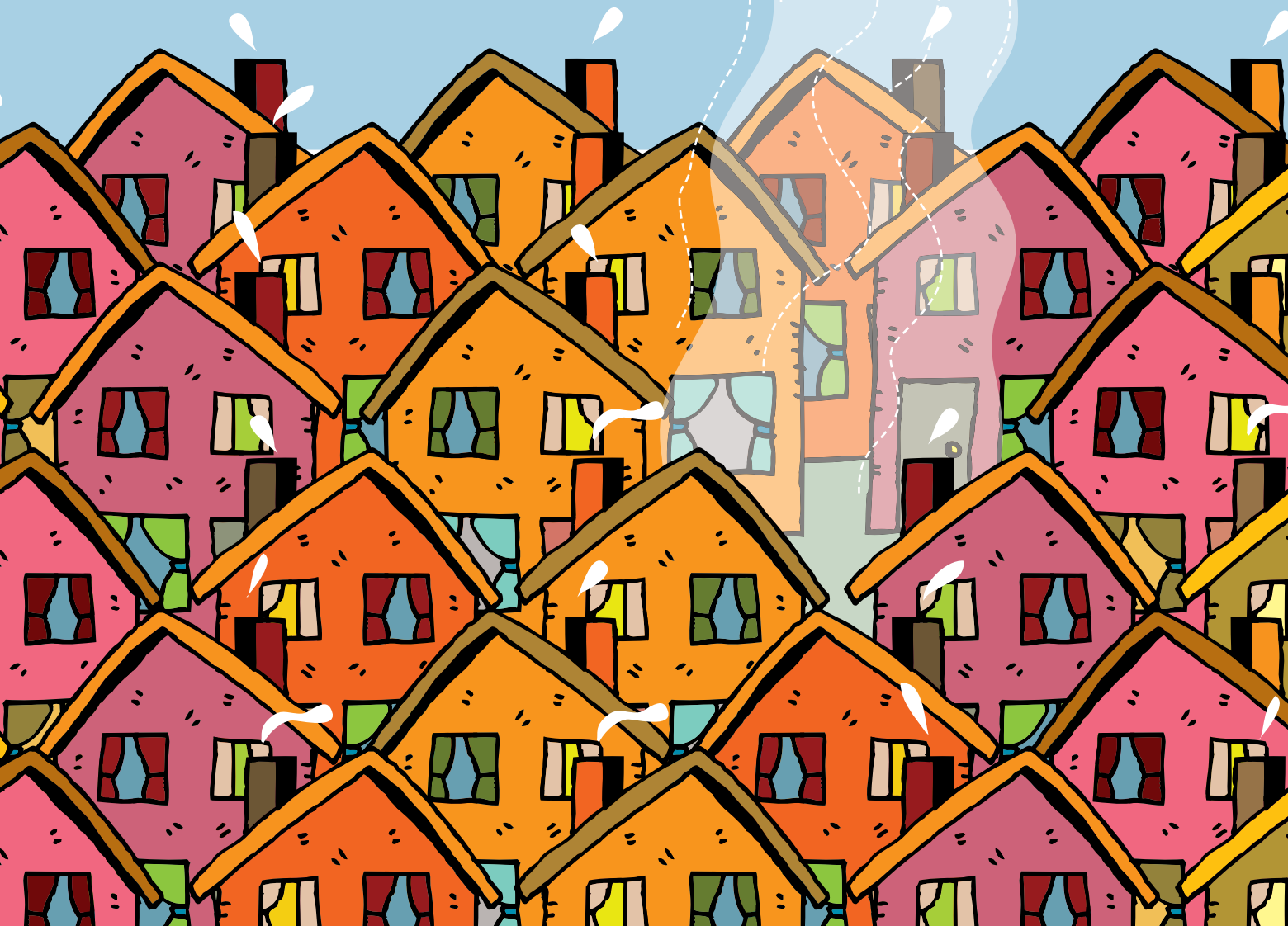


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KENTUCKY LEAGUE OF CITIES FALL 2008

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City CONTENTS

FALL 2008 • VOL. 10 • NO. 3

FEATURES



8 Foreclosures

Although Kentucky hasn't been hit as hard as much of the nation by the foreclosure crisis, communities are becoming proactive to help families keep their homes.

BY FRAN ELLERS



16 Impact on Animal Shelters

A family's foreclosure crisis can also mean giving up a pet, and animal shelters are getting more crowded as a result.

BY TERRI JOHNSON



20 Kentucky's Homeless

A count of Kentucky's homeless citizens sheds light on the circumstances of people in crisis.

BY DOUG WADE

CITY SCAPES



2

CITY LEADERS



4

CITY PERSPECTIVE



6

CITY SCENES



14

CITY CENTER



22

CITY BUSINESS



26

CITY CONVERSATION



28

CITY BITS



30

CITY Q&A



33



Sylvia L. Lovely is the Executive Director/CEO of the Kentucky League of Cities, headquartered in Lexington.



Dealing with the unexpected requires flexibility, preparation

They said it was a wonder I didn't run into someone selling my "stuff" on the streets of New York City. It was a case where my luggage, first assumed to have been misplaced, was eventually found to have been stolen. Or at least that was the only conclusion possible—the averted eyes of the airline agents notwithstanding.

The airline snafu and related hassles and inconvenience aside, one thing is apparent. There is an uptick in crime—particularly petty crime—in most communities. And it no doubt is the result of the economic downturn we're experiencing.

How could we not have seen it coming? And the same is true of the foreclosure crisis. Could we not have better prepared ourselves? And what is next on the list of negative or horrific developments? Undoubtedly something that we haven't anticipated! How is it possible to be prepared for the unexpected?

How is it possible to be prepared for the unexpected?

The Virginia Tech tragedy is a case in point. Blacksburg is considered the most wired town in America, but there was no notice provided to students or the public by police after the first student was murdered in a dormitory. That leaves us to wonder whether lives could have been saved in the subsequent rampage by better communication.

But Blacksburg and the university decided to develop a better plan. A series of public meetings, some of them very painful, led to an analysis and the development of stronger safeguards.

What are the lessons here? Mine is a simple prescription:

1. Be prepared, but stay flexible.
2. Take time to look at things in a different way, reinvent our world and, perhaps, even try to redefine the American Dream.
3. Focus on the work at home that is needed in this new age that we live in.

Being prepared Great communities, like great people, have a plan—one that is usually developed through meticulous work and bold leadership that welcomes diverse ideas in creating a shared vision. And being prepared should not be confused with being right. We must accept that being right is not the goal. Rather, the trick is to have a process in place that can lead to positive adjustments in the face of change.

Reinventing our world The so-called green movement is having an impact. Gas prices are making us think more about how we move about, and mass transit is attracting more people—and perhaps they are engaging with each other in the process.

Politicians speak of the American Dream as an immutable concept, some of them using it to question basic values. But I see some interesting signs that indicate young people value relationships and experiences more than the acquisition of wealth. These are hopeful signs of change.

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The Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) is a voluntary association of cities, created in 1927, to assist municipal officials in representing the interests of cities and to provide services to members which will foster improved local government in Kentucky.

KLC provides a forum for its 370 local member cities across the Commonwealth to address their common needs, challenges and opportunities. Some service program divisions of the League include: legal assistance, group insurance plans and risk management services, capital financing and management services, training and leadership development, downtown and economic development programs, information and research services.

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Editorial Staff

Publisher *Sylvia L. Lovely*
Executive Editor *Bobbie S. Bryant*
Editorial Services *Diana Taylor Communications*
Advertising Information *Edmon Design*
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Focusing on home Some of our society's observers believe we are entering a new age where the flickering computer screen is being rejected for—or at least supplemented by—something better and more nurturing. Perhaps moving along that path will spur us to build local

any of their citizens behind. We can find the right answers. Our country has always been good at that and can rise to the occasion again.

And as I often say, it's not the balls you juggle along the way, it's how you pick up the ones you drop. Or, as my good friend Tommy Preston points out, which one you pick up first. 🇺🇸

Politicians speak of the American Dream as an immutable concept, some of them using it to question basic values. But I see some interesting signs that indicate young people value relationships and experiences more than the acquisition of wealth.



connections and use them to change the institutions that, although vital for our existence, have grown away from the basics of how people live.

There is little here to offer comfort to those who are losing their homes or struggling to pay their bills. To address this crisis, we must resurrect an old idea—that communities cannot afford to leave

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Neil Hackworth is Deputy Executive Director of the Kentucky League of Cities and a former mayor of Shelbyville.



Pension reform a continuing priority

The pension crisis has been called one of the most complex and financially troubling issues in state government.

Since the end of the special legislative session earlier this year, the Kentucky Public Pension Working Groups have been studying some of the more controversial aspects of pension reform to prepare recommendations and

The Kentucky League of Cities recognizes the importance of classified school board employees to the local community and supports the notion of protecting the hard-earned retirement benefits for all members in the Kentucky Retirement System.

findings for Governor Steve Beshear by November 1. Several of the topics that have been examined are critical to cities' efforts to obtain more sustainable short-term reductions in employer contribution rates.

The possibility of transferring classified school district employees out of the current County Employee Retirement System (CERS) to another public pension

system is one of the most controversial issues under study. Concerns have been raised that classified school district employees may be benefiting from structural subsidies. Many school employees earn less wages and work fewer days on average than city and county employees.

The Kentucky League of Cities recognizes the importance of classified school employees to the local community and supports the notion of protecting the hard-earned retirement benefits for all members in the Kentucky Retirement Systems.

Fortunately, this issue will be fully vetted after the Kentucky Retirement Systems completes the comprehensive valuation study of CERS assets, liabilities and possible subsidies this fall. Actuaries will be performing pension and health insurance valuations for all members of CERS, including classified and city and county employees.

This important study will offer recommendations on how assets should be split if a subsidy does exist and will measure the financial impact of moving classified employees to another system.

We welcome the results from this actuarial analysis to provide insights into these issues and are hopeful that the actuarial study will allow us to move forward in a manner that is fair to all agencies in CERS. While many of the provisions included in House Bill 1, the pension reform passed during the special session, were proposals made by KLC and member cities, our cities recognize that employer contribution rates could once again increase drastically unless more cost reductions are approved during the 2009 session.

