

Bio Lab is a Great Opportunity for Kentucky, Tennessee

THE Tennessee-Kentucky Consortium is a strong contender to land the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) \$450 million bioterrorism lab. The 500,000 square-foot facility would hire 400 employees and study potential bio-threats to food supplies and diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

Why is the Kentucky-Tennessee group a potential frontrunner to land the lab at a site near Somerset?

- 1) Two states are working together.
- 2) The University of Tennessee, the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville present strong research capabilities for the bio lab's mission.



Senator Mitch McConnell



U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers

- 3) The proposed site has excellent Interstate highway proximity, is centrally located and is close to major airports in Tennessee and Kentucky.

- 4) U.S. Rep. Hall Rogers' subcommittee oversees funding for DHS.

- 5) Tennessee Senator Bill Frist and Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell are the majority leader and whip – a powerful combination.

The major criteria for evaluating proposals for the lab are: research capabilities (proximity of research facilities), community acceptance, site availability, and personnel (trained researchers in the area and labor pool).

Rep. Rogers is on record as saying that the technical merits of the proposals received will determine the location of the lab facility.

The lab is a good fit for the Kentucky-Tennessee consortium. The Lane Report encourages both states' economic development experts, political leaders, and research communities to aggressively work to secure this research facility.

Ball Homes Katrina Relief



The management of Ball Homes Inc. presents former President George H.W. Bush with a \$500,000 check to the Bush-Clinton Katrina Relief Fund earlier this month at Bush's personal office in Houston. From left to right: Danny Jett, Lexington construction manager, Ball Homes; Bob Osbourn, principal broker, Milestone Realty; George H.W. Bush; Gail Daniel, controller, Ball Homes; Rocco Pigneri, Louisville construction manager, Ball Homes; Mike Ball, vice president, Ball Homes; Jim Parsons, business manager, Ball Homes.

The Truth Is: Consumers Trust Fellow Buyers Before Marketers

BY JONAH BLOOM

McCANN Erickson is a great agency, but its maxim, "Truth Well Told," is bordering on irrelevance. While too many advertisers are still focused on the business of shouting one message over and over, today the most important communication is not the marketing monologue, but the dialogue that takes place among customers.

It doesn't matter how loud or often you tell consumers your "truth," few today buy a big-ticket item (or switch allegiance on a regular purchase) before they know what existing users have to say about the product. This is a low-trust world. Even if the marketer they're considering buying from hasn't lied to them, another marketer has – and it takes just seconds to find a host of opinions on any product or service. There are few truths, just lots of opinions.

That's why "recommendation by relative/friend" comes out on top in just about every survey of purchasing influences. A recent Forrester and Intelliseek study found that more than 90 percent of consumers trust "recommendations from consumers," while trust in various types of ads runs from about 40 percent to less than 10 percent.

It's also a major reason for Amazon's success in growing sales per customer. Who hasn't made an Amazon purchase based on another customer's review or the "Customers who bought this also bought..." section? And it explains why a recent Shop.org survey found that 96 percent of retailers find ratings and reviews to be an effective tactic in lifting online sales.

In such a world, the question for marketers and agencies is less "what single message do we want to send?" and more "How do we get people talking about our product, learn from what they say and tap their conversation to inform other communications efforts?"

Excerpts from commentary written by Jonah Bloom, executive editor of Advertising Age.

Opinion Creeps Unnoticed into News

BY LOWELL REESE

ONE of the amazing myths in American society is that newspapers are impartial public servants. Newspapers are neither impartial, nor public servants. They are businesses out to make money by gathering information about people and selling it, while at the same time receiving additional revenue from people who pay to have information printed about themselves. It's about business – news and advertising. There's not much benevolence about it.

Quite to the contrary, newspapers that have achieved institutional status, like *The Courier-Journal* and *Lexington Herald-Leader*, are used as instruments to mold society to the image of what the editors and owners of those papers think society ought to be – which, for Kentucky's two largest papers, is about the redistribution of wealth.

The late J. Ed McConnell said a person ought to gamble a little every day because, "You might be walking around lucky and not even know it." Well, the newspapers you read every day might be liberal to the bone, not just on the editorial page. But the editors handle it with such finesse, you might not even know it, which is my segue into a second myth about newspapers.

It's a myth that opinions stay on the editorial page. They don't. Opinion creeps from the editorial page to the news pages in silent steps. One way is story selection. Choosing what stories to write about is, in fact, an editorial statement. Thus, the doctrine of editors is presented to the public on a daily basis –

unnoticed with the news. And it's not coincidental. The editors know it. The newspaper industry has a name for stealth editorial statements masquerading on news pages: it's called civic journalism. Or, some call it democracy-enhancing journalism, because the aim, in the words of a co-founder, is to "help public life go well by re-engaging people in it."

In other words, instead of explaining the community, convene it; instead of exploring the issues, solve them; instead of exposing wrongs, campaign against them.

Max Frankel, a former executive editor of *The New York Times*, said, "The ardent civic journalists of today are not content to tell it like it is, they want to tell it and fix it all at once." Knight-Ridder and Gannett – the owners of the *Herald-Leader* [until this week] and *Courier-Journal*, respectively – are adherents and practitioners of democracy-enhancing journalism.

In addition to the editorial page and story selections, a third way newspapers color themselves is through the biases of writers – all of whom have beliefs that find their way into stories. Writers are always visible just behind their words. They don't plainly slant the news; that would be unfair and unprofessional. What happens is that all stories are written with stresses, colorations and emphasis that favor a writer's view about "public life going well."

As language passes through a writer's mind, something happens akin to bees making honey. As described by naturalist John Burroughs (1837-1921): "The

hive bee does not get honey from the flowers; honey is a product of the bee. What she gets from the flowers is mainly sweet or nectar; this she puts through a process of her own, and to it adds a minute drop of her own secretion of formic acid. It is this special personal contribution that converts the nectar into honey." And writers contribute minute doses of attitude – shades, colors and accents – that turn ordinary news into unnoticed commentary.

The influence of the state's two largest newspapers is tremendous, but not as profound as commonly perceived. The *Courier-Journal's* circulation outside Jefferson County penetrates fewer than 5 percent of the households in Kentucky, and the *Herald-Leader's* circulation out-

side Fayette County penetrates just fewer than 5 percent.

But more importantly, the two papers are read by movers and shakers and decision-makers. And the multiplier effect is enormous: AP rewrites the papers' stories for its members and, consequently, TV and radio broadcasters rip and read primarily from the state's two dominant printcasters.

It's too bad that the state's news mechanism is controlled by out-of-state-owned companies whose philosophies on public life are counter to most Kentuckians'.

Long live the First Amendment, even though in the long-term the news media can be more dangerous than politicians.

Lowell Reese is the publisher of *The Kentucky Gazette*. His commentary was published in that newspaper's March 15 edition.



Lowell Reese



"Say, guys, did you hear the one about the two lazy salesmen who got fired?"