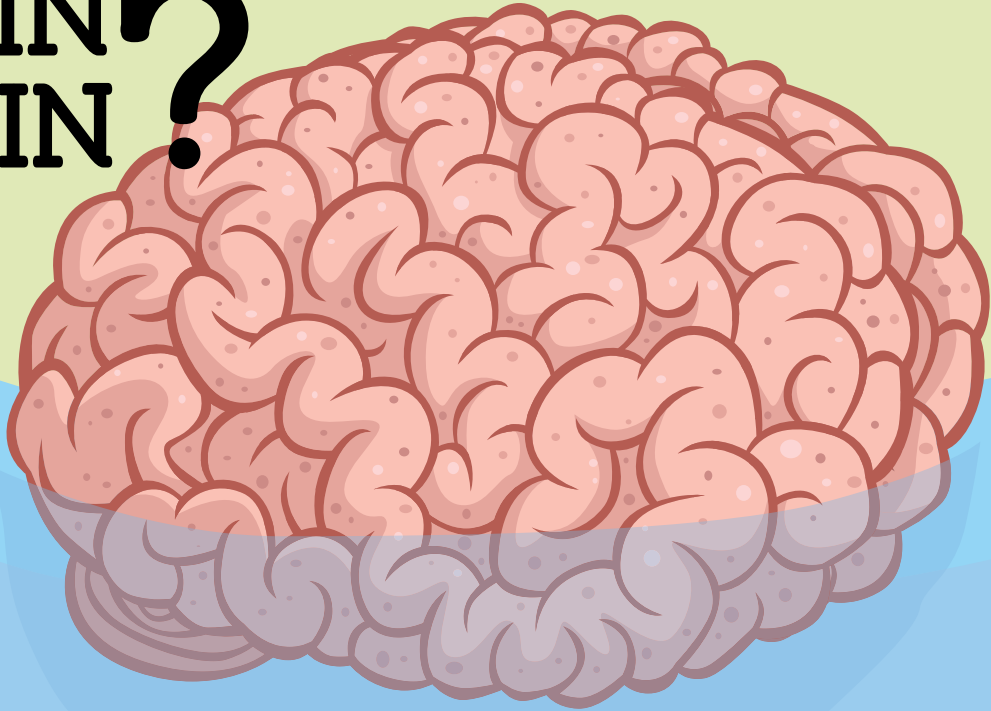


City

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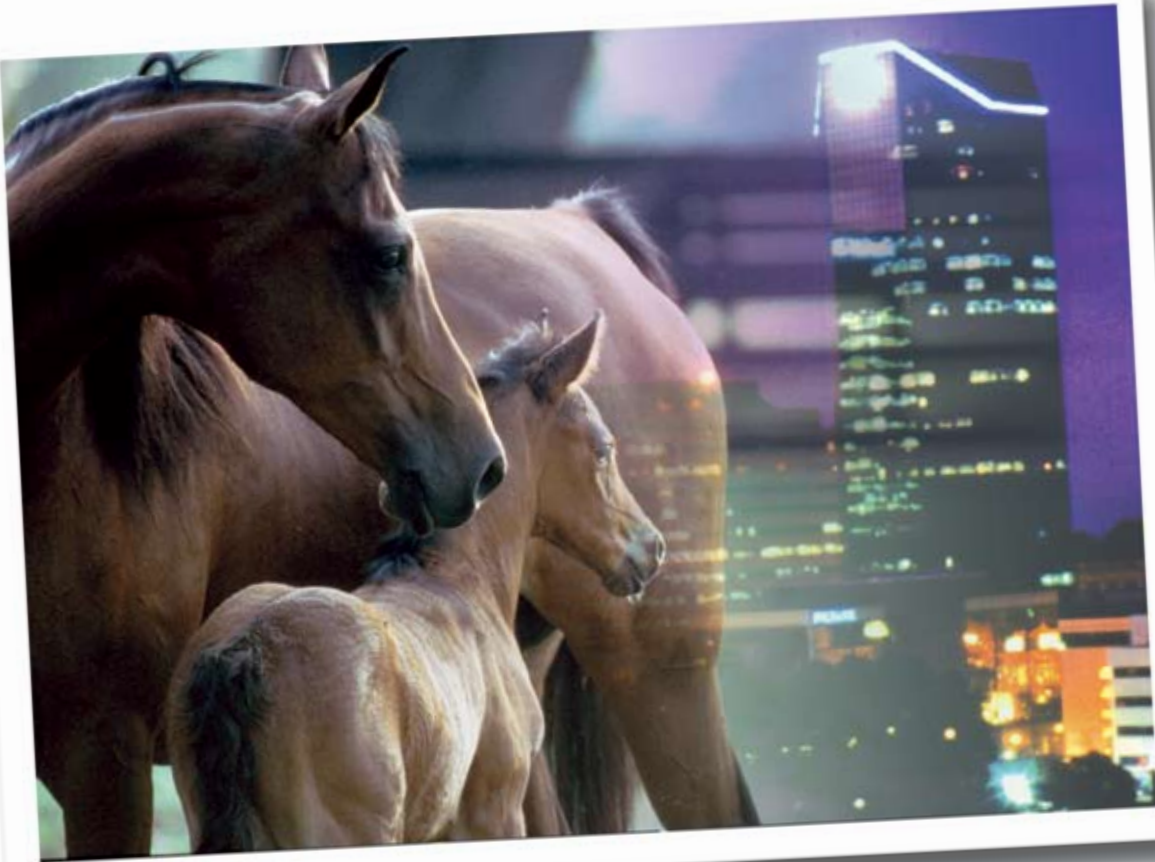
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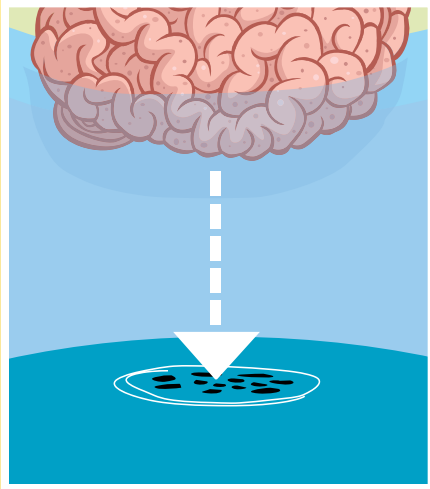
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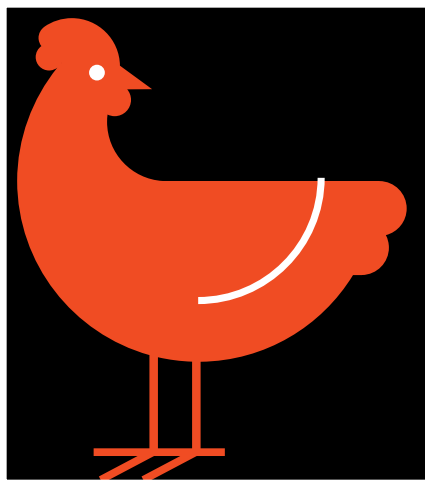
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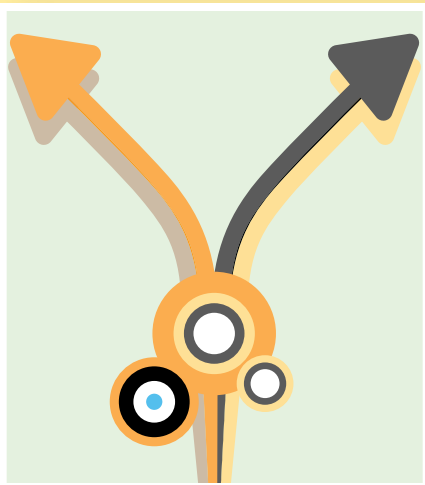
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Building a better world at home

It is always tricky to make comments about young people, especially since I'm not a member of that group any more. I do have two sons, but the only authority I claim is that I have very little of it when it comes to influencing the decisions made by a 22- and a 24-year-old.

For example, my son Ross had just received a prestigious award for chemistry during his junior year at Centre College when he suddenly announced he was switching his major to philosophy. I remember getting antsy over what I perceived would be diminished job prospects, but to no avail. And as it turned out, he is doing quite well in law school.

My younger son David, meanwhile, has announced he is going to Chile following graduation from Transylvania University. As I begin my "second son" tour of duty for such announcements, I am far more sanguine. "Go ahead—join the circus if you wish. Just send postcards!"

The lesson here is that it is hard to give advice to bright young people who will no doubt find their way. Nevertheless, I do have a few suggestions for today's young leaders.

I recently had an opportunity to address a group of 16- and 17-year-olds in a summer leadership program. I wasn't so much struck by their brightness (I see that in a lot of kids who are not in leadership programs) but by their utter confidence that they *would* become surgeons, lawyers and such—anything but what they considered ordinary people, I suppose.

I wondered what it would be like to see them again a decade from now, after they experience the inevitable moments of truth that passage into adulthood entails. I believe most of them will do well. That's because these are the lucky ones whose great lives include involved parents. (I tend to worry a great deal more about the kids not in the room than I do about the kids chosen for leadership programs.)

I was also struck by their lack of desire to return to their Kentucky hometowns and their reasons why. Their observations about life in small towns were particularly troubling. The pace is too slow, they said, people are too nosy and, according to one person, small towns are even "too white."

Most mentioned moving to bigger cities—to the same bright lights that forecasters say will attract 75 percent of Americans by the year 2050, all of them clustered in only eight "super cities" that include such well-known

destinations as Atlanta and Charlotte.

The troubling statistics tell us that in many parts of our state and country, young people are leaving, never to return. For communities, this is a prescription for failure.

This also tells us that what we have heard is true: the best and the brightest can live and work anywhere. But they don't want to limit their experience of the wider world to a broadband connection.

A reporter I know once observed that, upon graduation from journalism school, he wanted to move to a small town—but not just any small town. He wanted a place with a coffee house he could visit on Sunday morning and settle into *The New York Times*. He chose a small town in Texas, close to Austin. He had looked at Kentucky and North Carolina before choosing.

If our communities are to thrive, they have to be willing to embrace a broader audience and agenda. A mayor once said she wanted to get some of those good "high-tech" jobs but "none of the weird people."

The day has come that we can't have it both ways.

We must embrace youth and those who are different. We can retain the small-town way of life that gives such communities their charm, but doing so will require a lot of resolve, work and good old-fashioned citizenship from every corner of the community.

A bit of good news is that some young people have started a slow trickle back home, to the kind of places that a state like Kentucky has in abundance—places that have a caring and nurturing environment that provides a haven for people who see a world growing bigger and crazier by the minute.

These are the people who will change the world for the better as they choose to live in smaller places where they can see firsthand the impact of their work: A child has a house because of a Habitat for Humanity project. To sustain the house, the parent has a job and the child has a brighter future. A family takes root—a family that perhaps doesn't have the luxury of being able to live and work anywhere but has a contribution to make to the community.

