life Foundation, Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce, Owensboro Neighborhood Alliances, and the Owensboro Business and Professional Women’s Association (OBPW). OBPW is also engaged in a community-wide campaign to encourage women to vote.

Sponsors (at press time) included the above groups, plus Acme Plumbing and Heating, Greenwell Chisholm Printing, The Malcolm Bryant Corporation, Morton Holbrook, Watson Prosthetic and Orthotic Lab, and Owensboro Municipal Utilities.

Voting is key to becoming a force. The authors of “American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality,” a 2004 report from the American Political Science Association (www.apsanet.org), conclude that low voter turnout aggravates the already growing disparity in governmental representation of the rich and poor. The report documents that, because they typically do not vote and are not organized, the poor have little access to elected officials and their voice is not heard. Discretionary government funds are more likely to be spent in districts of more affluent constituents, and legislative votes more closely correspond with the policy preferences of affluent constituents over the less-privileged.

By increasing voter turnout in Owensboro’s eight target areas, we hope to empower residents with a stronger voice, greater access, and more effective attention to the needs and aspirations of low-income citizens.

Neighborhood Park Dedicated

A new playground at Thompson-Berry Park was constructed by Audubon-Bon Harbor Area Alliance volunteers in June. The park includes a climbing wall and other popular features. Neighborhood Chair Benji DeWitt

joined Mayor Waymond Morris and other residents and dignitaries for the August 9th dedication.

Study Circles Examining Immigration

Eight groups of up to 15 citizens each will participate in five-week “study circle” discussions about the changing faces of our community. The kick-off was September 23rd and the final report will be presented on December 2nd. Participants will examine the impact of immigration on employment, education, language, and racial tensions. Community Conversations, Inc. and the Owensboro Human Relations Commission organized the project and will be hosting the events.

Citizens interested in participating may contact Kathy Christie at 687-4630 or deliberation@omuonline.net.

Citizens Seek Solutions

Residents in the West Fifth Street Road area recently mobilized to address the confusion over street names that complicate mail delivery and emergency response time in the area. City officials have been receptive and are exploring options.

Public Life Advocate Salutes...

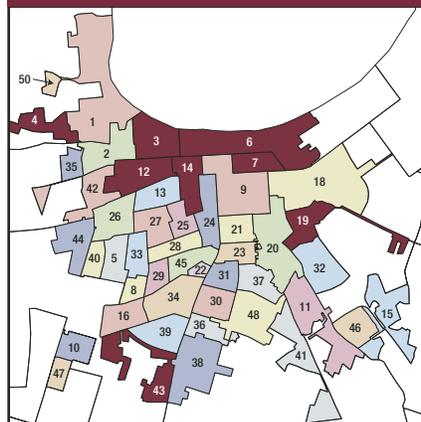
Bryant Bell is an Owensboro native, graduate of Owensboro High School, and a U.S. Army veteran of Operation Desert Storm.

He continued his education at several technical schools, community colleges, and universities. A U.S. Postal Service Letter Carrier since 1992, Bryant has demonstrated compassion, dedication, and leadership in addressing neighborhood, health care, and housing issues facing our community. Here at the Public Life Foundation, we have observed Bryant’s growth and influence as a charter member of the Citizens Health Care Advocates Board of Directors.

The *Public Life Advocate* salutes Bryant Bell for his concern, involvement, and expanding role in community affairs.



VOTER TURNOUT FOR NOVEMBER 2003 GENERAL ELECTION



Precinct	Registered	Voted	% Turnout
1	544	170	31.2
2	694	225	32.4
3	1003	268	26.7
4	1010	287	28.4
5	911	531	58.2
6	914	233	25.4
7	588	125	21.2
8	454	254	55.9
9	922	289	31.3
10	613	292	47.6
11	820	345	42.0
12	766	202	26.3
13	557	197	35.3
14	933	264	28.2
15	990	524	52.9
16	906	367	40.5
18	596	179	30.0
19	847	242	28.5
20	768	329	42.8
21	619	272	43.9
22	416	177	42.5
23	614	247	40.2
24	899	460	51.1
25	517	305	58.9
26	745	358	48.0
27	631	382	60.5
28	554	313	56.4
29	579	33	52.3
30	723	297	41.0
31	626	326	52.0
32	842	386	45.8
33	546	307	56.2
34	760	441	58.0
35	520	204	39.2
36	672	297	44.1
37	683	277	40.5
38	695	229	32.9
39	959	520	54.2
40	641	299	44.6
41	680	307	45.1
42	969	304	31.3
43	944	269	28.4
44	690	258	37.3
45	391	218	55.7
46	831	400	48.1
47	832	305	36.6
48	749	386	51.5

The highlighted precincts reported a turnout of less than 30 percent in the last general election.



Unexpected Obligations:

When Grandparents Get the Kids

by Tom Gaston

Substance abuse claims another victim: Grandparents who step in to care for children when their addicted sons or daughters are in jail, rehab, or simply not up to the task of parenting.

Unexpected Obligations

When parents are drug addicted, experts say, child neglect or even abuse often follows. The family can implode. And extended family members – most often grandparents – wind up raising young children at a time when their own health and energy levels are no longer equal to the stresses of caring for children in crisis.

Currently an estimated 600-700 grandparents in Daviess County are doing just that. Yet often the lives they lead stay hidden from public view, and for understandable reasons. Several grandparents refused *Advocate* interviews, even when assured of anonymity, citing as their reasons shame, possible harm to the children and fear of further aggravating an already tense domestic situation. Bill (not his real name) called just after Labor Day to cancel a scheduled interview. He and his wife are already rearing a three-year-old born to his addicted, unmarried daughter. Now they've learned his daughter is pregnant again.

