

PUBLIC LIFE

May 2005 – Volume 2, Issue 3
Owensboro, Kentucky

Advocate

Big Dreams, Big Decisions

*A citizen guide to prioritizing
proposed community projects*



About our 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*.



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.



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.

PUBLIC LIFE *Advocate*

Publisher	Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, Inc.
Editorial Board	Rodney Berry Dave Boeyink Fran Ellers John Hager Ed Staats
Editor	Rodney Berry
Executive Assistant	Kathy Strobel

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HOW TO CONTACT PLFO

Mail	Public Life Foundation of Owensboro 401 Frederica Street, B-203 Owensboro, Kentucky 42301
Email	info@plfo.org
FAX	270-685-6074
Phone	270-685-2652
Website	www.plfo.org

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Framing the Issue

Big Dreams, Big Decisions

*A citizen guide to prioritizing
proposed community projects*

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The look and feel of Owensboro and Daviess County could well be enriched in the years ahead. Public officials, community leaders, financial experts, organizational boards, a variety of committees, and private fundraisers all are wrestling with ways to build ambitious community projects now under consideration. The *Public Life Advocate* offers a guide to help *citizens* assess, prioritize, and have an informed voice in decisions concerning the largest of these substantial public investments. By Rodney Berry

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Major initiatives warrant a public process



by Rodney Berry

Public officials, members of governing boards, committees, and task forces: Opportunities are at hand – opportunities to make wise decisions, build good will, and enrich our sense of community.

In coming months:

- City and County officials will select priorities from an ambitious list of proposed capital construction projects.
- The Owensboro Board of Education will spend and borrow many millions of dollars, primarily to expand athletic facilities.
- The Daviess County Public Library will make decisions about relocating or expanding facilities.
- A citizen task force will examine and make recommendations regarding City-County government unification.

These are highly charged, volatile matters that could polarize our community. How leaders go about making these decisions, and the degree to which they welcome and value public participation, will determine whether these proceedings will be civil or rancorous.

In recent years, our foundation organized or was asked to have a leadership role in numerous community forums on health care access, education, community appearance and the riverfront, world affairs, race-ethnic relations, youth services, and more. In such capacities, we observed and learned much about what it takes to engage citizens in respectful, productive dialogue.

As work proceeds on these important community initiatives, we respectfully offer local leaders what we've learned:

Involve the public early.

If you wait until decisions are essentially made and hold the mandatory, perfunctory public hearings, the public sees right through it and resents it.

Educate

If you are concerned that the public is ill-advised, the remedy is not to dismiss their views and role, but to inform them – repetitively and effectively.

Don't make it difficult.

Facts, trends, the nature of problems, options, costs, points pro and con should be presented in a way that is clear, concise, and understood by all.

Take it to the people.

Public buildings can be intimidating. Driving downtown at night is inconvenient. Present information at schools, community centers, churches, fire stations. Work with co-sponsoring groups. Use the neighborhood alliances. Send a signal that you welcome and value the voice of all.

Set ground rules.

Hotheads and passionate proponents/opponents can disrupt meaningful dialogue. Set parameters that apply to all to ensure civility and equal participation.

Be balanced.

You should not try to sell your program. Your responsibility is to make decisions that are in the public's best interest. Strong leaders acknowledge legitimate points from other perspectives and trust in the collective wisdom of the people.

Promote dialogue and deliberation.

Don't stage debates. Progress and consensus seldom come from arguing. Give citizens a chance to wrestle with options, advantages and disadvantages, tradeoffs, and complexities of issues and choices.

Encourage and respect all points of view.

Foster mutual respect by giving citizens the opportunity to understand other points of view. Many people have never felt that their views matter. They deserve to be heard. Listen. Really listen.

Postpone judgment until all this takes place.

Resist the urge to come to judgment prematurely. Carefully weigh all the facts and perspectives before making your decision.

Be open.

Even if you are not obligated to do so: meet in public; deliberate in public; share the rationale of your decisions openly. Demonstrate that you have nothing to hide.

Such a process may be impractical when there is a short deadline or if the public investment is not substantial enough to warrant public scrutiny. But for the major initiatives under consideration currently, every effort should be made to systematically inform and engage the public. It will inevitably lead to better decisions, good will, increased confidence and trust in local leaders and institutions.

Contributors



Carrie Blackham

Carrie examined the plight of single mothers in her second *Public Life Advocate* assignment. "Despite the vast differences in their background and resources, every single-mother I spoke to suffered feelings of desperation."

Carrie is a lawyer and director of Audubon Area Community Services Child Care Assistance Program.



Chad Gesser

Chad teaches Sociology and directs institutional research at Owensboro Community and Technical College. He is founder of the local Conversations Café chapter. He recently launched owensboro.blogspot.com.



Susan Sommerfeldt

While acknowledging that our community has a stronger program than many places, "...schools are such an effective setting to instill good health habits and catch problems early. We need to make our school nurse program as important as capital construction projects."

Susan is a registered nurse, mother, school volunteer, wife of an emergency room physician, and cancer survivor.



Charly Wood

In researching his article on the underemployed in Owensboro, Charly interviewed more than a dozen families and individuals struggling with low incomes. "I was surprised and inspired by the optimism and determination of these people."

Charly is a former college English teacher, small town newspaperman, and producer in a community theater. He edits *Erete's Bloom*, a poetry journal.



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

PRIDE Day a successful team effort



More than 100 volunteers endured unseasonably cold and windy conditions to complete more than a dozen targeted projects during the first annual PRIDE Day on April 23rd.

Coordinator Rick Hobgood directed volunteers to medians, boulevards, the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, an historic cemetery, a municipal golf course, community welcome signs, parks and neighborhoods to pick up litter, plant trees and flowers, install public art, and more.

PRIDE membership has grown to more than 900 members, one of the largest organizations in Owensboro. PRIDE recently retained the services of McIlwain and Associates, a Lexington landscape architecture-planning firm, to develop a master plan based on citizen input for two major corridors leading into the community.

Rotarians enhancing science-history museum



The Owensboro Area Museum of Science and History will open our community’s first indoor playground in May. The “Kentucky Fun Play Space,” funded by the Owensboro Rotary Club, will be a 2,700 square foot, highly-interactive combination of units featuring a river and local history theme. It will be located on the museum’s second floor.

Approximately half of the \$263,000 project will be opened in May; the remaining units will be added as funds are raised. The

play space is designed by Inter Playco of Nashville.

Elevating the Value of Learning

For several years, volunteers associated with the Citizens Committee on Education have been exploring community reaction to a rather bold notion: What if Owensboro-Daviess County was known as the “Learning Community?” What if, in the very fabric of community life (in homes and neighborhoods, workplaces, churches, civic and social circles), there was an enhanced value of education and lifelong learning? Could we take steps to earn such a title? If we were the “Learning Community,” how would our community be different?

The “Learning Community” challenge has been introduced to citizens in dozens of community meetings. Citizens are signing on, volunteering, and endorsing the view that a higher value of learning is essential to our individual and collective success.

But what can be done to affect a community ethic? Can we really change behaviors? The committee is forming sector task forces to develop specific ideas and applications that emerge from the grass roots level.