This is important because family, neighborhood and community are the fundamental building blocks of our lives.

So to all young people living in this electronic/information age, I challenge you: Go home—wherever



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Editorial Staff

Publisher Sylvia L. Lovely

Executive Editor Bobbie S. Bryant

Editorial Services Diana Taylor
Communications

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Can Kentucky develop a strategy to keep, attract college graduates?

This is an election year in Kentucky for local officials. Citizens are running for mayor, judge executive, city council and fiscal court.

Undoubtedly one of the reasons some of these candidates will say they are running for local office is to do something about the fact that young people, particularly educated young people, are leaving their communities. They likely will promise to address this problem by working hard to create jobs that will keep these young people at home.

Often our young college graduates are simply going to Louisville, Lexington or other larger cities where there are more opportunities for jobs, but more often than we would like to admit they are going to cities outside of Kentucky, such as Atlanta and Charlotte.

The brain drain, as it is so often called, has been a problem for Kentucky. Between 1995 and 2000, a net of 5,000 college-educated people left the state for jobs in cities in other states. One-third of those leaving Kentucky, according to the 2000 census, were college graduates while only 29 per cent of those coming to our state were college graduates.

It should be noted that Louisville has seen some gains, particularly among people in their 30s. Lexington has been a bright spot with many young professionals remaining there after getting their degrees.

Northern Kentucky has also had steady growth, with 90 percent of Northern Kentucky University's graduates remaining in the Cincinnati area. Regrettably, these success stories have failed overall to help Kentucky improve relative to the nation. According to 2004 statistics, only 19 percent of Kentucky's population has a bachelor's degree or higher, ranking it 48th in the nation. The national

average is 27 percent.

Can Kentucky develop a strategy to keep its college graduates and reverse our downward spiral? What are the factors that attract young people, particularly college-educated young people? More important, does Kentucky have the political will to *really* do something about it?

Young people in today's society are very mobile. Most young people spread their wings and try new locations between the ages of 25 and 34. Many are single; many have no children or no school-age children. But the closer these individuals get to



35, the more likely they are to settle down and find a permanent location. They marry, have children and begin to develop lasting friendships that make moving much more difficult. That means that the window of opportunity to bring new people into your community or to attract former residents back to your community is during this time.

What makes this challenge even more difficult is that the talent pool is shrinking. The seemingly inexhaustible supply of labor that has fueled our economy is peaking, and baby boomers are preparing to retire. It will become harder to find the workforce necessary to keep our economy going.

Young, educated workers will be able to demand a premium. Having an abundant supply of such workers

will give a community a tremendous advantage over communities that lack young educated workers.

It is predicted that jobs will begin to find where the people are, rather than people having to find where the jobs are. Businesses will locate where the people can be found with the right skills to do the work. More often than not, new jobs will require young professionals and highly educated workers.

This is particularly true as we become less dependent upon manufacturing. Successful cities will make people the focus of economic development.

How does a city attract young professionals? Is there a strategy that a city can adopt to attract such workers?

Some factors need to be well understood. Young people are more diverse than the overall U.S. population. Is your city willing to accept diversity? Young women are playing a much larger role in the economic success of cities. Are your citizens ready to make the changes that would make your city more attractive to young, often single, women?

Currently, young adults are disproportionately concentrated in the 50 largest metropolitan areas. In fact, college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds were 25 percent more likely to live in one of the 50 largest metro areas. And some of these locations have seen their growth disproportionately fueled by the young adult population. Charlotte, Salt Lake City, Portland, Atlanta and Austin in particular have experienced such growth.

Another interesting aspect of this growth has been that most of these educated young adults tend to live near the center of the urban area,

apparently preferring the urban lifestyle and amenities. They also like the unique offerings of urban centers.


This is probably the most intriguing factor. Building on Kentucky's urban centers has not been a strategy that state economic development specialists have seemed to embrace, although the recent decision to locate the Louisville arena downtown is a welcome exception.

Generally, cities throughout the commonwealth have been on their own in trying to do the best they can to improve their central areas. Programs such as Main Street and Renaissance Kentucky have led to some success, but have suffered for lack of local funding. Efforts to restrict annexation, impose unfunded mandates and limit local options are making matters even worse.

Clearly not every city center in every county can or will be a magnet for educated young people. But until Kentucky recognizes at the state level that economic development is dependent upon having great cities, we will likely remain in the lower end of the rankings. A strategy should be developed for each region

to build cities that can attract young educated talent. Our city leaders have been doing their best over the years to create, preserve and deliver great places to live. It is time that state leaders joined with them in a concerted effort.

It is time for a summit on economic development to really address the problem of attracting an educated workforce. The strategies of the past will not work. Focusing on education alone will not work because educated workers will leave after they get their degrees. We may be spending a fortune to educate another state or city's workforce. Focusing on business recruitment and creating new jobs will not work if young educated workers decide to live elsewhere. Businesses will ultimately have to go where the people needed to do the work live.

Addressing community development and making our communities better places to live is the ultimate answer. Safe, clean, vibrant cities will attract young educated workers. The opportunity is now. We already have great places in Kentucky. Now we just need to make them better. 

City WRITERS



David Mudd is a writer living near Lawrenceburg. He has worked as a magazine editor and political consultant.



Terri Johnson is Senior Marketing and Communications Manager for the Kentucky League of Cities. Prior to joining KLC, she worked in the corporate and non-profit sectors

and spent nine years in health care marketing.



Robert W. Gee worked for eight years as a journalist, most recently for the *Austin American-Statesman*, where his assignments included coverage of the

war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In September, he will begin a nine-month Fulbright scholarship in Syria, where he will study Arabic.



Colleen Chaney, a graduate of Indiana University, is Deputy Commissioner of the Governor's Office for Local Development.

City LETTERS

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Summertime, and the city is feedin'

It's 11:30 on a June morning at Meadowthorpe Elementary School, and the kids attending the summer school/arts program are filing into the school cafeteria. As their names are called, they pick up a box lunch and carton of milk.

The school year has officially ended, but these children are among the 3,000 or so in Fayette County who are certain to receive a nutritious lunch

“By being a sponsor for this program, the Urban County Government makes sure all of our children get the nutrition they need during the summer.”

on an average day during the summer. The scene at Meadowthorpe has been repeated at 54 other sites around the county this summer.

Lexington Fayette Urban-County Government is one of several Kentucky municipalities that sponsor a summer food service program for children in their communities. The programs, which are operated in about 175 communities, are usually sponsored by school districts. The sponsors are reimbursed for each meal by the Kentucky Department of Education, using federal funds.

“Children from low-income households are very much at risk for not receiving nutritious meals during the day when school is out,” said Mayor Teresa Ann Isaac. “By being a sponsor for this program, the Urban County Government makes sure all of our children get the nutrition they need during the summer.”

Regardless of what agency sponsors

the programs, it's beneficial for cities to be involved, said Paul McElwain, director of the Division of Nutrition and Health Services at the state education department. “The greatest thing the city has to offer is the potential of sites where children are gathered, whether parks and rec sites or housing authority sites, just to name two types,” he said.

Although the urban county government is reimbursed for the meals, it spent \$42,560 in general fund money to support the service in 2005. The government is responsible for lining up and training coordinators at each of the food sites, where meals can be distributed for anything from a week to most of the summer. In addition to schools, sites include 15 parks, three of which operate summer day camps; a playground; two housing projects and several churches.

“In spite of the fact that it is many, many hours of labor, we think it's worth doing,” said Irene Gooding, grants manager in LFUCG's Division of Community Development, who

oversees the program.

Lexington's Parks and Recreation Department hires teenagers to help with the food service program at the parks sites, Gooding said. School personnel coordinate the school sites. Urban county government, which has been involved with the program for at least 20 years, is responsible for monitoring each site periodically.

Fayette County Schools is a major partner, under contract with the local government as the caterer for the program. Meals that meet federal standards are prepared at Lafayette High School by a summer crew of school food service workers and then transported in refrigerated trucks to the sites.

The partnership has been positive and “demonstrates our mutual commitment to the children of our community,” said Fayette County Schools Superintendent Stu Silberman. “Our motto is, ‘It's About Kids,’ and that means year-round. We know our students are the ones who benefit from this effort.”

The majority of the Fayette County sites are at schools. “A lot of the schools have enrichment-type programs throughout the summer,” said Marty Flynn, a food service supervisor at Fayette County Schools. “It's an opportunity for us to serve them lunch while they're there, because we're not sure if they're going home to be fed or not.”

Gooding said she has seen a decrease in the number of children who get the lunches at city parks. “You don't have children going out to parks to play that much. They're staying home with computers and cable television,” she said.

While LFUCG brings expertise in organizing its feeding locations, the school






These students at Meadowthorpe Elementary School in Fayette County enjoyed a nutritious lunch during their summer school/arts program, thanks to the sponsorship of Lexington Fayette Urban-County Government.

district has the food-service track record that private enterprise can't provide, Gooding noted.

"These are the people who feed children nine months of the year," she said. "We have their expertise and we also have their interest in feeding children and what children

will eat. They also have an extreme interest in the safety of the food provided."

Besides the obvious nutritional benefits, the summer food service program has academic benefits for the children, Flynn said.

"They need energy to retain things and learn things. If a child's not healthy when they come back to school, they're not going to be ready to learn and not as likely to retain what they have learned in the past," she said. 

Nibbling the numbers on an average day for Summer Food Service in Fayette County:

3,200 lunches
1,400 breakfasts
400 snacks



**2005 figures from Fayette County Schools based on a peak date in mid-summer*



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Plugging the drain

Encouraging creative young Kentuckians to stay, return home

BY DAVID MUDD

In 1975, Steven Spielberg's blockbuster "Jaws" boosted public concern over shark attacks to levels way out of proportion to the number that actually occur. The movie played brilliantly on primordial fears, not only about being savaged by something shadowy and fierce, but also about being stalked while bobbing in the ocean, unable to resort to the tried and true human response to danger: running away.

Audience members were driven to shout to threatened characters on the screen, "Get out of the water!" And the movie has had a lasting effect on the national psyche, evident then in the numbers of summer beachgoers who stayed out of the surf and now in the media attention that sporadic shark attacks still command—even in communities thousands of miles from any ocean.

That's the thing about something catchy and clever, and particularly something that rouses deep-down fears; it can call an unwarranted amount of attention to a threat that may not be all that real.

Take the term brain drain, for example.

The rhyme is catchy, insistent. It conjures an immediate and troubling

Kentucky's economic future is going to depend increasingly on young, educated, innovative thinkers and entrepreneurs.

image, of a precious resource dribbling away. And that image sparks an urgent instinctual response: Plug the drain!

