

PUBLIC LIFE

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Advocate

Boulware sets sights on larger facility, expanded services

Homeless mission renovating former convent

Framing the Issue:
Dental care for disadvantaged youth

Health Care:
The single payer vision

Longfellow School
Citizens react to possible
demolition of hilltop landmark

About our Editorial Board



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Rodney is president of the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro. He joined the foundation in 2000 following twelve years with RiverPark (performing arts) Center. His volunteer and civic experience includes work in education, health care, youth, social services, tourism, and community development. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University.



Dave Boeyink

Dave is Associate Professor of Journalism and Director of Media Studies, Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions, Indiana University. He holds a B.A. degree from Central College and an M.T.S. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. From 1978-87, he was Editorial Page Editor for the *Messenger-Inquirer*. He has published articles in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *Newspaper Journal*, and *Journalism Quarterly*.



Fran Ellers

Fran works as a writer, editor, and communications consultant. She is a former reporter with the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and was a frequent panelist on Kentucky Educational Television's "Comment on Kentucky." Her clients include the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, University of Kentucky Center for Rural Health, and the Kentucky League of Cities.



John S. Hager

John established the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro in 1996 following the sale of the Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer* to the Belo Corporation (Dallas, TX). A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Michigan College of Law, he was a practicing attorney for 19 years prior to returning to the family newspaper in 1973. He has been involved in numerous civic initiatives, including a lead role in the establishment of the Owensboro Community College. In 1996, the Kentucky Press Association honored him with its "most valuable member" award. He was named to the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame in 2002.



Ed Staats

Ed served The Associated Press for 41 years, as a reporter, editor and administrator in 10 AP offices, including the AP's headquarters in New York. He retired in mid-2002 ending a career that bridged the print, broadcast, cable, and online news businesses. At his retirement, he was in charge of AP's Kentucky operations, a position he had held since the mid-1980's. He is a member of the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame.

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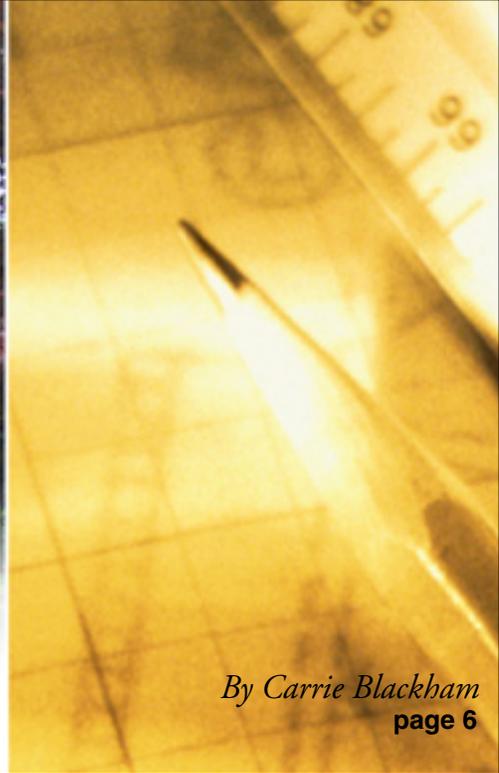
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Our Higher Education Challenge



by Rodney Berry

With 42 out of 100 adults age 25-34 with bachelor's degrees or higher, Lexington-Fayette County is Kentucky's best educated community. By comparison, only 19 out of 100 Owensboro-Daviess County adults of that age have college degrees. To match Lexington-Fayette County, we would need more than twice as many college graduates of that age – 4,828, compared to the 2,138 we have now.

A new citizens group has been formed to devise a strategy to address this deep-seated community challenge. Aably chaired by David Searles and comprised of the Owensboro mayor, Daviess County judge-executive, presidents or representatives of our local higher education institutions, and experienced members of the Citizens Committee on Education, the Higher Education Advocacy Group includes the stakeholder perspective and fire-power needed to work through the delicate loyalties and complexities of this challenge toward substantive outcomes.

It is certainly ambitious and may not be quickly attainable to reach the Fayette County benchmark. In 2005, Brescia University, Kentucky Wesleyan College and Western Kentucky University-Owensboro graduated only 341 students with bachelor's degrees, and many of them subsequently left our community for job opportunities.

To increase the number of college graduates in Owensboro-Daviess County, we must instill in our culture a greater appreciation for education; we must also better prepare students for college. We must produce more graduates of our local institutions and keep more of them here after they complete their degree. We must attract more graduates of out-of-town colleges – those from our community and those from other places. And on a parallel track, we must attract and expand businesses and create an inviting climate for entrepreneurial start-ups.

We must create more higher education opportunities through increased collaboration among our high schools, colleges and universities; new fields of study; and better ways for students to manage and afford college course work.

All of this may mean offering more graduate degrees to complement Brescia's social work and management programs and the executive MBA recently announced by Kentucky Wesleyan.

It may mean seizing more opportunities in health care: nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy and more. It may mean landing one of several new pharmacy schools planned for Kentucky or more programs connected with the cancer research initiatives at our hospital.

It may mean taking advantage of niche opportunities in agriculture technology, biotechnology, and cutting-edge uses of tobacco designed and developed by Kentucky Bioprocessing LLC (formerly Large Scale Biology).

It may mean devising technological programs to prepare workers for jobs of the future: nanotechnology, mechatronics, gene modification/therapy and more.

It may mean offering programs of distinction that expand our connection to the global community: language and international studies programs, exchange programs and more.

It may mean expanding distance learning opportunities that connect us with leading institutions, scholars and instructors across the nation and planet.

But these things won't just happen. It will take a community vision that transcends institutional interests. It will take leadership, teamwork and adequate funds for staff, research, consultants, and visits to other communities that have developed innovative, effective higher education models.

The new Higher Education Advocacy Group represents an important step forward. Few citizen initiatives are more important to the future of our community. Few are more worthy of public support. ■

Note: Rodney Berry is a member of the Higher Education Advocacy Group.

“The largest predictor of economic well-being in cities is the percent of college graduates.”

**– Ned Hill
Professor of Economic Development
Cleveland State University**

Contributors

Garrett Adams, M.D.,
M.P.H.



Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Louisville College of Medicine, Dr. Adams is Kentucky Coordinator of Physicians for a National Health Program.

Carrie Blackham



Carrie examines the expansion plans of Owensboro's Boulware Mission that was met with opposition from some of its future neighbors.

“Writing this article was an eye-opening experience for me. Not only did I meet some very interesting and sincere people,

but I also happily put to rest some of my own ill-informed biases.”

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

Chad Gesser



Chad is Coordinator of Institutional Research at Owensboro Community and Technical College. He founded the health data website “Project Healthy Owensboro: Progress and Evaluation (HOPE)” at www.octc.kctcs.edu/ir/HOPE.

Chad also developed an interest in global economic issues with his thesis work in Mexico studying NAFTA.

Benjamin Hoak



Ben examined the pros and cons of an emerging historic preservation issue, including the sentimental attachment that many former students have with Longfellow School.

“Working on the Longfellow assignment reminded me how everything and everyone has a story to tell. Buildings, people, towns – they're all worth discovering, no matter what we decide about them in the end. There's always more than meets the eye.”

A Kentucky Wesleyan College graduate, Ben is a former middle school teacher and a fellow of the World Journalism Institute. He is a special publications writer for the *Messenger-Inquirer*.

More to the story on youth dental problem



When the Public Life Foundation addressed the plight of children in need of dental care in the January 2006 issue of *Public Life Advocate* in the article, "Dental Care for poor youth 'a huge, huge need'" by Benjamin Hoak, we found much to support about the issues presented. However, there were some errors in the information presented that we feel misrepresent the Owensboro Public Schools.

Because we take a deep interest in helping children meet both educational and physical

needs and have the help of several very dedicated local dentists in providing care for our students, we feel that a clarification of what is taking place in this community is necessary.

The January article began by relating an incident in which an Owensboro High School student in dire need of having a tooth pulled, resorted to pulling the tooth himself. The sequence of the events, as related in the story, painted a picture that might leave some readers wondering why the school did not provide more help.