Arts education programs expand

Owensboro’s exceptional arts education programs continue to grow and blossom:

- The nascent Owensboro Symphony Orchestra headquarters in the RiverPark Center complex will enable the orchestra to expand youth orchestra and academy programs.
- Maple Mount Summer Academy continues to grow in stature and offerings.
- Despite setbacks from a devastating fire, Owensboro Museum of Fine Art touches thousands of young lives with school and community programs.
- The International Bluegrass Music Museum places instruments in the hands of thousands of students through its popular “Bluegrass in the Schools” program.
- Owensboro Dance Theatre has always involved youth at a young age in its educational programs and productions.
- Theatre Workshop of Owensboro continues its Drama Club and youth productions that bring together talented youth from area schools for special learning experiences.

- RiverPark Center demonstrates its commitment to art education through its Arts Teach Kids series, scholarship programs, Arts in the A.M. instruction, teacher training, Kennedy Center Partnership, Arts Education Showcase, summer camp, Misoula Children’s Theater, and more.

Energetic President/CEO Zev Buffman plans to capitalize on the accomplished artists and technicians who will converge on RiverPark in July to build and launch the musical, *Dr. Doolittle*. The Young Adult Academy will offer master classes and hands-on experiences for theater students.

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Senior Citizens (AARP)

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Owensboro Community and Technical College

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Green River District Health Department

Bill Dixon, Executive Director
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Judy Dixon, Member
Metropolitan Planning Commission

John Edge, President
First Security Bank

Ralph Kunze, Retired
Retail sales, credit union, school board

Lorraine Lauter, OSU, Founder
MISAS

Cate Lauzon, Advocate
Commonwealth Institute of Parent Leadership

Mary Lester, Community Development Specialist
Audubon-Area Community Services

Hugh Moore, Retired Attorney
Moore, Malone & Safreed

Nilesh Sangoi, Controller
Ramada Inn & Days Inn

Madison Silvert, Attorney
Thacker, Thacker, Bickel and Hodskins

Linda Wahl, Program Director
Building Stronger Families



Framing the Issue

Big Dreams, Big Decisions

The look and feel of Owensboro and Daviess County could well be enriched in the years ahead. Public officials, community leaders, financial experts, organizational boards, a variety of committees, and private fundraisers all are wrestling with ways to build ambitious community projects now under consideration. The Public Life Advocate offers a guide to help citizens assess, prioritize, and have an informed voice in decisions concerning the largest of these substantial public investments.

by Rodney Berry



Introduction

Talk can be cheap, but construction and financing are not. In recent years, local officials and project proponents have done a lot of talking about their favored projects, but as decisions draw near, our community faces difficult choices.

If but a few of the proposed projects come about, Owensboro will experience transformational change. Dramatic public improvements to the riverfront, new assembly facilities, community recreation and educational facilities could change our visual landscape and improve amenities, while intensifying financial obligations for generations to come.

Some believe these community investments are long overdue and vital to keeping Owensboro and Daviess County competitive and appealing. Others are satisfied with what our community currently has to offer and favor less spending.

How do *you* feel about these projects? What are *your* priorities? We offer the following information in order to help you become more informed and better prepared to come to judgment on these major community projects.



Arena



Main Street Renovations



Baseball Stadium



Marina/Boat Ramp



Convention Ctr/Parking Garage



Rec-Plex/Ice Rink

Framing the Issue: Big Dreams, Big Decisions

PROJECT PROFILES

Arena

A downtown arena could be an anchor to complement the Executive Inn and a new or expanded convention center. The need for a more competitive facility gained momentum after Owensboro lost this year's Kentucky-Indiana high school all-star game to Bowling Green and its renovated Diddle Arena. Some feel such a facility is key to the Executive Inn's long-term viability, and the tourist-convention business it generates and accommodates.



Capacity: 6,000 seats (sports events)
8,200 seats (concerts)

Cost Estimate: \$29 - \$32 million

Potential Uses:

KWC basketball, Trade shows exhibitions, Arena Football, Professional Hockey, Indoor Soccer
Special events: concerts, circuses, wrestling, boxing, rodeos, basketball tournaments and all-star games, assemblies, etc.

Financing Options:

State Government Grant	Hotel-Motel Tax
Bonds	Private Sources (i.e., naming rights)
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Local Government

Economic Impact:

construction jobs, construction purchasing, permanent operating jobs, annual payroll/payroll taxes, out-of-town visitors, annual local purchasing

Est. Debt Service: \$1.25 million annually (assumes 50% financed through TIF, 50% @ 4.6% over 20-25 years)*

Operating subsidy: \$200-300,000 per year

Taxes generated:

sales tax, payroll tax, hotel taxes, other taxes

**current rates and terms for municipal borrowing*

Advantages:

- Expands our capacity to attract and accommodate larger conventions, concerts, assemblies, exhibitions, tournaments, and all-star games
- Better facility to attract larger crowds for KWC basketball
- A boost to the Executive Inn and other hotels
- May enable us to attract another sport (e.g., arena football, minor league hockey)
- Increased revenue from hotel-motel tax
- Creates jobs (construction, operating) and spin-off business
- Boost to downtown, new restaurants, shops, increased restoration, etc.
- Enhances community image

Disadvantages:

- Construction/financing cost
- Limited market to support such a facility
- Will likely require an operating subsidy
- KWC may prefer a campus facility
- OHS and OCHS will likely play basketball in their own facilities

Main Street Renovations

Buildings near the Daviess County Courthouse owned by county government are in need of major restoration-rehabilitation. Sensitive to historic preservation and with an interest in improving downtown vitality and appearance, County Judge-Executive Reid Haire appointed a task force to examine the options and make recommendations.



Capacity: 23,760 leasable square feet

Cost Estimate: \$3.5 million

Potential Uses:

government offices, private offices, retail, or housing

Financing Options:

Kentucky Renaissance Funds
Federal Tax Credits (Historic District)

Enterprise Zone
Government Bonds

Debt Service: \$270,000 per year (\$3.5 million @ 4.6% over 20 years)*

Break Even Rent: \$11.37 per square foot (would not recover property cost)

Economic Impact:

construction jobs, recurring tenant jobs, payroll, contributes to appeal of historic district

Taxes generated:

property tax (if sold to private owner), sales tax, payroll tax

**current rates and terms for municipal borrowing*

Advantages:

- Long-needed facelift of historic buildings
- Will improve downtown appearance and vitality
- Could attract new downtown businesses and residents
- Could get the property back on the tax rolls
- May generate other improvements

Disadvantages:

- Construction/financing cost
- Limited parking
- Risk (to sell, lease)

PROJECT PROFILES

Stadium for Baseball/Concerts



In November 2004, the Bring Back Baseball Committee proposed a public-private partnership for a new stadium that would attract a professional baseball team in the expanding Frontier League, as well as concerts, festivals, and other community events. The committee presented summaries of a market study, site plans, renderings, and a financing plan involving a locally-controlled nonprofit corporation as owner, tax exempt bonds, a surcharge on all revenues, loan guarantee, and a contribution of property and infrastructure.

In the final days of the 2005 General Assembly, state government authorized tax increment financing (TIF) for a comparable (yet more ambitious) Bowling Green project. Through the TIF tool that was adopted, a percentage of increases in state tax revenue in a designated district can be applied to the financing of qualifying projects. Community officials are exploring potential applications for the baseball stadium as well as other community projects.