"I'm just too emotionally drained," he said "It's been a holiday weekend, and things just built up. I mean three years ago one came into this world and now another one's coming . . . and we just can't do it. Right now (my daughter and wife) aren't even speaking."

Grandparents in two local families agreed to speak up, however. They said they did so to call attention to the dearth of community resources to help elders caught up in a social problem of growing proportions. Their stories shed light on the addicts as well as their children and the often-bewildered and overwhelmed grandparents who care for them.

Lisa's story

Without even studying, her mother said, Lisa (not her real name) was an honor student in high school. The daughter of a businesswoman and a factory worker, Lisa probably began drinking and smoking pot at 15 while hanging out at a local skateboarding center.

She began dating a heavy-metal musician, also a high school student, whom she met there. Though she refused the tattoos and black hair worn by many among her new group of friends, she adopted their black attire and gradually wriggled free of parental control.

When she was 17, her behavior had changed so much that the mother, now convinced of her substance abuse, confronted her. Defiantly, Lisa left home but remained in school.

Lisa made it through high school but didn't even apply for any of the scholarships her outstanding grades merited.

Instead, she took a job in a sandwich shop, enrolled in community college and continued in what had become a tempestuous relationship with the musician. By that time, her mother was convinced Lisa was

heavily into addictive prescription medications and probably street drugs.

Lisa and the musician later broke up and she began a six-year relationship with a man with whom she had two children.

According to Lisa's mother, this man – three years younger than Lisa – had been introduced to drugs by his own mother, a former prostitute who was then on disability living in a trailer, "almost a street person."

As it turned out, the man was schizophrenic. Lisa's mother said he abused his prescription medications and spent disability income on alcohol and marijuana. Lisa joined him in partying and they left their children in the care of nine-year-old neighbor girls. At one point, police discovered the children in the girl's care while the father was



Unexpected adjustments: Grandparents must also help children cope with confusion and anger that result from the transition between homes.

at home, high on drugs. That's when Lisa's mother intervened and brought the children to live with her.

In June 2003, Lisa stole three credit cards, 10 checks and several household items from her mother, court records show. She "maxed out" the credit cards, forged the checks and pawned the household items.

Like many first-time offenders, Lisa was given a chance to make restitution and get treatment. She did well for a few weeks, then relapsed and began a series of relationships with different men, rotating among motels and apartments in Owensboro known for accommodating addicts and prostitutes.

Her mother became determined to act. "I searched known crack houses for days, looking for her," she said. "The seediness and danger of those places was shocking."

After a good bit of detective work, she located Lisa and tipped police to her whereabouts. Police discovered she had violated the terms of her probation and re-arrested her. "Then I had the first good night's sleep

I had had in six months," her mother said, "because I knew she was safe."

Lisa remains in jail.

Lisa's children

Lisa's two children, Emma, nine, and Kirk, six, (their names have been changed) have been in the full custody of their grandparents for six years. They are now in first and fourth grades.

Emma's grandmother describes her as "a smart little girl, very loving, very artistic and very adult." Yet memories of those stressful times with her mother, when she, a six-year-old, often had to act as the parent, have left their scars. For that, she receives counseling at school.

When Lisa lived with her parents and children during her unsuccessful probation, Emma once whispered to her grandmother that she smelled something on Lisa's breath.

Still, Emma welcomes the weekly phone calls from her jailed mother. "She understands what her mother has been through but loves her anyway. Her heart breaks and mine breaks watching her," her grandmother said.

Kirk's experience has been different. Having lived with the grandparents since infancy, he did not get to know his mother. "He and his grandpa are great buddies," his grandmother said, but Kirk also shows worrisome signs of psychological problems.

Kirk receives psychiatric care at River Valley Behavioral Health, where his doctor prescribed psychotropic medication to help him control outbursts of temper. His grandmother worries that Kirk may have inherited his father's predisposition to schizophrenia.

Lisa's parents

Lisa's parents have had full custody of Emma and Kirk for six years.

The *Advocate's* call to arrange an interview found their grandmother picking up bunk beds from a relative. "Now my grandson can have his own bed," she said. "He's been sleeping with his grandfather."

The grandfather now has a close relationship with the boy, who calls him "Daddy" and shows little interest in his birth parents, she said. However, the first days with the children were especially stressful for her 59-year-old husband.

A pre-existing heart condition flared up, and at one point his heart rate was measured in the 300s, his wife said. He now has a surgically installed pace-maker. "I thought I was going to lose my mind," Lisa's mother, now 65, confessed. "But my faith in God helped me, and if I had it to do over I wouldn't do it any other way."

Lisa's mother and father received excellent help from teachers at Head Start, where Emma was enrolled when she came to live with them. Kirk, a baby at the time, went to day care, enabling his grandmother to con-

Unexpected Obligations

tinue managing her small business.

Lisa's mother was also on a personal journey to learn how to continue coping with her daughter's problems. "After we had the children about three years, I was at my wits' end. I went to Families Anonymous (FA), but I just couldn't accept what they were telling me about tough love (for Lisa).

"I went to Al-anon, but they told me much the same thing. I remember saying they must not love their children the way I love Lisa or they couldn't be so hard (on them). But I kept going to FA and getting stronger, and she was getting worse."

After years of seeing Lisa in and out of school, in and out of treatment and in and out of their home, Lisa's mother finally found the resolve to set strict limits on the assistance she extends to her addicted daughter.

"I will take her medicine and food and things, but I will not give her money. The best thing I did was to tell her she couldn't come home."

Recently Lisa wrote her mother a letter, saying that a church lady had visited her in jail and that she has found Jesus and wants to be baptized. "I hope and pray it's true," the mother says. "I want to believe it, but I'm a little skeptical.

"I just don't know. Right now we and the kids are doing all right . . ."