Since HB 1 addressed many of the long-term changes that were needed, our next focus is to obtain lasting reductions in employer contribution rates that can immediately impact city budgets.

Our cities believe that the Kentucky Retirement Systems should use a less aggressive approach to pushing CERS toward full funding.



fix everything. However, cities cannot continue to absorb the drastic employer contribution rates in the near future and still maintain or enhance the quality of

The pension crisis is a complex situation that did not develop overnight, and there is no simple solution that will fix everything. However, cities cannot continue to absorb the drastic employer contribution rates in the near future and still maintain or enhance the quality of life expected by our citizens.

life expected by our citizens.

While the reforms passed during the special session are an excellent start, cities must remain diligent in the pursuit of a system that is affordable right now and in the years to come.

(Editor's Note: At press time, the results from the actuarial analysis had not been released.)

Unlike the state, CERS employers have paid their retirement bills and should be allowed an adequate phase-in time to achieve full funding.

And "full funding" should be defined as being between 80 and 85 percent of full funding, a level many retirement actuaries deem prudent. According to the Government Accountability Office, the retirement industry defines underfunding as not having enough money to meet 80 percent of future payouts.

Currently, KRS requires employer groups to contribute based on a 100 percent funding standard, creating an unnecessary burden on employer groups.

Defining a standard in statute could be a solution that gives the trustees responsible for the administration of the retirement system comfort that less aggressive approaches will not violate fiduciary obligations. This administrative change would reduce costs and lower employer contributions immediately.

It's no secret that the health insurance coverage provided to retirees is the main cost driver for local governments with employees in CERS. While House Bill 1 provided some measures for long-term relief, additional efficiencies will be needed to reduce the burden of spiraling health costs. There is an urgent need to find more savings on the health care side, including administrative changes and wellness programs that can reduce the costs of retiree health insurance.

The pension crisis is a complex situation that did not develop overnight, and there is no simple solution that will

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Fran Ellers

Fran Ellers is a writer and editor who lives in Louisville. She is a former reporter for *The Courier-Journal* and is studying for a master's degree in social work at the University of Louisville.



Terri Johnson

Terri Johnson is senior marketing and communications manager for the Kentucky League of Cities. Prior to joining KLC, she worked in the corporate and nonprofit sectors and spent nine years in health care marketing.



Doug Wade

Doug Wade is communications project manager for the Kentucky Housing Corporation, where he has worked for six years. Prior to joining KHC, he worked in media relations and project management in the private sector.

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Afghanistan leaders exemplify courage, longing for peace

Editor's Note:
A group of Afghanistan tribal leaders recently visited the Kentucky League of Cities for a meeting arranged by the Louisville World Affairs Council under the auspices of the U.S. State Department. Two KLC interns who participated in the meeting share their impressions with City.

By Emily Porter

Sitting in on the meeting with the Afghanistan tribal leaders was, by far, the greatest experience of my summer internship.

My expectations were, sadly, very narrow-minded and included thoughts of

disrespect for women, hate for Americans and even ignorance. My impression of the leaders after the meeting, however, could not have been more different.

These were incredibly smart human

beings who truly had a passion for their country. They recognized the dire state of their home and wanted, more than anything in the world, to make it a safer, happier place for its citizens. I didn't need

to know how to speak their language to understand the passion in their voices as they talked about the devastation facing Afghanistan.

Very quickly I learned that they do not

disrespect women or hate Americans at all. They spoke very fondly of their time here. The most shocking thing I found in their discussions was the use of the word 'love.' They said that they were amazed that people, simply walking on the streets, seemed to 'love' one another here.

The leaders looked to us to find ways to make their home seem a bit safer and more loving. And there was certainly no hate in their voices for Americans. If anything, they were looking to us for help.

Lastly, my misconception about ignorance was totally off base. These were incredibly talented, brilliant leaders who were devoted to helping their constituents. The simple act of coming here, in itself, could have put them and their families at risk. Knowing this made them incredibly courageous and undeniably brave in my book.

At the end of the day, I began to ask myself, "What if our community, state and federal leaders took risks as large and dangerous as those taken by the Afghanistan leaders?" Inevitably, the answer was that our communities and our entire nation would be far better off.

Perhaps there is truly something to learn from everyone in this world. It matters not what our history might be with others or even if we are at war with them—leaders appear in all places.



Emily Porter



David Abell

They said that they were amazed that people, simply walking on the streets, seemed to 'love' one another here.

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can mean more for your tomorrow.



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By David Abell

The meeting with the Afghan tribal leaders has to be one of the best, most eye-opening experiences of my life.

Leading up to the meeting I did not know really what to expect; all I could think of was what I had watched on CNN. One of the main things I worried about is what their image was of us as Americans. I couldn't imagine that it would be very positive, but after the meeting this perception was changed.

The adversity that these men and their people encounter every day is something that we all need to recognize.

Right away they impressed me by asking for 10 minutes to pray; it showed their commitment to their beliefs and gave me an insight on their culture.

Once our conversation started I felt like I was in a United Nations meeting, with the translators and the ear pieces on the table. I felt very privileged.

As the meeting went on I kept finding myself looking at their faces, wondering about the things that their eyes had seen. I am sure they have experienced things that I can hardly imagine. Once they began speaking and telling us about their situation in Afghanistan, the whole situation became much more real.

My worries about them hating Americans were quickly shattered, when they offered their thanks for the opportunity to meet with us. When they began talking about the problems they face is when the true eye-opening experience began.

Of course, I had read and seen in the news about all of the troubles they are having, but seeing it on television and sitting across the table from people who live in it are quite different things.

When they said that one of the problems they have with their cities is the fact that for the past 30 years they have been through a cycle of destruction and rebuilding, I realized that their entire lives have been filled with challenges that I cannot begin to imagine. Hearing them tell us with great emotion that they have no electricity, water, health care or other services truly made the war more real.

Their optimism is one of the most amazing things, however. They were so interested in learning how an association of cities is set up; it was incredible that they can even think about that.

Their determination and desire to learn is one of the most admirable things

I have seen in a long time. It gives me hope for their country and inspires me to confront any challenges I face in my life. If the opportunity arises in my life to work or help in a country such as Afghanistan I believe I would jump at the opportunity—it's the least I can do.

By sitting with these people for an hour I learned quite a bit about their determination and dedication and that adversity can mean a lot of things—standing up for what they believe in, living and leading in a place that is faced with countless challenges, and seeking help so their children can live in a safer place.



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Helping
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Kentucky

communities proactive
in addressing foreclosure crisis

BY FRAN ELLERS

Flying home together from a conference on the nation's foreclosure crisis in November 2007, Bowling Green Mayor Elaine Walker and Deborah Williams, director of an affordable-housing agency, sketched out a plan to stem the tide of foreclosures that could be on the way.

They were returning to Kentucky from a U.S. Conference of Mayors foreclosure forum in Detroit, where the warnings were dire: Even though many cities and states had not yet been hard hit, more and more families would be forced out of their homes in 2008. That's because rates would start rising on the adjustable subprime mortgages they had obtained.

Walker and Williams didn't start a moment too soon assembling local

stakeholders, including banks, to figure out how to help homeowners who were already in financial trouble as well as those who might soon be. It helped that Bowling Green was already working on ways to increase homeownership, a priority of Walker's when she took office in 2005.

Yet even with the steps Bowling Green has taken, "our foreclosures here will probably be about double" in 2008 what they were in 2007, amounting to 300 or so for the year, Williams said recently.



Kentucky hasn't been hit as hard as much of the nation by the foreclosure

crisis – in the second quarter of 2008, it ranked 42nd in the statewide foreclosure rate, with about one foreclosure per 1,000 homes, according to RealtyTrac, which calculates foreclosure data. That compares to one foreclosure for every 200 homes in Indiana.

Nevertheless, Kentucky had more than 15,000 foreclosures in 2007 and expects more this year – foreclosure activity increased by 16 percent in the second quarter of 2008 compared with the first. The highest rates are in the urban communities of Louisville, which was 89th of the top 100 metro areas in the U.S. in second-quarter foreclosures, and Cincinnati, including Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties in Northern Kentucky, which was 41st.





Lexington has a lower rate than the other urban communities, although it is higher than other parts of Kentucky.

However, federal data shows that the foreclosure crisis is now affecting more rural counties, according to Kevin R. Smith, president and CEO of Community Ventures Corp., a housing assistance agency based in Lexington that serves about a third of Kentucky. Smith said marginal lenders first focused on the heavily populated urban areas and "once they reached market saturation, they moved into the rural areas."

Starting in October 2007, many Kentucky communities, including Lexington, began participating in an education campaign called "Don't Borrow Trouble" aimed at teaching

An increase in abandoned lots is perhaps the most visible way that cities are being affected by the foreclosure crisis.

potential homebuyers how to identify and avoid predatory lending.

Organized here by the Kentucky Housing Corp. with many partners across Kentucky, the campaign originated in Boston and expanded throughout the nation with the help of the government-supported lending institution Freddie Mac.

But some homeowners were already in trouble, or headed there. The small city of Flatwoods in northeastern Kentucky, for instance, has had about eight to 10 foreclosures in the last few months, more than usual for a community of

7,600. Among other things, the city was recently forced to enact an ordinance to penalize property owners who don't maintain vacant lots.

The city, says the ordinance, "has experienced severe problems in gaining the cooperation of certain banks and lending institutions in maintaining foreclosed properties and cleaning said properties after they are vacated."

An increase in abandoned lots is perhaps the most visible way that cities are being affected by the foreclosure crisis. According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, city governments must now cope with:

- upkeep of vacant property, which is complicated by the fact that many of the lenders who foreclosed may be based out of state.
- higher costs for issuing municipal bonds for public projects, which recently delayed Louisville's efforts to raise money for a downtown arena.
- potential loss of property tax revenues due to declining home values. In the first quarter of 2008, for instance, the percentage of home sales was down in every region of Kentucky compared with the first quarter of 2007, according to statistics gathered by the Kentucky Association of Realtors from its member boards. Most were double-digit percentage decreases, and a few were down by half or more.