<p>Capacity: 4,000 seats (baseball), 2,000 fixed, 2,000 grass 7,900 seats (concerts and festivals)</p> <p>Cost Estimate: \$9.75 million Includes: \$1 million value for land, Infrastructure, Team Franchise, & Start-up Costs</p> <p>Infrastructure estimates: \$425 thousand English Park site \$1.7 million Highway 54 site</p> <p>Proposed Role of City Government: Provide land and infrastructure Establish TIF District</p>	<p>Proposed Role of County Government: Levy surcharge on all sales at stadium \$3 million loan guarantee against surcharge revenue</p> <p>Proposed Role of Local Nonprofit Board: Secure \$1.5 million (local lenders) Borrow \$4.25 million (tax-exempt bonds) supported by state TIF</p> <p>Users: Frontier League Professional Baseball Team Community Baseball Teams Out-of-Town Baseball Teams (tournaments) Concerts and Festivals Assemblies and Community Events</p>
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Advantages (English Park):

- Stand alone project with minimal city/county liability, value for low cost
- Multi-purpose facility will accommodate baseball, concerts, festivals, and more
- Low-cost family entertainment
- Boost to economy: jobs, purchasing, tourism
- Will generate spin-off business and neighborhood revitalization
- Hometown team source of community pride
- Breathe life into underutilized riverfront park
- Enhance the riverfront effort from RiverPark Center to English Park

Disadvantages (English Park):

- Would require gift of city park
- Parking challenges
- Potential noise issues
- Limited visibility and accessibility

Economic Impact:
construction jobs, construction purchasing, permanent operating jobs, annual payroll/payroll taxes, out-of-town visitors, annual local purchasing

Taxes generated:
sales tax, payroll tax, hotel taxes, other taxes

Note: Public Life Advocate Editor Rodney Berry is a member of the Bring Back Baseball Committee.

Marina/Boat Ramp



The Riverfront Master Plan calls for the existing boat ramp at the foot of Frederica Street to be converted to park and civic space. English Park would be the site for a larger boat ramp with an inland marina, slips, and more. A marina near the Triad Industrial Park is also an option.

Less expensive options include a boat ramp only at English Park or a boat ramp on the former Chevron property near Daviess County Middle School.

<p>Capacity: 75-150 slips</p> <p>Cost Estimate: Boat Ramp (Chevron site) \$1.8 million Marina (English Park) \$9.8 million Marina (Triad Park) \$14.1 million</p>	<p>Financing Options: Federal Funds (Riverfront Master Plan)</p>
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Advantages:

- A quality marina is a natural feature of a riverfront plan
- Necessary to bring attention back to the river
- Will attract out-of-town visitors
- Will boost our community image
- Could attract spin-off investments (housing, restaurants)
- English Park is underutilized
- Would complement stadium at English Park

Disadvantages:

- Construction/financing cost
- Boaters represent a small segment of the community
- May require an operating subsidy

Economic Impact:
construction jobs, recurring operating jobs, out of town visitors, annual local purchasing, increased boating equipment purchases/rentals

Taxes generated:
sales tax, payroll tax, hotel taxes, other taxes

PROJECT PROFILES

Convention Center-Parking Garage

To sustain Owensboro's tourism and convention business, new or expanded Executive Inn convention facilities and an adjoining parking garage could be essential. We do not have the capacity to accommodate large exhibitions (a new nearby arena would expand capacity by 40-50,000 square feet), and existing facilities have notable deficiencies and limitations.

By including parking for the GRADD transit program, county government hopes to qualify for a federal transportation grant for the parking garage. If built in close proximity to the state building, the state building parking lot could be incorporated into the riverfront master plan.

Note: A convention center and arena could be combined in a multi-purpose structure, reducing space needed for exhibitions.



Advantages:

- Expands our capacity for conventions, trade shows, exhibitions
- A boost to the Executive Inn and other hotels
- Increased revenue from hotel-motel tax
- Creates jobs (construction, operating) and spin-off business
- Boost to downtown
- Enhances community image

Disadvantages:

- Construction/financing cost
- Will likely require an operating subsidy
- GRITS bus center may not be a compatible use
- Parking garage may be inadequate to serve several projects

Capacity: 66,000 square feet convention center
300-space parking garage

Cost Estimate:
\$ 8.5 million (convention center)
Costs would reduce by as much as one-third if combined with an arena.
\$ 4 million (parking garage)

Potential Uses:
trade shows, exhibitions, sporting events, assemblies, conferences

Financing Options: Government Bonds
Tax Increment Financing (if combined with arena)
Federal or State Grant
Federal Transportation Grant (garage)

Est. Debt Service:
\$ 659,122 per year (@ 4.6% over 20 years)*
(If convention center 100% financed)

Operating subsidy: \$200,000-300,000 per year

Economic Impact:

construction jobs, construction purchasing, permanent operating jobs, annual payroll/payroll taxes, out-of-town visitors, annual local purchasing

Taxes generated:

sales tax, payroll tax, hotel taxes, other taxes

**current rates and terms for municipal borrowing*

Rec-Plex/Ice Rink

A centerpiece of the city-county parks master plan, this proposal includes an ice rink, gymnasium, indoor pool-water park, exercise machines, multi-purpose rooms and support space. Our existing ice rink has long outlived its projected life and can only be used in cold weather months. Our two public swimming pools are only open during the summer. The Rec-Plex would allow year-round use of the rink and pool.

Note: An ice rink could be incorporated into an arena project, and Executive Inn owner John Bays has expressed interest in building a water park with private funds.



Advantages:

- Ice rink needs to be replaced with year round facility
- May enable us to attract a minor league hockey team
- Will provide first year-round public swimming facility
- Facilities and programs will improve fitness
- Enhances community image

Disadvantages:

- Construction/financing cost
- Will likely require an operating subsidy
- Rec-Plex may compete with YMCA, HealthPark, church and private fitness clubs

Capacity: 120,000-130,000 square feet

Cost Estimate: \$18 million (Rec-Plex)
\$4.2 million (rink only)
(\$3 million if part of the arena)

Potential Uses:
recreation, fitness activities and classes, sports: hockey, swimming, basketball, volleyball, and more

Financing Options: Government Bonds
ODCH Wellness Funds
State/Federal Grant

Est. Debt Service:
\$1.4 million per year (@ 4.6% over 20 years)*
(If \$18 million is 100% financed)

Operating subsidy: to be determined

Economic Impact:

construction jobs, construction purchasing, permanent operating jobs, annual payroll/payroll taxes, out-of-town visitors, annual local purchasing

Taxes generated:

sales tax, payroll tax, hotel taxes, other taxes

**current rates and terms for municipal borrowing*

OTHER COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The following projects also require significant community resources from governments, foundations, corporations, or private donors. Some are nearly funded; others are ideas or suggestions.



OWENSBORO HIGH SCHOOL EXPANSION

The Owensboro Board of Education plans a \$13 million expansion and renovation at Owensboro High School that may include a new gymnasium, artificial turf for the football field, auditorium sound and lighting, fine arts center renovation (if the public library swap goes through), and more.

The OHS basketball team would play its home games at the school rather than at the Sportscenter, and the campus would have an assembly facility that accommodates the entire student body.

Artificial turf on the football field would enable officials to convert the current practice field to parking or construction. Some site plans may call for the demolition of Longfellow School, which many consider to be important historically and architecturally.



OHS SHIFLEY PARK ATHLETIC ANNEX

The city school board plans to concentrate all outdoor athletic facilities (except for football) at Shifley Park. The board purchased contiguous property for \$575,000. Plans include facilities for baseball, softball, soccer, and in later phases, tennis and track. Since facilities are not contiguous to the OHS campus, the board cannot use bond funds and has had to draw from the General Fund.



PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Daviess County Public Library District Trustees continue to explore options for a new community library. A swap of the current library property for Frederica Street property owned by the Owensboro Board of Education is the preferred option. A downtown option has also been discussed.