Maria's story

The youngest of four children, Maria (not her real name) seemed a solid average girl through most of her childhood. When she was 15, her mother suspected that something might be wrong and had her assessed for mental illness, but the report showed nothing conclusive.

"I still wonder if she didn't have bipolar (disorder), even then," said her mother, who holds a responsible position in a large social service agency. "I don't think they were as sensitive to bipolar (manic-depressive illness) then as they are now."

Maria finished high school, married and went to nursing school full time while also working, often full-time, at a nursing home. At the same time, she bore four children in four years.

Then, in less than 18 months, she lost a much-admired older sister to breast cancer and saw three grandparents die and her husband incarcerated for dealing in controlled substances.

Maria fell into a prolonged depression that eventually required medical intervention. Her mother believes that Maria's substance abuse began as self-medication during this time. Maria turned to "crank" for the energy required to meet the multiple demands on her and soon moved on to "crack" cocaine and possibly other street drugs, her mother said. In October, Maria was almost killed in a car wreck. The other driver was intoxicated, and though Maria denies being high, hospital tests showed narcotics in her blood stream.

"But that didn't turn her around. . . . She has attended some NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings. I tell her, 'You *must* get help.' She's still out there. I've turned it over to God's hands."

Maria's children

Maria's four children have been living with their grandparents for two years. Their grandmother said they are struggling, some more than others. Among other things, they are having disciplinary problems in school where other children often say hurtful things to them.

Three of the four are on prescription medication.

A daughter in third grade has frequent headaches and sometimes breaks down crying. "She just doesn't understand all this," her grandmother said.

Maria's son, who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and especially acute behavioral problems at school, attends weekly therapy sessions provided by the school system.

"Children have all this anger," she said of them, "and there's nothing they can do with it. It hurts to hear a six-year-old cry out, 'I want to die.'"

Maria's parents

Maria's parents took her four children to live with them two years ago. They received full custody three months ago.

Like Lisa's parents, they feel compelled to use "tough love" in their ongoing effort to persuade Maria to get treatment. "I'm there for her. I tell her, 'I love you, but you *must* get help,'" Maria's mother said.

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Special problems of grandparents rearing at-risk children

Children's adjustment to a new home. The child's prior bonding with its parent and adaptation to its previous environment, however turbulent, sometimes makes for a difficult transition, especially for older children.

Lack of legal authority. Unless the grandparent has legal custody, she may have difficulty acting as the child's custodian – everything from giving permission for school field trips to authorizing medical care and accessing information that privacy laws make available only to parents. Ultimately, legal custody may be the best solution for many grandparents, but addicted parents who choose to fight can hold up this action for months.

Resistance from social service agencies. The assumption of most social service agencies is that, wherever possible, it is better to keep the primary family intact. Some grandparents report difficulty convincing social service workers of the urgency of their need to intervene to protect addicts' children.

Financial strain. By the time it becomes necessary for grandparents to take their grandchildren, they may have exhausted their savings in efforts to help their addicted child. Many are on fixed incomes, and the additional costs of child-rearing place further strain on their finances. The financial and in-kind assistance available to destitute parents from social service agencies may be unavailable to grandparents or ill-suited to their needs.

Conflicting expectations for children. When addicts and grandparents divide their time with the children, the addicts may undermine the grandparents' instructions or rules of conduct. Maria's mother reported, "After they visited her for a few days, they would come back cursing. We don't allow cursing. Things like that. It would take about three days for us to get them settled down again. And I've heard other grandparents say the same thing."

Manipulation of parents. Balancing the needs of the addicted parent against those of the grandchild presents a constant challenge. Addicts frequently use their children as pawns to extract concessions from worried grandparents. Until the addicted parent gets treatment and is in recovery, grandparents worry about their safety and welfare.

Difficult relations with the other parent and his/her family. The other parent is often also an addict. If not, he or she may be caught up in denial and codependency (protecting the addict from the consequences of substance abuse.) They and their families may side with the addicted parent against the grandparent in disputes over what is best for the child.



PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES Health Care Plans

Along with concerns over national security and the state of the economy, health care issues are among the most disturbing to Americans: our poor state of health compared to other industrialized nations; unaffordable care, insurance, and prescription drugs; the growing number of uninsured and underinsured (most of whom are working).

In the past few years, the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro has joined forces with other community groups to examine the state of our health and health care. Our focus has been local: 52 community forums on health care access problems; research to uncover local models to improve the affordability of prescription drugs or to

determine the factors contributing to the high cost of insurance in our area.

We have prepared directories to help people find the care they need, provided grants to help local clinics obtain prescription drugs, and helped bring about a Community Summit on Healthy Lifestyles, among other initiatives.

Despite local efforts, to effectively address our nation's complex health care problems, a national strategy is warranted. Consequently, the proposals of our leading presidential candidates should be examined openly and thoroughly. We share our summary to help concerned citizens come to judgment:

THE BUSH PLAN THE KERRY PLAN

Guiding Principles

- The cost of health insurance should be driven by the marketplace.
- If people paid a greater share of their own health care, they would be more likely to use only services they need – which would reduce costs.
- Health care decisions should be controlled by patients and their doctors.
- Rather than concentrate on employer programs, we should help individuals buy their own insurance and create more coverage options.
- We should use tax credits more than new spending.
- Costs can best be controlled by reducing frivolous lawsuits and modernization.

Key Elements and Projected Outcomes

- Proposes tax credits to help low- and middle-income families purchase health insurance if they do not receive it through their employers:
 - \$3,000 credit for a family of four with an income of \$25,000
 - \$1,714 credit for a family of four with an income of \$40,000

Last year, the average premium for a family of four covered by employers was more than \$9,000.
- Proposes health savings accounts to allow people

Guiding Principles

- Health care should not be characterized by disparities between the rich and poor.
- Steps should be taken to reduce what the nation spends on health care.
- All Americans need relief on skyrocketing health insurance premiums.
- We should support employers who provide health insurance for their workers.
- We should emphasize prevention and early detection.
- We should protect the public from catastrophic health care costs.