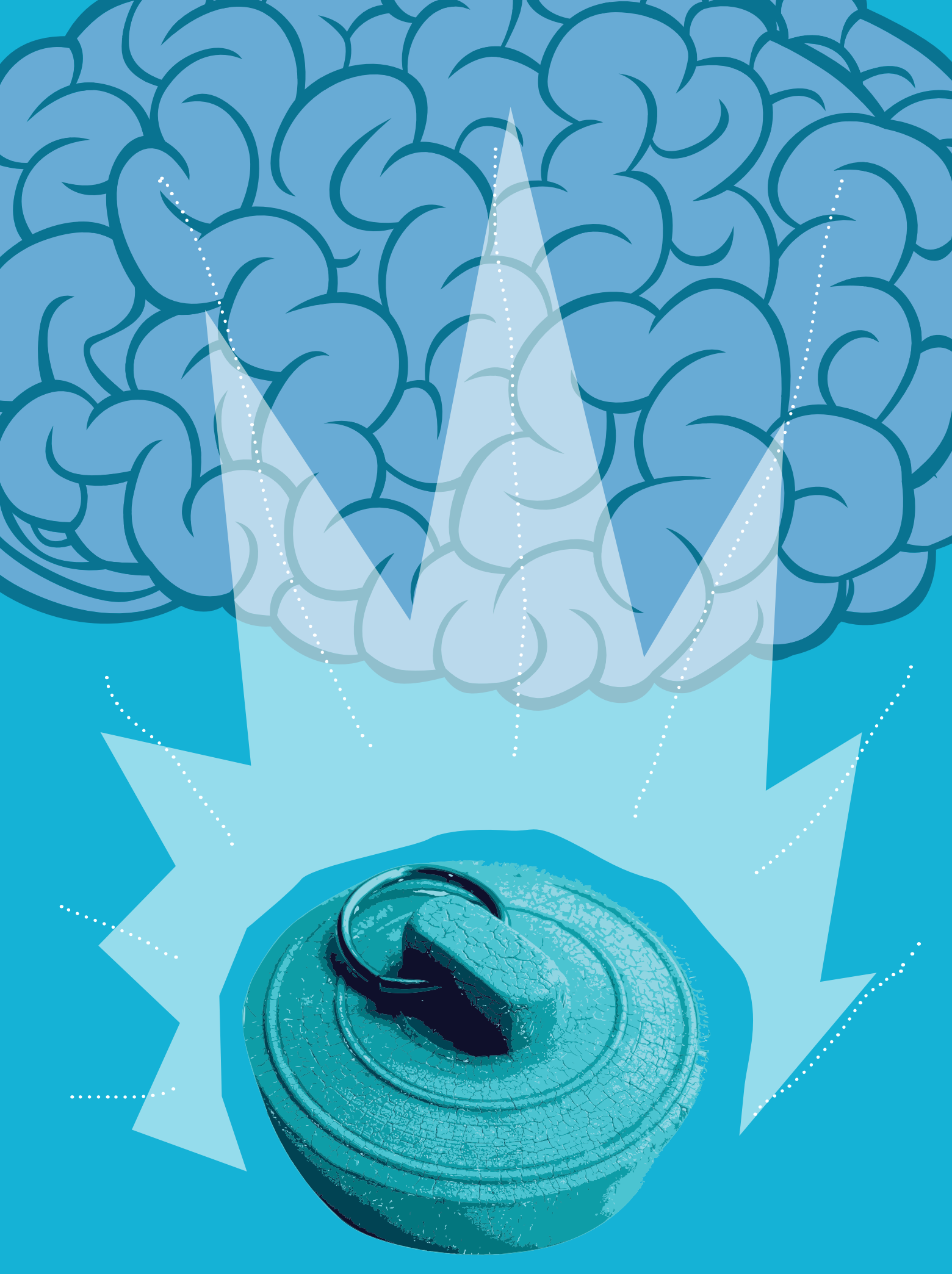
Here in Kentucky, with an education system that has been viewed as second-rate until recent years, and with a Southern-state economy historically neither very

diverse nor dynamic, a brain drain has seemed a plausible and worrisome danger.

It just *felt* true, and it still does, that the smartest and most promising among us, those who couldn't help but recognize how they would be constrained by the state's relatively limited educational and economic opportunities, would choose to go elsewhere. Moreover, we all know someone promising or gifted who has done just that—slipped away to greener pastures.

Add to these unsettling experiences the insistence by a bevy of authorities, including University of Kentucky President Lee T. Todd, that Kentucky's economic future is going to depend increasingly on young, educated, innovative thinkers and entrepreneurs....And, you know, too many of those people are leaving.

You can almost hear the brooding swell of strings in the "Jaws" soundtrack that signaled the shark's presence. The instinctual response is to view the brain drain as a menacing public policy problem and to want to



do something about it. Immediately.

And the state has indeed launched efforts aimed at keeping gifted young people here at home. Relying on research conducted by the Southern Technology Council that indicates a high percentage of college graduates tend to settle near where they get their educations, Kentucky has launched two programs in the past two decades—both modeled after projects in other states—meant to identify promising college-bound students, encourage them, enroll them in Kentucky colleges and universities, and assist them with scholarships and forgivable loans.

The older of the two, the Governor's Scholars program, identifies about 1,000 of the most promising students in the state's high schools each year and invites them, in the summer break between their junior and senior years, to attend five-week, expense-paid seminars held on several college campuses around the state.

The seminars are meant to expose students to the array of educational programs and standards at all of Kentucky's public and private colleges and universities. Students also learn how to make themselves more attractive candidates for college acceptance, as well as for scholarships and other aid from these institutions.

Dr. Aris Cedeno, academic chair of the program and a professor at the University of Louisville, said that Governor's Scholars has been increasingly successful since its inception in 1983 at passing gifted students on to Kentucky universities and colleges. "It's now a success rate of greater than 80 percent," he noted. So far, more than 16,000 students have participated.

The newer program, the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship fund, established by the legislature in 1998, provides scholarships of varying levels based on academic merit for Kentucky high school students who intend to enroll in some form of higher education. Last year, the fund directed nearly \$50 million to colleges and universities to help pay tuition costs for almost 120,000 qualifying students.

These grants can be used to attend some colleges or universities outside

Louisville creating new environment for young people, boomers

Mayor Jerry Abramson says he wasn't stung by the low ranking that Louisville earned a few years back in demographer Richard Florida's published estimation of the most, and least, "creative" large cities in America.

Florida based his judgments on a number of factors—a "creativity index" that he said indicated how attractive each of the 49 metro areas reporting populations of more than a million would be to the "Creative Class" he has helped define. The group is made up of the young, educated, motivated people he and others claim will drive the country's changing economy. Louisville was one of the bottom 10, lumped with Buffalo, New York; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Providence, Rhode Island.

These cities, Florida said, were "stuck in old paradigms," and spun their wheels in the 1980s and 1990s in misguided efforts to "become the next 'Silicon Somewhere'" with generic high-tech office parks while their creative residents fled for more interesting, dynamic places such as Austin, Boston and Seattle.

"All I can say now is Mr. Florida should come back and let me show him around," Abramson said. "We're not your daddy's Oldsmobile any more."

The mayor said his tour might start at the Extreme Skate Park on the eastern edge of downtown, a bowl of concrete overshadowed by elevated interstate highway interchanges and the ancient silo of a seed-processing company. It might not look like much, he said, but that park is attracting more than teenage skateboarders banished from mall parking lots and sidewalks.

"I was on a trip to Atlanta a while back—to talk to a group of people with Louisville ties as a matter of fact, including plenty who expressed interest in job opportunities here—and the 25-year old receptionist at the office where we met told me she and her boyfriend come to Louisville several times a year just to skateboard there. I rode my bike down there the other day, and the first two kids I talked to were software engineers."

From there, the mayor said he might show Florida the new downtown baseball stadium, the parks and trails being developed along the Ohio River waterfront, the burgeoning downtown restaurants and clubs, along with the growing number of downtown core apartments, condominiums and other residential units. "It was in the low hundreds five years ago. We're at about 1,700 now, and that's expected to double by 2008."

The tour would have to include Louisville's diverse neighborhoods, too, he said. And while he was filling Florida in on the long-term plan for a ring of connected parks on the city's outskirts, he would also have to mention the announced billion-dollar expansion by United Parcel Service at the airport and the continuing growth of the downtown-headquartered Humana Inc.

There's a lot for the creative class in these and other developments, Abramson said, and the city is luring them. But he cautions against a single-minded approach, bent on the pursuit of any distinct group, no matter how promising.

"It's everything; we're trying to improve things for baby boomers, too. That's what the 23 miles of bike trails along the river are about, because many of the boomers like me wore out their knees running in the '80s and '90s, so now they've switched to bikes. Bike trails make them happy, *and* they appeal to younger people."

The same holds for housing units downtown, he said. "It isn't just young people moving into apartments. Some of the condos are priced higher than most young people could afford, frankly. But boomers are buying them. There's been a pent-up desire for this kind of change."

It isn't just about trying to think of what would make the city attractive only to young people, it's about making it livable and interesting to as many people as possible, the mayor said. Done right, he added, that kind of approach can't fail to attract and hold some of the best and brightest in each generation.



Kentucky, but restrictions make it much more likely that they will be used by students intending to get their higher educations right here.

And again, that's a big part of the goal of both these programs: encouraging talented, ambitious achievers to get educated here because it's a way of ensuring some will stay here.

But, wait. As noted, these two programs took their cues from similar efforts under way in other states; Georgia, for example. Does that mean Georgia and others are also worried about brain drains? Isn't it just our problem?

As it turns out, many states are worried about, and trying to plug, their own brain drains. Enter the term on any Internet search engine, and dozens of articles and public policy papers appear, probing the phenomenon from Michigan to Mississippi, Hawaii to New Hampshire.

And don't think the simple explanation is that all the promising

And don't think the simple explanation is that all the promising young people in the country are flocking to California and New York for the lifestyles and high-paying, cutting edge jobs they offer.


young people in the country are flocking to California and New York for the lifestyles and high-paying, cutting edge jobs they offer. Those

states, and Massachusetts, too—home of MIT and countless high-tech start ups—have witnessed net losses of hundreds of thousands of residents with bachelor's degrees in recent years, according to tracking by the U.S. Department of Education's Postsecondary Education System.

A 2003 article in a public policy journal, the *Federal Reserve Gazette*, said U.S. census figures suggest Texas and Colorado may be at the other end of the brain drain pipeline as they appear to have more college graduates than their own high schools could have furnished. But they still don't account for the large numbers that seem to be bleeding away from all these other states, including Kentucky, where one analysis in 2001 by the Kentucky Long Term Policy Research Center suggested Louisville alone lost more than 25,000 young residents from the 1970s through the mid-90s.

Where are they all going?

Well, everywhere, and nowhere it



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The attractions of staying 'home'

Only 23, Oldham County native and University of Louisville graduate student Travis Riggs is already married, which may not fit exactly the profile of the young urban hipsters presumed to make up the core of America's "Creative Class."