Since rescinding a recent tax increase following opposition, trustees must scale down the project or build a new library in phases. Current plans call for a \$6.5 million project.



COUNTY SOCCER COMPLEX

The Daviess County Fiscal Court plans a \$1.5 million soccer complex off Fairview Drive near the booming Highway 54 corridor. This is designed to meet the growing youth league needs and enhance our community's capacity to accommodate tournaments.

No financing is expected. The County hopes to absorb the cost through a federal grant for drainage (a retention basin will be built in conjunction with the project), ODCH, Inc. wellness grant, and revenue from coal discovered when excavation occurred.



RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN

The 2001 Riverfront Master Plan incorporated citizen input from more than 30 meetings, forums, and workshops. Two phases are complete: the RiverPark Center BB&T Patio expansion and the McConnell Plaza next to the Executive Inn Convention Center.

The next phase, an expansion of Smother's Park via a retaining wall, will dramatically increase green space for festivals, concerts, and many other gatherings. Future phases may include a playground, fountain, overlook, waterfall, walkway to English Park, marina, fishing dock, and more. The total project: \$20-\$30 million.

Officials are counting on federal grants to absorb the cost of future phases.

OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT CAPITAL PROJECTS

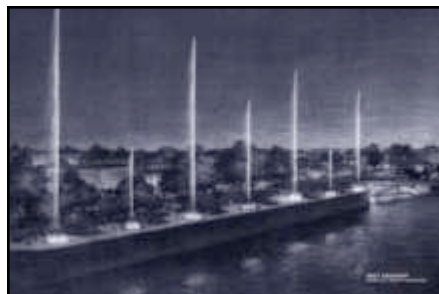
- Boulware Mission – relocation and expansion
- Boys and Girls Club – new building
- Brescia University Athletic Complex
- International Center
- Neblett Center – new building
- OMHS Cancer Center/Research Facility
 - \$24 million research component
- Owensboro Museum of Fine Art Restoration
 - Phoenix Rising Campaign
- RiverPark Center – \$3 million Young Adult Academy, other capital and endowment
- Symphony Center-Academy (in RiverPark Center complex)

OTHER CITY GOVERNMENT PROJECTS

- City Connections Bike Paths
- Misc. Drainage Projects

OTHER STATE GOVERNMENT PROJECTS

- Hawes Park Expansion/Improvements
- Higher Education Center
- OCTC Advanced Technology Center (Phase II)



Pictured above are renderings of options under consideration for a water feature to be located on the Owensboro riverfront.

WHAT IS THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO FINANCE THESE PROJECTS?

Both city and county government are fiscally sound, with a moderate amount of debt and a small percentage of annual revenues applied to debt service. Reserves are relatively low, however, and both governments propose cuts in departmental and agency allocations for 2005-06.

Faced with increased obligations (e.g., city pension plan, county jail), both governments are cautious to assume major community projects without leveraging local funds with federal and state grants, bonds, private funds, tax increment financing, hotel-motel tax, and other sources.

	City of Owensboro	Daviess County
Reserves	\$1.6 million	\$4.0 million
Annual Budget	51.8 million	55.7 million
Est. 2004-05 Balance (Deficit)	1.6 million	(1.0 million)
Restricted Funds (2004-05)		
Capital Construction	3.7 million*	none
Wellness Initiative (ODCH Funds)	3.3 million	3.9 million
Less Commitments	-3.7 million**	-1.8 million
Uncommitted Funds	3.3 million	2.1 million
Loans		
Legal Debt Limit	220.8 million	72.0 million
Total Current Debt	21.8 million	17.7 million
Annual Debt Service	2.3 million	1.3 million
Percent of Budget for Debt Service	4 percent	3 percent

Notes:

*.3 percent of the City's 1.3 percent occupational and net profits tax is restricted to capital projects.

**Funds earmarked in 2005-06 for drainage, parks, public safety, sidewalks, and transportation

Grant opportunities are monitored by staff and applications are submitted when promising. These include federal transportation, HUD Community Development, State Renaissance, and other areas. Legislators have been successful on occasion attracting grants for special projects (e.g., U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell secured grants for riverfront improvements).

Private sector support has been key for many community projects: RiverPark Center, Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, BB&T Plaza, and more.

Framing the Issue: Big Dreams, Big Decisions

PROJECT ASSESSMENT SHEET

Share your ranking on these projects.

■ For mail, send the completed survey to Public Life Foundation, 401 Frederica Street, B203, Owensboro, KY 42301

■ For online, point your Web browser to <http://plfo.org/projectssurvey.htm>

The foundation will compile the results and share with the public and public officials.

1 = disagree strongly

2 = disagree somewhat

3 = not sure

4 = agree somewhat

5 = agree strongly



Criteria	Arena	Main St. Renovation	Baseball Stadium	Marina	Convention Ctr/Parking	Rec-Plex/Ice Rink
Citizen Support						
There is a need for the project.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project represents an exciting community opportunity.	___	___	___	___	___	___
There is an active constituency promoting the project.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Many citizens have expressed support for the project (surveys, hearings, forums, etc.)	___	___	___	___	___	___
Community Appeal						
The project will enhance the appeal of our community...						
to businesses looking to expand or relocate.	___	___	___	___	___	___
to young people when they graduate from college.	___	___	___	___	___	___
to families.	___	___	___	___	___	___
to retirees.	___	___	___	___	___	___
to tourists.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Impact						
The project will generate a significant number of jobs...						
during construction.	___	___	___	___	___	___
in operations when construction is complete.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will serve a significant number of local people.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will attract a significant number of people from outside our community.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will be a valuable visual enhancement to our community.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will generate spin-off investment.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project could be a boost to downtown development.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will require a significant amount of local purchasing.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will generate significant sales, payroll, property or other tax revenue.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Funding						
Funds are available for the project.	___	___	___	___	___	___
There is a good plan to finance the project.	___	___	___	___	___	___
If funds must be borrowed, there is a good plan to absorb the debt service.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will not likely require a tax increase.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project will not likely require a significant operating subsidy.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The project leverages local funds with state, federal, or private funds.	___	___	___	___	___	___
The value of the project justifies the cost and/or risk.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Total	___	___	___	___	___	___

How much revenue would come from a...

1 percent increase in the City Occupational and Net Profits Tax:

\$10 million/year... which could finance \$145 million in projects

1 percent increase in the County Occupational and Net Profits Tax:

\$5.5 million/year... which could finance \$80 million in projects

1 percent increase in the City's Insurance Premium License Fee:

\$800,000/year... which could finance \$10.5 million in projects

1 percent increase in the hotel-motel tax:

\$ 130,000/year... which could finance a \$1.7 million project

1 percent restaurant tax (currently not allowed in second-class cities):

\$1.2 million/year... which could finance \$15.7 million in projects

COMPARISON OF COMPETITOR CITIES

	City of Owensboro	City of Bowling Green
Population (2000 Census)	54,067	49,296
Occupational Tax	1.3 percent	2.0 percent 3.5 percent*
Annual revenue from occupational, net profits, and insurance tax	\$13.7 million	\$27 million
Hotel-Motel tax (to county government)	5 percent	4 percent
No. of hotel rooms	1500	2500
City employees	442	610
General Fund Balance	\$1.6 million	\$14.3 million
Debt	\$21.8 million	\$93.9 million

* for employees in Bowling Green's new industrial park

Note: City of Owensboro Finance Director J.T. Fulkerson, Daviess County Finance Director Tony Sook, RiverPark Center CEO Zev Buffman, Deputy County Administrator Steve Johnson, City Facilities Manager Tony Cecil, and Messenger-Inquirer business reporter Keith Lawrence were helpful in assembling information on these community projects.