Key Elements and Projected Outcomes

- Proposes increased funding for medical safety net programs such as Medicaid to insure 99 percent of children.
- Proposes raising the maximum incomes for Medicaid and the state's Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- Proposes that government absorb 75 percent of medical bills exceeding \$50,000 per year to reduce health insurance premiums for all Americans.
- Proposes to relieve insurance companies and HMO's

THE BUSH PLAN

- who purchase insurance policies with high deductibles (\$2,000 or more per family) to shelter income from taxes.
- Proposes that the cost of health insurance premiums be deducted when purchased in conjunction with a health savings account.
The Bush campaign projects that this would result in one million new insured Americans.
- Proposes a five-year plan to fund 1,200 community health centers.
- Proposes medical liability reform to reduce frivolous malpractice suits and excessive jury awards.
- Proposes giving pooled small employers the same purchasing power as larger employers.

The Bush Plan is projected to reduce the number of uninsured by four percent, from 44 million to 42.2 million.

This would reduce the uninsured in Daviess County from 13,700 to 13,150.

NOTE: In his first term, President Bush:

- Signed legislation to expand prescription drug coverage through Medicare
- Expanded Medicaid eligibility and improved benefits
- Increased funding for health information technology demonstration projects to prevent errors and cut costs

Costs

- Less than \$100 billion over 10 years

How to Pay for It

- Reduce frivolous medical malpractice lawsuits so that doctors will not be forced to practice defensive medicine
- Reduce government bureaucracy
- Continue funding in health information technology to increase efficiency and reduce costs
- Stimulate economic growth and increased government revenue from tax cuts

Supporters Say the Bush Plan...

- Is much less expensive than Kerry's proposals.
- Would allow the tax cuts to stay in place as a stimulus to economic growth.
- Includes ample safeguards so that no one should be denied basic coverage.

THE KERRY PLAN

- of the risk of catastrophic care (should drive down premiums an additional 10 percent or more).
- Proposes tax credits for businesses that provide health insurance for employees.
- Proposes that individuals be allowed to buy into the same insurance programs that are available to government employees, including Congress.

The Kerry Plan is projected to reduce the number of uninsured by 61 percent, from 44 million to 17 million.

This would reduce the uninsured in Daviess County from 13,700 to 5,350.



John Kerry speaks at a town hall meeting on Medicare in St. Louis.

Costs

- \$600-\$700 billion over 10 years

How to Pay for It

- Rescind Bush tax cuts for the three percent of the population with incomes above \$200,000. (The tax cuts approved during the first Bush term are projected to reduce federal government revenue by \$2.8 trillion over the next decade.)
- Reduce health administration costs (25 percent of the \$1.7 trillion spent every year in the U.S. on health care is for administrative costs).
- Allow re-importation of prescription drugs from other countries to reduce costs and enhance competition.

Supporters Say the Kerry Plan...

- Offers the most promise for helping the uninsured, underinsured, and those struggling with rising health care costs.
- Provides the means for employers to continue offering health insurance benefits.
- Features a balance of assistance for the short term, prevention and early detection.

Critics Say the Bush Plan...

- Will only reduce the uninsured by four percent.
- Even with health savings accounts, few uninsured families will be able to afford health insurance. And the poor are not helped greatly by tax savings since they are in low tax brackets anyway. Health savings accounts will actually increase the number of uninsured.
- The plan provides another tax shelter for the affluent who don't have problems getting health insurance.
- Health savings accounts will reduce the incentive for companies to insure their workers.



President Bush announces a plan to save consumers on their prescription drug bill.

Critics Say the Kerry Plan...

- Is too expensive.
- Is more government intrusion into the health care marketplace.
- Avoids the medical malpractice crisis in favor of the interests of plaintiff lawyers.
- Falls short of the comprehensive overhaul of our health care system that is really needed.
- Will make it that much more difficult to reduce the budget since the plan devotes the proceeds from a tax-cut rollback to health care.

Note on Sources:

As readers might suspect, it is challenging to find consistent, objective information on positions and proposals of presidential candidates. For this health care summary, we drew from candidate and political party materials, published articles and reports from journalists, non-partisan organizations, and independent researchers.

Non-Partisan Resources on Health Care

The J. Henry Kaiser Family Foundation
2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650/854-9400
www.kff.org

Center for Responsive Politics
1101 14th Street, NW
Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20005-5635
202/857-0044
www.opensecrets.org

Common Cause
1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW # 600
Washington, DC 20036
292/833-1200
www.commoncause.org

Tax Policy Center
c/o The Urban Institute
2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
202/833-7200
www.taxpolicycenter.org

**General Election
November 2, 2004**

**Races for:
Owensboro Mayor
City Commission
State Legislature**

Voter Guide

- in-depth
- unedited, prepared by the candidates
- personal background, experience, political philosophy
- campaign volunteers, advisors, primary contributors
- motivation for seeking office
- commitment of time
- candidate is prepared to make
- views on open government, public access and participation
- top five issues

Voter Guide available at our Website - www.plfo.org
or at the Daviess County Public Library

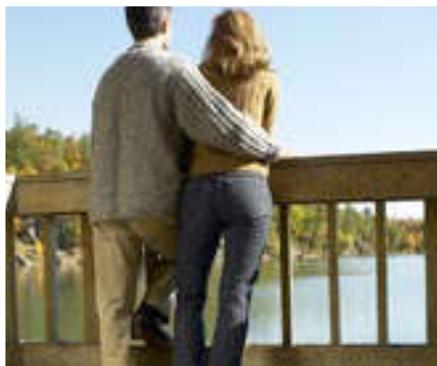
Framing the Issue



MAXIMIZING *Riverfront* DEVELOPMENT!