In response, Kentucky cities are using a variety of short- and longer-term strategies, many of them supported by federal or state governments and nonprofit housing-assistance agencies, to limit and prevent local foreclosures and deal with abandoned property.

The strategies range from offering financial help to troubled homeowners to providing counseling for potential home buyers to taking action to require the maintenance of vacant lots. The new ordinance in Flatwoods, for instance, allows the city to take a lien

against the property for cleanup costs if the property owner does not maintain it. That gave the city the leverage it needed.

"We have been successful getting compliance," Mayor Bobby Crager said.

In some ways, Louisville's response to the crisis has set the tone for the state as a whole. The Kentucky Home Ownership Protection Center, a statewide foreclosure assistance program launched in August, was modeled after a program Louisville put in place several months earlier.

Louisville's efforts started earlier than most because it was experiencing a

higher rate of foreclosures than other parts of Kentucky; also, its mayor, Jerry Abramson, is well connected at the national level where other mayors across the U.S. were grappling with more serious foreclosure problems.

"Compared to other cities in Kentucky we have quite a bit higher numbers, but really other parts of the nation have been harder hit," said Matt Stull, a spokesman for Abramson's office. Nevertheless, Louisville had an estimated 3,400 foreclosure filings in 2007, an increase from about 1,200 five years earlier, according to the Metropolitan Housing Coalition. It is also dealing with about 7,000 vacant properties throughout the community, Stull said.

In February, the city partnered with other local organizations

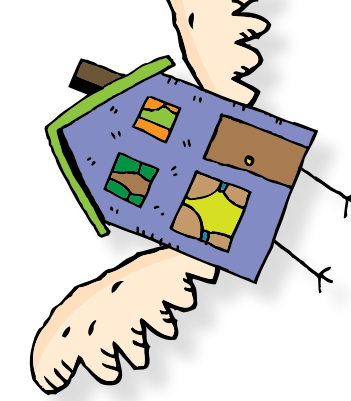


including housing assistance agencies, the Louisville Urban League, Legal Aid and local banks to start the Louisville Foreclosure Prevention initiative; it is now being folded into the Kentucky Home Ownership Protection Center.

The focus of the Louisville initiative was "trying to get people who are in an adjustable-rate mortgage into a fixed-rate mortgage" with sustainable payments, Stull said.

Among other things, Louisville:

- launched a foreclosure hotline using the 211 number maintained by Metro United Way and since then has taken calls from 1,800 different homeowners. The hotline links callers to financial counselors or lawyers who can help them work with their lenders. Part of its success was due to supportive media coverage in the community, Stull said.
- created a \$350,000 emergency fund to provide emergency loans of up to \$5,000 apiece for families who were in danger of losing their homes but, with limited assistance, could begin making payments on time again (the loans are forgiven if a borrower stays in the home 10 years). The fund isn't a



bailout, Stull said: "It is in every city's interest to keep their neighborhoods viable." So far, Louisville has loaned out about \$52,000.

- convened a foreclosure task force to determine how best to keep people with problem mortgages in their homes, a process involving negotiation, financial counseling and other steps. Homeowners in trouble were often waiting too long to seek help so the city worked on ways to connect them with lenders as soon as possible, Stull said.

Louisville's efforts were shored up when the Housing Partnership, a nonprofit housing assistance agency in Jefferson County, received nearly \$1 million in federal funding to increase

financial counseling for homeowners, part of \$180 million appropriated by Congress in late 2007 for this purpose.

The \$180 million is being distributed through NeighborWorks America, a national nonprofit set up by Congress for housing assistance that includes a network of local and regional agencies around the country. Kentucky has four, including Community Ventures Corp. in Lexington, the Housing Partnership (which also serves counties outside of Jefferson), Frontier Housing in Morehead and the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises in Berea.

As in Louisville, these agencies have been key partners with the cities and counties they serve. Late last year they began creating and coordinating foreclosure services with each other, pooling their counseling resources and setting aside hundreds



of thousands of dollars in financial assistance apart from the Metro Louisville efforts. Both the Lexington and Berea agencies created rescue loan funds; each also created loan pools to refinance mortgage loans.

Then in July, the four agencies received \$400,000 through the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati to provide rescue grants to households in or at risk of foreclosure, whose loans are held by member banks.

Financial help is critical to keeping Kentuckians in their homes, said Smith of Community Ventures. "We've counseled more than 400 households since the first of the year. Generally, job loss and general economic hardship are the principal drivers for foreclosure."

The state's new assistance program, operated by the Kentucky Housing Corp., will build on these efforts, putting residents in touch with financial counselors at these and other agencies or lawyers in their area. The program has a toll-free number, 1-866-

830-7868, answered from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday. More information is available at www.protectmykentuckyhome.org. Rick McQuady, interim executive director of Kentucky Housing Corp., said it is essential that homeowners "call somebody as soon as they know" they might have a problem.

Looking to the long term, one additional step that Louisville has taken is to establish a \$1 million



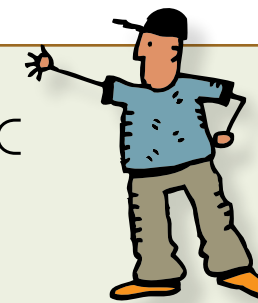
affordable housing trust fund that is expected to grow so that it can loan up to \$10 million a year to help families own their own homes.

Bowling Green, too, has focused on increasing its homeownership rate, which was only 47 percent in 2005, said Walker, the mayor. A few years ago, Walker started an award-winning DollarWise program to encourage family savings and homeownership, thus the city was already working closely with the local housing authority and Housing Assistance and Development Services (HANDS), as well as local realtors, when the foreclosure crisis began.

Then after the trip Walker and Williams took in November, Bowling Green developed an initiative called Creating a Credit-Responsible Community. It includes the city, local realtors, several local banks, HANDS, the local housing authority and other community organizations.

In cooperation with seven area banks, HANDS is offering financial counseling that can include the provision of "rescue funds" or gap funding for families who may be able

Impact of economic downturn varies at city level



Beyond the foreclosure crisis, the nation's economic downturn is affecting Kentucky cities – but the impact varies widely depending on local issues and conditions.

In general, most if not all Kentucky cities are getting budget relief this year from the General Assembly's passage of pension reform at the same time they're coping with higher fuel costs for city vehicles (and rising prices for other goods as a result of transportation costs). Florence, for example, expected its pension savings to be about enough to cover higher-than-expected fuel costs.

But city experiences vary when it comes to the economy's more general effect on tax receipts and budgets. Owensboro wound up with more than a \$1 million surplus at the end of 2007-08, partly because occupational tax revenues were higher than expected.

But in Bowling Green, city departments had to absorb cuts for 2008-09 of at least 3 percent because of lower-than-expected economic growth, and Lexington is cutting operating expenses by about 10 percent.

A tight budget also means that Newport's fire department will have 11 firefighters per shift instead of 12, and new firefighters will make a lower starting salary than they have in the past.

According to Moody's online economic analysis web site, even if the U.S. economy is not technically in a recession, many states and metropolitan communities are. Its list for July 2008 included Louisville, Lexington, Bowling Green, Elizabethtown and Northern Kentucky (Cincinnati).

The mortgage crisis itself likely has played no small part in that. The U.S. Conference of Mayors has estimated that it has resulted in a decrease of about 1 percent in the nation's gross domestic product, which could ultimately result in lower local tax revenues.

For instance, the revised real Gross Metropolitan Product for Bowling Green in 2008 was 1.9 percent growth, a loss of .8 percent or an estimated \$62 million. Louisville's revised growth estimate was 1.7 percent, a loss of .6 percent or \$499 million.

Whether those estimates will hold up is hard to say. Yet in the coming year there may also be good news for Kentucky city budgets, particularly those with a payroll tax – in July, the minimum wage rose from \$5.85 to \$6.55 in July.

FRAN ELLERS

to maintain their homes, according to Williams, its executive director.

To reach out to families in the 27 counties served by the banks, the group will offer "Super Saturday" financial counseling clinics in 27 communities including Bowling Green, Owensboro and Elizabethtown. The clinics not only look at residents' existing mortgages but

offer counseling for families considering a home purchase.

HANDS is drawing on its success, and the success of the Housing Authority of Bowling Green, with home loans for low-income families. Of the 45 families the agencies have helped buy homes in recent years, only one has experienced foreclosure, which came after the

homeowner began dealing with a major health crisis, Williams said.

On the one hand, said Williams and Walker, it is an excellent time for some families to consider a home purchase or recover from mortgage-payment problems. The new law passed by Congress this summer includes a tax credit of up to \$7,500 for first-time home buyers, and government-insured mortgages are available for homeowners in trouble.

Also, the Kentucky General Assembly, in passing legislation this spring that created the homeownership center, limited the maximum penalty for paying off a loan early in order to refinance a home-interest loan, which had been a barrier for some homeowners.

Yet as credit requirements tighten and home sales slow down, Williams said, HANDS has had to reduce the number of homes it is building. She has been concerned that misguided media coverage of the "housing crisis" will create a perception that it's worse than it is, frightening people away and exacerbating the problem.

At the same time, the crisis has created an opportunity to educate potential homeowners so that financial literacy increases throughout the community, a benefit down the road.

The City of Covington, for instance, has goals in its 2007 strategic plan to reduce the foreclosure rate, increase financial literacy education and discourage bad loans.

Among other things, Covington and other Northern Kentucky communities have benefited from Cincinnati-based efforts to help homeowners in the region; Ohio has been much harder hit by the foreclosure crisis than Kentucky, partly because the economic slowdown has hit harder there.

Some of the foreclosures in Northern Kentucky came after Delta declared bankruptcy in 2005 and airline families struggled to make their mortgage payments.

"It's all hands on deck," said Smith. None of us has the resources individually to help Kentuckians preserve what is their single largest investment, their single largest asset. It will take all of us working together to make a significant impact."