That's a term applied by demographer Richard Florida to the group of young, well-educated and motivated Americans he says will be key to the economic vibrancy of states and communities for the next 25 years.

But if not the hippest—"My mom says I was born old," Riggs said—other factors place him solidly in the ranks of that desirable group of people, the ones who'll have the knowledge and drive to make economies sizzle, or to make them sputter by choosing to move on.

He's an electrical and computing engineering major, working on his graduate thesis in robotics, with plans to head into the job market in December. He participated in the Governor's Scholars program while attending Oldham County High School and was given a full scholarship through U of L's Hallmark Scholars Program.

And while he figures he could land jobs without much effort in places like Houston, where he did internships working on instrumentation systems in the oil industry, Riggs said he's determined to establish a career in Kentucky. He said he even based his choices about the type of engineering he'd pursue on the strong desire to work and live in or near Louisville.

"I knew I wanted to be an engineer, and I could have chosen design or software, but knowing Louisville's manufacturing base and the push to automate a lot of assembly line work, I figured it would easiest to get work here with this kind of degree."

What's the allure? Family's one, Riggs said. His wife is from Texas, but his parents are still in Oldham County, and extended family members live all around the Louisville area.

Another attraction is, Louisville isn't Houston. Riggs admits the east Texas city is the only other urban place he has experienced for any length of time, but says it's enough. "It was just so hectic all the time. I was blown away by the pace people keep."

He said his wife Jaime, a Houston native, wonders why the attitude's different in Louisville, why the place isn't as fast-paced. But Travis says he doesn't question it, he relishes it.

"Louisville's big enough to have everything a city should be," he said. "But it's not too big." And, "I like the way people treat each other here."

For Riggs, it comes down to a satisfying quality of life, and he says Louisville—and Kentucky—have it. "There are definitely more jobs in larger cities on the east and the west coasts," but he believes there's more to deciding where to live than a dizzying choice of career opportunities.

And he says he's not the only one. "I don't know of any others I'm in school with who've gone to the lengths I have to be qualified for the kind engineering work you can expect to find around here, but I do know several who say they want to stay."

seems, which makes the brain drain, the closer you look at it, a kind of brain scramble. Iowa higher education consultant Tom Mortenson told the *Federal Reserve Gazette* that after years of analyzing brain drain data in the plains states, he's found it "is not complicated to see, but it's hard to

interpret."

And those doing the interpreting here in Kentucky bear that out.

Cedeno, at the Governor's Scholars program, said the state's efforts to help its promising students complete their higher educations in-state means any brain drain Kentucky has

suffered is on the decline.

Todd, in an e-mail exchange, wrote, "There clearly is a brain drain challenge confronting Kentucky. We lose too many bright Kentuckians because the jobs and the pay aren't here for them."

Researchers at the Long Term Policy Research Center concluded, "It is difficult to know whether there is, indeed, a *net* brain drain." (They compared the number of students who leave the state for higher education to those who come here.) And analysts at the UK Center for Business and Economic Research said in a 2004 report that the brain drain is real, but a quickening influx of relatively well educated foreign immigrants was helping mitigate the loss.

Meanwhile, the *Gazette* article asserts, "Graduate retention figures measure only part of the in- and out-migration habits of young people. Inconsistent and incomplete data on other migration flows mean that few, if any, states have a reliable grasp on actual brain drain in their state."

Ron Crouch, director of the Kentucky State Data Center, provided sharp perspective by suggesting the debate is ultimately distracting and unproductive.

"The census figures and the surveys we do suggest we do lose a few thousand college graduates to other states each year," he said, "mostly to neighboring states, and to the South in general.

"But to see that as a major public policy problem ignores a larger fact: our population of young people is growing smaller, not just because we're losing some of them to other places, but because Kentuckians are producing fewer children. The cohort is shrinking."

This trend isn't unique to Kentucky, Crouch said. "The national baby boom's giving way to the baby bust." But Kentucky is one of the states that will be the most challenged by a younger population that shrinks in proportion to its older cohort because our general population is already relatively small. "Who's going to take care of all of us old people if there aren't enough young ones?" Crouch asked.

The state needs to go beyond a

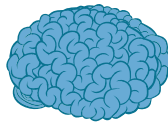
limited quest to retain and attract elites, he said, and understand that with the population of younger people not as large as it once was, each individual becomes a more important resource to educate and motivate. That means improving the quality of education and opportunity for a wider contingent of young people, including the children of the foreign immigrants attracted to the state's agriculture and service jobs.

We're going to have to "grow a bigger slice" of our best and brightest, he said. Todd concurred.

"First, we're not educating enough young Kentuckians. To reach the national average of bachelor's degree holders by 2020, Kentucky will have to educate an additional 210,000 young people. Nationally," Todd continued, "about 27 percent of Americans have a bachelor's degree. In Kentucky, the number is 19 percent. For Kentucky to compete economically, we have to turn those

numbers around."

And that will involve confronting at least two thorny issues, Crouch said. It's getting harder, not easier, for young people to afford higher education. And, he said, Kentucky



"We'll need everybody here to be their best."

hasn't sufficiently embraced diversity; minorities and immigrants are going to make up an increasing proportion of the state's younger population, but still find acceptance comparatively tough.


"We're going to have to work on that," he said. "We'll need everybody

here to be their best."

And here's the delicious thing: keep improving education, demonstrate a commitment to diversity, and suddenly, almost as an afterthought, you've sparked the interest of the brain drain set, the young, education-oriented achievers we're so worried about losing.

Richard Florida, a professor at Carnegie-Mellon University has labeled this group "the Creative Class." He has written two books about them and maintains a Web site called Creativeclass.org, on which he wrote, "Diversity is simply something they value in all its manifestations. This is spoken of so often, and so matter-of-factly, that I take it to be a fundamental marker of creative class values."

His further point is, where members of the creative class see their values, they go. Or stay.

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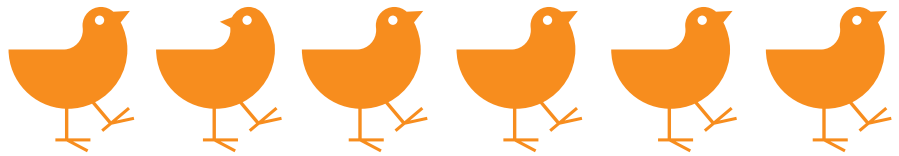
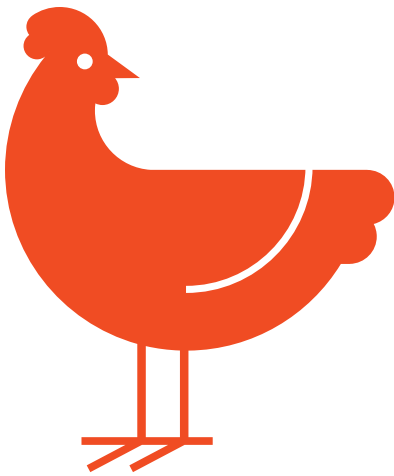


Whitehall, Lexington



Thomas Edison's Home, Louisville

Is the grass greener in the Bluegrass State... or in Bangkok?



BY TERRI JOHNSON

Iraq currently holds the dubious distinction of ranking No. 1, according to an online source. In what? Brain drain.

That means that, of all countries, Iraq has the highest percentage of its trained, talented and educated people leaving their homeland seeking opportunity elsewhere. Some wouldn't be surprised by this, or by the fact that it is hard to rebuild a country when the professional class is gone.

But politics or not, the implications

of brain drain affect most aspects of any location. Whether it's Iraq or a city in Kentucky, when countries or communities consistently lose smart, motivated people, life gets tougher for those left behind.

Some of our own talented people are also migrating. And we're not just talking about college students. American rainmakers who drive the information-based sectors—people at their professional and intellectual peaks—are real targets of professional recruiters.

People move every day—across town or across the Pacific. At issue are the high economic stakes as the talent shifts. More than half of the PhDs working in America today are foreign born. What happens if and when they go home?

Some Kentucky leaders are hopeful that the state is gaining as well as draining. "I worry constantly about the building of intellectual capital in this country and keeping talent in Kentucky, but I don't worry about brain drain," said Education Cabinet

Secretary Virginia G. Fox.

Brain drain implies that intellectual capital is lost and never gained, but the condition can work both ways, she said. Kentucky has a net annual gain of 2,600 students who come here to attend college, for example, and is working toward a goal of having 800,000 college graduates working in the state by 2020. (There are 400,000 today.)

Adult and nontraditional students also are being targeted with lifelong learning and postsecondary programs. This effort is vital to fill the support jobs associated with attracting top talent, Fox said.

“Every high flying engineer needs a whole bunch of technicians around.”

In the current lexicon, brain drain refers to the migration of young people from their homes.

Brain drain has been around a long time, and it literally created cities.

Historically, America’s great homeland brain drain became obvious in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as people began looking for greener pastures—or actually left the green pastures of their rural homes for school or to work in city-based businesses and factories. They often stayed in their new locations, and cities flourished.

In the current lexicon, brain drain refers to the migration of young people from their homes—often to metropolitan areas with higher paying jobs, rich arts and culture, and diversity.

But brain drain has many different aspects with terms that sound like what you might hear in a doctor’s office—gain, drain and circulation. Internationally, trends and counter-trends are happening simultaneously. Poor countries are hemorrhaging talent while globalization is giving some countries economic advantages for the first time in centuries.

To understand how brain drain affects Kentucky, consider that most

students locate in the state where they receive their college education. A study by the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Kentucky Employment Services and Driver’s License divisions found that five years after college graduation, 73 percent of the graduates held a Kentucky driver’s license and 61 percent were working in Kentucky.

Sylvia L. Lovely, president of the Lexington-based NewCities Institute and executive director/CEO of the Kentucky League of Cities, thinks it takes people with passion of all sorts to create great places to live.

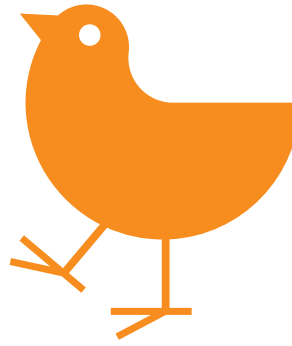
“As our communities compete on the world stage, we must look at brain drain from several angles. Not only must we find ways to keep our best and brightest but we must discover the talents and gifts that all our youth have to offer—those talents and gifts may be well hidden but need to be discovered. We cannot afford to waste any of the precious human capital that will be our greatest natural resource of the future.”

But the CPE study didn’t show what types students stay or go. There are more than 230,000 college students in Kentucky, but the question is, Who is leaving after graduation? Are their degrees in physics or medieval history?

It’s hard to track brain drain, or even to know what to track. Charles McGrew, the CPE’s director of information and research, said the council tracks college enrollments and degrees in certain fields of study such as math, science and technology, but it is hard to know what happens after students graduate.

The CPE will soon begin tracking the migration of certain types of students to provide more information on, for example, what happens to the state’s “science” brains and what impact that has on the economy.