Which is the Best Strategy?

With funds flowing from Washington, the Owensboro Riverfront Master Plan is coming together incrementally. But leaders acknowledge that it will take more than these public sector investments to fulfill the dream. Private investment is vital, and how to bring that about is the question.



BACKGROUND



An Ambitious Public Investment

The 2001 Owensboro Riverfront Master Plan, heartily endorsed by city and county officials, business leaders and citizens alike, a plan that incorporates input from more than 30 public meetings and workshops over several years, will cost more than \$20 million. Phase one, the expansion of the RiverPark Center patio, is complete. Phase two, a plaza and small outdoor amphitheatre contiguous to the Executive Inn Convention Center, is nearly so. Future phases may include a retaining wall and dramatic expansion of park and civic space, playground, interactive fountain, overlooks, waterfall, walkway from downtown to English Park, marina, fishing dock, and more.

Stimulating the Best Private Investment

The improvements to this point have been absorbed primarily through federal government grants. (The plaza near the Executive Inn was recently named for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell to acknowledge his role in securing the funds.) The improvements in themselves are sure to be enhancements that will be used and appreciated by the public even if spin-off private developments do not occur.

Most observers agree, however, that to protect this major public investment and maximize the riverfront potential, the properties on the south side of Veteran's Boulevard (First Street), from RiverPark Center to the Executive Inn, should be developed in an appropriate manner to complement the improved and expanded civic space. To many, private investment is the key to riverfront development.



Above: The Mitch McConnell Plaza, under construction, will include an outdoor performance facility on the riverfront connected to the Executive Inn Convention Center.



Below: Phase one of the riverfront plan: an extension of the RiverPark Center patio to accommodate events such as Friday After 5.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

The Public's Vision

What does the public want to see in the area? In dozens of public hearings and workshops on riverfront development, participants expressed preferences for a critical mass of enterprises that attract people: specialty shops, entertainment venues, restaurants with river views, coffeeshops, bakeries, flower stands and food kiosks, bookstores, cinemas, night clubs, cocktail lounges, and art galleries were envisioned.

They also expressed a keen interest in design issues, appointments, and amenities that could shape the look and feel of the area: period lighting and signage, outdoor dining, use of wrought iron, open air malls, trees, bike racks, fountains, places to gaze upon the river, places to walk along the river's edge.



A PRIDE workshop on the riverfront plan.

The Planner's Perspective

The Riverfront Master Plan proposes that Veterans Boulevard "be developed as a major civic area that is people-friendly, with active uses..." The plan points to the appeal of riverfront properties for residential, restaurant, entertainment, and specialty retail uses.

The plan endorses rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings as well as new development, but with certain caveats. For example, planners acknowledge that...

- ... a condominium would be a welcome addition to our riverfront. But if the first floor is used for parking, it creates a dead zone along the sidewalk. A first floor café, bakery, newsstand, or flower shop would be better, adding vitality to the downtown, riverfront, and adjoining park.

- ... professional offices are common uses in the area. But these firms serve clients only and are not open on nights and weekends. To achieve the riverfront plan objectives, professional offices should be located on upper floors leaving the first floor for specialty retail, coffeeshop, barber shop, deli, or candy store.

- ... ample parking is essential to attract the public to the riverfront and nearby businesses. However, street front parking creates a dead zone and is not the highest and best use of the property. Parking should be located behind buildings or in structures. Street front parking lots should be developed to fill gaps, concentrate retail, and increase downtown vitality.

To achieve these objectives, planners look to regulation as the most effective tool. In this case, they propose an "Overlay District" in which riverfront district first floors would be restricted to certain retail uses. Existing buildings would not be subject to such restrictions unless the property is sold or an existing building is razed.

Property Owner's Perspective

Owners of office buildings and vacant lots on Veteran's Boulevard opposed the proposed Overlay District during a September 9 public hearing. They acknowledged support of the Riverfront Master Plan (without publicly acknowledging the benefits from increased property values), but they resented the intrusion into their rights as property owners, preferring full flexibility in the use and development of their property.

Some property owners speculate that, if forced to lease their first floor to retail shops or restaurants, they may be forced to accept vacancies or reduced rental income since there is no proven market for retail in that area.

Developer's Perspective

The Owensboro riverfront will attract developers when

- ...land is available at a price within the project budget, or

- ...buildings are available that can be renovated cost-effectively, and

- ...there is a strong market to attract tenants and convince lenders of project viability.

There may indeed be markets for Owensboro downtown and riverfront development. These markets will only increase as riverfront improvements and special event programming take place. Given suburban growth patterns and the unique hurdles to overcome in developing downtown, incentives will probably be necessary to attract developers: reduced or free land, parking, air rights over parking, tax abatement, infrastructure, construction/maintenance of adjoining civic space, or low interest loans.

Government's Perspective

In the riverfront project, Owensboro governmental leaders seek a distinctively appealing riverfront, an enhanced tax base, new businesses, jobs (construction and permanent), tourists, and a progressive community image. Since the plan calls for \$20 million or more in public improvements, they wish to protect and enhance that investment through every available means.

If incentives are needed, the cost must be measured against the tangible benefits of private investment (e.g., increased tax revenues, spin-off investment, jobs) and the intangible benefits (improved image, livability). Unlike suburban development sites, downtown projects generally do not involve extensive infrastructure costs.

Business Owner's Perspective

Businesses thrive on traffic and buying power. Traffic can drive by on South Frederica Street or stroll by following a day of convention meetings. They can be downtown professionals gathering after work or young couples with children enjoying a fountain or a sliding board. They can be tourists attending a softball tournament or an arts and crafts festival.