LEARN MORE/SHARE VIEWS

City of Owensboro

101 East Fourth Street
Owensboro, Kentucky 42303

Mayor Tom Watson

270/687-8561
mayor@owensboro.org

Commissioner Candace Brake

270/687-8565
brakecc@owensboro.org

Commissioner Charlie Castlen

270/685-8563
castlenca@owensboro.org

Commissioner Jim Glenn

270/685-8564
glennjh@owensboro.org

Commissioner Ron Payne

270/685-8566
paynerl@owensboro.org

City Manager Bob Whitmer

270/687-8558
whitmerrl@owensboro.org

Daviess County Fiscal Court

Daviess County Courthouse
P.O. Box 1716
Owensboro, Kentucky 42302
270/685-8424

County Judge-Executive Reid Haire

rhaire@daviessky.org

Commissioner Jim Lambert

jlambert@daviessky.org

Commissioner Bruce Kunze

bkunze@daviessky.org

Commissioner Mike Riney

mriney@daviessky.org

GET INVOLVED

Bring Back Baseball Committee

Bruce Brubaker, Chair
140 Southtown Boulevard
Owensboro, Kentucky 42303
270/684-1441
bbrubaker@champion-ford.com

Rec-Plex Task Force

Russ Wilkey, Chair
121 West Second Street
Owensboro, Kentucky 42303
270/685-6000
rwilkey@wilkeylaw.com

Owensboro Boat Dealers Association

Steve McNattan
The Boatman
3900 West Parrish Ave.
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301
270/683-0161

Downtown Owensboro, Inc.

101 East Second Street
Owensboro, Kentucky 42303
270/683-206

Preservation Alliance of Owensboro-Daviess County Inc

319 Booth Avenue
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301
270/926-5058
Gary Adams, Secretary
garysoft@aol.com
www.paupdate.org

School nurse program **GROWS**

BUT HAS SERIOUS NEEDS

by Susan Sommerfeldt

In March 1992, the Green River District Health Department saw a need to become more involved in school health. It began the school nurse program in Owensboro Public Schools at Estes and Foust elementary schools because of their high population of students from low-income families.

The city school system found that the nurses made a difference -- when children's health care needs were met, they were better able to learn.



Since then, the program has expanded to the county and Catholic school systems and is considered an integral part of the community's health care system. Nurses report that school health rooms are often the primary care or medical homes for some children and families who are uninsured or underinsured.

The nurses' services are not limited to students from low-income families, however. "It is a fallacy to believe that the private schools and more affluent children do not utilize the health services at the schools," said Kathryn Crowe, registered nurse for Owensboro Catholic Schools. "I see the same types of issues in our system and the need for education is great."

Funding now comes from several sources besides the health department, including Owensboro Medical Health System and the school systems themselves.

Nevertheless, some local health and school officials say that the program does not have enough nurses to meet the needs of all students, particularly given growing rates of childhood obesity, diabetes and asthma.

The American School Health Association recommends that school systems have about twice as many nurses as the Daviess County systems have currently – one for every 750 children. The rate here is about one for every 1,400 children.

In addition, local schools at times have to scrape together funds to keep the nurses they have. One year, Daviess County Middle School teachers and staff voted to contribute their school's "reward money" for student achievement on the statewide CATS test to retain registered nurse Anita Owens.

The registered nurses are assisted in many schools by health technicians whom they have trained. The health technicians are not licensed, nor are they required to have formal medical training. That means they can provide only limited services. However they are able to take over duties that once fell to teachers and staff members with little or no background in health care.

In the days before school nurses and health technicians, Debby Neel of OMHS remembered, "Children would come to the (school) office to get their meds, and school personnel would be asking what color their medications were since they were so unfamiliar with the drugs. With several children needing morning medication, the potential for error was tremendous."

Today, nurses and health techs are called on for an array of services, some of them complex. Besides monitoring students' medicines and dealing with injuries, they support students with chronic illnesses which may involve feeding tubes, insulin pumps, tracheostomy (breathing tubes) care, urinary catheterizations or intravenous medication.

Dr. Lee Clore, a local pediatric allergist/immunologist, said the school nurse program helps carry out the plans that doctors develop with their young asthma patients. "We send these kids to school with meds like inhalers with instructions. These 'asthma action plans' allow the school nurses to have a structured approach to the treatment of the asthmatic student. They are a valuable part of the health care team."

There's also a tremendous need for education about preventive health care, said Wendi Morgan, a



Under-employed IN OWENSBORO:

How Two Families Cope

by Charly Wood

Recently the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce identified low-wage jobs as a growing concern in the state and the nation. Nearly one in five people in our region hold such jobs, which generally pay between minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour and \$8 an hour. The chamber says a family would need to earn about \$8.70 per hour to stay out of poverty, and a 2001 study by Kentucky Youth Advocates found that families needed to earn more than \$10 per hour to meet a bare-bones budget.

This article will look at how two low-wage families cope. The first is a young couple with no children, the second a family of immigrants with two children.

Brian and Rachel

Brian and Rachel are an unmarried couple in their 20's. Rachel has lived in a modest, one-bedroom apartment for some months, and Brian is moving in with her shortly. They both work about 25 hours a week at a fast-food restaurant in Owensboro and earn \$6 per hour. Brian said he has been promised an extra 20 hours per week shortly. Currently, their combined income is about \$1,045 per month.

Working part-time on shifting schedules is not their preference, but they don't have a better option. Rachel didn't finish high school and has an uneven job history. She previously worked in a coffee shop but lost her job after becoming depressed when a previous relationship ended. She stayed out of the workforce for a time and had a hard time finding a job when she started looking again.

Today, Rachel has been working for eight months and is confident her experience will allow her to find another job. She's also studying to take the GED and thinks about becoming a technician in a veterinarian's office someday.

Brian is a high-school graduate and has worked more steadily; he too feels his future is not tied up in his present job. He loves computers and has also thought about becoming a mortician.

For now, however, the two are depending on the fast-food industry, which depends on part-time workers. "If you work 40 hours, they have to give you benefits," Brian said. "Sure, I'd like to work full-time, not just for the money, but to get health insurance mainly."

So how do they make it on such low salaries? Together they have expenses of \$600 per month, which leaves them about \$111 each week for food, clothing, personal supplies, medical expenses and other unanticipated costs (Rachel has two kittens that have had to be taken to the vet twice in the last few weeks).

Neither has a car at the moment; they both ride bicycles two miles to work and two miles back. Recently Rachel's bike was stolen and replacing it was a major hardship for her.

Neither has ever been rich, they say, but they do not consider themselves poor. When asked if they were satisfied with their present lot, Brian answered, "As long as we have each other," and Rachel said almost simultaneously, "As long as we're together."

For now, they think short-term and plan in small steps. Rachel says her real fear is that the continent will sink into the ocean. Brian talks of things he would like to be able to do in six months. For pleasure, Rachel paints and does other art work, and is a heavy reader. Brian's love is computers.

"I really do want to go to school," Brian said. "It's just a matter of figuring out how to pay for it." Rachel pointed out to Brian, "We work evenings and school is usually in the day time, so you would just have to give up some of your computer time to school time."

As to longer-range desires, Rachel mentioned wanting children "some day" and Brian said, "Yes, but not now." When asked how they might get from their "now" to their dream-future, Rachel said simply, "I have no idea."