There is some data available on young people’s decision-making process. According to a Kentucky Long Term Policy Research Center study of 16- and 17-year-old college-bound students, 57 percent of those who plan to leave the state made the decision in elementary school. For people of all ages, work is wherever



the laptop and Internet are, and children are definitely growing up in a global village.



State Representative Rocky Adkins of Sandy Hook sees energy research as Kentucky’s potential next big thing. As domestic and

global energy needs continue to grow, alternative energy research takes on international urgency. Adkins sees this as another reason for Kentucky to invest in education and business incentives.

“We are already doing research in coal, shale and agriculture fuel production,” he said. “Imagine what would happen for our workforce and our economy if we led the nation in alternative energy research? The eyes of the world would be on Kentucky.”

And there are many ways of achieving brain gain. Futurists and planners are challenging communities to create strategies to attract the 75 million baby boomers as they reach retirement. Tom Prather, executive vice president of the NewCities



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Institute, said recent studies show that 60 percent of boomers, nearly 50 million people, want to retire in a small community.

“Surveys also reveal a desire on the part of 58 percent of college-educated boomers to relocate to a college or university environment,” he said. “Kentucky communities can absolutely use this to their advantage.”

“Kids will be kids,” noted Steve Austin, NewCities Institute policy advisor and president & CEO of Bluegrass Tomorrow, in agreeing with Prather. “They always want to leave home. Some real opportunities lie

Talent stocks and wealth centers are growing in what were considered the world’s most remote places just a few years ago.

with baby boomers. They are still vital, involved and smart, and they don’t cost communities as much money. You don’t have to build as many schools or playgrounds for baby boomers.”



There is something of a 21st century reverse brain drain under way. Although there are a number of reasons for it, one is a trend that is finding highly educated young people, often schooled in America, returning to their home countries.

For decades, bright students have come to America to study medicine, science and technology. Many have remained to reap the rewards such lucrative fields offered them here. This drain for their home countries was a gain for the U.S. But as countries like China and India emerge on the global stage, many of their students are returning home after they graduate from U.S. schools.

Middle-aged professionals are also repatriating themselves and building careers, and competitive markets, in their homelands. India is strategically

and successfully growing its health care sector as a destination for North Americans and Europeans with the lure of U.S. trained physicians, state of the art hospitals and dramatically lower costs.

Homeland security efforts also have had an indirect effect on certain aspects of our national brain pool. With increased scrutiny of individuals and changes in immigration laws, work visas for science and technology immigrants dropped 55 percent between 2001 and 2002.

Talent stocks and wealth centers are growing in what were considered the world’s most remote places just a few years ago. In addition, countries like Estonia, Belgium and the Russian Federation are aggressively harnessing global talent.

Although America is still the world’s undisputed land of opportunity, some people find going home or going elsewhere has its advantages.

For many returning to China, corporate promotions come much faster, and there is excitement in being part of what has been described as the “Wild West in the Far East.” Still, people who have gone back say there are adjustments.

Most “sea turtles” (as Asian returnees are called in San Francisco) are westernized and are deeply troubled by the poverty they sometimes encounter in their homeland. Hungry babies and tattered elderly people in the streets

are far from the American dream they were living. But many also see their return as a personal challenge and a chance to give back.

There are even support groups such as the Thailand Association of Reverse Brain Drain to collectively “utilize the skills of those who have come back to Thailand.”

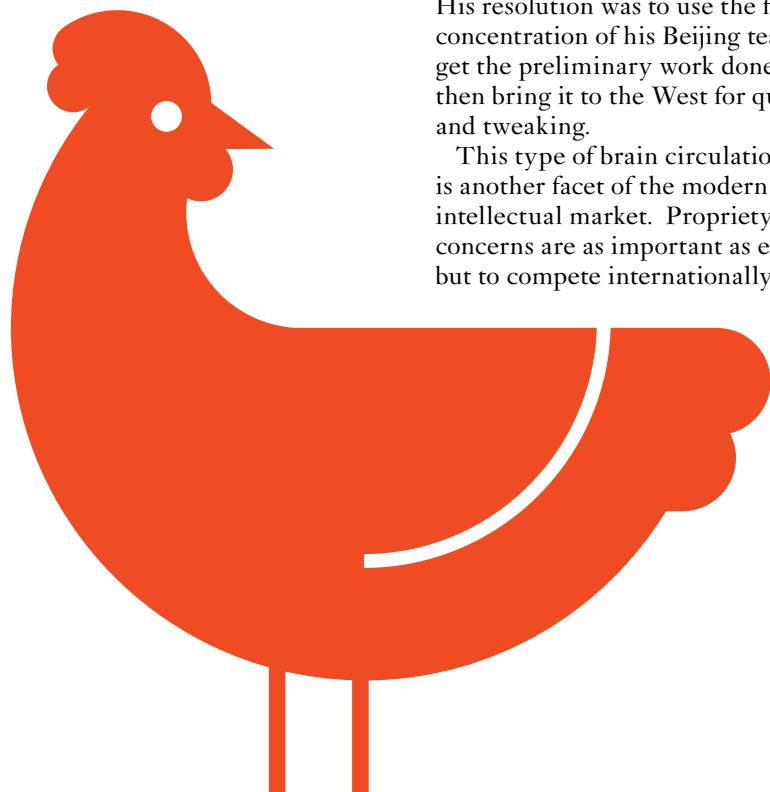
For people who might want to relocate internationally for other reasons, there is the attraction of going after what is hot. Ireland, for instance, is embracing pharmacological research. American scientists who want to develop stem cell therapies are working in Ireland and Great Britain with less political interference.

Perhaps the leading example of reverse brain drain is 45-year-old Kai-Fu Lee, recently profiled in *Fast Company*, who heads Google’s research and development lab in China.

After escaping China, his family lived in Taiwan. At age 11, Lee moved to the U.S. to live with his older brother. He thrived in the western world, eventually earning a computer sciences degree from Columbia University and a doctorate from Carnegie-Melon where he created a speech recognition program that made him famous in technology circles.

He worked at Apple and, in 1998, Microsoft asked him to help open its Chinese market. Like many “reverse brains,” he found American work models and Chinese culture at odds. His resolution was to use the focused concentration of his Beijing team to get the preliminary work done and then bring it to the West for questions and tweaking.

This type of brain circulation is another facet of the modern intellectual market. Propriety concerns are as important as ever, but to compete internationally,



collaborations among company divisions, governments and universities are now more common. The European Union countries are even working on recruitment networks.



Researcher Richard Florida's "Creative Class" (see cover article) includes scientists, engineers, architects, designers, educators, artists, musicians and entertainers—those who generate new ideas and solve complex problems.

Ireland has legislated recruitment of such workers as a national priority, putting the country at the top of Florida's Global Creative Class Index which calculates the number of people engaged in creative jobs in proportion to the general workforce. In 2004, the United States ranked 11th, behind Ireland, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Estonia, United Kingdom, Canada, Finland and Iceland.

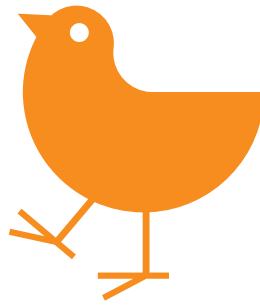
All of this matters. U. S. corporate research and development budgets dropped by \$8 billion in 2002, the largest single-year decline since the 1950s, and U.S. companies follow the labor. Intel CEO Craig Barrett has warned that Russia, China and India have a many as 500 million knowledge workers—the kind that develop sophisticated products and make big bucks.

The brain gain that Kentucky is experiencing—such as the upcoming deployment of 5,000 to 8,000 highly educated people to Fort Knox through its base realignment—are sparking new synergies and enthusiasm. Companies such as Toyota and UPS pour billions of dollars into our economy, and we have plenty of home-grown superstars.

Adkins said ongoing opportunities to attract companies like FutureGen (the prototype power plant that will produce electricity and hydrogen with limited emissions) could help Kentucky become a great research center.

Although Kentucky was a strong contender for the plant, FutureGen announced in late July that it had chosen Texas and Illinois as the finalist sites.

Adkins said he thinks Kentucky's improvements in higher education will substantially enhance all



kinds of opportunities here. "The vision of this reform is that our Kentucky universities, colleges and technical institutions will lead the way in educating a new economy workforce and create an atmosphere of excitement about research and technology."

Nationally, the race to attract intellectual stars is accelerated by a healthy amount of fear—who can fill the shoes of all those soon-to-retire baby boomers who keep the country humming? What happens if those foreign-born brains continue

"The vision of this reform is that our Kentucky universities, colleges and technical institutions will lead the way in educating a new economy workforce and create an atmosphere of excitement about research and technology."

to become high-tech entrepreneurs and then go home? There are volatile political and ethical concerns, too. What do we do for well-educated yet mobile immigrants, and what do we do for the millions of immigrants who operate our service and agricultural industries?



According to Richard Florida, there are 38 million so-called creatives in the U.S. oozing with ideas and looking for opportunities to compete.

"The only way you can remain a leader is to keep exceeding the bar," said Secretary Fox. "America set the bar, and we're going to exceed it in Kentucky by working hard in education and creating a business-friendly climate in our state."

Transfers of knowledge and movements of people are organic. No one can blame smart people for following their dreams and moving where they can share their knowledge most rewardingly. In some cases, they leave dangerous, repressive places. But unless poor countries receive infusions of monetary and intellectual support, they will continue to be on the losing end of all types of brain drain, gain and circulation.