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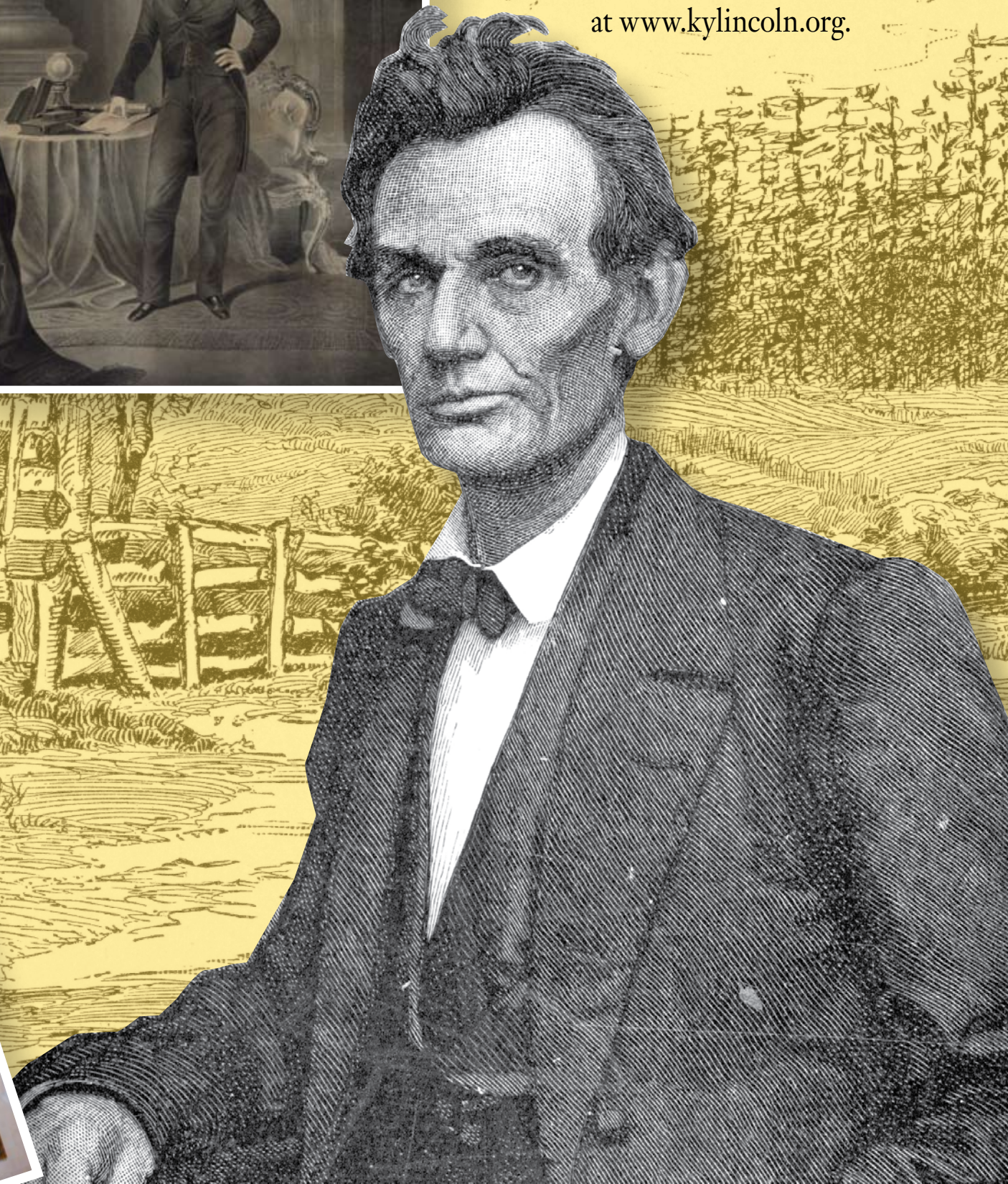
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SCENES



Abe Lincoln's Kentucky



The national commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth began in February and will continue for two years. Lincoln's story in his native state is being told by the Kentucky Historical Society at www.kylincoln.org.



Waiting to go home

ECONOMIC WOES ADD STRESS TO KENTUCKY'S CROWDED ANIMAL SHELTERS

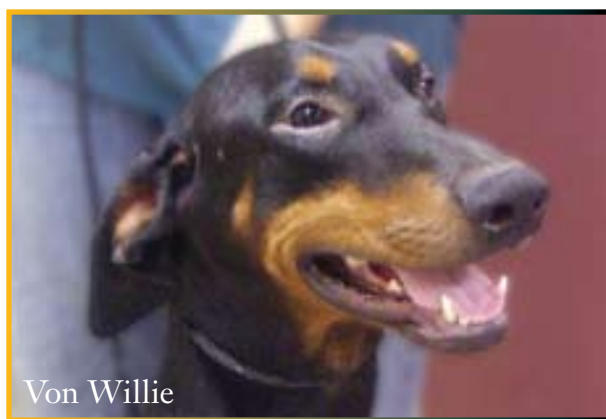
BY TERRI JOHNSON

Damian and Von Willie are good dogs.

Von Willie, a timid Doberman, was recently diagnosed with a rare blood disease called Von Willebrand's Disease (hence his name). Damian, a gentle natured pit bull terrier, gave him a blood transfusion and saved his life.

Both are house broken and leash trained and are current residents of the Lexington Humane Society—two more casualties of harsh economic times.

One-year-old Damian and his 6-year-old companion, Drew, a lab mix, were "owner give ups," or OGUs in animal shelter parlance. The home in which the dogs lived with their family went into foreclosure in April, and they were brought to the shelter because their owners had to move and said they couldn't afford to care for them.



Von Willie

Like 25 percent of animals in shelters, Von Willie is purebred. Perhaps his owners knew of his illness and could not afford his care. He was found in a shelter drop box with no information.

The nation's housing market suffered a 60 percent increase in home foreclosures from July 2007 to July 2008. This, in addition to lost jobs, basic cost of living

increases and the lasting effects of natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods, has led to declines in charitable donations. That has a negative impact on the day-to-day operation of shelters and increases the number of animals being euthanized due to lack of space.

"Today, we had six adults dogs surrendered before 2 p.m.," said Margie Patton, chair of the Barren River Animal Welfare Association in Glasgow. "It would have been seven, but I

was able to find some resources for one person who was able to keep her dog."

While Kentucky's housing economy climate is better than most states, foreclosure rates have increased 46 percent in the last year. Having to give up a pet makes the stress and



Damian

embarrassment of losing a home that much harder.

"This isn't a new problem," said Susan Malcolm, president of the Lexington Humane Society (LHS). "The economy and moving are the two main reasons people give up their pets."

But it is getting worse. Shelters across the state are seeing more animals resulting from economic hardship or abandonment.

At LHS, 25 percent of owners who turn over their animals say the economy is the reason. Louisville's Kentucky Humane Society, the state's largest shelter, had 325 pets surrendered between January and July, compared with 120 last year during the same period. In most shelters, the OGUs increases are in dogs because it costs more to feed a dog than a cat.

Becky Reiter, director of the Boone County Animal Shelter and chair of the state Animal Control Advisory Board, said 48 percent of the animals that wind

up in their shelters are OGUs. Most startling, she said abandonment cases are up 600 percent.

"We want to work with people when they come into the shelter," said Reiter. "If it's a pet behavioral issue, a need for food, medical or spay/neuter services, we can often find resources to address it on the front end."

"If it's a pet behavioral issue, a need for food, medical or spay/neuter services, we can often find resources to address it on the front end."

Helping people keep their pet is best for everyone.

Three of the state's five highest county foreclosure rates are in Northern Kentucky, and shelters in Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties work collaboratively to address regional problems that are often "human issues," according to Reiter.

She recently launched a dog food donation program that works in conjunction with Meals on Wheels after she learned that many of the food delivery program's clients were sharing their meals with their pets.

"Now the people who get meals also get food for their animals," she said. A

similar program is being considered in Louisville and possibly as a charitable model for a national dog food company.

Other health and human services programs are also finding ways to support clients who have pets.

The Buffalo Trace Women's Crisis Center in Maysville has a special pet protection program which gives women and children leaving domestic violence situations a safe place for their pets.

Center Director Shari Stafford said the program places pets in confidential locations for up to 30 days while their clients get settled.

"We've had everything from hamsters to horses," she said. Often the crisis center, which serves 13 counties, works with area shelters or humane societies.

Stafford said getting the pet out of abusive homes is important for a

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number of reasons. Often the animals themselves are the first victims of abuse.

"It's huge to give families of domestic abuse the stability of having their pet once they get out of the home," she said. "Sometimes pets are the only source of unconditional love for children. While mom and dad are fighting, the kids are in their room hugging their puppy."

Out of sight and forgotten

Often, the animals that get dropped off at shelters are the lucky ones. It can take weeks or months for a bank or mortgage company to visit an abandoned property.

Sadly, home inspectors, landlords and even real estate agents across the country are finding dogs and cats trapped in properties or yards with no food or water. Many are dead or beyond saving. Veterinarians say it takes only 24 hours for small animals to become dehydrated, and they can die in as little as two days in extreme hot or cold weather.

"Abandoning pets for any reason is not only irresponsible, it is also illegal," said Stephanie Shaine, director of outreach for companion animals at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) based in Washington, D. C.



Lexington Humane Society Development Director Madison Carey with Damian and Drew.

"Abandoning pets for any reason is not only irresponsible, it is also illegal."

In Kentucky, abandonment is considered second-degree animal cruelty, a Class A misdemeanor that carries a \$500 fine and up to a year in jail.

All counties are required by law to provide animal control services. The level of service depends on the extent to which the county prioritizes animal welfare and how much funding is available. Most Kentucky communities also have humane society or "friends of animals" organizations that supplement the animal control programs, and often provide rescue, medical and spay/neuter services as well as fundraising and public awareness programs.

Making it better

To make relinquishment a last resort, organizations have begun to promote financial resources for struggling pet owners and encourage creative thinking. The HSUS suggests simple modifications like buying cheaper dog food and cutting out toys or fancy grooming in favor of paying for necessities and vet care.

Nationally, a trend is starting among shelters to vary adoption fees. Patton, in Glasgow, said the shelter there is probably going to increase adoption



fees on puppies and lower them for adult dogs.

"If people want a puppy or kitten, they are going to get it. I try to emphasize how nice it is to bring a pet into your home that's already calm, house trained and under control," she said.