In reality, there was more to the story. Last spring, when the student reported his tooth problem to the school nurse, she called his mother and was assured that the student had a dental appointment to take care of the problem. He was provided Tylenol to relieve the immediate pain. The school had no reason to believe that the boy's mother would not seek treatment for her son as she said she would do.

The student did not return to the nurse for several months. One day last fall, the student came to school in pain from an unrelated injury. At that time, he went to the assistant principal and reported having pulled his tooth at home that day. All OHS staff could do at this point was to take the student home. Sadly, had he returned to the school nurse prior to taking such drastic action and told her he still had a problem, arrangements could have been made to get him the medical help he needed.

Mr. Hoak's article talked about the Foust Elementary School dental program. A featured quote in the article stopped short of what Foust Family Resource Director Beth Murphy said in her interview for the story. The quote said that "...more than half (of Foust Elementary School's 378 students) have never been to a dentist." What we understand that Mrs. Murphy actually said is that more than half of Foust's students don't have a dental home (i.e., a family dentist). With parental consent, every child at Foust is offered a free dental

screening as well as other services.

While Owensboro and other school districts do all they can to help students get much needed dental care, there is no question that there is a tremendous gap. There are promising models such as the Foust Elementary School model that was featured in the Kentucky Department of Education's *Kentucky Teacher Magazine* in October 2004.

Foust's program was created about 12 years ago when Dr. Mike Johnson began working with the school district nurse to help provide dental care to students who would not otherwise see a dentist. Today, while less than half of Foust's students report having seen a family dentist, every child at Foust has the opportunity for dental care through the joint effort of the Family Resource Center, the Green River District Health Department, a dental health grant, and Dr. Johnson.

The program's goal is to get dental care to those who need it most, but can afford it least. Several local dentists participate in this or similar programs and volunteer time to do screenings and to see those children for little or no compensation. All children in the participating schools are offered free dental screenings. The students then are triaged into different levels of needed care. Every child who is eligible gets dental sealants on adult molars, which according to the program is the best decay preventative. Preventative care and education are making a tremendous difference for students in these programs.

There are several dentists who routinely help OPS students by providing screenings and care. However, a huge obstacle that many of our children face is the extremely limited number of dentists who will take a child on a state medical card for care. The fact that there are limited numbers of providers in our area to provide care for hundreds of children who have state medical cards or no insurance at all has really created a tremendous burden on these dentists who do help us. Unfortunately, the state's compensation rate to dentists serving state medical card children is not sufficient to cover the cost of the care or even the supplies the dentists use in treatment. Funding for needy children not covered by a state medical card is also very limited.

The Owensboro Public Schools work tirelessly to meet the physical as well as educational needs of its students and we welcome your help in getting more dental health care for the children who need it in this community.

Julie Ellis
Public Relations
Owensboro Public Schools

CORRECTION

In the January edition of the *Public Life Advocate*, we regret that a statement from an interviewed source was apparently misinterpreted by our reporter. We reported that more than half the students at Foust Elementary School have never been treated by a dentist when, in fact, many have been provided dental screenings at the school. Many Foust students do not benefit from the ongoing care of a family dentist.

The *Public Life Advocate* salutes Dr. Mike Johnson who has provided dental screenings at no charge at Foust for more than 12 years. We also salute other dentists who volunteer at clinics and/or treat economically disadvantaged patients in their offices on a free or reduced-price basis.

Health care: The single payer vision

By Garrett Adams, M.D., M.P.H.



America has wonderful hospitals, clinics, and doctors. We conduct brilliant research. But there is a missing link: access to health services.

Some day, however, financial barriers to health care in America will be removed, and, finally, we will provide health care for all. Every resident will have affordable, high quality comprehensive health care. Infant mortality rates will fall, immunization rates and life expectancy will rise, and the World Health Organization will rank the efficiency of American health care first, instead of 37th. Health care will be disengaged from employment, freeing millions of health care hostages to pursue jobs they want, rather than jobs they take for health benefits.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship will become financially feasible. American business and manufacturing again will be competitive with countries that have national health plans. Without health benefits as a hiring issue, small businesses will compete equally with large ones for good employees. Medical bankruptcies -- now half of all bankruptcies, and especially affecting the middle class -- will vanish. Ninety-five per cent of Americans will pay less for health care than they do now.

Malpractice issues will diminish. Physicians will spend more time with patients and people will choose physicians and hospitals freely, rather than being forced into a market network. Money will not change hands between patients and providers, again improving doctor-patient relationships and leading to fewer claims. Since 60 percent of current settlement costs are for future medical care and everyone already will have medical care, settlements will go down and professional liability insurance costs will go down proportionately. Overhead in doctors' offices will plummet because of vastly simplified billing to a single payer. Primary care physicians will be valued and reimbursed accordingly.

There will be no Medicaid crises, no unreimbursed care for doctors, hospitals or other providers, and no cost-shifting. Health-related issues associated with natural disasters, such as hurricane Katrina, or pandemic influenza, will be managed seamlessly.

A national electronic medical record system will detect medical errors quickly. Half a million Kentuckians are uninsured, 85,000 in Jefferson County. The dire straights of unhealthy Kentuckians have been dramatically portrayed in *The Courier-Journal*. Uninsured people forego doctor visits and necessary medicine; they postpone medical attention until illness is far advanced, more expensive to treat, and

some cannot be helped.

Eighteen thousand Americans -- six 9/11 bombings -- die every year because they cannot afford medical care.

Privatization of traditional Medicare is a Trojan horse bringing more pain to a critically ill American health care system. Health insurance companies increase profits by raising premiums, reducing benefits, shifting costs to consumers, and providing coverage for only the healthiest.

The Medicare Prescription Drug Act specifically prohibits negotiation for volume discounts and requires private administration. It is an example of the difficulties of mixing profit-taking with health care

delivery. It provides lucrative profits to insurance and pharmaceutical industries; but a high cost is borne by the American people. Dr. Oliver Fein, New York City internist, says: "I was outraged when one of my patients required hospital admission after stopping her medications, because she couldn't afford the \$45.57 co-payment demanded by [her new plan]." Health Savings Accounts, tax credits, consumer-directed health care, voucher systems, etc. are Band-Aids for a failed experiment in health care delivery; they cannot control costs effectively, and they will

not provide comprehensive universal affordable health care.

We have the highest health costs in the world, more than twice that of other developed nations that provide care to all of their citizens. We spend more, but we get less. We have the money now to provide excellent health care for everyone. A bill in the U.S. Congress, HR 676, describes the details of a single payer national plan. The majority of American citizens support a national health program, and data indicate that the majority of physicians do so as well. We need non-profit single payer health care reform now.

This item appeared in the Courier-Journal on Feb. 17, 2006.

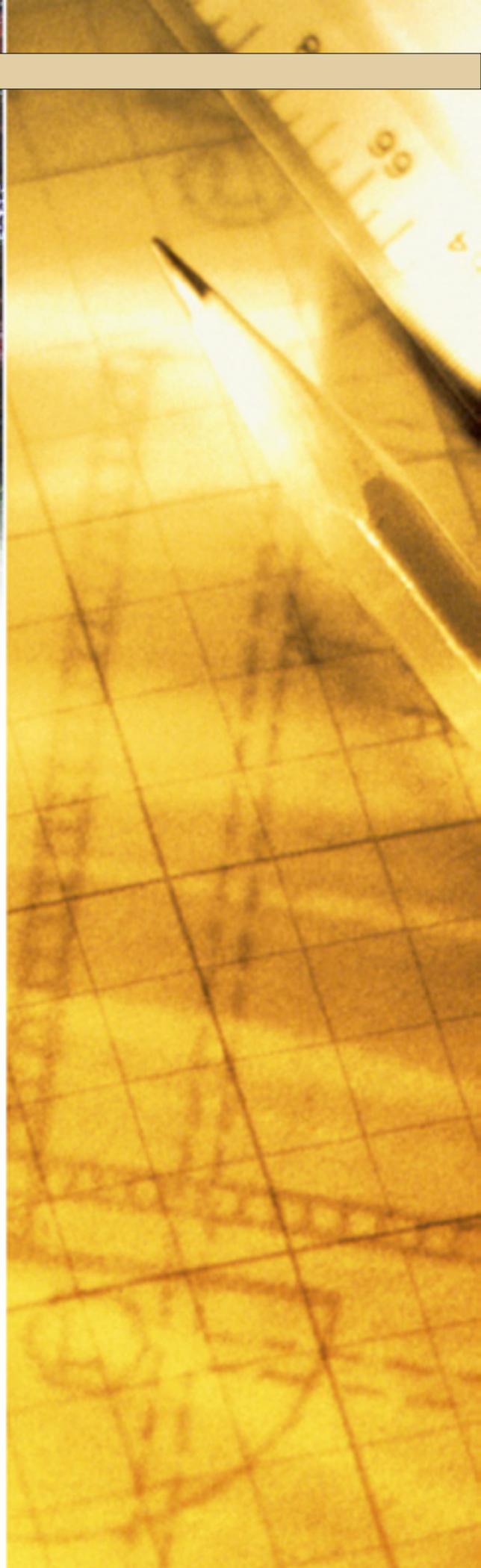
Further information on single payer health care is available at:

www.KYHealthcare.org,

www.PNHP.org,

www.healthcare-NOW.org.

Dr. Adams can be reached at kyhealthcare@aol.com.



Boulware sets sights on larger facility, expanded services

Homeless mission renovating former convent

By Carrie Blackham

From the front steps of the former Passionist convent on Benita Avenue, it is easy to see the signs lining the lawns along adjacent Geary Court stating, "No to Boulware."

The Boulware Mission, a homeless shelter and substance abuse treatment center, purchased the long, empty building in March and will move there next year. This new, larger location will allow Boulware to more than double the number of people it can serve at any one time – from 40 now to 90 in the future. The mission also expects to increase its staff from 15 to about 24.

The yard signs are the last remnants of an attempt to prevent Boulware from moving from its current site on Hall Street. The efforts included a lawsuit which was recently resolved in favor of the mission.

While some of its new neighbors argued that Boulware should have expanded its existing space, the mission's administrators say the convent site will better meet the mission's needs for housing. And expanding is critical, they say – Boulware is the only shelter in Daviess County for single men. The Hall Street site will be used by another organization, Lifeboat, as a detoxification facility.

At the convent site, Boulware will be able to serve 60 men and 30 women. That still won't be enough to meet the need -- the mission served 300 clients over the course of last year, but had 3,000 requests for services, up from 2,000 the year before.

"A homeless person is anyone who does not have a safe, decent home of their own," said Linda Roberts, chief operations officer at the faith-based mission. While homelessness in Owensboro is somewhat invisible, area shelters are usually at capacity.

Roberts believes that homelessness is a result of the increase in single-parent families and the limits of public assistance -- a single parent cannot support a family on minimum wage. Substance abuse is another common reason for the homelessness of many Boulware clients. While there is little concrete data available, Roberts believes that homelessness is on the rise. In particular, she says that there is a correlation between the incidence of substance abuse and homelessness.

Mission serves clients who have hit bottom

James, a resident of the mission, considers himself fortunate. He has been there for 18 days after spending two months in jail on his third drunk-driving charge. James is very soft spoken as he recounts the story of two failed marriages and the loss of a construction business that employed eight people and gave him a \$150,000 salary. He recalls how he used to live in his truck.

James openly admits that he is an alcoholic and is incapable of rehabilitating himself. It became obvious that he needed the kind of long-term substance abuse treatment that Boulware provides. Previously, he had two unsuccessful stints in a 35-day program. While in jail recently, James wrote for drug court, "I am a menace to myself, people around me, and society. With deep shame comes the knowledge that I live with no sense of social obligation or know the meaning of moral responsibility to my fellow man." James appears sincere when he expresses gratitude for his most recent arrest because he feels as though "it was the beginning of the end" of his addictive lifestyle.

The mission encourages its clients to remain in residence for six months to a year, a time frame that Roberts believes is necessary to treat the entire person. Case managers and clients develop a plan to address the specific needs of the client, including physical health, mental health or substance abuse, emotional health, spirituality, education, job skills and housing.

Boulware takes drug court referrals and self-referrals on a first come, first served basis. The mission serves residents of all counties in the Green River area, with the majority of its clients coming from Daviess County.

Brandy, now in her late 20s, is a young mother of three who began drinking at age 15 and using drugs at 17. The drug court in a nearby county offered her the choice of going through the programs at Boulware or spending 10 years in prison on drug possession charges. Brandy said that she was tired of living and would probably be dead if she had not gone through drug court; she credits the mission with saving her life. She has been clean since December of 2005 and once her treatment is complete, she plans to obtain her GED (high school equivalency diploma) and focus on her children.

Other shelters serve women, families

There are two other agencies in Owensboro that provide similar services. OASIS offers shelter and support to women and their children affected by domestic violence and substance abuse. It provides shelter for every woman at risk for domestic violence, but there is a waiting list for those women with substance abuse issues not related to domestic violence.

The Daniel Pitino Shelter offers shelter to single women and families, but is unable to serve single men. This agency is strictly a shelter and does not provide any other support services on site. It has room for 14 families and several single women.

Besides Boulware, the only other shelter in the Green River area that provides shelter services to single men is located in Henderson. Since 1921, Boulware has served homeless men, women, one- and two-parent families and couples without children.

Expansion will include wall

In the renovated convent, Boulware will have 27,000 square feet of space. The mission plans to close the Benita Avenue entrance to the building and continue the wall around the mission so that it is

completely enclosed. Administrators expect to complete the \$3 million renovation within a year.

Boulware is currently seeking donations from community leaders and organizations through private negotiations until it reaches an undisclosed benchmark. At that point, when the mission can assure the community that there is significant support for the mission's expansion, administrators and board members expect to begin a public fundraising campaign.

The mission also receives funding from the United Way, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, local churches and some businesses.

But what about the neighbors?

While the Daviess County community has always supported Boulware's efforts to help men like James with difficult substance abuse problems, neighbors of the new site have been concerned that some of those problems could begin affecting the neighborhood.

Donna Embry, neighborhood representative, cites two reasons for neighbors' opposition to the mission's new location – finances and fear.

James and Brandy said they do not understand the opposition – that they believe that Boulware is instrumental in taking troubled people off the streets and turning them into productive citizens.

However neighbors have doubts that Boulware can raise the money needed to support the new site and believe that it would have been less expensive to renovate the current site, Embry said.

The other reason for neighborhood opposition is fear that the neighborhood will be less family oriented and less safe -- that residents won't want to venture out because some of Boulware's clients could pose a risk to them.

Embry also said the neighborhood would have been more accepting of the move if residents had been prepared with a series of meetings between the neighborhood and the mission so that concerns could have been aired freely.

At the same time, Embry supports the mission's work. She had two suggestions for calming some of residents' fears -- conducting more stringent FBI background checks so that sex offenders from other states are not missed, and having trusted clients from the mission ride bicycles or walk the neighborhood to get to know residents and make sure that no one is experiencing problems.

Mission administrators indicate that they already use an Internet-based FBI background check on every potential resident. They also rely on a pre-admission interview to determine whether someone is an appropriate candidate for residency at the Boulware Mission. Roberts said staff members have experience interpreting both the behaviors and the answers given in the lengthy intake process because, unless a person has been convicted, their background check will be clear.

Roberts indicated an interest in Embry's idea of having pairs of "residential volunteer staff" make regular rounds in the surrounding neighborhood. Roberts also plans to open the mission to visitors two or three times a year so the community can see how the residents live and learn about the programs they are required to participate in. "The people who enter these doors are human beings that made mistakes," Roberts said, "but they are ready to do the work necessary to help themselves." ■

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Boulware will be able to
serve 60 men and 30 women.
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meet the need -- the mission
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dental care for DISADVANTAGED youth

Local options for expanded services

As dental care and dental insurance costs rise, employers and individual policy owners cancel policies, take their chances, and more low-income people postpone treatment until conditions are serious. Children are particularly vulnerable. How should a compassionate community respond?