INCOME AND EXPENSES



Figures here do not represent complete income and expenses. Interviewees were fairly precise on income and basis expenses as rent and utilities, less precise on grocery expenses, and even more vague on other expenses such as insurance and one-time items.

Brian and Rachel

Monthly Income	\$1,200 per month with each working 25 hours per week at \$6 an hour
Monthly Expenses	\$250 rent \$150 phone and utilities \$200 personal expenses such as video rentals, book clubs and computer related expenses \$200 for groceries plus shift-meals at work valued at \$80 \$880 total

Carlos, Maria, and Juan

Monthly Income	Total family income is a maximum of \$3,120 a month (for five people), but inconsistent and usually less, sometimes dramatically so. At the moment each of the three adults is working close to 40 hours per week and each makes \$7 an hour.
----------------	---

Carlos works as a cook in a hamburger restaurant. Maria works two part-time jobs in a medical facility and office. Juan works as a dishwasher.

Monthly Expenses	\$550 rent \$700 food \$170 gas in worst of winter \$ 70 electricity average \$ 50 telephone \$ 36 cable TV \$192 child care \$300 to parents in Mexico \$2,068 Total
------------------	--

Maria and Carlos

Maria and Carlos and Maria's brother Juan are Mexican immigrants who share a home in town. Maria and Carlos have two children who were born in the U.S. and thus are American citizens.

The three adults each work as close as possible to 40 hours a week but only rarely do all three reach that goal. Among them they have five jobs; generally they earn about \$7 per hour, so all three of them could make a total of about \$3,120 per month. Sometimes, though, their income does not even meet their expenses and Carlos has to pick up odd jobs wherever available to make ends meet, he said. When the three of them do have a good month, they send money their parents in Mexico.

The children, ages 4 and 2, are in day care while the parents work. The parents pay \$48 per week to the child-care center, which is about a third of the cost; the rest is covered by CCAP (Child Care Assistance Plan), the state's subsidy program. The adults have no medical coverage but the children get Medicaid and some prescription medication at a local clinic. Dental expenses are a problem for the adults and their budget is limited enough that they are staggering dentist visits, one appointment per month.

Maria was trained as a nurse in Mexico but is not certified for nursing in the U.S. She works part-time in a local medical facility and also works in a local office; in both jobs her Spanish skills

are helpful. She said her family would like to stay in this country, partly for the sake of their children. As immigrants, however, they fear they will eventually have to return to Mexico. Daily they face the possibility of being arrested and deported. This makes long-range planning difficult. Maria said she knows that they are doing better economically than some other immigrants, but also is aware they are still close to the poverty level. She said her family is treated well by everyone. Networking with other immigrants and organizations that work with immigrants makes life pleasant for them.

Carlos, Maria's husband, is future-oriented and his concerns pivot on making a better life for his family. He completed two years of college in Mexico and dreamed of being an attorney, but the economic situation there made that impossible.

In Owensboro, Carlos cooks hamburgers, but he also attends classes at a citizens' police academy in another city and speaks excellent English. His long-range goal is to be a police officer. But, "We can't think long range," he said. "We pay too high rent, so I would like to be able to buy a house. But what if I make house payments for years and then go back to Mexico? I could be left with nothing." ■

PLODDING THROUGH THEIR PLIGHT: Single mothers | work, JUGGLE & school, family



by Carrie Blackham

The challenges for single mothers in Owensboro and Daviess County can be overwhelming – especially for the 60 percent of them who have young children and are living in poverty.

That percentage is higher than state and national averages. Overall in our community, about 42 percent of single women with children of all ages are living below the poverty level. Families headed by single mothers make up about 12 percent of local households, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, a slight increase since 1990.

Sarah, whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, is one of these mothers. She is 25 years old with two sons, ages 5 and 2. When asked about the most difficult part of her life, Sarah said unequivocally, “Money.” Her family survives on a monthly K-TAP check (welfare assistance from the state) and the pay from her minimum-wage job. She obtained a clerical position through the Ready to Work program, a work-study program which helps K-TAP recipients develop job skills.

Sarah also receives several other subsidies from government agencies – child care assistance, food stamps and a Section 8 housing voucher. Nevertheless, after paying her bills, she has only about \$40 left each month for diapers, clothing and other necessities such as laundry detergent.

Although Sarah can provide food and shelter for her family, the federal welfare reform law of 1996 has changed the long-term outlook for single mothers, partly because of its five-year time limit on cash assistance to low-income families.

Sarah has been receiving K-TAP payments for the past three years. She said she is concerned about what will happen after her final assistance payment. She believes her problems will be solved with education. And she may be right.

According to the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, a working woman in Kentucky with a bachelor’s degree is likely to earn double the income of a woman without a high school diploma. But only 9.4 percent of the women in Daviess County older than 25 have a bachelor’s degree and only 6.8 percent have an associate degree. The numbers are higher for women without a high school diploma – 12.7 percent.

But this spring, after five semesters -- one semester more than the traditional student -- Sarah will graduate from Owensboro Community and Technical College with a degree in human services. Sarah has been lucky; up to this point her education has been financed with grants that she will not have to repay.

Next semester, however, when she begins working toward a bachelor’s degree in social work at Brescia University, Sarah may receive some grants but she also expects to take out student loans for much of the cost. It will take 16 months for Sarah to finish her education. It is doubtful that will be before her K-TAP payments end. In that case, she expects to attend school full time, work full time and care for her children.

Once she completes her education, Sarah hopes to obtain employment with the state Department of Juvenile Justice or Probation and Parole, where the starting pay can range from \$20,000 to \$23,000. What she may not realize is that she may still qualify for some of the benefits that her family currently receives.

The careers traditionally chosen by women tend to be those that

pay the lowest wages. This is another area of local concern. Nancy Eskridge of Owensboro, a member of the Kentucky Commission on Women, notes that occupational segregation is a real problem for the women in Daviess County and across the state. Jobs traditionally held by women -- in elementary education and social services, for instance -- are among the lowest paid jobs available. Careers which pay more in math, science and technology are seldom chosen by girls in Kentucky: only about 17 percent of girls as compared to about 41 percent of boys, according to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research. To encourage more women to seek higher-paying jobs, Eskridge said the Kentucky Commission on Women plans to start a mentoring program to pair up successful women -- those with higher education, professional careers or business owners -- with other local women and teenagers who may share their interests.

For now, however, Sarah is mainly concerned with staying on course while meeting the needs of her young sons. At times, she said, she’s ashamed of her circumstances and worried about how her boys will be affected. She grew up in a two-parent household where both parents worked. Her children don’t know that type of stability. Their father is not involved in their lives, though he visits sometimes. He lacks a high school diploma and seldom works, she said. After the birth of her second child, Sarah discovered that he has eight children by five different women. He hit her once, Sarah acknowledged, and was accused of physically abusing other women in his life. He doesn’t provide financial support to any of them and spends the major-

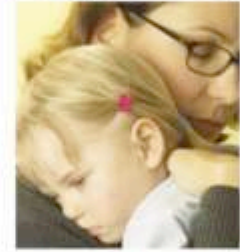
ity of his time in jail for not paying child support, she said. The situation is common among her friends living in similar circumstances, Sarah said.

Amy Fogle, the Ready to Work coordinator, said that single parents definitely need help beyond financial assistance from state programs, such as childcare assistance and food stamps.