To help local shelters, the HSUS started a Pet Foreclosure Fund. Shelters and rescue organizations that apply for a grant may use the money on any program or partnership to assist individuals or families whose primary challenge with keeping their pets is financial.

Anyone can help

Anyone can help animals survive their worst prospects, just by being observant. If there are empty properties in your neighborhood, check them out. If you suspect animals are on site, contact your local animal shelter immediately.

Madison Carey, director of development at the Lexington Humane Society, said everyone can help by donating money or supplies to a local shelter, volunteering time or fostering lost, abused or abandoned animals.

Typically, fostering through a shelter program means temporarily housing an animal for a few weeks to provide a home

environment. For abandoned pets, fostering lessens the depression of losing their family.

"They are confused, and they don't know why they ended up in a strange place," said Nancy Peterson, an HSUS issues specialist. "No matter how caring shelter staff and volunteers are,

Resources

www.kyagr.com/acab – for a list of Kentucky animal shelters and rescue organizations

www.petfinder.org – to find a suitable pet anywhere in the nation

www.hsus.org – to access HSUS resources including the following publications:

13 Steps to Finding Animal – Friendly Rental Housing

Moving On: Remember Your Pets when Relocating

Renting with Pets: Online Resource for Rental Managers and Pet Owners

the animals are stressed. But they are resilient." Carey said people should always spay and neuter their own pets and, above all, should consider adopting pets from a local shelter or rescue group. "Only 5 percent of the U. S. population has visited their local animal shelter," she added. As with homeownership, responsibility is the key when it comes to pet ownership. "There are costs associated with pets. Before you adopt, make sure that you are able to afford and support the pet," Carey said. "We want people to realize that with animals, it's finders, keepers. They aren't disposable."

So, while the economy fluctuates, Damian, Drew and Von Willie eagerly greet anyone who visits their kennels – and patiently wait for new homes.

"We want people to realize that with animals, it's finders, keepers. They aren't disposable."

So, while the economy fluctuates, Damian, Drew and Von Willie eagerly greet anyone who visits their kennels – and patiently wait for new homes.

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homeless

Counting Kentucky's homeless a challenging, but important, task

BY DOUG WADE

Did you know that approximately one-third of Kentucky's homeless are without shelter because they left a domestic violence situation? Or that nearly 36 percent of our homeless suffer from a mental illness? Or that 13 percent of homeless households in Kentucky have dependent children? More important, did you know that this possibly could be occurring in your town?

These and other demographics were gathered in one day this January as hundreds of volunteers around the state took to the streets for a point-in-time count of Kentucky's homeless. In one 24-hour period, 7,136 homeless persons were identified. While not an exact count, this number offers a rough estimate of how many people are homeless in Kentucky on any given day.

The count, which is coordinated by the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC), collects data that ultimately determines how much funding Kentucky will receive for homeless programs from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Although only required every other year, KHC conducts the count annually to ensure the most accurate information.

The challenges of counting

Even with a network of volunteers, getting an exact count of the homeless is difficult. While counts in metropolitan areas can be fairly straightforward, the homeless often go unseen in rural areas. Some city leaders may not even realize they have a homeless population in their communities, since they cannot be easily

observed on a downtown street. The homeless in their areas may be living in cars, sleeping on a friend's couch or living in other structures not intended for habitation.

"Since the count took place, I have had several people say to me, 'I really didn't realize people were living like that,'" said Deborah Williams, executive director of Housing Assistance and Development Services, Inc., in Bowling Green, who coordinated the count in one of the regions. "As with most things, awareness brings action and solutions."

Unfortunately, some areas are still in the dark about their homeless numbers. No data was submitted for roughly one-quarter of Kentucky's counties due to a lack of volunteers and coordinators in those counties. Since the count affects

federal funding, these communities are skewing the statewide numbers and missing a prime opportunity to address the tragedy of homelessness.

Moral issues aside, city leaders have another compelling reason to tackle homelessness: it costs a fortune. A February issue of *The New Yorker* told the story of two Reno, Nevada, police officers who traced the recurring costs of chronically homeless individuals, including emergency room visits, jail time and use of other community resources. One homeless man had accumulated a bill of more than \$60,000 over three months. Another was estimated to have cost the city \$1

million over 10 years. Both men were still living on the street at the time of the study.

Those numbers should make any city leader take notice. While the cost may not be as dramatic in a Kentucky community, it is clear that homelessness affects everyone.

Getting involved

Homeless advocates in many communities may already have a team ready to participate in the 2009 count. If so, cities can help by making staff available. Police officers, for instance, can help identify locations where the homeless take shelter. And if there isn't a team in a community, city leaders are encouraged to consider assembling one. More volunteers will produce more accurate numbers, bringing us one step closer to conquering homelessness in Kentucky.

More information, including demographic breakdowns and county-by-county data, is available on the Kentucky Homeless Web site at www.kyhomeless.org.

To find out more about the 2009 Point-in-Time Homeless Count, contact Kentucky Housing Corporation's Laurent Houekpon toll-free at 800-633-8896 or 502-564-7630, extension 304; TTY 711; or e-mail lhouekpon@kyhousing.org.

New solutions to old problems

Several federal programs provide food and shelter to the homeless, but most of them treat the symptoms while ignoring the illness. They provide basic necessities but do little to stabilize an individual or get him or her into permanent housing.

In the last few years, the Kentucky Housing Corp. has unveiled some new programs to address the root causes of homelessness. The results thus far have been encouraging.

Recovery Kentucky

This year's homeless count showed that 46 percent of the homeless individuals interviewed said they suffered from chronic substance abuse. The Recovery Kentucky initiative is creating 10 recovery centers around the state that will help them recover from their addictions. Five of the 100-bed centers have been constructed and Henderson's has graduated two classes, is currently at capacity and has 100 women on a waiting list. The center in Morehead, with 60 residents, will soon be at capacity. Three more centers are scheduled to be at capacity by early 2009.

Safe Havens

Thirty-three percent of the homeless surveyed in this year's count were survivors of domestic violence and 36 percent had a mental illness. Through the Safe Havens Program, KHC offers the first component of self-sufficiency by providing temporary housing assistance to these households. Housing vouchers are given to domestic violence survivors, homeless families with children and persons with serious and persistent mental illness.

Since it began two years ago, Safe Havens has had 752 participants in case management, with more than 200 employed or going to school. Nearly 100 participants have completed the program and are in permanent housing. KHC recently made some changes in how the program is funded to ensure that even more people can be served in the future.

Of the homeless heads of household surveyed in 2008, approximately:

- 46% suffered from chronic substance abuse
- 33% were survivors of domestic violence
- 36% reported a mental illness
- 18% had served in the military
- 15% were chronically homeless
- 2% reported having HIV/AIDS



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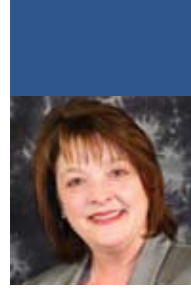
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Bobbie S. Bryant is Director of Public Affairs for the NewCities Institute at the Kentucky League of Cities.



Cities share insights on prize-winning projects

Kentucky cities are home to innovation and creative thinking. The evidence of that is provided every year in the Kentucky League of Cities Enterprise Cities Awards, given to communities in recognition of special progress or projects.

City asked last year's winners to share their insights about what contributed to their success and what challenges they faced.

Hopkinsville

Mayor J. Daniel Kemp

The Inner City Residential Enterprise Zone

Hopkinsville's Inner City Residential Enterprise Zone was established to renovate and revitalize the city's Downtown Renaissance Area and four adjoining neighborhoods. A 12-member advisory committee provides oversight and chose four elements to serve as the foundation of the effort: clean and safe neighborhoods, housing stock revitalization, economic infrastructure and economic opportunity.

By holding charrettes with neighborhood leaders, the city was able to better identify citizens' needs and develop designs to meet those needs. The goal of the project is to create a more pleasing atmosphere for residents and to attract retail businesses to the area.

Here is what Steve Bourne, director of the Hopkinsville Christian County Planning Commission, told us about the project.

QUESTION: What was the best thing about your project overall?

ANSWER: Creation of the neighborhood networks - because it has empowered the residents to revitalize their neighborhood the way they see fit.

Q: What was the most challenging element you had to overcome to meet success?

A: Creating, building, and maintaining positive relationships between government and residents.



Q: If you had it to do over, what would you do differently?

A: We would have tried to undertake the planning process a lot faster, focusing strictly on planning rather than beginning implementation while we were still planning.

Q: How long did the project take and could it have been done any faster?

A: Initially we thought the planning process was anticipated to take one year. Beginning year three now, we're still planning the final elements. We don't think this could have been done any faster, particularly as we've been implementing as we move along.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to mention about citizen participation?

A: We had a grassroots program which was very important to us. The residents are the ones who met with consultants to identify what changes they wanted and how the changes were to come about. Continued citizen involvement is of crucial importance.

Q: Do you have any advice for other cities undertaking similar projects?

A: Be sure to involve citizens on the front end. Do your best to build political support.

Q: In the end, was the juice worth the squeeze?

A: Absolutely!

Bowling Green

Mayor Elaine N. Walker

The Bowling Green Housing Initiative

The Bowling Green Housing Initiative addresses housing issues, particularly home ownership, from all angles. Through the leadership of the mayor, city manager and city commission, the city is tackling housing issues by streamlining the building permit process, donating property, establishing a housing

fund, offering housing counseling, assessing regulatory barriers and strengthening a coalition with local nonprofits and the housing authority.

Mayor Elaine N. Walker shared these insights.

Q: What was the best thing about your project overall?

A: That it was and is comprehensive. We're looking at putting people into home ownership, providing pre- and post-credit counseling, furthering financial education in the high school, transforming substandard rental units into home ownership and creating a home ownership housing trust fund. We're providing the whole spectrum of home ownership opportunities and preparing people to become home owners.

Q: What was the most challenging element you had to overcome to meet success?

A: The toughest thing has been to find the money, particularly when the need is so great.

Q: If you had it to do over, would you do anything differently?

A: I don't think so. We've brought a large group of people together with varied backgrounds. We are growing and modifying the program as we move forward.

Q: How long did the project take and could it have been done any faster?