BACKGROUND

Family dentists are important. More than half of our community's economically disadvantaged youth do not have a "dental home" (a family dentist). With a family dentist, problems can be detected earlier, prevention and hygiene are more likely to be practiced by the patient and records can be more effectively maintained.

Low reimbursements discourage treatment. Approximately 11,000 Daviess County youth qualify for the Medicaid (or K-CHIP) program, but few dentists treat them because government reimbursements are only 35 percent to 50 percent of their normal fees. Reimbursements have not increased in many years.

Volunteer dentists conduct screenings. Due to the generosity of volunteer dentists, students attending six local elementary schools are offered dental screenings. Participating elementary schools: Foust, Estes and Cravens in the Owensboro system; Utica, Tamarack and Sorgho in the Daviess County system. (There are 20 elementary schools and five middle schools in Owensboro-Daviess County.) Dental screenings also take place during the annual back-to-school "Readifest" that last year was attended by 1,725 students.

Many students get sealants. As a follow-up to the screenings at schools and at events such as Readifest, many youth receive dental sealants at dentist offices. Sealants protect against future cavities, but they cannot be applied until existing cavities and other problems are treated.

Dental education is essential. School nurses promote dental health and provide opportunities for students to brush their teeth at school. According to local dentists, in many instances, these worthwhile programs cannot offset the damage caused by the high-sugar diets and soft drink consumption so prevalent in youth today. Dentists stress that poor dental health leads to poor general health.

Many delay treatment due to cost of care and insurance. Access to care is an issue for more than those who qualify for assistance. And only 25 percent to 30 percent of Medicaid/K-CHIP eligibles use their dental benefit. Many youth do not receive the treatment they need because they come from working families who cannot afford the cost of care or dental insurance. Most employers do not offer dental insurance as a benefit, and dental benefits are increasingly dropped as employers cope with rising health insurance premiums. Consequently, many people postpone dental treatment until conditions are serious or additional health complications occur.

Charity care is available, but limited. Some dentists provide charity care in their private practices, generally in a discreet manner so as not to attract an unmanageable number of non-paying patients. The Christian Dental Mission, located in a low-income west end neighborhood, relies on volunteer dentists and hygienists, but has limited hours and a long waiting list. Occasional dental screenings and hospital emergency room care provide the only other options.

Missed appointments complicate care. When patients miss appointments, dentists are more likely to discontinue reserving appointment slots for Medicaid and non-paying patients. "No shows" are typically caused by transportation problems or because the patient will lose pay or may not be allowed off work to see a dentist.

Many turn to the hospital ER. An Owensboro Medical Health System (OMHS) hospital emergency room physician recently reported that approximately 10 patients per day turn to the emergency room for dental care. (Some claim that this is due, in large part, to the increased use of methamphetamine.)

Daviess County can meet demand, but not need. There are 54 dentists listed in the local Yellow Pages phone directory, including 41 dentists in family/general practice. For Daviess County to be classified as underserved, 34 or fewer family/general practice dentists would be serving our community. This formula measures the capacity to meet the "demands" of the market, but not "needs" of the uninsured, underinsured and poor.



Cost of Dental Care

Source: DentalPlans.com

Check-Ups	\$40-\$67
Teeth Cleaning	\$53-\$75
Full Mouth X-Rays	\$104
Fillings	\$121
Extractions	\$123
Sealant (per tooth)	\$43
Root Canals	\$646-\$829

Cost of Dental Insurance

Source: DentallInsurance.com

DentalInsurance.com lists 14 family dental plans with monthly premiums from \$17.95 to \$98.79. Plans vary with regard to co-pay obligations, number of participating dentists, discounts per service, limitations on claims and more. Because the average claim is only \$150, dental insurance is often viewed by employers as expendable.

Community Options: Expanding Dental Care for Disadvantaged Youth

1. RELY ON DENTISTS IN PRIVATE PRACTICES

This option suggests that dentists will respond to an urgent appeal and accept more Medicaid and non-paying patients if a strong case is made. Dentists are caring professionals and will respond to the challenge; however, many may expect charitable services to be absorbed by all dentists equitably.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- We should turn to dentists in existing private practices before creating clinics or expanding government services.
- If dentists share the burden of charity care, the number will be manageable for everyone.
- The best way to provide quality dental care is through a “dental home,” where a dentist has a relationship with the patient, knows the patient’s history and can stress prevention, hygiene, regular check-ups, etc.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- Our community may not be classified as underserved by dentists, but with only 41 family/general practitioners in Daviess County, there are not enough dentists to absorb such a large number of people who are uninsured and unable to pay.
- There is no reason to be optimistic that a high percentage of dentists will participate in a voluntary program.
- Private dental practices are businesses and there are only so many appointment slots in each day. Bills cannot be paid, staff cannot be paid, and practices cannot be sustained without paying or insured patients or reasonable reimbursements.

Costs

If dentists volunteer their time, it may be necessary and appropriate to absorb their supply costs. It may also require staff to recruit volunteer dentists into a structured program, such as a dental version of the Daviess County Community Access Project (DC-CAP).

Consequences

This option may indeed result in more dentists providing valued services for the uninsured and those unable to pay. It is unlikely that all dentists will participate; however, so many needy patients may remain underserved.

2. CREATE A NEW CLINIC OR EXPAND EXISTING ONES

If private dental practices cannot or will not absorb more charity care, our community should increase the capacity of the Christian Dental Mission, add a dental care dimension to an existing medical clinic, or develop programs using dental student residents from the University of Kentucky or University of Louisville.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- Given the obvious community need, the cost of equipping and operating a dental clinic is justified.
- Providing care through a clinic is much less expensive than the hospital emergency room.
- A dental clinic is within reach: OMHS could fund a dental clinic from its reserves or funds proposed for entrepreneurial ventures and, at the same time, reduce its emergency room costs; Catholic Health Partners could fund (and possibly endow) a dental clinic from the funds it received when its hospital partnership interest was purchased.
- Health department officials could provide space for the dental clinic in the new Daviess County Health Center.
- A clinic does not preclude dentists from volunteering.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- No health care or community institution has offered to fund the equipment, supplies, staff, operating costs and medications needed for a dental clinic.
- Officials are unlikely to approve a health tax increase for this purpose.
- If we establish or expand a clinic to include dental care, people from throughout the region will come to Owensboro for free care.
- A clinic would likely also accept paying and insured patients that would take business away from private dental practices.
- The role of the health department is community education, public health inspections, preparedness for epidemics, etc. The health department should not be in the business of providing direct care to patients.

Costs

Start-up and operating costs will vary based on whether equipment and furnishings are donated, staff members are paid or volunteer, space is donated or leased, hours of operation are full-time or part-time. Costs could be minimal or several hundred thousand dollars annually. Moreover, costs would likely increase by 15 percent to 30 percent or more annually.

Consequences

A community dental clinic would serve a substantial number of patients who need dental care but are unable to pay, particularly if evening and weekend hours can be offered.

Framing the Issue: Dental Care

3. ADVOCATE FOR REIMBURSEMENT INCREASES

If state and federal government reimbursements for Medicaid and K-CHIP programs were increased fairly and regularly, dentists would already be accepting more patients and services for disadvantaged youth would not likely even be an issue. This option suggests that we should mobilize citizens to urge state legislators to increase Medicaid and K-CHIP reimbursements to dentists.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- It has been many years since Medicaid and K-CHIP reimbursements were increased, yet the costs of operating dental practices have increased significantly. Less than one percent of state Medicaid dollars are set aside for dental care. Reimbursements cover only 35 percent to 50 percent of a dentist's standard charges.
- Public officials should have the courage to redirect or raise revenues to provide these fundamental, vital services for our youth and disadvantaged populations.
- Kentucky should leverage its 40 percent share of Medicaid costs to take advantage of the 60 percent match from the federal government.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- Even if reimbursements doubled – which is unlikely in light of current government financial pressures – some dentists would still be losing money on Medicaid patients they treat.
- Increasing reimbursements is impractical. Medicaid already consumes 22 percent of Kentucky's annual spending, close to \$5 billion per year, with projected shortfalls of several hundred million dollars. Medicaid officials are already forced to either reduce provider reimbursements, patient benefits, or the number of people eligible for Medicaid.
- We need to reduce public expectations in medical and dental care. People need to understand the actual cost of care and accept a greater sense of responsibility for their own care and that of their children.