Some indirect support is available. The Asset Building Coalition, for instance, educates low-income families in how to work toward financial self-sufficiency. Additionally, the Center for Community and Economic Development of the Owensboro Community and Technical College has set a goal to increase the number of scholarships by 50 percent over five years. The center is also attempting to increase access to higher education for low-income students by offering courses at varying times of the day and evening and in various forms (using computers and televisions).

The most intractable issue for single mothers, however, is how to improve their finances while also parenting their children. According to Nancy Roberts, the child care resource and referral manager for Audubon Area Community Services and a single mother herself, this issue is paramount. She asked, “Where does a single parent draw the line between continuing her education and working to support her family while still providing the stability that only a parent can provide?” Perhaps the better question is: How can the community help? ■

“Their father is not involved in their lives ... He lacks a high school diploma and seldom works ... After the birth of her second child, Sarah discovered that he has eight children by five different women.”





Citizens Speak: LEADERS RESPOND

Residents shape Old Germantown redevelopment

For more than two years, residents of the Old Germantown Neighborhood have shaped the \$5 million redevelopment underway in the area. In advisory committee meetings and public hearings, residents reviewed census data, property evaluation information, zoning regulations, plans, budgets, and priorities.

According to City of Owensboro Community Development Director Keith Free, the plan is 85 percent complete. The centerpiece of the project (that was not included in the budget) is a new park on the approximate site of the Smith Machine property on J.R. Miller Boulevard. Architects will soon be retained to design the park and homes that will be built on its perimeter.

The district (bounded by J.R. Miller Boulevard, Bolivar Street, Ninth Street, and Fifth Street) is undergoing an ambitious facelift through \$2 million in federal Housing and Urban Development funds and \$3 million in private investment.

By year end, home ownership is expected to climb from 38 to 55 percent. It is hoped that the redevelopment effort will also reduce crime, illegal drug activity, and other problems that have plagued the Old Germantown area.

Residents share faith traditions

The Owensboro Human Relations Commission featured representatives of two dozen faith communities in a Religious Roundtable on April 21st. The forum provided an opportunity for attendees and a television audience to listen and learn about diverse faith traditions that are present in our community: history, beliefs, misconceptions, membership, and more.

Perhaps future programs will address discrimination, cultural difficulties, language barriers, hate crimes, and other problems faced by certain cultures and faith communities, as well as steps our community can take to promote understanding and tolerance.

As our community becomes increasingly diverse, this kind of dialogue will be increasingly important and valuable.

Report on City-County Unification Test Forum

On February 28, the Public Life Foundation convened 12 citizens to participate in a forum (a “run through”) to test the effectiveness of a dialogue guide and format for future forums on this important, re-emerging community issue.

Participants reflected a balanced demographic mix of ages, gender, and place of residence.

Following the forum, participants completed a questionnaire. *One hundred percent* of the participants indicated that...

- the forum helped them understand the unification issues and choices facing our community
- the forum helped them gain a greater understanding of other points of view
- others should participate in a similar forum
- forums such as this should be held throughout the period that the city-county task force is doing its work (rather than wait until the task force completes its work)

- the information was clear and easy to understand, fair and balanced

All but one participant indicated that forums such as this will reduce the divisiveness that characterized the 1990 merger initiative.

At this point, City and County officials recommend that the task force be given time to gather more facts, examine unified departmental scenarios, and more fully identify the advantages and disadvantages of unification before engaging in dialogue with the public.

For a complete summary of the February 28 forum, call the Public Life Foundation: 270/685-2652.

SCHOOL NURSE PROGRAM

continued from page 13

registered nurse for the Daviess County Public Schools.

But for the most part, Morgan doesn't have the time for it, she said. "I oversee four schools, with almost 1,900 students. We've got much sicker kids in school now, which requires training the teachers and staff on the kids' illnesses in addition to overseeing the health techs. It doesn't leave much time to get into the classroom on a regular basis."

Here's how the school systems are staffed now:

1. One registered nurse (employed by the hospital) oversees the four Catholic schools and about 1,400 students. The system also has three health technicians.

2. Owensboro Public Schools has four registered nurses (two employed by the health department and two employed by the school system) and three health technicians for 10 schools and about 4,000 students.

3. Daviess County Public Schools has seven registered nurses (four employed by the school system and three employed by the health department) and 15 health technicians for 17 schools and about 11,000 students.

The approach of the school systems to health care issues has evolved over the years. Last year, for instance, the Daviess County Board of Education developed a more comprehensive health education plan. The Healthy Student and Staff Initiative resulted in bimonthly parent health programs, expanding the school resource officer program, the production of a healthy food booklet for parents and staff, and replacing vending machine items with 50% healthier choices. One middle school in the system volunteered to pilot 100% healthy vending choices. ■



MARCH/APRIL 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.)

Important Upcoming Public Meetings

MAY

- 4 City-County Unification Task Force**
6:30 p.m.
GRADD
- 5 Citizens Health Care Advocates**
5:30 p.m.
Round table discussion in observance of "Covering the Uninsured Week"
Green River District Health Department
Bedford Walker Community Room
- 10 Joint Daviess County Fiscal Court – Whitesville City**
Commission Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Whitesville Senior Center
- 12 Citizens Health Care Advocates**
5:30 p.m.
Green River District Health Department
Bedford Walker Community Room
Program: Final Stages of Health Care
Guest speakers: Jesse T. Mountjoy, [Sullivan, Mountjoy, Stainback & Miller
Jeremy Bradford, Hospice & Palliative Care of the Ohio Valley
- 16 Coalition for the Poor**
12:00 p.m.
First Christian Church

- 17 Daviess County Fiscal Court**
Work Session – Economic Development
12:00 p.m.
Daviess County Courthouse
- 18 City-County Unification Task Force**
6:30 p.m.
GRADD
- 19 PRIDE Membership Meeting**
12:00 p.m.
Wendell Foster Campus, Young Meeting House
Featured speaker: Gail Riecken, Director, Evansville Parks & Recreation
Light lunch will be served
RSVP to Liz Seibert at 685-2652 or liz.seibert@plfo.org

JUNE

- 17-19 Goodfellows Club Benefit Tennis Tournament**
Chautauqua Park
For sponsorship or participant information, contact Janie Walther, 688-4878

Regularly Scheduled Public Meetings

Meeting Dates and Times Subject to Change

- Citizens Health Care Advocate**
Second Thursday each month
5:30 p.m.
GRDHD, Bedford-Walker Community Room
- Daviess County Board of Education**
Third Thursday each month
6:00 p.m.
1622 Southeastern Parkway
- Daviess County Fiscal Court**
First and Third Thursday each month
4:00 p.m.
Daviess County Courthouse
- Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce "Rooster Booster" Breakfast**
First Thursday each month
7:30 a.m.
Executive Inn

- Green River Health Council**
Second Tuesday every other month (Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, Dec)
10:00 a.m.
GRADD

Neighborhood Alliance Meetings

- Apollo Area Alliance**
Fourth Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
Apollo Heights Baptist Church.
- Audubon Bon Harbor Area Alliance**
Second Monday each month
6:30 p.m.
Audubon Church of the Nazarene

continued on pg. 19

The TRACKER

DATA OF INTEREST



Compiled by
Chad M. Gesser

FACTS ABOUT DRUGS AND THE DRUG INDUSTRY:

- Each year 32,000 older adults suffer from hip fractures—contributing to more than 1,500 deaths—attributable to drug-induced falls.
- Two million older Americans are addicted or at risk of addiction to minor tranquilizers or sleeping pills because they have used them daily for at least one year.
- According to the Fortune 500 in 2002, the drug industry ranked second among all business sectors in return on shareholder equity, with a rate more than two-and-a-half times the 2002 Fortune 500 median (27.6% compared with 10.2%).
- In the 1990s, the drug industry's profitability grew to almost four times the Fortune 500 median.
- Vioxx (arthritis medication now off the market) was more heavily advertised in 2000 than Budweiser and Pepsi.
- Pfizer (maker of Benadryl, Celebrex, Cortizone, Lipitor, Neosporin, Roloids, Sudafed, Viagra, Zoloft, Zyrtec, and other medications) had more profits in 2001 than all of the Fortune 500 homebuilding, apparel, railroad and publishing companies combined.
- Of the 50 most popular drugs discovered, 45 were discovered with taxpayer-funded research.
- Compared to all other industries, the federal tax burden on the drug industry is 40% lower.
- According to the National Institute of Health, taxpayer-funded scientists conducted 55 percent of the research projects that led to the discovery and development of the top five selling drugs in 1995.