Some businesses and franchises shy away from downtowns; others will consider our downtown when conditions are right. The market, parking, nearby anchors, attractiveness, and clientele are all part of the consideration.

Clustering businesses is part of our downtown challenge. We need infill development where there are street front parking lots. We need a critical mass of businesses within walking distance of one another to create synergy between anchors.

Framing the Issue: Maximizing Riverfront Development

Experience of Other Communities

Incentives vary from project to project and are difficult to track. For Louisville's Fourth Street LIVE project, the City of Louisville acquired the former Galleria downtown mall and provided extensive incentives to attract the Cordish Development Corporation for leasehold improvements and recruitment of tenants around an entertainment theme.

Former Lexington Mayor Pam Miller, speaking to a September 16 gathering of PRIDE, re-

ported on her experience with Overlay Districts. "Overlay Districts were unpopular at first, but property values almost always increased significantly after the district was created."

Riverfront and Waterfront Overlay Districts have been used in Elgin, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Ludlow, Kentucky; Grants Pass, Oregon, among other cities.

Riverfront planners stress the programming opportunities that will emerge when the civic

space construction is complete. Concerts, exhibits, festivals, boat races, fishing tournaments, and carnivals are examples of events that can occur on the new riverfront that will attract the public and provide support for nearby enterprises.

OPTIONS & VIEWPOINTS

1. LET THE MARKETPLACE DRIVE OUR RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Beyond the planned riverfront improvements, keep government out of private development. No more zoning restrictions. The demand of the marketplace will determine riverfront development potential.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT	THOSE WHO OPPOSE
<p>If, as planners speculate, there is a market for first floor retail, restaurants, and entertainment, property owners and developers will build it or incorporate it into their buildings. We do not need an Overlay District. Property owners should be allowed to do whatever they please with their buildings and land.</p>	<p>Even with strong demand, because development is more difficult and complex downtown than in other areas, steps must be taken to control and coordinate projects. The public is investing too much money in the riverfront for us to take a chance that nearby properties are not developed properly.</p>

2. INDUCE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ZONING REGULATIONS (OVERLAY DISTRICT)

Between RiverPark Center and the Executive Inn, use zoning to create a critical mass of restaurants, entertainment, and specialty retail to enhance and complement the public investment in the riverfront. Through an "Overlay District," first floors in the riverfront district would be restricted to certain uses that are open to the public. Existing buildings would not be affected until properties change hands.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT	THOSE WHO OPPOSE
<p>Overlay Districts work, and bustling riverfront districts in other cities are a testament to the fact. We should use every tool possible to protect the public's investment in the riverfront and stimulate the best possible development. If we do not control development, an inappropriate use or eyesore could create a negative image and set back riverfront development for many years. Overlay Districts consistently increase property values, which is the best interest of property owners.</p>	<p>Zoning cannot make good things happen. If there is not a market for the uses called for in the Overlay District, we will see more vacancies or property owners will be forced to accept lower rents. Developers of professional offices and residential complexes will avoid downtown where there are too many restrictions.</p>

3. ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES

Rather than regulation, incentives could be used to stimulate certain types of riverfront development. In exchange for land purchase subsidies or affordable long-term leases, low-interest loans, or assistance with parking, developers could be required to reserve first floors for specified uses.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT	THOSE WHO OPPOSE
<p>Incentives work. In the past decade, the RiverPark Center Parking Garage and five-year tax abatements were used to stimulate millions of dollars in renovations on Second Street properties in downtown Owensboro. Incentives get the attention of developers and government gets a return on its investment through increased property values, taxes, and jobs. This is an effective way to target decaying areas in which the infrastructure is already in place.</p>	<p>Why should investors and developers receive incentives to build or renovate in downtown when similar incentives are not available elsewhere? This gives an unfair advantage to certain businesses over others.</p>

OPTIONS & VIEWPOINTS (CONT.)

4. FORM A DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO ACQUIRE PROPERTY AND CONTROL DEVELOPMENT

The City of Owensboro, Daviess County Fiscal Court, and other supportive parties form a development authority to acquire and hold property downtown and along the riverfront. The authority establishes development goals and guidelines, and solicits proposals from developers.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT	THOSE WHO OPPOSE
<p>The best way to control development is to control the land. Property along the riverfront will not get any cheaper. We must get the key tracts in friendly hands through an ownership group that seeks development that is in the best interest of the community.</p>	<p>City and county governments do not have funds for this kind of speculative initiative. Property may need to be held for long periods of time before there is any revenue. Losses would have to be absorbed by the taxpayers. We should not take such a risk.</p>

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

- Which of these options – or which combinations of the above strategies – represents the approach our community should take to maximize riverfront development? Are there other options?
- What started out as an effort to save a city park from eroding into the river has evolved into one of our community’s most ambitious projects. Has the project grown too large? Should we consider scaling it back? Is there a way federal funds can be diverted to other pressing community needs?
- Since \$20 million or more is proposed for public improvements, what amount should be set aside to stimulate the best private investment to complement the park improvements and expansion?
- A project of this scale needs full-time attention. The Louisville Waterfront Development project has had a staff of several administrators and planners for many years. Who will lead and coordinate the effort: local government, Downtown Owensboro, OMPC, a new development authority, Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation? Where can operating money come from?
- If we move forward with a development authority, where should funds come from to acquire land?
- What other projects, practices, and policies are vital to downtown? Rerouting of Second Street? Enforcing design standards? Eliminating eyesores? An all out effort to attract major headquarters to downtown? (Imagine the impact on our downtown if Atmos Energy, Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline, or U.S. Bank Mortgage had located downtown.) Adopting a policy that all public buildings/offices (e.g., OMU, post office, Social Security) be located downtown?