Costs

If, for example, Medicaid reimbursements to dentists were increased by 10 percent statewide, the Medicaid budget would increase by \$12-\$20 million (including the federal match).

Consequences

Added costs to increase reimbursements would be passed along through increased state and federal taxes unless comparable cuts are made in other programs. This option would increase significantly the number of dentists who accept Medicaid and K-CHIP patients.

4. FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Most dental problems can be prevented. Our community strategy should focus on comprehensive dental education to keep teeth and gums healthy.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- Many people are not aware of the dental problems they may cause through their behaviors.
- Many people are not aware of the additional problems and dangerous medical complications that can result from poor dental hygiene and untreated problems.
- Our community would not need a dental clinic or as many dentists (and dental insurance premiums would be significantly less) if the people of our community practiced responsible dental hygiene from an early age.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE THIS OPTION MAY SAY...

- Community education campaigns must be well-funded and sustained over long periods of time to be effective.
- It is difficult to change the behavior of many people, particularly youth, and acute needs cannot be ignored.
- Substance abuse (particularly as it relates to methamphetamine) is the cause of many dental problems in our community. A focus on substance abuse prevention would make more of an impact than dental education.

Costs

An effective local public information campaign may require several hundred thousand dollars per year.

Consequences

Carefully crafted, assiduous public information campaigns can be effective. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving fundamentally changed public attitudes toward driving while under the influence of alcohol.

Discussion Questions

Which option(s) do you prefer and why?

Are there other options? Are there better ways to help more disadvantaged youth get the dental care they need?

What are the tradeoffs with regard to the options? Are they worth it? Are we willing to pay higher taxes or otherwise sacrifice to help more disadvantaged youth?

Should the needs of disadvantaged youth take precedent over the needs of uninsured low-income adults?

What can each of us do to more effectively address this issue?

What is the role of the public, government, schools, insurance and drug companies, employers and others in addressing the issue?

Only 400-500 of the 2,200 practicing dentists in Kentucky make significant claims to Medicaid /KCHIP.

In 2004, only one-third of eligible children in Kentucky received any dental services through Medicaid and the Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP).

A Fayette County four-chair dental clinic cost \$400,000 to equip and \$300,000 annually to operate. This did not include the costs of dentists, hygienists or dental assistants. Dental clinics targeting low-income populations typically recover approximately half the operating costs through Medicaid.

Nearly half of Kentucky's children (age 2-4) have untreated tooth decay (twice the national average).

Kentucky Oral Health Program

"The day that we as a nation decide to provide oral health education to our families of newborns, public health measures such as community water fluoridation, and regular dental visits to every American will mark the birth of the first generation that could grow up essentially free of dental disease."

American Dental Association, 2004

"Although dental problems don't command the instant fears associated with low birth weight, fetal death, or cholera, they do have the consequence of wearing down the stamina of children and defeating their ambitions."

Jonathan Kozol, author

Kentucky ranks 49th in the nation in the percent of people who have lost six or more teeth because of decay or gum disease.

Kentucky Adult Oral Health Survey (2002)

Framing the Issue: Dental Care

LEARN MORE

"Dental care for poor youth 'a huge, huge need'"

Public Life Advocate, January 2006
http://www.plfo.org/advocate/volume_3_issue_1/dental_care_for_poor_youth/

Mission Frankfort Dental Clinic

201 St. Clair St.
Frankfort, KY 40601
(800) 675-7948
<http://fbcfankfort.com/>

GET INVOLVED

Citizens Health Care Advocates

Beverly Mills, Executive Director
401 Frederica St., B-203
Owensboro, KY 42301
beverly.mills@plfo.org
(270) 685-2652

Kentucky Youth Advocates

2034 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
info@kyyouth.org
(502) 895-8167

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GRADD Health Council

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Ohio County Hospital
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Hartford, KY 42347-1847

Owensboro-Daviess County Dentists

Specialty	Number*
Family/General Practice	41
Endodontists	2
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery	3
Orthodontists	4
Pediatrics	2
Periodontists	2
TOTAL	54

* Yellow Page listings

District Health Tax Comparisons

Marshall	8.0
Mason	8.0
Harrison	6.0
Madison	5.0
Franklin	4.0
Henry	4.0
Laurel	4.0
Mercer	4.0
Pike	4.0
Rowan	4.0
Spencer	4.0
Shelby	3.75
Bell	3.7
Daviess	3.5
Fayette County	2.8
Campbell	2.4
McCracken	2.4
Hardin	2.0
Boone	2.0
Kenton	2.0
Jefferson	n/a
Warren	n/a

Source: <http://revenue.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D7A8529F-0EE9-406E-8BCE-B1B90D623CF8/0/ratebookward20050406.pdf>

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Hinson, Ph.D. David, Founder of Mission: Frankfort	Norris, Terry DMD Owensboro
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Longfellow School

Citizens react to possible demolition of hilltop landmark

By Benjamin Hoak

“Longfellow School the best of all / Sits on a hill so very tall ...”

For many Owensboro residents of a certain age, these opening lines of Longfellow School’s fight song stir memories of childhood when they were full of promise, running up the hill to a building that must have seemed enormous.

Back then, of course, it was just a school, the place where they spent time between summers of freedom. Today, however, it’s part of the community’s history – which is why some former students and preservationists are alarmed that it might be torn down.

Owensboro Public Schools owns the two-story building that sits just north of Owensboro High School on the west side of Frederica Street. By the summer of 2007, the school board plans to begin construction on a gymnasium that will fill the open space between Longfellow School and Owensboro High School. The question is whether the school board will decide to tear down Longfellow to build the new gym or keep it and remodel the interior for another use. Currently Longfellow is used for ROTC programs, alternative to suspension programs, some extracurricular activities and storage.

The question of whether to preserve Longfellow is part of a larger debate in communities such as Owensboro about how far to go to save historical landmarks, given financial limits and the needs of the future.

In Longfellow’s case, “no decisions have been made yet,” said

Larry Vick, superintendent of the Owensboro Public School district. The school system is currently developing a facilities plan that must still be approved by the state before any new construction can begin; the gym is already part of the plan, but other changes are prolonging the process. Vick and school board member Nancy Eskridge said the board won’t decide about Longfellow until the facilities plan is complete and the board has reviewed its architect’s recommendations.

The school system has hired Sherman Carter Barnhart from Lexington to design the new gymnasium. The firm has experience in historical renovations and Eskridge said the school board asked it for options and expenses involved in both demolition and renovation of Longfellow.

Built like a bunker

“It’s a beautiful old building,” Eskridge said. “I would love to keep it.” She isn’t sure, however, that there will be a use for it because of the way it’s constructed.

According to records at the Daviess County property valuation office, the building contains 36,974 square feet, has a foundation of concrete, is constructed of wood and brick, and is valued at \$1.3 million.

It has “a structure like a bunker,” said Gary Adams, secretary-trea-

surer of the Preservation Alliance of Owensboro-Daviess County. "It's a solid building. It's still in good shape."

Therein lies some of the difficulty – and expense – of renovating the building for new purposes. "The inside walls are reinforced concrete," Vick said. "There's very little potential for reconstruction." Eskridge said the school system can't use classrooms in the building without an elevator available for disabled students and staff, which it currently doesn't have.

She added that Longfellow can't be easily redesigned, but "you can do anything if you have enough money. It's all tied to cost. What's the cost to remodel against the cost to start over? We're stewards of the public's money. We have to see what the architects can tell us. If it does come down, what goes up in its place would look just as nice if not better and satisfy the needs of Owensboro Public School students for years to come."

Vick said the school system will probably continue using the building at least until the new gym is completed.