This Index and other items of interest can be found at The Owensboro Blog: <http://owensboro.blogspot.com>

Chad Gesser is Director of Institutional Research at Owensboro Community and Technical College. He holds a master's degree in sociology from Western Kentucky University.

Public AGENDA, cont.

Dogwood Azalea Neighborhood Alliance

Third Thursday each month
5:30 p.m.
Davie County Public Library

Dugan Best Neighborhood Alliance

Fourth Tuesday each month
6:00 p.m.
Dugan Best Recreation Center

Hillcrest Area Alliance

Second Tuesday each month
6:30 p.m.
Davie County High School Media Center

Midtown East Neighborhood Alliance

First Thursday each month
5 p.m.
Buena Vista Baptist Church

Northwest Neighborhood Alliance

Fourth Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
English Park Center

Old Owensboro Neighborhood Alliance

Second Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
Brescia University Campus Center

Seven Hills Neighborhood Alliance

First Thursday each month
7:00 p.m.
Trinity United Methodist Church

Shifley-York Neighborhood Alliance

Second Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
Lewis Lane Baptist Church

Southeast Alliance

Second Thursday each month
6:30 p.m.
Newton Parrish Elementary School

Wesleyan-Shawnee Neighborhood Alliance

Fourth Tuesday each month
6 p.m.
Kentucky Wesleyan College, Administration Building, Room 103

Owensboro Board of Education

Fourth Thursday each month
4:30 p.m.
Boardroom

Owensboro City Commission

First and Third Tuesday each month
5:00 p.m.
City Hall

Owensboro-Davie County Regional Airport

Third Monday of each month
4:30 p.m.
Airport terminal building conference room

Owensboro Historic Preservation Board & Downtown Design Review Commission

Fourth Wednesday each month
5:00 p.m.
City Hall

Owensboro Housing Authority

Fourth Thursday each month
11:30 a.m.
2161 E. 19th St.

Owensboro Metropolitan Board of Adjustment

First Thursday each month
6:00 p.m.
City Hall

Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission

Second Thursday each month
6:00 p.m.
City Hall

Owensboro Riverport Authority

Fourth Friday each month
12:00 p.m.
1771 River Road

Owensboro Utility Commission

Third Thursday each month
4:00 p.m.
2070 Tamarack Rd., Third floor board room

Preservation Alliance of Owensboro-Davie County, Inc.

First Friday every other month (Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, Dec)
12:00 p.m.
Campbell Club

RWRA

Third Monday of each month (except January, Fourth Monday)
3:30 p.m.
RWRA, 1722 Pleasant Valley Road

Tobacco Control Coalition

Fourth Wednesday each month
11:30 a.m.
GRDHD

Tourism & Convention Bureau

Third Thursday each month
7:45 a.m.
215 E. Second St.

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

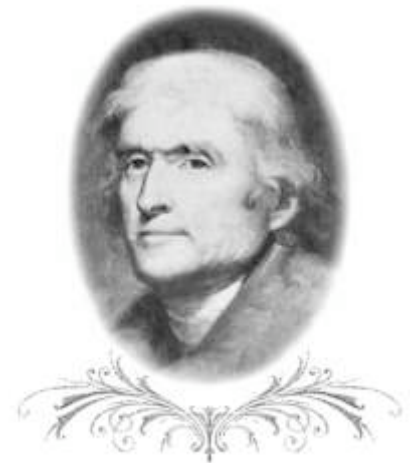
The *Public Life Advocate*, published monthly, is committed to be a trusted resource of information and analysis of public concerns and community issues. The *Advocate* is a community-driven publication, grounded in a commitment to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

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



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.

Bring Back Baseball Committee

Bruce Brubaker, Chair

bbrubaker@champion-ford.com

- pending response from City and County on requests for assistance
- if City and County do not fund a feasibility study, BBB Committee will raise funds for such a study
- considering a Frontier League affiliation (the same league in which the Evansville Otters compete)

The Citizens Committee on Education

Marianne Smith Edge, Co-Chair

msedge@smithedge.com

Forrest Roberts, Co-Chair

robroom@adelphia.net

- will soon release its Strategic Higher Education Study
- making presentations, broadening the base of support for "The Learning Community," a program to instill a higher value of education and lifelong learning into the fabric of community life
- tracking data and trends connected with city-county school district disparities

Citizens Health Care Advocates

Dale Taylor, Chair

dalet@www.com

Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month, 5:30 p.m., Green River District Health Department

- conducted a roundtable discussion as part of "Covering the Uninsured Week"
- adopted "Five Fields of Focus" for 2005:
 - access to health care
 - healthy lifestyles
 - governmental affairs
 - health care costs
 - organizational development
- supporting efforts to reduce second-hand smoke exposure
- CHCA now has 103 members and meetings are broadcast on OCTV

Coalition for the Poor

Rodney Berry

rodney.berry@plfo.org

Next Meeting: May 16, noon, First Christian Church

- sharing information and concerns regarding the impact that government social program cuts have on the poor

Goodfellows Club

Barry Carden, President

bcarden@messenger-inquirer.com

- convened youth service providers to discuss community needs
- concluded successful 2004 "Roll Call" campaign, raising \$97,000
- contributed funds for winter coats, shoes and clothing as requested by school social workers
- making plans for Spring benefit tennis tournament: June 17-19

Maceo Concerned Citizens

Patsy Hawes Gordon

10038 Kelly Cemetery Road, Maceo, KY 42355

- tracking the cleanup and sealing treatment of a former hazardous waste "Super Fund" disposal site near Maceo in east Daviess County.
- promoting nearby wooded areas as a possible public park.

Owensboro Area World Affairs Council

Stephanie Curran

curranp@bellsouth.net

Board meetings: 4th Thursday, 11:30 a.m., Kentucky Wesleyan College

- recently adopted bylaws and elected its first officers and directors.
- identifying program opportunities for series to begin in the fall of 2005

PRIDE

Susie Tyler, President

grand.view@adelphia.net

- conducted first annual PRIDE Day on April 23
- developing master plan from citizen input on new community entrance from the Natcher Bridge and West Parrish Avenue from the airport
- meet regularly with architects of proposed projects
- meet regularly with engineers and utility representatives regarding planned transportation and other public projects.
- conducting historic home tours as a fund-raiser

Unity Coalition

David Kelly, President

davak@bellsouth.net

- heard a presentation by Jana Beth Francis on "Mix it Up, a program to enhance race-ethnic relations in our schools
- heard a presentation by Sister Lorraine Lauter on immigration issues
- planning future programs: speakers, panels and film discussions