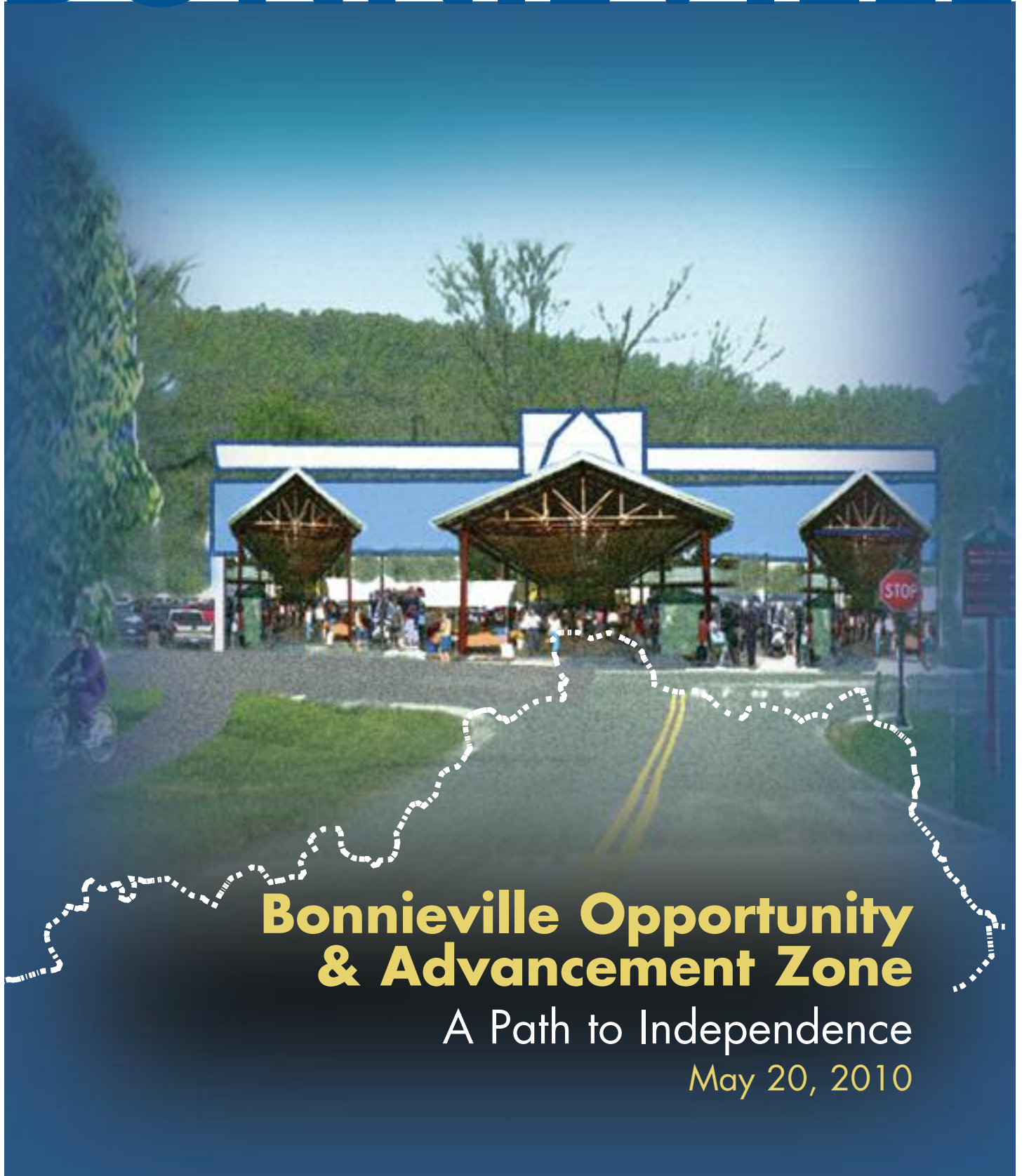


BONNIEVILLE



Bonnieville Opportunity & Advancement Zone

A Path to Independence

May 20, 2010



When Our Community Works
Together, All Things Are **Possible**



Overview

BONNIEVILLE is located in Hart County, Kentucky along US Highway 31W and just off Interstate 65 at Exit 71. The population of Bonnieville is 364. Founded in 1849, the area was settled along the banks of Bacon Creek, the original name of the town.