A long history

Preservationists and former students point out that Longfellow represents important history in the Owensboro community. Construction began on the school in August of 1931 and was completed in time for the spring semester beginning Jan. 25, 1932. According to a Jan. 17, 1932, article in the *Messenger-Inquirer*, Key Bros. Construction of Murray, Ky., was awarded the building contract in the sum of \$68,425. The company followed the design plans of William Butts Itner, a famous St. Louis architect who was considered a national expert in elementary school design.

"The building is one of the most attractive of its kind," the article read. It contained 11 classrooms on two floors, as well as an auditorium that seated 400 and was equipped with a booth for "moving picture purposes." Each classroom also had the capacity for moving picture machines. At the time, J.L. Foust (for whom Foust Elementary was named) was superintendent of the city schools. Members of the board involved with the new building included W.A. Steele, James H. Davis and W.R. Jagoe.

Adams thinks officials should do everything they can to save Longfellow. "Our contention is you should bend over backwards when you have a building of that character and significance to try to find a way to integrate it, even if it costs a little more," he said. "Unless there's a compelling reason to get rid of a building of that character, why do it?"

Fond memories

Longfellow was last used as an elementary school in 1975. Many of its former students still reside in Owensboro and look back fondly on their elementary school days. "We still get together," said Ann McManus, who attended the school from first through sixth grade, along with her sister, Marylou Steele, her sister-in-law, Marge Hager, and Beverly Steele. "We know the fight song. I remember where we played baseball out in the yard. The hill behind it is where we all went sleigh riding. It was loads of fun. Most everybody walked to school. I thought it was awfully far away, but it wasn't.

"We have discussed it. We think it would be absolutely a terrible thing to tear it down," she said.

Joe Haycraft of Owensboro, a retired airline pilot who attended the school in the 1930s, still remembers the names of two of his first teachers, Ms. Smitha and Ms. Lumpkin. "We need to keep beautiful old buildings like this," he said. "They're the fabric of our community."

Sue Haycraft, who is married to Joe, also went to Longfellow in first grade. "I believe in preservation for posterity and future generations," she said. "I've talked to all kinds of people who do not want it torn down. Even as a six-year old, it impressed me. I can remember the sun streaming in those windows."

"Adaptive reuse"

But a community often needs more than just memories to save old structures. "We have torn down a tremendous amount of beautiful old buildings," says architect Terry Blake of RBS Design Group in Owensboro.

Why? Not because no one remembered them, but because there was no use for them any longer. If a building is to be saved, it must have a purpose.

Blake is an advocate of what he calls adaptive reuse. It doesn't necessarily involve preserving structures exactly the way they were built; instead, old buildings such as Longfellow are adapted to

modern standards while still maintaining the aesthetics of their past. "I would just have to hope it could be considered (in Longfellow's case)," he said. "We can't have disposable architecture anymore," he said. "We can't afford to."

Blake believes it might be easier to adapt the use of Longfellow if the building itself could be moved to another spot on the same site. "It's amazing what technology will do. There are some giant movers out there. You can move two- and three-story buildings, all masonry," he said. "It's not necessarily cheap, he added. "But sometimes in the interest of heritage, it's worth doing."

Eskridge said the school board has not considered the possibility of moving the building because no one has mentioned the idea to them.

Independence Bank, which is headquartered in Owensboro, recently announced plans to undertake the kind of

adaptive reuse Blake describes. The bank is purchasing a historical building on St. Ann St. across from the courthouse and renovating it into a downtown branch of its operations. According to vice-president Larry Mayfield, officials initially wanted a new building that would have been a replica of historical American architecture, similar to the bank's other branches.

When they saw the St. Ann St. building, though, they realized that it would retain the look of historical Owensboro while fitting in with the look of their other buildings. The bank carefully weighed cost options before deciding to proceed, Mayfield said. "We've got to be good stewards of what we have," he said. "We felt it probably would be a little more expensive to keep the old building, but we felt like it would be worth it as a token of what can be downtown and as saving pieces of the past for the future."

Historic downtown

While many historic buildings in downtown Owensboro have already been lost, plenty still remain to be saved. Daviess Fiscal Court recently budgeted \$200,000 to renovate the Smith-Werner building at Second and St. Ann streets. Add in \$31,000 from a city

"Our contention is you should bend over backwards when you have a building of that character and significance to try to find a way to integrate it, even if it costs a little more," he said.

"Unless there's a compelling reason to get rid of a building of that character, why do it?"

– Gary Adams
Preservation Alliance

Longfellow School

Renaissance grant, and according to county commissioner Bruce Kunze, the county will have enough to restore the rare iron façade on the front of the building as well as rebuild the back wall and gut the building in preparation for retrofitting.

“It was a group decision that we felt the building was worth preserving,” Kunze said. “Historically, it’s one of the most significant buildings downtown. It’ll really be an interesting and attractive building. I think it gives the community . . . a lot of character, it makes it interesting, makes it attractive to tourists.”

Kunze predicts the downtown area is ready “to boom and explode with growth” and hopes restoration efforts will help attract new businesses. Kunze also has a personal interest in preserving local historical buildings. His father and grandfather were partners in a men’s clothing store downtown from 1937 to 1978. His grandfather began working at the Newberry-Wile building when he was 14 and worked in the same block for more than 70 years. “Because (the county) owns the buildings (i.e. Smith-Werner), because they are historically significant, I think Fiscal Court has some responsibility to maintain the buildings,” he said.

If county government can get its own buildings in good shape, perhaps it can induce private investors to move their businesses into such buildings, thus creating the public-private partnerships that seem so beneficial, Kunze said.

Mike Wallace, who owns MediaWorks, an advertising firm in Owensboro, understands the importance of private investors. He bought the building at 208 W. Third St. (two doors down from Colby’s Restaurant) a couple of years ago after keeping his eye on it for a long time. When the owner retired, he sold it to Wallace, who renovated it and moved his company to the facility. “It has really unique architectural features to it,” he said. “It dates back to 1895 . . . it didn’t have the attention a lot of the old buildings downtown need.

“I do believe these old buildings are really part of a treasure,” he continued. “Without a doubt, they speak to our history. There are great stories behind every building.” His own building once served as a bank, and the basement served as a barbershop many years ago (it is one of only two walk-down basements in downtown Owensboro).

From a bottom-line financial standpoint, it’s sometimes easier and more cost-effective to simply tear down old buildings and start from scratch, he said, but it doesn’t add much to the character and history of the community. Tax incentives and abatements help those interested in preserving historical structures, but private investors are needed. “We’ve got some buildings we’re close to losing if someone doesn’t step up,” he said.

Can they be saved?

While buying and renovating historic buildings may be within the grasp of some private investors, many citizens can’t follow that example. They can, however, have a voice in helping to preserve the landscape of their town, even with a building such as Longfellow.

“We always listen to citizens,” Eskridge said, when asked if a group of concerned residents could make a difference. “I’m sure it would factor in. I’m not sure it would make the decision. Our responsibility is to the students. We have to do the right thing for the kids; that will be the right thing for the citizens. All of it will be done with the public in mind. I wish there was some really easy solution. I’d like to save it if we could; we need to have a use for it.”

“Our board has made a real commitment to the past with Owensboro High School,” Vick added, saying that many communities haven’t saved their original city high schools. What the school board has to do now is decide “what will be necessary to keep Owensboro High School viable for the future,” he said.

“It’s through our built environment we’re able to have identity with our past,” Blake said. “The older I get, the greater value I put on our past.” ■

Preserving History



The Breedenbach Building in downtown Owensboro, restored by MediaWorks.



The Smith-Werner building at Second and St. Ann streets will soon be restored with the help of the Daviess County Fiscal Court and a city Renaissance grant.



Citizens Speak... LEADERS RESPOND

Chamber coordinates unprecedented push for tech center funding



During the recent Kentucky General Assembly, the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce mounted an unprecedented advocacy effort to secure \$14 million to construct phase two of the \$27 million Advanced Technology Center on the campus of Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Launched at the Chamber's February 2 Rooster Booster breakfast, the "3-2-1" campaign (third largest city, phase two, number one priority) generated 15,000 emails to Gov. Ernie Fletcher and state legislators, plus numerous letters and phone calls. Personalized letters and campaign buttons were sent to legislators and later to members of the House-Senate Conference Committee. Another 60 local project advocates attended a special western Kentucky reception in Frankfort on February 9.