A: We started this project in the last half of 2005 and the project continues to grow as we go along. My goal is to meet the national rate of homeownership in the city. When I took office it was 47 percent and now we're around 50 percent with the national average just over 70 percent, so we've got a way to go.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to mention about citizen participation?

A: It has been great to see people becoming involved in the process - more nonprofits and different corporations such as local banks that have become involved. We're beginning now to get even more involvement as the National Board of Realtors and AARP have become supporters. We've raised over \$1.5 million in cooperation with the Nashville Housing Fund and CDB (Community Development Block) grants, and the housing assistance and development services, so the city is able to provide gap funding.

Q: Do you have any advice for other cities undertaking similar projects?

A: If you want to take on something of this scope, look at all aspects of the underlying problems. Start slowly and build all facets into the project - for instance, financial literacy, supply of housing, building affordable housing, etc.

Q: In the end, was the juice worth the squeeze?

A: When I meet with someone who has become a home owner, particularly parents, and I



see that pride that they have about owning a home of their own, it is definitely worth it.

Maysville

Mayor David Cartmell

The Maysville Renaissance Façade Project

Maysville's Renaissance Façade project was developed to help property owners in the Maysville Renaissance District with matching funds. As they restore their building façades, property owners in the district apply for reimbursement of up to 50 percent of their project costs, with a maximum cap of \$5,000 per property owner.

Several properties have participated in the program, resulting in a more appealing streetscape that is attracting new businesses into the downtown area. These include a coffee shop, a restaurant, a real estate office and an art/boutique store.

While this project is spurring interest in the downtown area, it is also making local property owners more aware of local, state and federal resources that are available to update many of their buildings. So much interest has been created that the city is starting to hold workshops to better educate local officials on the details of downtown restoration projects.

Mayor David Cartmell provided the details.

Q: What was the best thing about your project overall?

A: It allowed citizens who ordinarily wouldn't maintain property to receive assistance. It was an encouragement to be in partnership with the city.

Q: What was the most challenging element you had to overcome to meet success?

A: Understanding the technical aspects of preservation and having to follow the directives of the Secretary of Interior for historic preservation.

Q: If you had it to do over, what would you do differently?

A: We would allow owners with multiple properties to submit multiple properties for work. We would also let people with corner properties or those that run from one street to another to submit for extra money on the same building.

Q: How long did the project take and could it have been done any faster?

A: Turnaround on these projects is normally around two months, but the initial project has been ongoing for three years and continues today.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to mention about citizen participation?

A: Citizens are very excited about it and it has served as an incentive to get the work done. Citizens have been most appreciative of the city for instigating this project.

So often the city is writing citations for work that should be accomplished. This project allowed the city to lend a hand rather than charging fines.

Q: Do you have any advice for other cities undertaking similar projects?

A: Keep the guidelines simple and keep the applications user friendly. If you don't, folks will get bogged down in the process and walk away without accomplishing their goal.

Q: In the end, was the juice worth the squeeze?

A: Definitely! Sixteen facades have been completed in the district. Because of the success this project has expanded to other areas within the city, already making a difference.

Simpsonville

Mayor Steve Eden

The Simpsonville City Hall Project

The Simpsonville City Hall project converted a 1949 school building for use as new city offices. Since becoming a city in 1982, Simpsonville has operated out of several locations. The lack of a permanent location and limited services prohibited the city government from fully addressing its citizens' needs and concerns.

The new city hall will enhance customer service and will better meet the future needs of Simpsonville's residents. A long-term goal of the project is to successfully recruit more business and industry to the city. The new city has already played a role in helping the city land two new industries that will create approximately 150 new jobs.

City Manager David Eaton addressed the details.

Q: What was the best thing about your project overall?

A: It enabled Simpsonville to have a central location to serve citizens and deal with their concerns.

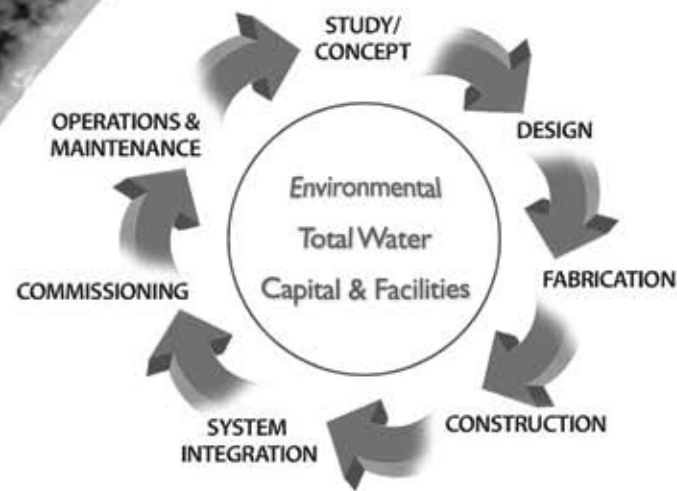
Q: What was the most challenging element you had to overcome to meet success?

A: Keeping costs within budget.





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Q: If you had it to do over, what would you do differently?

A: Really, nothing. The entire project went pretty much as planned.

Q: How long did the project take and could it have been done any faster?

A: Eleven months. No, it could not have reasonably gone any faster.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to mention about citizen participation?

A: Our citizens raised the money to construct an outdoor basketball court in conjunction with this project. Our senior citizens group helped produce an open house attended by over 200 people.

Q: Do you have any advice for other cities undertaking similar projects?

A: Yes. If you have a building you can rehab to convert to a usable facility, it is worth the effort. Also, use the KLC Bond program for financing. That program is a wonderful asset to cities.

Q: In the end, was the juice worth the squeeze?

A: Absolutely. Local citizens are pleased with our new facility.

Greensburg

Mayor George "Lisle" Cheatham II The Heartland Regional Micro-Enterprise Park

The Heartland Regional Micro-Enterprise Park project began in early 2004 when the Greensburg City Council decided to use a donated building as an incubator for business and industry.

The project provides opportunities for small businesses and industries to get started or expand without incurring the usual associated expenses. Businesses that have participated in the project have provided employment for some of the several hundred people who lost their jobs as a result of factory closings in the area.

One of the immediate benefits of the project has been an increase in the entrepreneurial spirit in the area. In the future, the city hopes to enhance that spirit by working with individuals trying to form new businesses and help them find resources through their use of the Heartland Micro-Enterprise Park.

Mayor George "Lisle" Cheatham II provided an overview.

Q: What was the best thing about your project overall?

A: We were able to take possession of a vacant building that was a constant reminder of our economic problems and the jobs we have lost in the region and turned it into a positive for the community. It has encouraged local entrepreneurs by giving them an opportunity to go into business for themselves without all the normal overhead expenses, thus allowing them to take less risk and focus on making their businesses profitable sooner. Currently we have over a dozen businesses in the facility, employing approximately 40 people. These are all businesses we don't have to worry about packing up and leaving the community.

Q: What was the most challenging element you had to overcome to meet with success?

A: The bricks and mortar issues were really the easy part. The hard part was changing people's attitudes toward starting and operating a small business. Helping people to learn how to run a business versus working in a business can be a real challenge.

Q: If you had it to do over, what would you do differently?

A: If we had to work on any one particular area, it would have to be the mentoring and training aspect of the project. We just did not have the funding available to put that part of the program in place as well as we would have liked to, but we are working on that!

Q: How long did the project take and could it have been done any faster?

A: The Micro-Enterprise Park will be an ongoing project as it has become one of the most successful aspects of our economic development program in the community. Building local businesses is one of the few things a community can have any real control over when trying to add jobs

to the community. In our case, the project hit the ground running from the time we took possession of the facility. It was just four short months before we had our first new business to open their doors, and I'm happy to say the same business is still with us today and continues to grow.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to mention about citizen participation?

A: One of the keys to our early success with the Micro-Enterprise Park was our ability to put together a tremendous steering committee made up of local business people, bankers and real estate brokers.

These community leaders really worked hard to set the program up the right way and helped spread the word in the community and in the surrounding area about the facility and what we had to offer. Because of that, this project has met with tremendous success from local people who wanted to start a business. Having the incubator concept gave them the confidence they needed to try a new business on their own.

Q: Do you have any advice for other cities undertaking similar projects?

A: You don't have to have a 68,000-square-foot building to do a project like this. It could be done just as easily in one or more smaller buildings, perhaps even in a downtown area. Helping to build small businesses in your community can be a huge plus for your community. It helps to stabilize your local economy and improves civic and business pride in your community at a time when big business is struggling and cutting back.

Q: In the end, was the juice worth the squeeze?

A: Yes, it has been an unquestioned success! With the success of this project, it has made it easier for our community to step up and attempt other projects that previously would have met with a great deal of local skepticism.

Since we have had such success, the city has had another 40,000-square-foot building donated to the community that we're in the process of turning into an educational facility to encourage continuing education and entrepreneurship.

We have also bought a downtown building that had sat vacant for 40 years. I am happy to say we have already signed a lease agreement for a portion of the building to a local group to open a new, much-needed restaurant for our downtown district.



Mark Norman is a partner in the Cincinnati office of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, where he is a member of the energy and environment group.



'Green infrastructure' a promising tool in managing wastewater



Editor's Note: This is another installment in City's ongoing series, "How Green Is Your City?"

Chronic problems with overflowing sewers and stormwater runoff have led Hamilton County, Ohio, to begin working on a "green infrastructure" program to help meet the challenges it faces from too much wastewater.

"The EPA is telling us that no one else in the country is developing a program with the scope and breadth of ours," said Karen Ball, the county compliance coordinator for its work with the local sewer district. "We're going to be a model for communities across the nation facing these same issues."

Green infrastructure uses existing waterways, watersheds and wetlands to control water flow, containing it at its source to prevent overloading a sewer system. Green infrastructure tools also include permeable pavements, green roofs, rain barrels, cisterns, trees and tree boxes, rain gardens, vegetated



Curb cut and swale at High Point in West Seattle.



All of the stormwater runoff from the parking lot at Wissabickon Charter School in Philadelphia flows to a rain garden downhill from the school. The rain garden provides on-site educational opportunities at the school.

swales, pocket wetlands and planted median strips.