In a perfect world brain, power would be equitable. Maybe some day there will be as many primary care physicians in all of Kenya as there are plastic surgeons in Beverly Hills. 🇰🇪



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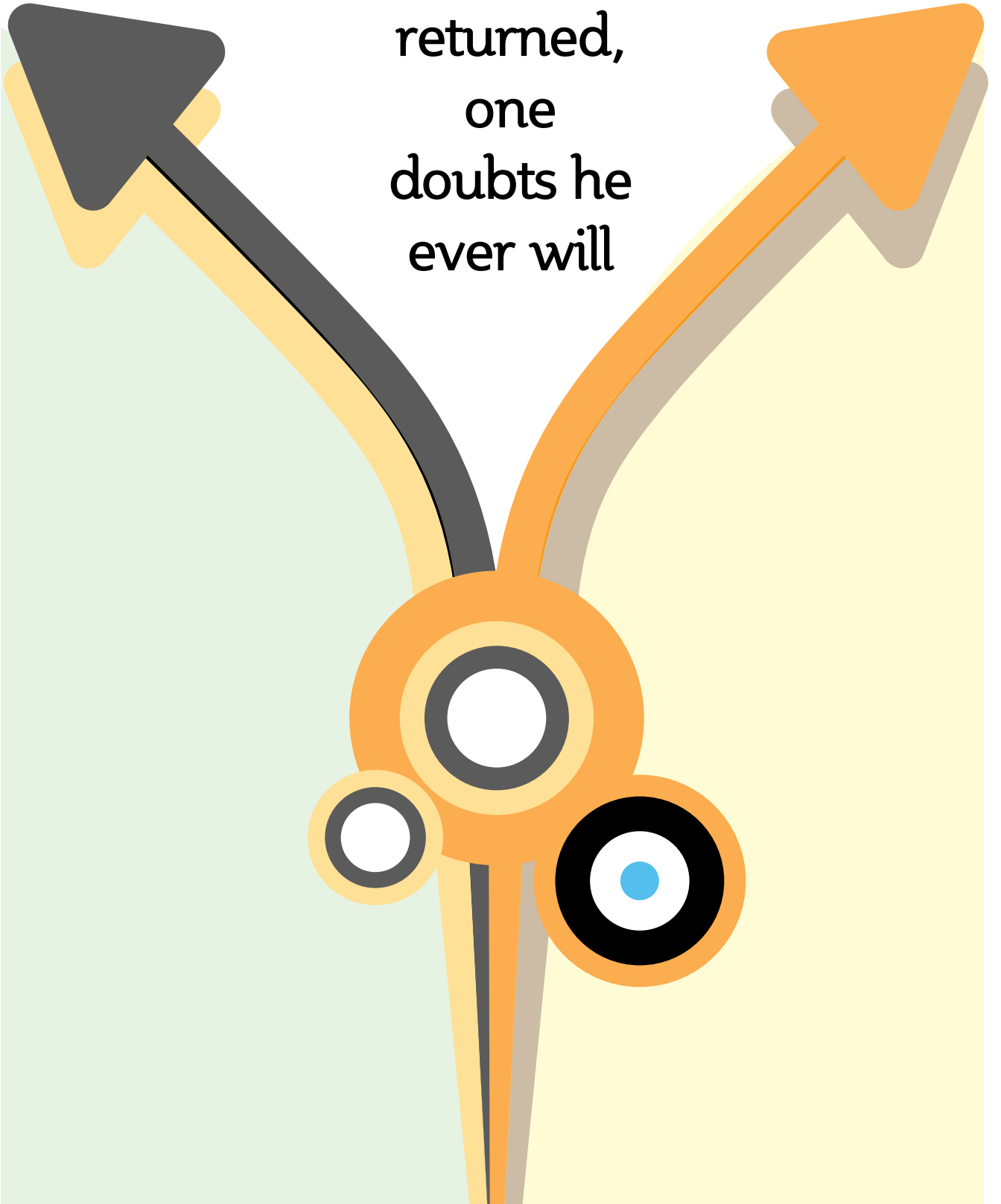
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ever will





No plans to return to Kentucky: Other places offer more excitement, diversity, opportunity

By Robert W. Gee

I lived from age three to 18 in Lexington. After I graduated from Bates Creek Senior High School, I left Kentucky and never returned.

I never made a conscious decision to stay away: opportunities for higher education, then jobs, then more education took me elsewhere. But, now that I've lived away for so long, I couldn't imagine returning. My two greatest loves—family and Kentucky basketball—are still in Lexington, and I will always come home for those reasons. But only to visit.

Why not live in Kentucky?

For me and my closest childhood friends, all but one now residing outside the state, the reasons are many. We have asked ourselves why. We have wondered: could we ever move back?

We all first left the state for the same reason: college. And, with one exception, a friend who now lives in Louisville, all of us have spent our adult lives outside the state, in cities mostly larger, more cosmopolitan, more diverse, more fun than any in Kentucky. New York. Washington. Boston. Atlanta. Austin. Toronto.

I first left Kentucky when I was 18, headed to Northwestern University, just north of Chicago, which promised to expose me to a new and dynamic city and a student body that hailed from all 50 states and countries around the world. Northwestern and other universities my friends attended—Duke, Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Virginia—all offered more than any university in Kentucky. I double majored in journalism and international studies.

Afterward, I started a career in journalism, living in Washington, D.C.; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Washington, D.C. again; McAllen, Texas; and, the past seven years in Austin, Texas. I came for a job, but stayed for the lifestyle.

Among my closest friends in Austin are two other Kentucky transplants: one from Lexington and one from Louisville. One, like me, moved to Austin in 1999. We were housemates for four years. The other arrived in 1997. Our parents still live in Kentucky. We all enjoy Austin, a city that folks who have lived here a long time say used to be a sleepy college town. The main employer was state government. Austin was



Sense of community, unique details make Kentucky best place to call home

By Colleen Chaney

“So, what made you choose Indiana University?”

That was, without a doubt, the No. 1 question asked of me in my 20s. The frequency of the question prompted a repetitive response: “My majors were ranked really high, the school has an excellent reputation, I wanted to be a small fish in a big pond.”

But generally, as I listed the university's assets, I was thinking about the real reason: “I wanted out of Kentucky!”

It's true. I was ready to get away. As a native Lexingtonian, I couldn't think of a single thing that felt attractive about attending college, much less living out my life, in Kentucky. I just didn't see it in my cards. I wanted bigger things for myself—a big, corporate job, a fast-paced lifestyle, the hustle and bustle of a woman on the go. Things that couldn't be found in Kentucky, or so I thought.

I took advantage of every moment of my college experience, but it had flown by before I knew it. I packed my four years to the brim with new experiences, but at the end found myself feeling like I often do when returning from a vacation. It's great to go, but I'm always ready to come home at the end. As graduation day approached, I found myself in the place I least expected. In four short years I went from the Kentucky girl who longed to leave to the Kentucky girl who couldn't wait to go back home.

What happened?

So, with the world as my oyster, what made me choose to return to Kentucky? It was the realization that all of the qualities that I had been searching for were actually possessed by the very place I was trying so hard to leave.

My highest priority in school was to position myself for the perfect foothold in the corporate world. Originally I thought I wanted to be part of a mass conglomerate, but I realized after visiting a few that it wasn't a Fortune 500 company I was looking for. Rather, I wanted a mid-sized company where I could cultivate my skills, make meaningful professional connections and have the potential for job growth.

Kentucky was the perfect state to meet this need. It offered a wide array of corporate and



Robert W. Gee

dwarfed in size and importance by the larger cities to the north, east and south: Dallas, Houston and San Antonio.

But Austin changed quickly. It became a city of entrepreneurs, musicians, writers and filmmakers: people who make a living from being creative. You don't have to be one of those people to live here, but it makes life much more interesting. At a party, you're just as likely to meet a musician as a corporate nine-to-five. Locally owned neighborhood coffee shops draw a steady stream of patrons during weekdays—those who work nights and weekends—and some 40 live music venues attract crowds most every night of the week.

Austin, taking a cue from its very large public university—with 50,000 students, it's the largest single-campus university in the country—has long been free-thinking. It has nurtured and accepted people who look different, think differently and challenge pre-conceived boundaries. Austin spawned Dell Inc. and countless other high-tech start-ups, attracting smart people from around the country. The film industry has developed into the second largest in the United States, and the live music scene is second to none.

When I meet someone my age in Austin, they are almost never born and raised in Austin. Part of the allure is the melting-pot nature of Austin's generation of young people. And because people are most often relative newcomers, there's not an established and exclusionary clique that determines the in-crowd and party scene.

But Austin is not just diverse in the geographic distribution of its American residents. It attracts



Colleen Chaney

entrepreneurial opportunities for a college graduate. For some of my friends, landing jobs with Toyota, Papa John's and Lexmark was the pot at the end of the rainbow. Others were drawn to the infectious entrepreneurial climate, with start-up ventures blossoming across the state. For me, a 70-person organization headquartered in the heart of downtown Lexington was the perfect fit. I gained valuable, hands-on experience that catapulted me into other professional opportunities.

Deep roots

My family is not originally from Kentucky. In fact, they hail from New England and planned to be in Kentucky only as long as it took my father finished his studies at the University of Kentucky. But before they knew it, they had spent 25 years in the Bluegrass State, surpassing the time that they had lived in New England. While my extended family was not in the state, we had a network of family friends. We had built our own "community" family.

This sense of community is what made my family feel at home despite being hundreds of miles away from their own relatives. It is a unique quality that seems to be a natural personality trait for many Kentuckians. Commonly described as "Southern hospitality," it seems bigger than that to me. There is a sense of belonging, the feeling that you are never a stranger.

I came to take this wonderful community for granted and assumed that everywhere was like Kentucky. Finding that that was not the case, the thought of trading community for anonymity suddenly lost its appeal. I wanted to return to the place where even the largest city had the warmth of a small town.

Inner beauty

Kentucky is just beginning to make the most of its aesthetic strengths—finally capitalizing on the tourism potential that comes from the inherent beauty. The Appalachian region attracts everyone from adventure enthusiasts to nature conservationists. The Land Between the Lakes, with its first-rate amenities, pulls people from near and far for boating, fishing and swimming. The excitement of the motor speedway in Sparta and Churchill Downs in Louisville brings sports fans from around the world.

And for those who prefer cultural activities, Kentucky offers a gamut of options, and many can be found beyond the boundaries of the state's larger urban areas. The Owensboro RiverPark Center series offers a variety of performances, including Broadway shows. The East Kentucky Exposition Center in Pikeville hosts an array of big-name acts. The city of

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Robert W. Gee

immigrants from Mexico—many, but not all, low-skilled laborers—as well as from Asia. This diversity of people brings diversity of cuisine: Austin boasts some of the nation’s best Mexican food as well as excellent Thai, Japanese and, of course, Texas barbecue. Austin’s young professionals support dozens of high-quality, independently owned restaurants. Likewise, there are dozens of bars, many with outdoor decks and patios, which are popular 10 months a year. (December and January sometimes call for a sweater.)

Austin, like many large cities, has its own ballet company, symphony and lyric opera. The city is currently building a state-of-the-art performing arts center.

Hiking and biking trails follow ribbons of “green belt” that criss-cross the city, following creeks and lakes. One can mountain bike or kayak minutes from downtown and central neighborhoods.


Austin, like most big cities, offers direct flight links to cities on both coasts and many in the middle. Young people with disposable income like to travel. The places not serviced by direct flights are accessible from the nearby hub cities of Houston and Dallas.

What do I like in a city? My Kentucky friends and I found it in Austin: a diverse, young population—the average age is 28—great dining, entertainment, outdoor recreation practically in my own backyard and an environment where differences are not only tolerated but celebrated. All are reasons I’m sad to leave Austin. Professional goals are taking me elsewhere, but you can bet I’ll look for the same things in a city, wherever I land.

I still watch Kentucky basketball—thanks to ESPN’s Full Court package, I follow every game with one of my Kentucky buddies—and I still visit my parents in Kentucky on holidays.

I figure that Kentucky will always be there. And whenever I return, it seems as if not much has changed. That may be because I look for the things that have stayed the same, viewing everything through the lens of my childhood.