Ranked as the number one state legislative priority of the Chamber, Economic Development Corporation, city and county government, the tech center will include up-to-date training facilities, business incubator, administrative offices and classrooms for Western Kentucky University – Owensboro and more.

In the 2006 session, tech center funding was included in the House of Representatives budget, omitted in the Senate version, and placed back in the budget during the House-Senate Conference Committee.

Gov. Fletcher vetoes the project

On April 24, Gov. Fletcher announced that he cut \$370 million from the state budget, including a line-item veto of the Owensboro Advanced Technology Center.

More than 2,000 projects had been proposed in a budget that included \$2.38 billion in new debt.

"The right dose (of projects) can give us energy, but too much can cause irreparable harm... We tried to make it balanced... It's not no. It's just not yet," Fletcher said.

Higher education projects that *were* funded include:

State Universities

Eastern Kentucky University Science/Education Buildings	\$58 million
Kentucky State University Hall Renovation	5 million
Morehead State University Health/Science Centers	26 million
Murray State University Science Complex	15 million
Murray State University Residential Hall	13 million
Northern Kentucky University Center for Infomatics	35 million
Northern Kentucky University Student Union /Parking Garage	33 million
University of Kentucky Biological/Pharmaceutical Complex	80 million
University of Kentucky Hospital Building	150 million
University of Louisville Health Sciences Center	70 million
University of Louisville Center for Predictive Medicine	13 million
Western Kentucky University Education Building	35 million
Western Kentucky University Academic/Athletic Renovation	25 million

Community and Technical Colleges

Gateway Advanced Manufacturing Tech Center	28 million
West Kentucky Emerging Technology Center	16 million
Somerset Allied Health/Technical Building	14 million
Jefferson County Science/Allied Health Building	26 million
Ashland Tech Drive Campus – Phase III	18 million
Elizabethtown Regional Postsecondary Education Center	20 million
Bluegrass Advanced Manufacturing Center	1 million
Maysville Administrative Building	5 million
Springfield Community and Technical College*	14 million
McCreary Center	6 million

Other funded projects include:

College of the Cumberland Pharmacy School	11 million
Kentucky Horse Park Arena	36 million
Louisville Arena	75 million

**The new Springfield Community and Technical College was not included in either the House or Senate budget. It was added during closed Conference Committee negotiations.*



MAY/JUNE Public AGENDA

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

The TRACKER DATA OF INTEREST



Compiled by
Chad M. Gesser

Important Upcoming Public Meetings

MAY	JUNE
<p>11 Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA) 5:30 p.m. Program: "Stroke's Warning Signs and Stroke Systems of Care" Speakers: Don Crask, Cardiovascular Health Education, GRDHD; and Lollie Alvey, RN, Nurse Liason, OMHS Rehabilitation Green River District Health Dept. Bedford Walker Community Room</p>	<p>1 Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce Rooster Booster Breakfast 7:30 a.m. Executive Inn, International Room A</p>
<p>12 Kentucky Wesleyan College Fundraising Dinner 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Gordon M. Bethune, former CEO and Chair of Continental Airlines and author Southern Star headquarters 4700 Highway 56 in Owensboro Tickets \$150 per person or \$250 per couple. For reservations or information call 683-3319.</p>	<p>3 Owensboro Museum of Fine Art Grand re-opening gala 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. Dinner and entertainment Owensboro Museum of Fine Art Tickets \$100 per person For reservations or information call 685-3181</p>
<p>14 Mercury Rising! Public Forum 5:30 p.m. Speakers: Boyd Haley, Ph.D., former chemistry professor/chairperson, University of Kentucky; George Rodgers, M.D., professor of pediatrics, University of Louisville Homebuilders Association</p>	<p>8 Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA) 5:30 p.m. Program: "Health Care as a Moral Right and a Safe Guard of Human Life" Speaker: Bishop John J. McRraith Green River District Health Dept. Bedford Walker Community Room</p>
<p>18 PRIDE of Owensboro-Daviess County 5:00 p.m. Speaker: State Representative Tommy Thompson Homebuilders Association</p>	<p>11 Owensboro Museum of Fine Art Grand re-opening family celebration 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Children's activities, door prizes, and family celebration of the museum's return to public service Owensboro Museum of Fine Art</p>
<p>19 Tradewater/Lower Green River Watershed Watch For more information contact Lee or Aloma Dew, 685-2034</p>	<p>16-18 Goodfellows/Luke Woodward Memorial Tennis Classic Moreland Park Tennis Center For sponsorship or participation information, contact Janie Walther, 688-4878 / email: jwalther@omhs.org</p>
	<p>22 Unity Coalition 6:00 p.m. Program: Immigration Issues (Understanding Mutual Respect) Owensboro Area Science Museum Wendell Ford Center</p>

Regularly Scheduled Public Meetings

Meeting Dates and Times Subject to Change

Citizens Health Care Advocates
Second Thursday each month
5:30 p.m.
GRDHD, Bedford-Walker Community Room

Daviess County Board of Education
Third Thursday each month
6:00 p.m.
1622 Southeastern Parkway

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SPECIAL INTEREST INFLUENCE

- *Corporatization* refers to the homogenization resulting from large private interests (corporations) dominating and/or replacing smaller private and public interests (small businesses and governmental functions).
- The largest commercial bank in the United States, Citigroup, maintains connections through its board of directors with 25 corporations. The 153 boards of directors for these corporations also serve with an additional 214 corporations.
- Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc, the top U.S. lobbying firm from 1998-2004, has represented over 250 states, companies, and organizations ranging from the Commonwealth of Kentucky to Wheelchairs for the World Foundation.
- Corporations have promoted themselves and their interests aggressively over time. The total number of registered clients lobbying the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate in 2000 was more than 14,000. In 2004 the number was more than 20,000.
- In 1998, the total lobbying expenditure at the federal level was \$1.43 billion. In 2004, the total was \$2.16 billion.
- In 1990, General Dynamics (a major defense contractor) made nearly \$400,000 in federal campaign contributions (59 percent to Democrats, 41 percent to Republicans). In 2004 the total more than tripled to nearly \$1.5 million (43 percent to Democrats, 57 percent to Republicans).
- From Kentucky, Brown & Williamson Tobacco spent the most money, more than \$35 million, in federal lobbying between 1998-2004. The eighth largest federal lobbying effort from Kentucky during the same period was from Western Kentucky University, at just under \$1 million.
- In the 2003-2004 election cycle, Owensboro (\$405,000) ranked fourth behind Louisville, Lexington, and Northern Kentucky in Kentucky metropolitan area donations to federal candidates, political action committees, and political parties.
- More than half of the 170 psychiatric experts who contributed to latest edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) had financial ties to the pharmaceutical companies that make the medications to treat the illnesses the DSM defines.

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



Citizen Action UPDATE

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

Margaret Mead

To submit updates on citizen action: 685-2652 or info@plfo.org.

Owensboro-Daviess County Asset Building Coalition

Contact: Keith Sanders (685-5707, keithsanders@omuonline.net)

- Celebrated second year success and thanked volunteers on April 25.
- Making plans for expanded program in 2007.
- Developing financial literacy programs.

Bring Back Baseball Committee

Bruce Brubaker, chair
bbrubaker@champion-ford.com

- Sharing results of feasibility study with community groups. Recent endorsements include: Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Owensboro, Owensboro-Daviess County Tourist Commission.
- Exploring site options.
- Awaiting new guidelines on tax increment financing.

Citizens Committee on Education

Marianne Smith Edge, co-chair
msedge@smithedge.com
Forrest Roberts, co-chair
robbrook@adelphia.net

- Named a Higher Education Advocacy Group to facilitate increased local opportunities in undergraduate and graduate education.
- Hired Tracy Marksberry to direct "The Learning Community" initiative that seeks to instill a higher value of education and lifelong learning into the fabric of community life.