A main driver of the program is the fact that traditional approaches – including upgrades in the so-called gray infrastructure by expanding treatment capacity, separating combined sewers and replacing broken or decaying pipes – are tremendously expensive and require massive sewer rate increases.

Also contributing to the new approach is growing evidence that it has improved the effectiveness of green infrastructure tools.

The roots of these issues extend back more than 100 years. When municipalities first began building sewers on widespread basis in the late 1800s, they carried both sanitary wastes from homes and storm runoff from streets away from residential areas and into nearby lakes and streams.

As development increasingly placed more of a load on these combined sewers, heavy rains would overwhelm their capacity, and overflow was diverted directly into basements, streets and lawns.

Overflowing, untreated sewage generates plenty of bad publicity, but stormwater runoff is also a major contributor to water pollution. Storm runoff picks up and carries pesticides, fertilizers, oil, sediment, leaves, construction materials and pet waste before it seeps into the ground or ends



Curb cuts in the vegetated swales, along with the grade of the lot, encourage water to enter the swale. This is located at a parking lot for the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

up in streams, lakes and other bodies of water.

The sewer district serving Cincinnati—like those in many other communities—is under a federal consent decree to fix these sewer overflows.

Initial efforts focused on the gray

At one point, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati considered spending more than \$1 billion to build an 18-mile tunnel extending from Interstate 275 to a sewage treatment plant near the Ohio River to stop flooding and catch overflow sewage during heavy rains. A lack of federal funds and inadequate local resources killed that idea, however.

In 2006, MSD estimated that expanding capacity and system repairs



Villebois is a large neighborhood development in Wilsonville, Oregon, that incorporates decentralized stormwater management features throughout. Larger retention ponds were the solution to building codes that don't allow rain gardens close to home foundations.

mandated by the courts would cost approximately \$2 billion over 23 years. That would require double-digit annual sewer fee increases, resulting in residential and business charges at double or triple their current rates.

Beginning in 2007, however, the U.S. EPA began encouraging communities to consider different approaches, noting that green infrastructure could be both cost effective and environmentally preferable.

The EPA noted additional benefits green infrastructure:

- **Cleaner water:** Vegetation and green space reduce the amount of storm water runoff.
- **Enhanced water supplies:** Most green infiltration approaches involve allowing storm water to percolate through the soil where it recharges the aquifer.
- **Cleaner air:** Trees and vegetation improve air quality by filtering many airborne pollutants.
- **Reduced urban temperatures:** Summer city temperatures can average 10 degrees higher than nearby suburban temperatures. Vegetation creates shade, reduces the amount of heat absorbing materials and emits water vapor – all of which cool hot air.
- **Increased energy efficiency:** Green space helps lower ambient temperatures and helps shade and insulate buildings from wide temperature swings, decreasing the energy needed for heating and cooling.
- **Community benefits:** Trees and plants improve urban aesthetics and community livability by providing recreational and wildlife areas.

Many communities across the country have begun green infrastructure pilot projects and report encouraging results. Among them:

Louisville, like Cincinnati, is under a federal court order to reduce sewage overflows, facing a December 2008 deadline to submit a long-term control plan. The city has already started using some green tools:

- More than 350 homes have disconnected their downspouts from the sewer system and hooked them up to rain barrels instead.
- The sewer district is advising home owners on how to install rain gardens.
- The district also is reviewing community zoning and stormwater standards, changes in its rate structure and is exploring partnerships with parks and schools.

In **Chicago**, a new ordinance took effect this year requiring new developments or redevelopments of a certain size to capture the first half-inch of runoff from all hard surfaces, such as roofs and driveways, on site instead of allowing the water to flow into the sewers or nearby waterways. Developers can use a variety of techniques, such as green roofs, permeable pavements or rain barrels and cisterns, to capture the water. More than 80 buildings in the city, including City Hall, now have green roofs.

Milwaukee began looking at green options after spending more than \$3 billion in the 1980s and 1990s to improve its sewer system. A downspout disconnection program, started in 2003, redirects building downspouts into rain barrels, pervious areas and rain gardens. In addition, seven green roofs have recently been installed throughout the city, the largest of which covers roughly 20,000 square feet.

Philadelphia is completely revising its stormwater billing system to shift the burden from residential customers to large, nonresidential entities such as rail lines, parking lots and utility rights of way whose large, impervious spaces generate significant levels of runoff. Fees will be based on amount of impenetrable cover per site; the program, to be implemented over four years, will offer incentives for customers to retrofit properties with green infrastructure.

Pittsburgh has spent an estimated \$3 billion on gray infrastructure repairs over the last several decades, but some green initiatives are also under way:

- More than 500 rain barrels have been placed in neighborhoods with sewer overflow problems.
- A 15,000-square-foot green roof is being planned for the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens.
- The city is spending \$7.7 million to restore riverbanks and create wildlife habitat along Nine Mile Run, an urban watershed.

Portland, Oregon, has been a pioneer in green infrastructure. City building codes require on-site storm water management for all new construction projects. And the city plans to offer fee discounts of up to 35 percent for properties with on-site storm water management. Other initiatives include:

- New municipal buildings are required to have a green roof.
- Incentives are offered to privately owned buildings with green roofs.
- The city pays homeowners \$53 for every downspout disconnected from the sewer system. More than 45,000 households participate in the program.

The program in Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio, is still in its infancy, and many challenges remain. An example: the more than 33 separate political jurisdictions within Hamilton County all have their own development regulations and practices.

Green design, with its emphasis on preserving vegetation and reducing impenetrable surfaces, will require a new way of thinking about regulations.

Toward that end, the sewer district is working with the building industry, the Sierra Club and other interested groups to integrate the various local government rules into one new set of standards – the first attempt at countywide standard-setting in Greater Cincinnati.

Green infrastructure isn't a magic bullet, and it is definitely not a replacement for gray. There is just too much stormwater to manage without sewers and pipes, and communities will still need to increase capacity in those areas.

But green infrastructure has the potential to save taxpayers millions of dollars while it improves water quality.

Marilyn Sargent, an honors graduate of Ashland Community & Technical College, is continuing her studies at ACTC and Morehead State University to become a middle school English and social studies teacher.



Leadership KCTCS: Stengthening Kentucky by improving civic engagement

I had no idea what I was getting into when I was chosen to participate in the inaugural session of Leadership KCTCS. I've always been interested in community activities and like to be a positive influence, but I didn't realize that I was about to embark upon such a valuable journey.

The goal of Leadership KCTCS is to help the state by improving the civic engagement of its citizens. Sixteen students from the Kentucky Community & Technical College System were chosen for the inaugural class to travel to Versailles, Somerset, Bowling Green

and Louisville for city tours, seminars and direct exposure to the day-to-day responsibilities of local leaders.

The goal of Leadership KCTCS is to help the state by improving the civic engagement of its citizens.

A key feature was the brainstorming we did about what we were learning and how we could apply it to our own communities. We studied the "12

Principles of Community Building" framed by the NewCities Institute and discovered how people, place, perspective and prosperity make a community great.

Have you ever wondered why some people sit on the side of the road watching the world go by? It may not be because they don't want to participate. Instead, it could be because they've never been encouraged to participate.

Leadership KCTCS has inspired me and provided me with valuable knowledge. Through our involvement, my colleagues and I have been equipped with skills to make us true community

patriots. We have also formed a network connecting individuals throughout the state who can contact each other for support and ideas on community improvement.

I certainly appreciate NewCities CEO Sylvia Lovely and KCTCS President Dr. Michael McCall for allowing staff to create and implement such a valuable

I certainly appreciate NewCities CEO Sylvia Lovely and KCTCS President Dr. Michael McCall for allowing staff to create and implement such a valuable program.

program. The team of leaders from Leadership KCTCS will assist the program's graduates in any way possible in the future. We have become our own little community, so to speak.

And if you have not already done so, I encourage you to log onto YouTube and watch "The Last Lecture," given by the late Randy Pausch.

A married father of three and a Carnegie Mellon University professor, Pausch was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was told in August 2007 he had no more than six months to live. He recently passed away, after seeing his book with the same title become a best seller. Facing the end of his life, this brave man still encouraged others to follow their childhood dreams and achieve their goals.

Among his wonderful advice and insights: It is important to have specific dreams. Anger never makes a situation better.

Never lose the childlike wonder. It's just too important. It's what drives us. Be good at something. It makes you valuable.

Brick walls are there for a reason. They let us prove how badly we want things.

As we go into our communities and work to make our world a better place, there will be many brick walls. The benefit of Leadership KCTCS is that we have learned that we do not need to let those brick walls deter us.

I recall an early session when we were asked to list the problems that affect our communities. We found that we shared many of the same difficulties, and we joined in searching for answers. Obstacles can often seem insurmountable when they are faced alone, so why not seek

advice from someone who has traveled that route before?