There’s comfort in a place where much seems the same from visit to visit. But, for my taste, that can get boring. In Austin, construction cranes have occupied downtown since I moved here. New buildings are added, new bars open, new bands arrive, new friends come, old ones go.

When it comes to a place to hang my hat, Kentucky doesn’t seem to offer as much as Austin. And, from the perspective of my Kentucky friends elsewhere, Kentucky also doesn’t offer as much as Chicago, Washington, Toronto, New York ... 




Colleen Chaney

Horse Cave touts one of the only remaining repertory theatres in the country. Wonderful treasures stretch across the state.

Being true to yourself

I can remember my first day in a new high school. Terrified, I kept reminding myself what I had always been told, “Just be yourself.” This is one of the qualities about Kentucky that I appreciate most. There is a desire among the people to be better but not at the expense of losing their identity.

When I left Kentucky, I found myself longing (and incessantly talking about) the little things that were so uniquely Kentucky: standing in line for days for University of Kentucky basketball tickets, getting goose bumps when “My Old Kentucky Home” was played, buying elephant ears at the Berea Crafts Fair and so much more. Without realizing it, those little details, which on their own didn’t amount to much, combined and captured my heart, drawing me home.

It has been close to a decade since my return to the commonwealth—years that have been filled with the excitement of a fast-paced career balanced with the everyday joys of small-city life. Looking back, I can’t imagine ever wanting to leave. But in doing so, I gained the best perspective of all: a true appreciation for what Kentucky has to offer. 

PROGRESS
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Feoshia Henderson is a freelance writer and suburban reporter for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*.



Historic preservation boosting Flemingsburg economy

“The Friendly Town that Hospitality Built.”

That city motto still holds true for Flemingsburg as locals and out-of-towners alike work to refurbish the small city’s historic homes and commercial buildings.

“It’s like coming to real America,” is how Kathy Macht, of Vero Beach, Florida, described the town that sits near the AA Highway in northeastern Kentucky.

Macht and her husband, Ken,

a Kentucky native, moved to Flemingsburg a year ago after tiring of the hurricanes that batter the coast. The couple bought an old tobacco factory and converted it into an art studio and loft.

“It didn’t take us very long to realize we weren’t going to be part-time citizens,” she said. “We changed our residency and everything, and after three months we were totally ingrained into the community. We love it.”

The Machts are one of several out-of-state couples who’ve moved to Flemingsburg in the last few years. Along with a second Florida couple, others have come from Massachusetts, northern Ohio and other parts of Kentucky. And while they spruce up buildings, they’re rehabilitating the local economy.

Among the downtown projects open or under way in this city of 3,087 residents: the Stockton Station Inn, a bed and breakfast; a covered bridge museum set to open in August, and a 12-apartment complex converted from an old clothing store.

“We’ve seen three to four new businesses come downtown, and a restaurant. It has made a difference,” said Flemingsburg Mayor Louie Flanery.

Many consider Flemingsburg a diamond in the rough, with a downtown historic district, several 1800’s-era buildings and its signature covered bridges. The historic district and 10 other structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They include the “White Bridge” or Goddard Bridge, just southeast of the city; and the home of Thomas Fleming, son of the city’s namesake.

Flanery said the rehabilitation trend started about three and a half years ago when the city helped get the ball rolling by making infrastructure improvements. Much of the money for that work came from the state’s



A new streetscape was one of the improvements that have spurred historic preservation work in Flemingsburg.

Renaissance Kentucky downtown redevelopment program, which has boosted many of the state's small, deteriorating downtowns.

"We've done a lot of taking up sidewalks and moving utilities underground and replacing concrete and doing some water line replacement as well," Flanery said. The city also did some work improving downtown building facades to make the city more attractive, he added.

The new state historic preservation rehabilitation tax credit program also helped spur Flemingsburg's redevelopment. The program offers a tax credit of up to 30 percent on certain redevelopment expenses for owner-occupied residences. Commercial properties are eligible for a credit of up to 20 percent. The buildings must be on the National Register of Historic Places or in a district listed in the National Register.

The Kentucky General Assembly approved the program in 2005 after years of lobbying by the state's preservation community.

"It's ideally putting more money into a local economy so a lot more money stays at home."

The Flemingsburg museum is among the projects using the state tax credit, and some others are pending approval, said Scot Walters of the Kentucky Heritage Council State Historic Preservation Office, which administers the new tax credit program.

The tax credit program generates economic development in areas that don't need a lot of new infrastructure and helps create new jobs, he said. "It's ideally putting more money into a local economy so a lot more money stays at home."

But tax credits aren't the only reason people are moving to Flemingsburg. The town and its people attract newcomers, the mayor said. "I think it's a small town and

not the fast paced city life with all the traffic. It's a slower pace and everybody knows everybody. It's a friendly town."


David Collins, a board member of the nonprofit Kentucky Trust for Historic Preservation, said many out-of-towners learn about Flemingsburg on the Internet by surfing properties at historicproperties.com, which lists buildings for sale across the nation and outside the United States.

The Kentucky Trust, which buys and sells historic property, has also invested in Flemingsburg. Its Web site, www.thekentuckytrust.org, lists the General Gabriel Evans House, built in 1810. The two-story brick home is located near the county courthouse in the center of the Flemingsburg historic district and is

listed at \$59,000.

Collins, of Flemingsburg, said the Macht's home is among those getting the most buzz in town.

"The two buildings getting the most attention were bought by couples from Florida with no connection to each other. They're artists and they've set up studios for displaying regional and local art. As well as the art they are producing they ... teach various art classes," he said.

Kathy Macht said she and her husband didn't know about any of the incentives when they moved to Flemingsburg and paid all of their own rehab costs. Still, she believes it was worth every penny. "When we rolled across that county line, it was like, 'This is it.'" 

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Peaceful reflection and education combine for unique Madisonville project

From a young couple enjoying a quiet stroll along the lake's edge to a group of school children learning about the way trees benefit the environment, Madisonville's Falcon O. & Ernestine Baker Serenity Path provides the setting for both peaceful reflection and educational opportunities.

The Serenity Path, as it is more

commonly called, is part of the city's effort to live up to the motto it has chosen to describe itself: "The Best Town on Earth."

Located in City Park, the Serenity Path is the result of a partnership involving the city, the Kentucky Division of Forestry and the local Community Improvement Foundation. Its success as a scenic

walkway and outdoor classroom underscores the power of public-private collaboration.

The project was completed in 2005. Its serene nature lies in stark contrast to the damage caused later that year to the park and throughout the community by a category F-4 tornado—the largest in the nation in 2005.





With a paved walkway, benches and large boulders that feature engravings, the Serenity Path was the brainchild of citizen members of the Madisonville Tree Board. The board members' vision culminated in the creation of a location that is popular with residents for such events as outdoor weddings and prom photo sessions.

It also helps raise awareness of

From the child learning about the benefits of trees to the senior adult spending quiet time fishing along the lake, the path crosses generational boundaries to bring value and long-term benefits to the community.

the vital role of urban forestry—something the board members believed was important, especially for the community's youth. The project includes a life science curriculum known as a TREE Kit.

The TREE (Teacher Resource for Environmental Education) Kit teaches specific science lessons, with focused




objectives and age-appropriate language, and contains all the necessary materials and instructions needed to teach the lessons along the Serenity Path. The educational component aligns with the Kentucky Core Content and Hopkins County's educational standards.

From the child learning about the benefits of trees to the senior adult spending quiet time fishing along the lake, the path crosses generational boundaries to bring value and long-term benefits to the community. In doing so, it enhances the community's livability—making it more attractive to residents and economic development prospects alike.

The Serenity Path represents a great addition to City Park, which was realized only through a collaborative effort that leveraged private dollars against public funds. Infusing private funds allowed public money to be used for other projects, giving citizens

an even larger return on their tax investments.

A John Muir quote engraved in one of the boulders along the path states: "But in every walk in nature one receives far more than he seeks." This sentiment is truly reflected in the numerous benefits that citizens have and will continue to receive from the innovative collaboration that made the Serenity Path a reality for the City of Madisonville. 

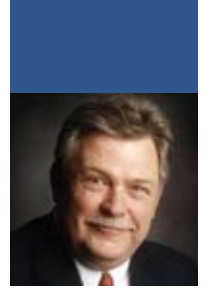
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Historic depot restoration spurs railpark development

Nobody could have guessed how big this would get. So mention to Dorian Walker that it sounds as if the people in Bowling Green might try to lay down railroad track all the way to New Orleans if they could, and he laughed.

“I tell ya, we would *love* to do that,” Walker said. He might be only half joking.

What began as restoration of a 1925 train depot with the idea of maybe acquiring a railroad car for display has blossomed into the Historic L&N Depot and Railpark—which includes an L&N presidential office car built in 1911, a 1949 Pullman Standard dining car, a 1953 Luxury Pullman

sleeper and a Chessie Class caboose.

But what’s a train without an engine—and darned if they haven’t found one of those as well. The diesel is currently being restored and should be ready for display by summer of next year.

“There were four engines ordered by L&N in 1950. None exist today, but this one is identical to those. It’s built by the same manufacturer,” Walker said. “So we’re going to put it in L&N colors.”

The engine will join the cars on 450 feet of display track, which is all that remains from the days when passenger trains made 25 or more stops a day in Bowling Green.

Meanwhile, the depot has been fully restored, including a hand laid hexagonal tile floor and square tile wainscoting. Part of the depot is a digital library that includes a kid’s area with a smaller chair in front of each computer.

“It started out so simply, and it’s just grown exponentially,” said Walker, who serves as chairman of the Historic Railroad Committee and who is the husband of Bowling Green Mayor Elaine Walker. “It really sparked the imagination of people from all walks of life.”

At a recent Railfest celebration, Walker said he noticed an older African-American woman in the crowd as he was giving a history of the depot and explaining future plans.

“She was standing sort of quietly in the shadows and holding a package close to her bosom,” he said. “After I finished she came over and very quietly said, ‘You know, my father used to work for the L&N.’”

And with that, she opened the package. Inside was a photo—probably taken in the ’30s, Walker estimated—of her father cooking meals in a dining car.

“I told her that was terrific and we’d love to honor his memory and all the hard work he did,” Walker said. “So we’re getting a blowup of the picture and will include it in our dining car. She got very excited about that.”

So did another woman who had heard about the Railpark and was visiting while on vacation. Her father had been president of the L&N in the 1940s.

“So, lo and behold, about a month later we got this packet filled with commemorative memorabilia, including a picture of the christening



Cecil Whitebead works on preparing the Pine for its first coat of L&N blue paint in years while other volunteers check out the sanding and grinding work.

of the train in New Orleans,” Walker said.

The Railpark is one of the reasons why Bowling Green was named one of America’s Dozen Distinctive Destinations for 2006 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Bowling Green was selected from 93 destinations in 39 states that were nominated. It is the first time a Kentucky destination has been named since the first list was compiled in 2000.