The community is rich in history. Of particular note are the "tragedy at Frenchman's Knob" in 1782, and the community's role in the Civil War. On October 10, 1861, the first blood of the rebellion to fall in Kentucky was shed at Bacon Creek. The bridge at Bacon Creek located along a vital supply route was burned five different times throughout the war. The most recent bridge at Bacon Creek still stands, thankfully! Kimmy Cook, a local historian and Bonnieville City Commissioner, along with several others have created a comprehensive website detailing the history of the area - www.bchist.com.

Like many of Kentucky's small cities, the construction of interstate highways and ease of transit have created challenges for the community's economic condition and population. These changes have not, however, negatively impacted the community's spirit.

Bonnieville citizens care deeply about their community and one another. The community is regularly at the top of the list for per capita contributions to Louisville's WHAS Crusade for Children. Citizens have rallied around their local elementary school and persuaded local officials not to close or consolidate it. When a local family suffers tragedy, Bonnieville's citizens step up to provide shelter, food, clothing and moral support. These qualities form the foundation of community spirit which keep hopes and dreams alive and bring us to the purpose of this particular report. What can Bonnieville do to build a sustainable future?

On March 4, 2010, more than 80 citizens of the community gathered at Bonnieville Elementary School to begin a dialogue about the future of the community. Spearheaded by Bonnieville Mayor Tommy Atteberry and the city commission and driven by the Bonnieville Opportunity and Advancement Zone Steering Committee, the community of Bonnieville has charted a course that will preserve its values and way of life while creating and implementing a strategy for a successful future. Visit the city of Bonnieville's website at: www.bonnieville.org.



“What We Heard”

More than 80 Bonnieville citizens gathered at Bonnieville Elementary School on March 4, 2010, to share their hopes, dreams, concerns and visions for their community. A few of the things that we heard were:

Community Strengths

- ◆ Fund-raisers
- ◆ Churches working together
- ◆ Great fire department
- ◆ Concerned town board
- ◆ Small town charm
- ◆ People, location and history
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ 21st Century After School Program
- ◆ Two homemakers clubs
- ◆ Strategic location
- ◆ Friendly and helpful people
- ◆ Railroad access

- ◆ Old theatre

Community Weaknesses

- ◆ Nothing represents history in our community
- ◆ Lack of positive recreation activities for youth and seniors
- ◆ Lack of long-term commitment
- ◆ Lack of stores, variety of products
- ◆ Rundown buildings
- ◆ Natural resources not developed - such as the Bacon Creek
- ◆ No community building
- ◆ Unemployment
- ◆ Lack of appreciation for what is already here
- ◆ Lack of diverse opportunities for all ages
- ◆ Lack of pride in property ownership



“What We Heard”

Community Opportunities

- ◆ Rich in history
- ◆ Volunteer community theatre
- ◆ Physician/medical facilities
- ◆ Government housing
- ◆ Laundromat
- ◆ Motel
- ◆ Walking trail
- ◆ Bed-and-breakfasts
- ◆ Car wash
- ◆ Ball park
- ◆ New school
- ◆ Industry
- ◆ Park in town
- ◆ Ag Expo Center
- ◆ Hardware store/Dollar Store
- ◆ Sidewalks
- ◆ Feed mill/grain depot/feed processor
- ◆ Commercial scale
- ◆ Community center
- ◆ Covered bridge
- ◆ After school opportunities for children
- ◆ Movie theatre
- ◆ Museum



Community Threats

- ◆ Parking
- ◆ Lack of long-term commitment
- ◆ Lack of community drawing power
- ◆ First impression of the town
- ◆ Lack of employment opportunities
- ◆ Lack of community volunteers
- ◆ Denial that problems exist
- ◆ People fear change
- ◆ Reluctance to change
- ◆ Loss of control due to growth

“ This gives me an opportunity to do something not only for my grandchildren, but for all of the children in the community.”

- Norman Cottrell
Bonnieville Businessman

“What We Heard”

Community Design Charette

A community design charette (drawings by participants) was conducted to ask the citizens to transform their words into visual representations or pictures. Nine table groups of six citizens each collaborated to create their visions of the community - where things should go, what they should look like, how they connect to the big community picture.