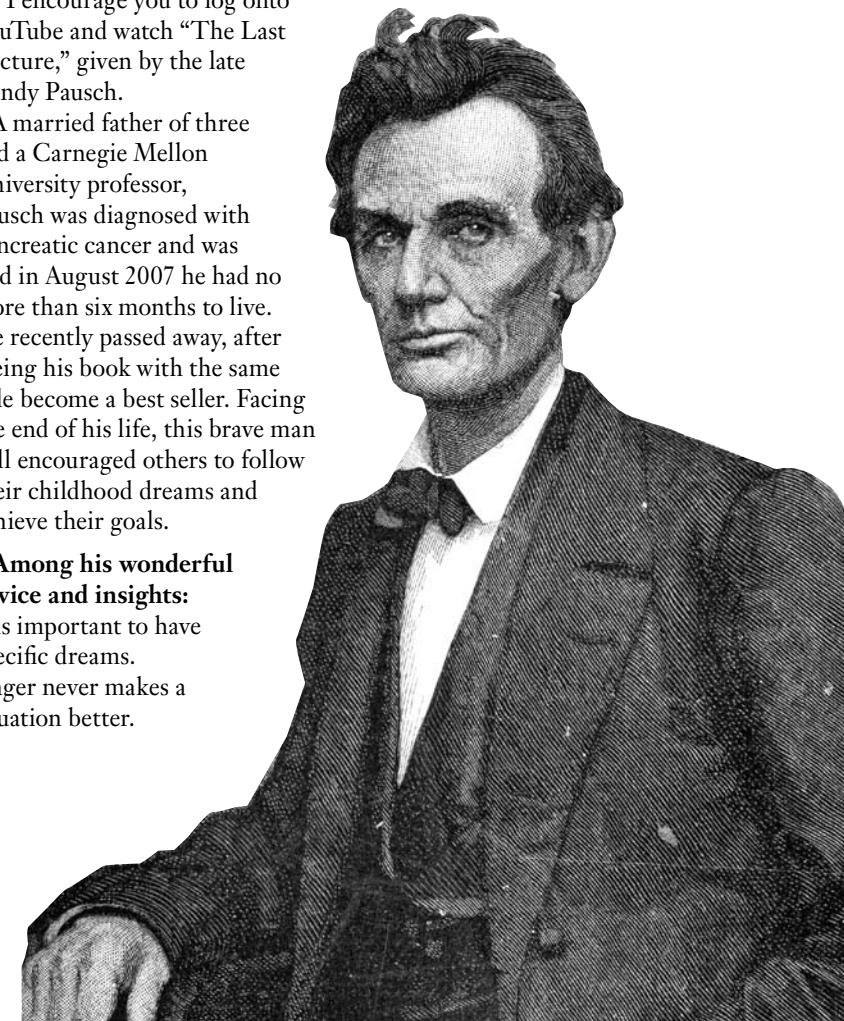
I am confident that the next class of Leadership KCTCS will have a superb selection of leaders-to-be as the program, already on the rise, adds new students and opportunities.

As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Just as laughter is contagious, so can be the desire to make a difference. I may be only one person from Ashland but, in the words of my favorite historical figure Abraham Lincoln, "I, too, am a Kentuckian."

We are a strong, resilient people who can achieve great things. Let us start at the heart of the matter—our hometowns—and grow from there.

"I, too, am a Kentuckian."



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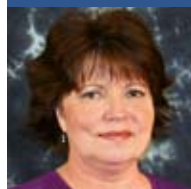
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Terry Ueber is Marketing and Expo Coordinator for the Kentucky League of Cities.



News from Kentucky's communities

Nicholasville No. 1 for affordable homes

Nicholasville was recently named the No. 1 city in the country for affordable homes by *Money Magazine* and CNN. Nicholasville, located 12 miles south of Lexington in the heart of the Bluegrass, is within minutes of a major highway, five golf courses, dozens of parks throughout the county, retail stores and good restaurants.



Residents prize its slow-going, small-town charm. In an effort to reinforce and preserve its character, city officials have announced plans to redevelop downtown Nicholasville with a community center, music park and tree-lined streets and lighting. The city's Downtown Master

The magazine recognized that Nicholasville offers three-bedroom, single-family homes starting at just under \$100,000.

Plan encompasses a nine-block area and incorporates some of the county's unique cultural, historical and physical aspects.

The magazine recognized that Nicholasville offers three-bedroom, single-family homes starting at just under \$100,000. The city's median home price is \$70,000, and the median family income for its residents is \$53,505.

Eagle Scout designs memorial

Eagle Scouts are known for taking on difficult projects, and 16-year-old Brian Huybers knew that a memorial to the victims of Flight 5191 was a perfect project for him.

Huybers says the idea to create a memorial in Richmond was prompted by Whitney Dunlap, assistant scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 401. She told

"Before dawn on August 27, 2006, the Atlanta bound commuter jet that was Comair flight 5191 crashed on take-off from Blue Grass Airport in Lexington, killing 49 of the 50 people on board, including these six from Madison County."

Huybers that Richmond Mayor Connie Lawson wanted a local memorial for the six Madison County residents who died in the Lexington crash on August 27, 2006.

Huybers, a Madison County High School senior, was the project coordinator and Russell Sitter was the fountain designer. The memorial was recently dedicated and is now in place at

the Lake Reba Recreational Complex in Richmond.

The memorial has a fountain at its center, a cylinder that tapers toward the top and has 49 engraved doves. Around the base of the fountain are six granite plaques inscribed with the name and age of each Madison County victim. A seventh plaque describes what happened to Flight 5191:

"Before dawn on August 27, 2006, the Atlanta bound commuter jet that was Comair flight 5191 crashed on take-off from Blue Grass Airport in Lexington, killing 49 of the 50 people on board, including these six from Madison County."

"I think it is just amazing that a teenager could spearhead this and get it done," said Kathy Moscoe who lost her daughter, Cecile Moscoe, in the crash. Other Madison Countians killed in the crash were Carole Bizzack, Lynda McKee, Victoria Washington, Judy Rains and Brian Byrd. (Information from the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.)

Rabbit Hash election puts man's best friend on ballot

The small town of Rabbit Hash is searching for its next unofficial mayor. The former unofficial mayor, Jordan Cochran, was a black Labrador retriever who passed away last May after serving since 2004. Voting in this small Ohio River community began at the end of August and will conclude on Nov. 4. So far, the only name in the hat is "Lucy Lou" and her bio reads "Border Collie."

How did this quaint small town end

up with a dog as its mayor?

In 1998, the Historical Society held a mock mayoral election to raise funds for the restoration of an historic church. Votes were sold for a dollar each, and the election resulted in thousands of dollars for the restoration project and the election of Jordan Cochran as the unofficial mayor.

Rabbit Hash is an unincorporated community with a population from 4 to 40 on any given day, and no one is

exactly certain how its name came about (although many believe it followed a flood that drove hundreds of rabbits from the riverbank to local dinner tables).

But its biggest claim to fame these days is its choice of "mayors." (Information from www.preserveamerica.gov 8.22.08 and www.kypost.com 8.22.08.)



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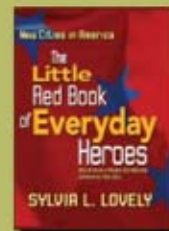
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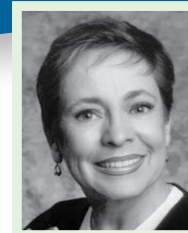
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Libby Alexander is the founder and principal of Saturn Consulting in Louisville.

City Q&A WITH LIBBY ALEXANDER

A vision of community building

Libby Alexander recently completed work in Owensboro, helping its leaders develop a 10-year strategic vision for the city. Current clients include state government cabinets in both Kentucky and Indiana—one focused on aligning marketing strategies to bolster Kentucky's tourism economy; the other developing new public library models as part of Indiana's local government reform initiative. *City* recently asked her about her work in community and strategic planning.

Q: What attracted you to the community planning field?

A: Communities exist in so many forms and venues—everywhere people come together around a common cause to achieve something they can't do by themselves. I have a lifelong fascination with how that happens—how people with different backgrounds, personalities, styles and perspectives are motivated to yoke their differences and take on huge challenges.

The ability to help coalesce those groups, objectively frame issues affecting their destiny, support development of new strategies and see the results of that work—I never fail to be thrilled with the opportunity to be a part of that process.

Q: What are some of the major similarities of, and differences between, the public and private sectors that you have found in your work?

A: Drawing others to a vision of the future; managing, motivating, and aligning a diverse array of folks; and having the skills and discipline to realize results in a timely manner are common characteristics of leaders with whom I've worked in both public and private sector settings. Private sector leaders typically focus more quickly, and often with a greater sense of urgency, in order to respond to shifting conditions and craft specific outcomes. In contrast, the cadence of public sector decisions is slowed considerably by the scrutiny of multiple constituencies. In spite of those differences, each set of circumstances produces similar degrees of pressure to lead and to produce.

Q: What do you consider Kentucky cities' strongest points? How can they become stronger in the years to come?

A: Kentucky cities are especially good at managing operational details, improving efficiencies, and mobilizing in the face of short term crises. They've been less adept, less practiced, at engaging local citizens in dialogue and bringing together "communities within the community" to deal with big, long-term issues. I've seen an exciting shift across the state, a recasting of local leadership programs to reinforce the skills needed to lead today's plugged-in, networked community. Learning to frame issues, communicate the significance of huge volumes of data, actively listen to customers, create win-win relationships with unlikely partners, craft effective messages for multiple audiences, develop performance metrics, facilitate group processes, align multiple

viewpoints, exchange busy-ness for quantifiable results – learning how to relate to a warp-speed world. I see a new city-level capacity model which, if sustained, will raise Kentucky's economic tide.

Q: What are some of the challenges you believe communities will encounter in the coming years, and how can they prepare for them? What is the key to community success?

A: Demographers tell us that U.S. population trends present Kentucky with new opportunities for growth and development. Our cities are challenged to understand those trends and help prepare their communities to capitalize on them. We won't, however, be able to do that without raising our sights beyond familiar boundaries, redefining old notions of power and authority and sharpening each local community's sense of connection to the rest of the state, the rest of the nation and the rest of the world.

We also won't be able to do that if we don't learn new techniques for focusing the sights of our civic leaders, elected officials and municipal professionals on the same far horizon. All must be at the table in all phases of community planning – the great visionary leaders, the entrepreneurs and the professionals in the trenches charged with the nitty-gritty of implementation.

We have to figure out how to integrate multiple perspectives from the beginning, how to meld possibilities with probabilities. As Warren Bennis put it, we need more dreams with deadlines.

Q: What do you enjoy the most about your work? Your greatest challenges?

A: Every single job brings new opportunities to learn – and new people to meet. I could eat strategy for breakfast, so I love working with bright, dedicated people in search of new perspectives on old problems to achieve a new result. Most projects appear as huge puzzles with multiple moving parts – and, often, the presenting problem isn't the real issue. It's often a sort of archeological dig. And every community scenario is a unique combination of people, systems and circumstances.

Q: If you could have a conversation with anyone, living or dead, who would it be and why?

A: Quincy Jones. An entrepreneur, a social activist, a player in every sense, he's fearless in his approach to life. He's gravitated multiple times to the cutting edge of his craft and in every possible role from performer, arranger and producer to director, coach and collaborator. He's a master at taking diverse talents and weaving them into inspired musical results. It's some sort of magic, his ability to see what others cannot see, to develop what others don't know is possible. His realization of symphonic possibilities – it's a rare form of community building, don't you think?

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