Citizens Health Care Advocates (CHCA)

Don Crask, chair
don.crask@grdhd.org
www.CHCA.US

- Meetings: Second Thursday of each month, 5:30 p.m., Green River District Health Department, Bedford Walker Community Room
- Continuing monthly programs on relevant topics and issues
 - Tracking "Five Fields of Focus" for 2006:

- access to health care
- healthy lifestyles
- governmental affairs
- health care costs
- organizational development

- CHCA now has 115 members and 563 attendees and participants at meetings
- Meetings are broadcast on OCTV

Coalition for the Poor

Nancy Keeton, Keith Sanders, and Sharon Sharp (Steering Committee)

c/o Public Life Foundation, 401 Frederica Street, B203, Owensboro, KY 42301 (685-2652)

Next Meeting: May 15, noon, First Christian Church

- Featured Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, on issues and state legislation affecting youth and families.
- Building a network of citizens who are concerned about the plight of the poor.
- Sharing information and concerns regarding the impact that government social program cuts have on the poor.
- Interested in leadership development programs that empower the poor.

Dental Task Force

Contact: Rodney Berry (rodney.berry@plfo.org, 685-2652)

- Featured David Hinson, founder of a community dental clinic in Frankfort.
- Examining options for expanding care for those who are uninsured and unable to pay, particularly children. (See "Framing the Issue," page eight).

Goodfellows Club

Bruce Kunze, president
bkunze1@aol.com

- Planning annual benefit tennis tournament for June 16-18.
- Participating in task force on youth dental needs.
- Raised \$110,000 through 2005 "Roll Call" campaign.
- Providing more than 1,000 children with winter coats, shoes, clothing

and emergency assistance each year.

Owensboro Area World Affairs Council

Stephanie Curran, president
curranp@bellsouth.net

- Recent programs: Leonard Pitts, syndicated columnist; John Stempel, senior professor and former director of the University of Kentucky Patterson School of Diplomacy; George Russell, international elections consultant for the U.S. State Department.
- Planning 2006-2007 series to begin in the fall.

Owensboro Neighborhood Alliance

Tracy Marksberry, coordinator
marksberrytm@owensboro.org

- Developing leadership training program through Public Life Foundation partnership.
- Strengthening alliances, recruiting members, sharing information, and developing programs to improve neighborhoods.

PRIDE of Owensboro-Daviess County

Donna Risley, president
drisley@visitowensboro.com
www.prideodcky.org

- Made numerous visual improvements on PRIDE Day (April 22nd).
- Will soon release the master plan and cost estimates for new community entrances from the Natcher Bridge and West Parrish Avenue from the airport.
- Committees active in areas of beautification, public projects, architecture, and more.

Unity Coalition

Hervey Howell, president
hervey@myway.com

- Presented a "Fair Housing" forum on February 16.
- Planning a forum on immigration issues on June 22.

Making a Difference

VOLUNTEERS HELP LOW-INCOME TAXPAYERS MAXIMIZE REFUNDS

On April 25, the Owensboro-Daviess County Asset Building Coalition formally thanked volunteers and celebrated its success in assisting low-income individuals and families of our community. In the 2006 tax season, 62 volunteer screeners, greeters and tax preparers assisted more than 1,200 people at nine sites, resulting in \$1.5 million in federal tax refunds, \$150,000 in state tax refunds, including \$650,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits. Volunteers also saved \$125,000 in tax preparation fees and diverted many people away from high interest cash advance companies that often target low-income populations.

More than 100 volunteers are part of the coalition's broader goals of improving financial literacy and financial decision-making.

CITIZENS DIPLOMACY SUMMIT

Local citizens participated in a state teleconference on April 5 to explore how our community and state can raise awareness and discover economic and cultural applications in this new era of globalization. Following presentations by Tim Honey and Martha Layne Collins, directors of Sisters Cities International and the Kentucky World Trade Center respectively, a local panel consisting of Cheryl King, Rodney Berry, Kirk Kirkpatrick and Nick Brake led the audience in the idea sharing session.

Suggestions included: expanded language courses; programs to make international visitors and new residents feel welcome; an International Center (perhaps located in the new public library); local institutional websites that are user-friendly for international students, business and tourists; a worldwide bluegrass music Internet radio show and more.

PRIDE DAY

Dozens of PRIDE volunteers recently devoted a beautiful Saturday (April 22) to enhance the appearance of our community. Projects (landscaping, painting, clean-up and more) targeted downtown, the Western Kentucky Botanical Gardens, parks, Adkisson Greenbelt, historic cemeteries, golf courses and medians. Participating groups included students from Daviess County High School, Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals, Owensboro Mercy Medical Health System, Home Depot, Western Kentucky University Alumni Association, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Old Owensboro Neighborhood Alliance, Wendell Foster Campus and more.

Public AGENDA, cont.

Daviess County Fiscal Court

First and Third Thursday each month
4:00 p.m.
Daviess County Courthouse

Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce "Rooster Booster" Breakfast

First Thursday each month
7:30 a.m.
Executive Inn

Green River Health Council

Second Tuesday every other month (Feb, Apr,
June, Aug, Oct, Dec)
10:00 a.m.
GRADD

Neighborhood Alliance Meetings

Apollo Area Alliance

Fourth Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
Apollo Heights Baptist Church.

Audubon Bon Harbor Area Alliance

Second Monday each month
6:30 p.m.
Audubon Church of the Nazarene

Dogwood Azalea Neighborhood Alliance

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

Dugan Best Neighborhood Alliance

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

Hillcrest Area Alliance

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

Midtown East Neighborhood Alliance

First Thursday each month
5:00 p.m.
Buena Vista Baptist Church

Northwest Neighborhood Alliance

Fourth Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
Foust Elementary School Media Center

Old Owensboro Neighborhood Alliance

Second Tuesday each month
5:30 p.m.
Wendell Foster Center Administration Building
Boardroom

Seven Hills Neighborhood Alliance

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

Shifley-York Neighborhood Alliance

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

Southeast Alliance

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

Wesleyan-Shawnee Neighborhood Alliance

Fourth Tuesday each month
6 p.m.

Kentucky Wesleyan College, Winchester Center

Owensboro Board of Education

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

Owensboro City Commission

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

Owensboro-Daviess County Regional Airport

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

Owensboro Historic Preservation Board & Downtown Design Review Commission

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

Owensboro Housing Authority

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

Owensboro Metropolitan Board of Adjustment

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

Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission

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

Owensboro Riverport Authority

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

Owensboro Utility Commission

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

Preservation Alliance of Owensboro-Daviess County, Inc.

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

RWRA

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

Tobacco Control Coalition

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

Tourism & Convention Bureau

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

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

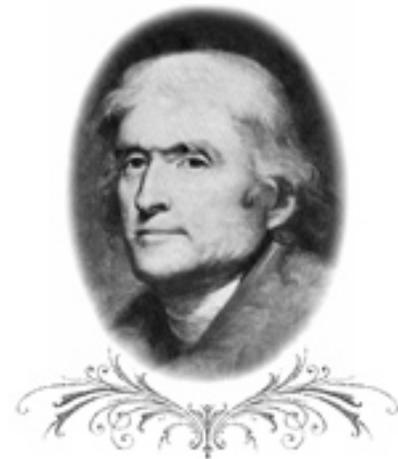
The *Public Life Advocate*, published bi-monthly, is committed to be a trusted resource of information and analysis of public concerns and community issues. The *Advocate* is a community-driven publication, grounded in a commitment to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, Inc. is a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c) operating foundation (not a grant-making entity) founded in 1996 by John and Marjorie Hager. Mr. Hager is the former owner, editor, and publisher of the Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer*.

The foundation fosters broad, meaningful citizen participation in community decisions and public policy. We believe that open, accessible, and trustful institutions are essential to an enlightened and engaged citizenry and the democratic process.

Foundation activities are driven by the importance that people attach to issues. We are committed to the people's agenda. To assist citizens in solving problems and seizing opportunities, we facilitate a process of information > deliberation > action.



*"I knew of no safe
depository of the ultimate
powers of society but the
people themselves; and if
we think them not
enlightened enough to
exercise their control with
a wholesome discretion,
the remedy is not to take
it from them, but to inform
their discretion by education."*

Thomas Jefferson