- ### TO LEARN MORE
- Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission**
 101 East Fourth Street
 Owensboro, KY 42303
 270/687-8650
 Gary Noffsinger, Director
- Edward D. Stone, Jr. & Associates (EDSA)**
 1512 E. Broward Boulevard
 Suite 110
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
 954/524-3330
 www.edsaplan.com
- American Planning Association**
 122 South Michigan Avenue
 Suite 1600
 Chicago, IL 60603
 312/431-9985
 www.planning.org
- Urban Land Institute**
 1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
 Suite 500 West
 Washington, DC 20007
 202/624-7000
 www.uli.org
- The Waterfront Center**
 1622 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, DC 20007
 www.waterfrontcenter.org

GET INVOLVED

Downtown Owensboro, Inc.
 101 East Second Street
 Owensboro, KY 42303
 270/683-2060
 Dan Edelschick, Executive Director

PRIDE
 401 Frederica Street, B-203
 Owensboro, KY 42301
 270/685-2652
 Susie Tyler, Chair

- ### SHARE VIEWS
- Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission**
 101 East Fourth Street
 Owensboro, KY 42303
 270/687-8650
 Gary Noffsinger, Director
 noffsingergl@owensboro.org
- OMPC Members:**
 Drew Kirkland, Chair
 David Appleby
 Mark Bothwell
 Sister Vivian Bowles
 Nick Cambron
 Jimmy Gilles
 Martin Hayden
 Judy Dixon
 Scott Jagoe
 Irvin Rogers
- Owensboro City Commission**
 101 East Fourth Street
 Owensboro, KY 42303
 270/687-8550
- Mayor Waymond Morris
 Commissioner Charles Castlen
 Commissioner Mimi Davis
 Commissioner Al Mattingly
 Commissioner Jim Wood
- Daviess County Fiscal Court**
 Daviess County Courthouse
 Owensboro, KY 42301
 270/685-8424

Judge-Executive Reid Haire
 Commissioner Bruce Kunze
 Commissioner Jim Lambert
 Commissioner Mike Riney



Citizens Speak: LEADERS RESPOND

Six months since the session, and state legislators have yet to act on the tobacco tax.

On March 9, 2004 Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA), the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, Kentucky ACTION, and Kentucky Wesleyan College sponsored a public forum on whether or not the Kentucky tobacco tax should be increased. Approximately 40 people attended the forum. The event was broadcast on public access television.

The balanced panel featured: a proponent for a tax increase, health foundation representative, physician, two tobacco farmers, and a Kentucky Farm Bureau lobbyist.

Near the conclusion of the forum, a questionnaire was distributed to solicit the participant's informed judgment on the issue.

- 96 percent supported an increase in Kentucky's cigarette tax. (Kentucky's tobacco tax is currently three cents – the lowest in the nation.)
- 91 percent supported an increase of 31 cents or more.
- 43 percent supported an increase of 51 cents or more.
- 91 percent think an increase will reduce youth smoking.

- 90 percent think it is more important to reduce smoking to prevent disease and reduce long-term health care costs than to protect the tobacco industry's interest.

Forum comment summaries were sent by email Action Alert throughout the community, urging citizens to share their views with state legislators.

Survey results were sent to state legislators from Owensboro-Daviess County and legislators in positions of leadership in Frankfort.

Several local legislators called in response, expressing support for the tax that would generate significant new state revenue while reducing the number of youth smokers.

But since the tobacco tax is tied to the budget, and tax modernization may be as well, and the size of the tobacco tax increase is still unresolved, citizens are left with partisan deadlock and without another budget for state government.

UNEXPECTED OBLIGATIONS

continued from page 7

"I'll see that she has a place to stay and something to eat, but I won't give her money. I tell her, 'I'll go to the store with you and buy food,' but I don't dare give her money as long as she's out there and not getting treatment."

Maria's mother emphasized that she and her husband, too, found strength in their religious faith and help from their church. Still, the life they lead now is vastly different from what they planned when Maria's father retired from the major corporation that employed him for more than 30 years.

"We planned to start a business, getting a few rental properties, and doing a lot of church work. I enjoy praying with people when they have trouble. And traveling -- I've never been to Las Vegas, and I wanted to go back to the Bahamas," Maria's mother said.

"Actually, I've been away overnight twice in the past two years."

She was able to continue in her position

as administrator of a sizable social service agency because, during the difficult transitional period when she and her husband first got the children, one of her older daughters gave up her business in another city and came home to help her parents.

The daughter helped for a year and a half.

Today, both grandparents are on medication for high blood pressure. But Maria's mother believes the children are making progress. "It's a blessing to be in their lives . . . seeing them happy in sports or in church, singing in the choir box and knowing you're making a difference in their lives."

But she still eyes her grandchildren with concern. "Nobody understands what the children (of addicts) are put through," she said, choking back tears. "The addicts get caught up in their own lives, looking for their next fix and their next partner. That affects children at a level that gives them baggage that hurts them today -- and that will hurt the community tomorrow."

Implications for the community

From her stance as a helping professional, Maria's mother naturally uses her own family's experience as a basis for generalizing about what she sees happening in the larger community.

"You're going to see this more and more because of the impact that substance abuse is having on this community. You can almost see it coming before it hits full force.

"(And with it) you also see a decline in the health of the grandparents . . . The whole family is impacted; it puts extra stress on the (addicts') siblings."

When grandparents seek help from the usual social service agencies, she says, "The door is not always open. It's easy to get caught up in all the red tape.

"We were extremely lucky to have Tim DeWitt to walk us through all the procedures. He was a social worker with the Department of Social Services. Many people don't have that, and these agencies aren't set up to help grandparents, especially those without legal custody." ■



OCTOBER/NOVEMBER Public AGENDA

Meetings, hearings, and forums open to the public. Please contact us if your organization would like its events listed by calling 685-2652 or sending an email to info@plfo.org. (Meetings are subject to change.)