After conducting the charette, these big picture themes emerged:

- ◆ Facelift of downtown
- ◆ Beautifying downtown - trees/grass - peddlers mall
- ◆ Old motel - single family/multi-family units with swimming pool
- ◆ Nice welcome signs at the edge of town
- ◆ Civil War park
- ◆ Community center
- ◆ Small playground for kids
- ◆ Doctor's office
- ◆ Bank
- ◆ Renovate the Bonn Theater
- ◆ Skating rink
- ◆ Grocery
- ◆ Gas station off I-65
- ◆ Civil War museum
- ◆ Community housing

Project teams will take these ideas and develop priorities and implementation plans. Consensus will form as more discussions are held and resources identified. **The key to success is to "pick a project and complete the project." Then, select another project.**



Community Values



Throughout the community conversations, certain themes or "values" emerged. These community values are at the core of what makes Bonnieville unique. A successful plan requires that these shared values be respected, honored and preserved.

Our Values

- ◆ Caring and Generous People
- ◆ A Rich History
- ◆ Pride in our Community
- ◆ Agricultural Roots
- ◆ Our Image - How we see ourselves and how others see us

The Strategy

Building upon these shared values, the community created "project teams" to plan the community's work

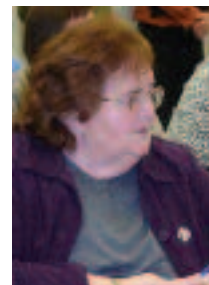
and to work the plan. Each team consists of a group of citizens interested in a particular aspect of community life. All of the discussion and work is documented. A spokesperson for each team reports to the community during scheduled community forums. The project teams meet regularly to discuss strategy, establish priorities, create action steps and perform implementation tasks.

The Project Teams

- ◆ The Community Jobs Team
- ◆ The Community Image Team
- ◆ The Community Activities Team
- ◆ The Community Infrastructure and Development Team

“Two things - We can stay the way we are and in the future, we'll disappear. There are things we can do that we may not like, but to be part of this world, we've got to grow.”

- Suellyn White,
A Bonnieville Citizen



Community Image Team

The Community Image Team is the frontline group of citizens who are making an immediate visible impact on the community. The team's first priority is to "clean up the town." On April 12, 2010, 25 citizens gathered early on Saturday morning to pick up trash from one end of the town to the other. A dumpster of garbage was collected for disposal. The impact was visible and immediate.

While on cleanup detail, several team members began to discuss the idea of painting some of the dilapidated buildings. The team is applying for a small grant to buy paint for the project. Others have begun to contact property owners to ask for permission to implement the project.

Another idea began to germinate - build entrance signs at or near the city limits that would welcome visitors and establish a "brand" for the community. Cost estimates have been obtained. Vendors have been identified. Fundraising is underway to implement the project.

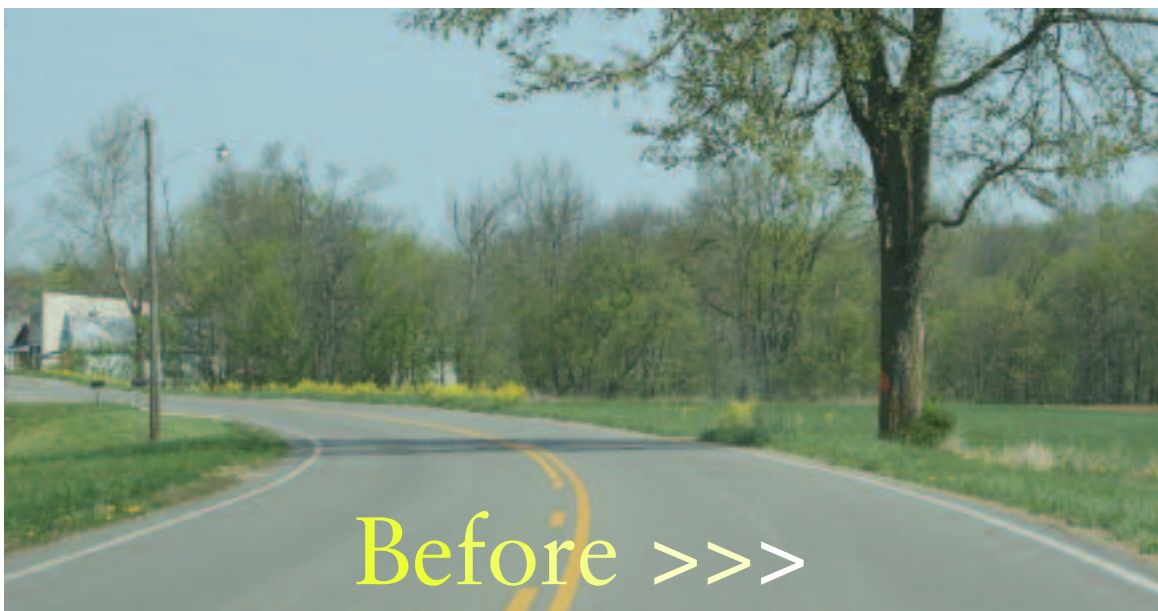
Other ideas include:

- ◆ Planters and greenery along the roadways
- ◆ Walkways and trails throughout the community
- ◆ Pocket-parks on city-owned building lots (a

collaboration with the Community Infrastructure and Development Team)

We recommend:

- ◆ Establish a regular schedule for community cleanup
- ◆ Enlist the support of community groups and spread the responsibility to prevent burn-out. Cleaning the community is everyone's responsibility
 - Young people
 - Church groups
 - Boy and Girl Scouts
 - Firefighters
 - Senior citizens
 - Service clubs/organizations
 - City commission
 - School classes - by grade groups as community service projects
 - "Everybody" Day



Community Image Team

- ◆ Two great suggestions by Rodney Kirtley, executive director of the Barren River Area Development District
 - Establish a community room (perhaps the meeting room at City Hall). Place photographs of every street and every building on the wall (current condition). Place a property/street condition sheet under each photo. As an improvement is made, place updated pictures underneath the original picture. From time to time, create a PowerPoint presentation of before/after to post to the city's website and to use as a presentation at local meetings so that the citizens can see the visual impact of the project. A great idea!!
 - Keep a current list of the top one or two projects along with the project needs such as paint, lumber, supplies, number of volunteers, dates of activities and opportunities to volunteer. Post the list in local businesses, city hall, school, fire station and other public places on a bulletin board so that as many citizens as possible will know what is needed, what is being done and when an activity is going to take place. Don't forget to list contact names and phone numbers!
- ◆ Coordinate with Angela Woodward. The Elizabethtown Community & Technical College has supplies, volunteer students and experts and can provide these resources at little or no cost to the community
- ◆ Create a community logo or "visual brand" - have a community contest to draw a logo for the community. Select one or two - or even seasonal logos. Award prizes to the winners. Have the community or a group of judges select the winners. Do it seasonally, annually or whenever you need a new or different brand. This kind of activity creates buzz, buy-in and ownership of the community.
- ◆ Schedule exchange visits with other communities - go and see what other communities are doing, talk with their local leaders, learn from them and then invite them to Bonnieville so that you can showcase your work!



Community Activities Team

The Community Activities Team works to provide opportunities for the citizens of Bonnieville to come together for recreation, events or festivals.

Bonnieville has three annual activities already in place - the 4th of July celebration, Santa at the Bonnieville Firehouse at Christmas and a "Cruise-In" car show from April through September. The team identified the 4th of July as its top priority. The Bonnieville City Commission is leading the effort for this year's festival. The team agreed that the festival needed more community support. The burden of organizing the festival has fallen to a couple of people and has created burnout. Citizens at the community meetings have agreed to volunteer their time so that the workload can be shared. The planning team will kick into high gear after May 20 when the BOAZ planning process is completed.

The team developed and added a short list of additional activities to its priority list. Bonnieville desperately needs a community center and park.

- ♦ The city already owns a parcel of land for a park.
- ♦ The community has the money in place to buy equipment for the park.
- ♦ A park development plan - drawing layout - is the next step, followed by bids and installation.



Community Activities Team

The Big Idea!

Great Trails for a Healthy Community

The size and layout of the city of Bonnieville provide an opportunity to easily develop a walkable community. The big idea is to build infrastructure that supports an active lifestyle. The city can begin with small improvements that will have a tremendous impact over time. While many communities are attempting to cater to "health" tourism, Bonnieville can provide walking and biking trails that serve the dual purpose of providing outdoor activities for local citizens and visitors.

We recommend:

- ♦ The city should begin to make the town walkable by constructing sidewalks throughout the city - small, affordable sections at a time. Incorporate "green" building practices into the design - pay a little more now, but save money over the long term.
- ♦ Simultaneously, create bike lanes that are safe and accessible. The community has more than enough room to accommodate them. (Refer to the website www.cooltownstudios.com - Parts 2 & 3 to see how one small community in a major metro area accomplished this at very little cost).
- ♦ Begin a trail development program. Identify areas within the community for biking and hiking.
- ♦ Eventually, develop trails from the proposed Bomber Ballpark along the Bacon Creek into town. Start small. Develop a small section at a time. Add picnic benches and park benches through small private donations or sponsorships.