This whole improbable venture

Children gather in the depot library at dark and a conductor comes, gathers their tickets and guides them along a walkway to the train. There are snacks and cookies in the dining car.

began about 10 years ago when Walker was serving on a committee looking into restoration of the depot. Walker runs his own TV and film production company, and after seeing exhibits of a couple of rail cars on working trips to West Palm Beach and Madison, Wisconsin, he and three others from the depot board hatched a plan to add railroad cars with a goal to restore them to their original “factory fresh” condition and colors.

“Originally we thought we’d just bring a car or two down just to make a reminder of what this old depot was,” Walker said. “Now we’ve got a complete train set.”

Restoration of the cars didn’t begin until they were placed on the track in 2002, right next to the Depot Branch Library. Since then, many people in the community have volunteered their services. People who retired from the railroad have been guest speakers. A current outreach program to work on the postal car has received

strong interest from local postal workers, and Walker said there is talk that the postmaster of Kentucky might issue a special commemorative stamp when they have the cars finished.

Apart from its historical significance, perhaps the greatest aspect of the Railpark has been its ability to bring together so many people in the community—from volunteers to people holding meetings or parties or even weddings in the depot.

“It’s not just been for a fan of trains,” Walker said. “We’ve got that as well, but we also have teachers and grandparents and athletes and high school kids and grade school kids, and we cross all ethnic barriers. It’s just wonderful.

That doesn’t mean we don’t still have challenges. We’re a nonprofit and we have no paid executive director, so as we grow we’re seeing these needs.”

They are also seeing how the depot and the train has sparked the imagination of a number of people, including the librarians—who decided it would be a good idea to have local celebrities read “The Polar Express” to groups of children in the dining car during the Christmas season. It’s become a very popular annual event.

Little wonder why. Consider that to enhance the ambience, they bought a snow-making machine. Then consider just what transpires on the train.

Children gather in the depot library at dark and a conductor comes, gathers their tickets and guides them along a walkway to the train. There are snacks and cookies in the dining car.



Volunteer Chairman Bill Hockensmith and Dick Webber are brushing paint in a race to stay ahead of the paint rolling crew.

“If you don’t know the story of the Polar Express, it’s about a boy who is riding the Polar Express and he doesn’t know if there is really a Santa Claus,” Walker said. “It starts to snow as he rides the train, he goes to sleep and dreams of meeting Santa, who gives him a silver bell. Then he wakes up and there’s a silver bell beside him.”

When the reading is finished, the children walk down a passageway to a point where there is only one window in the railroad car. The snow-making

It’s the kind of thing that has turned the depot and railpark into something very special for more people than Walker likely ever imagined possible.

machine is positioned outside, and the kids see a window filled with the sight of falling snow.

“And as they turn to get off the train, there’s Santa,” Walker said. “He hands them each a silver bell.”

As he tells a listener this story over the phone, you can almost see him smile.

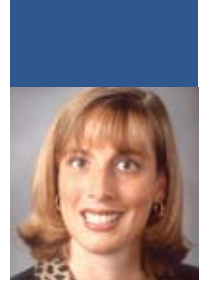
“All of that,” Walker said, “is the result of the imagination of a bunch of librarians.”

It’s the kind of thing that has turned the depot and railpark into something very special for more people than Walker likely ever imagined possible.

“It’s been wonderful,” he said. “That doesn’t mean we don’t still have challenges, but it’s been phenomenal to see how they have embraced the idea.”



Robyn Miller is Member Services Manager for the Kentucky League of Cities.



News from Kentucky's communities

Owensboro: Broadway West

Owensboro's RiverPark Center is taking center stage this summer for the national and international performing arts community.

Having already lured five touring Broadway shows to build, rehearse and premiere in its state-of-the-art performing arts center—with two more slated this summer—the city is becoming known as Broadway West. Those shows then head to cities like Tokyo, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles and Louisville.

In September, Mel Brooks will make Owensboro home as he reprises the biggest Tony Award-winner in theater history—"The Producers." It, too, will be built in Owensboro and premiere there Sept. 21 and 22 before

heading out for a North American tour.

"The Producers" is the second show built in Owensboro's RiverPark Center this summer. In June, Kyodo Tokyo—a \$17 billion media giant in Japan—produced BLASTII/MIX, a musical that premiered in Owensboro and currently is touring Tokyo and 11 other major cities.

Tickets can be purchased at the RiverPark Center box office at (270) 687-2787, or by visiting www.riverparkcenter.org.

Bardstown lands NPR Manufacturing Kentucky, LLC

Nippon Piston Ring Co., Ltd. will locate its newest manufacturing facility, NPR Manufacturing Kentucky, L.L.C., in Bardstown. The \$48.7 million Japanese investment will create an initial 50 jobs and approximately 150 jobs within two years of operation.

NPR Manufacturing Kentucky (NMKY), expected to be operational by October 2007, will produce steel piston rings, a

key automotive engine component, at its new 200,000-square-foot facility in Nelson County. The company anticipates reaching a production capacity of four million pieces of piston rings in 2008 and 18 million pieces in 2010.

The facility will be the company's third U.S. manufacturing operation. "This is an exciting day for the residents of Bardstown and Nelson County," said Bardstown Mayor Dixie Hibbs. "NPR Manufacturing Kentucky will be a true asset to our community, and we look forward to the new jobs and opportunities this fine company will bring to the area."

Horse Cave's largest employer to expand

Dart Container Corp., a container company located in Horse Cave, recently announced that it will add 100 employees and two buildings as part of a \$15 million expansion. Dart officials said the expansion, the seventh in the last 25 years, will include a 21,600-square-foot truck and trailer shop and a 587,000-square-foot warehouse area in Horse Cave. Company officials hope to have the new buildings open by August 2007.

Source: *Lexington Herald Leader*





of up to 50,000 for their ability to secure new and expanded corporate facility projects.

Finishing in the Top 100 were: Paducah, Glasgow, Danville, Richmond, Somerset, Corbin, Frankfort, Mount Sterling, Murray and the Union City, Tennessee-Kentucky region.

The ranking is based on a community's total number of qualified projects as tracked by Conway Data Inc.'s New Plant database. Qualified projects include those that involve a capital investment of at least \$1 million, create 50 or more jobs or involve new floor space of at least 20,000 square feet.

Source: *The Lane Report*

If you'd like to see your city featured in City Bits, please submit newsworthy items to rmiller@klc.org.

Lexington named 'Smart Place to Live'

According to analyses and rankings prepared by *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, Lexington ranks 13th in the nation's 50 Smart Places to Live. Lexington is the only Kentucky city listed in the rankings, which were based on good value in home prices and a reasonable cost of living combined with a great quality of life. The analysts looked at, among other things, places where an attractive house could be purchased for \$300,000 to \$400,000 or less, access to quality health care and a

strong economy. For a complete list of the 50 Smart Places to Live, visit www.kiplinger.com.

More Kentucky cities recognized nationally

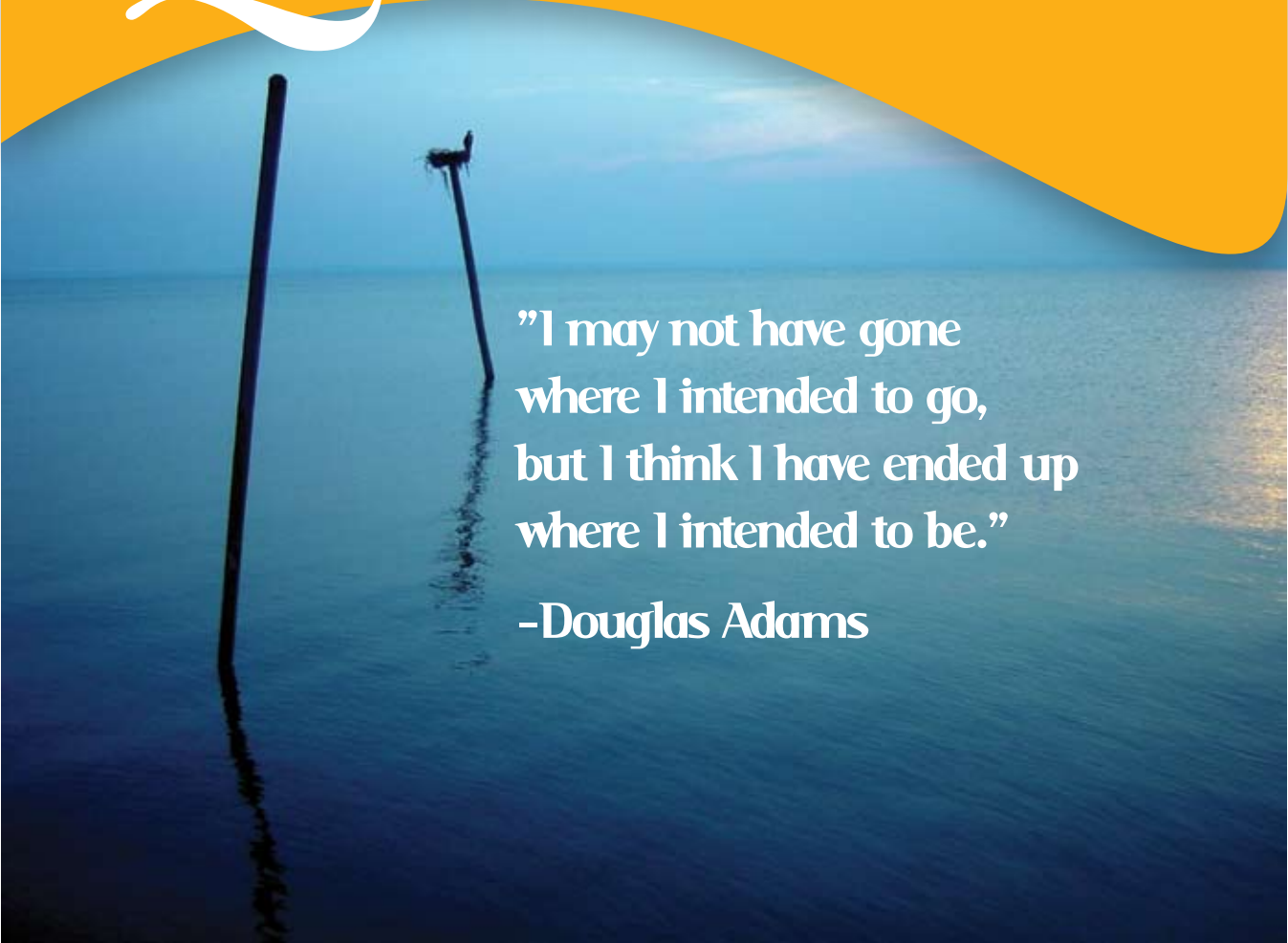
A recently released listing in *Site Selection* magazine ranks Kentucky third in the nation for the largest number of micropolitan areas in the nation's top 100. The Micropolitan Awards—formerly called Top Small Towns—is an annual program that honors communities with populations

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