OCTOBER

- 1 Preservation Alliance of Owensboro-Daviess County**
12:00 p.m.
Campbell Club (Contact: Gary Adams 683-3380)
- 5 Green River Area Council on Aging**
10:00 a.m.
GRADD

Owensboro City Commission
5:00 p.m.
City Hall
- 6 Rotary Club**
12:00 p.m.
Owensboro Country Club
Program: Bob Boudreau, District Governor
- 7 Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA) Board**
4:30 p.m.
Public Life Foundation Conference Room

Daviess County Fiscal Court
4:00 p.m.
Court House

Owensboro Metropolitan Board of Adjustments
6:00 p.m.
City Hall
- 12 Clean Indoor Air Taskforce**
11:30 a.m.
GRDHD

Green River Health Council
9:00 a.m.
GRADD

Owensboro Historic Preservation Board
5:00 p.m.
City Hall
- 13 PRIDE Board**
4:00 p.m.
Public Life Foundation Conference Room

Rotary Club
12:00 p.m.
Owensboro Country Club
Program: Will Carpenter, Global Information System
- 14 Chamber of Commerce "Rooster Booster Breakfast"**
7:30 a.m.
Executive Inn, International Room A (Reservations: 926-1860)
Program: Forum of Two Candidates for Mayor

- Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA)**
5:30 p.m.
GRDHD – Bedford Walker Community Room
Program: JAT Mountjoy, DC-CAP Program
- Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission**
6:00 p.m.
City Hall, 4th floor
- 18 Owensboro Daviess County Regional Airport Board**
4:30 p.m.
Boardroom
- 19 Owensboro Board of Education Luncheon**
12:00 p.m.
Seven Hills Elementary (Contact: Maxine Walker 686-1000)
2401 McConnell Avenue

Owensboro City Commission
5:00 p.m.
City Hall

Owensboro Daviess County Tourist Commission
7:45 a.m.
215 E. Second Street
- 20 Daviess County Public Library Board**
5:00 p.m.
Library

Rotary Club
12:00 p.m.
Owensboro Country Club
Program: Keith Free, Owensboro Community Development
- 21 Daviess County Board of Education**
6:00 p.m.
1622 Southeastern Parkway

Daviess County Fiscal Court
4:00 p.m.
Court House

Owensboro Utility Commission Board
4:00 p.m.
OMU, 2070 Tamarack Road
- 22 Owensboro Riverport Authority Board**
12:00 p.m.
1771 River Road
- 26 Clean Indoor Air Taskforce**
11:30 a.m.
GRDHD

Girls Incorporated Board of Trustees
5:30 p.m.
2130-G East 19th Street

- Owensboro Board of Education Luncheon**
12:00 p.m.
Central Office (Contact: Maxine Walker 686-1000)
1335 W. 11th Street
- 27 Rotary Club**
12:00 p.m.
Owensboro Country Club
Program: Richard Stallings, Home Builders
- 28 Owensboro Board of Education Board**
4:30 p.m.
1335 W. 11th Street

Owensboro Housing Authority
11:30 a.m.
2161 E. 19th Street

NOVEMBER

- 2 Owensboro City Commission**
5:00 p.m.
City Hall
- 3 Rotary Club**
12:00 p.m.
Owensboro Country Club
Program: Anne Cairns Federlein, Ph.D., Future of KWC
- 4 Chamber of Commerce "Rooster Booster Breakfast"**
7:30 a.m.
Executive Inn, International Room A
Program:

Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA) Board
4:30 p.m.
Public Life Foundation Conference Room

Owensboro Metropolitan Board of Adjustment
6:00 p.m.
City Hall

PRIDE Annual Meeting
5:00 p.m.
International Bluegrass Music Museum
- 9 Clean Indoor Air Taskforce**
11:30 a.m.
GRDHD

Owensboro Board of Education Luncheon
12:00 p.m.
Sutton Elementary (Contact: Maxine Walker 686-1000)
2060 Lewis Lane
- 10 Rotary Club**
12:00 p.m.
Owensboro Country Club
Program: Kirk Kirkpatrick, Funny Expressions



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.

The Citizens Committee on Education

Marianne Smith Edge, Co-Chair
msedge@smithedge.com

- hosted a reception to welcome Dr. Anne Federlein, new Kentucky Wesleyan College President
- tracking financial and student population trends of the city and county school systems (The CCE is concerned about growing disparities from a landlocked city school tax district.)
- launching "The Learning Community," a program to instill a higher value of education and lifelong learning into the fabric of community life
- developing a community higher education plan that will integrate and transcend the individual strategic plans of our local colleges and universities – interview and survey phase underway

Citizens Health Care Advocates

Dale Taylor, Chair
dalet@www.com

- sponsored a forum on substance abuse
- JAT Mountjoy, DC-CAP Director, will speak at the October meeting.
- supporting efforts to expand health care services for the uninsured and underinsured residents of our area
- launched a CHCA newsletter

Goodfellows Club

Barry Carden, President
bcarden@messenger-inquirer.com

- contributed more than \$60,000 in clothing to meet back-to-school needs for disadvantaged youth
- planning the annual Goodfellows Club Christmas Eve party
- supporting dental sealant program for disadvantaged youth
- held a successful 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

- adopted bylaws and formed a Nominating Committee to propose the charter members of the board of directors
- identifying program opportunities for 2004-05

PRIDE

Susie Tyler, President
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 projects
- held a work session to review riverfront plans and establish goals for Veteran's Boulevard development
- held second work session to solicit ideas for enhancing the new community entrance from the Natcher Bridge and West Parrish Avenue from the airport
- conducting historic home tours as a fundraiser

Unity Coalition

- adopted by-laws and will soon name its first group of officers and board of directors
- developing the 2004-05 series of programs

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