Community Infrastructure and Development Team

The Community Infrastructure and Development Team focuses on the fundamental elements of development including sidewalks, facilities and guidelines. This area of development includes several big projects. Patience and methodical planning are required to achieve success.

The team's top priority is a community center. Although a long-term project, the team believes that a center can be a focal point of community activity and provide some basic needs for the city.

Members of this team have committed to the difficult tasks of raising funds to turn this dream into a reality. Implementing the project will require a number of small steps to achieve a big objective.

We recommend:

- ♦ Zero in on the needs that a community center would provide. Some potential ideas could include a multi-functional center with a gym, stage, meeting rooms, crafts store, fitness center, community day-care, computer lab, business incubator space and game arcade.
- ♦ Visit the community center in Inez, Kentucky. The center in Inez is the best example in Kentucky of a center serving the needs of a very small town (about 450 people). The facility is in constant use and is the gathering spot for many community activities.
- ♦ Develop a building plan.
- ♦ Create a budget.
- ♦ Identify potential funding sources - public, private, government, and individual donors.
- ♦ Set reasonable expectations.
- ♦ Include the public at every opportunity - keep them informed, motivated, and engaged.



Community Infrastructure and Development Team

The Big Ideas!

The team identified several other big idea projects that would improve the city, increase the quality of life, and restore a sense of pride in the downtown. They include:

- ◆ Restore the Bonn Theater
- ◆ Informational marquee at City Hall
- ◆ Archery range
- ◆ Full-service grocery store
- ◆ Billboard signage at the interchange
- ◆ Branch bank
- ◆ Assisted living facility
- ◆ Recruit a Dollar General Store

All of these projects are worthwhile and will immensely benefit the community; however, these are long-term investments. We offer the same advice as we did for some other projects - "pick a project and complete the project." A community wants to see something completed before undertaking another project.

“ (This experience) gives people hope that something great can be done when we all work together! ”

- Dennis Amos
Chief, Bonnieville Fire Department



Community Jobs Team

The Community Jobs Team identified potential "green" industries that are already interested in locating in Bonnieville. Their action steps include:

- ◆ Identify property owners and begin discussions about impact and acquisition.
- ◆ Hold informational meetings to keep the community apprised of the status of potential employers interested in the community.
- ◆ Collaborate with the Hart County Judge-Executive, the Hart County Chamber of Commerce, the Barren River Area Development District, the University of Kentucky Extension Service, the Elizabethtown Community & Technical College, Western Kentucky University and various state officials including legislators, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, Department for Local Government, and the Governor's Office.

In addition to the efforts that are already underway, the team is discussing ways to grow local jobs through local entrepreneurship. Angela Woodward of the Elizabethtown Community & Technical College is working with the team on workforce development.

The expertise and resources that she can bring to the table will be very beneficial to the community.

We recommend:

- ◆ Create an inventory of local citizens who possess talents, trades and traditional arts that are becoming lost or extinct for much of rural America.
- ◆ Establish local "teaching" opportunities or schools that focus on these trades and market the classes to other small and rural communities creating a unique economic opportunity for local citizens.
- ◆ Visit the city of Liberty, Kentucky to tour and meet with local officials who have developed a unique economic development model for their downtown.
- ◆ Meet with officials from Sparta, Kentucky (pop. 200) and home to the Kentucky Speedway. Sparta has had to address a number of challenges associated with the speedway. An exchange of information would serve the community well.



Community Jobs Team

The Big Idea!

Create a Sustainable and Independent Community

The first impression of Bonnieville for most outsiders is the entrance from I-65. The gateway should reflect the community's traditional culture and entrepreneurial spirit. It is Bonnieville's **STATEMENT TO THE WORLD** - *"Here we are - authentic, genuine, and independent."*

We recommend:

- ◆ Development of the motel property into a public/farmers market.
 - ◆ Grow the market into subsidiary businesses where local citizens can afford to establish small attached booths or stores to sell local crafts, teach local trades, and market other local tourism opportunities.
 - ◆ "Market the market" to draw customers from the region, state, and country. Ideas include developing an outdoor classroom - "How Bonnieville went from dependent to independent" - free from global markets, economics and outsourcing.
 - ◆ Collaborate with regional, state and educational institutions to bring free or low-cost resources in developing the concept.
- ◆ Seek other national nonprofit partners for funding, planning and development.
 - ◆ Equal parts local production and global marketing.
- A sustainable and independent economic development strategy accomplishes several things:
- ◆ Establishes Bonnieville as one of America's first sustainable and independent communities - locally owned, produced and sold.
 - ◆ Honors the community's values.
 - ◆ Provides an economic opportunity for local citizens.
 - ◆ Creates local jobs.
 - ◆ Invites and welcomes newcomers without jeopardizing the small town charm.
 - ◆ Visitors arrive, learn, buy, spend and leave.
 - ◆ Leverages other opportunities for sustainable business growth such as bed-and-breakfasts, local arts and crafts stores, farm-to-table restaurants and historic tourism.
 - ◆ Integrates the market as part of a "cultural tourism experience" that includes the local Amish population, future baseball event attendees, Civil War re-enactments, and Frenchman's Knob visitors.



The Legacy of the Interchange

I-65

Bonnieville is one of the most fortunate cities in America. Exit 71 on Interstate 65 at Bonnieville is one of the last major interchanges that is left undeveloped. The potential residing at the I-65 interchange cannot be understated or underestimated. How many communities have a clean slate at an interstate interchange? Practically none.

The community had a lot to say about the topic. Some wanted to take a traditional approach - gas station, fast food, or truck stop. Many others spoke up for a non-traditional approach - use the exchange to drive business to downtown. Still others said "do nothing."

A few had a truly visionary idea - make it fit into the big picture and connect it with the long-term vision. In other words, create business opportunities that complement the vision of a downtown market featuring locally produced goods; tie it to the creation of the new Bomber Field baseball complex that is on the drawing board; and develop walking trails to many destinations such as Frenchman's Knob, city parks and Bacon Creek.

We recommend and endorse the latter idea. An average of 36,000 vehicles pass Exit 71 every day. While some folks will only want fuel or fast food, they can find those establishments at dozens of other exits. As one person put it, "What if you were driving from Michigan to Florida and you knew that you could get a good home-cooked meal at exit 71? or buy some homemade ice cream? or take a leisurely stroll to a baseball game and buy some memorabilia?" Bonnieville would quickly become a mecca for travelers seeking something unique. We believe it could also spur the kind of business activity that aligns with the community's values and creates local jobs. Bed-and-breakfast establishments instead of mundane motels. Real economic growth through the cycle of "new" economic dollars that would circulate through the locally owned businesses.

The citizens of Bonnieville have an opportunity to make a resounding statement to the rest of the nation - we're proud, we're unique, and we're independent. Who wouldn't want to visit a place like that? This is your LEGACY opportunity - one that won't be available again for perhaps another century. Use it wisely!



“ I have been so pleased by the commitment and energy that the citizens of Bonnieville have displayed by their actions and support of this project. ”

- Tommy Atteberry, Mayor, City of Bonnieville, KY



“ I am thrilled to be a part of a process that can restore our community. ”

- Janet Clauson
Bonnieville Merchant



Acknowledgements



The Kentucky League of Cities would like to acknowledge those who assisted us in making your dream a reality. In particular we want to thank all of the fine citizens of Bonnieville, Kentucky. You have welcomed us into your community with open arms. More importantly, you've inspired us with your commitment and passion for your community.

We want to acknowledge the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Kentucky Department for Local Government and the Brushy Fork Institute in Berea, Kentucky. Without their financial and technical support, this project would have not been possible.

We want to recognize the following for their contributions to the initiative:

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- ♦ The BOAZ Steering Committee - Sherman Bowman (Chairman), Rose Bostic, Kimmy Cook, Leonard S. Dixon, Shelby Dixon, Shirley Dye and Todd Hodges
- ♦ Steve Austin, Community Planner, Visual Artist for Bonnieville's Strategic Plan
- ♦ Bonnieville Fire Department - Dennis Amos, Chief
- ♦ Bonnieville Elementary School - Lori Chapman, Principal
- ♦ Hart County Judge-Executive Terry Martin
- ♦ Hart County Magistrate Franklin Turner
- ♦ Hart County PVA Vicky Reynolds
- ♦ Hart County Chamber of Commerce - Virginia Davis, Executive Director
- ♦ Jane Higgins, Brushy Fork Institute
- ♦ University of Kentucky Extension Agent Pat Margolis
- ♦ Angela Woodward, Workforce Development Liaison, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College
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