

Passing Lane

Commentary on Life in Kentucky

Branding Kentucky: One State. One Vision. One Brand.

FOR decades, Kentucky has lagged behind the national average in a number of areas: educational levels, per capita income, healthcare, indoor plumbing, innovation and technology. And regrettably, Kentucky has been a leading state for cancer, a high percentage of smokers, obesity and high school drop-out.

The good news is that progress for a better Kentucky is

being made. Kentuckians understand that our state must compete in a global economy. Most of our business, civic and governmental leaders realize that the state's future is linked to better education and the creation of a work force that can compete for 'new economy' jobs.

The benefits of a plan to create a brand and a slogan for Kentucky are many. Branding

will help communicate to Kentuckians – as well as to people around the world – a clear vision for Kentucky's future.

If branding is successful, Kentuckian's energies will be focused in a positive manner that will help our state reach its goals of creating better opportunities for all, enhancing our quality of life, and building on our state's heritage of traditional values.

Abramson On Duty 24/7

LOUISVILLE residents are pleased to know that Jerry Abramson is a full-time mayor. Abramson and his security chief, Bruce Siegel, arrested two men who were loading bags of Metro Louisville's mulch (that was stacked in the median on Grinstead Drive) into their truck on



Jerry Abramson

a recent Monday evening. Both men are now facing misdemeanor theft charges.

The good news for Mayor Abramson is that in addition to saving the taxpayers' money, the alleged mulch moochers were from Indiana and not registered to vote in Louisville.

In No Rush and Cash Rich

CEO James O'Brien recently told stock analysts that Ashland Inc. would have \$700 million in cash – and no debt – after the \$3 billion sale of its ownership in Marathon Ashland Oil.

O'Brien also indicated that no major acquisitions were planned, but companies that complement businesses Ashland currently operates would be considered.

Ashland is one of Kentucky's top corpora-



tions and its business activities are an important catalyst for economic prosperity in Kentucky. In addition, Ashland supports a broad range of philanthropic efforts that benefit communities throughout the commonwealth.

Hopefully, Ashland will identify a powerful Bluegrass investment so it will be incentivized to invest some of its liquid assets into new business operations in Kentucky.

Putting Around

17th Hole
Stone Crest Golf Club
Prestonsburg, Kentucky
200 Yards, Par 3

THE par 3 hole at Stone Crest Golf Club in Prestonsburg is the fourth handicap hole at this mountaintop course in southeastern Kentucky. It typifies a hole you would expect to find on a mountaintop location: tremendous elevation changes, pot-hole ponds to the left and front of the green, and an undulating putting surface. The hole has a set of five tee boxes, all dug into "shelves" in the side of the mountain. From the championship tees, the hole plays 200 yards downhill. Your tee shot has only two possible outcomes: 1) on the green, or 2) lost! The course provides panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountains and is breathtakingly beautiful, especially in the autumn season. Bring an extra sleeve!



Lexington - Home of the Blue Light Special

THE Lexington-Fayette County Urban County Government (LFUCG) has earned the ranking as the lowest paying employer among major cities in a four-state area (KY, TN, OH, IN) when it comes to police compensation. Perhaps that's why the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation requiring binding arbitration between LFUCG and representatives of the police force.

Public safety is local government's top priority. It seems evident from this analysis that the LFUCG - one of Kentucky's tax-rich communities - has failed to properly allocate adequate funding to compensate its police, jailers, firefighters and EMS employees.

Police Compensation

CITY	BASE PAY			SWORN OFFICERS PER 1000 POP.
	START	1ST YEAR	MAXIMUM	
Chattanooga.....	\$29,437	\$29,437	\$40,988	2.79
Cincinnati.....	\$40,967	\$42,192	\$55,150	3.06
Cleveland.....	\$41,997	\$41,997	\$49,332	3.25
Columbus.....	\$34,611	\$35,818	\$54,850	2.51
Dayton.....	\$42,557	\$43,181	\$51,709	2.74
Evansville.....	\$38,454	\$38,454	\$49,817	2.15
Fort Wayne.....	\$37,490	\$37,490	\$42,191	1.02
Indianapolis.....	\$33,420	\$33,420	\$43,876	1.46
Knoxville.....	\$27,900	\$27,900	\$46,800	2.26
Lexington.....	\$26,952	\$26,952	\$39,511	1.94
Louisville.....	\$30,597	\$30,597	\$48,402	2.87
Memphis.....	\$39,369	\$39,369	\$46,265	1.94
Nashville.....	\$35,472	\$36,643	\$50,956	2.40

Source: Policepay.net

Readers Respond

Needed: More Results, Less Pomp

KENTUCKY'S parents, students and teachers must be confused after reading *The Lane Report's* interview with Robert Sexton, executive director of the Prichard Committee.

After first boasting that Kentucky's public education system has "gone from a laughing stock to the center of national attention," Sexton later claims: "Kentucky is a state that's famous for a poorly educated population."

Which is it? If results matter, the attention Kentucky's public education system is receiving cannot be the kind for which Sexton is proud.

The latest National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) evaluation - also known as the Nation's Report Card - indicates that only 30 percent of Kentucky's fourth-grade students are proficient readers. Credible tests, including the SAT and ACT college entrance exams and those offered by the armed forces, show that Kentucky's scores lag behind most of the nation.

By pointing out the "huge" academic achievement gap between the state's white and black children, Sexton admits that the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 is

failing to fulfill its commitment to deliver quality education to all Kentucky children.

Research by Susan Perkins Weston at the Kentucky Association of School Councils also indicates that the state's gap in math scores widens as students progress from grade to grade.

Sexton also claims that it was "bad" information that caused Gov. Ernie Fletcher to say recently that Kentucky ranks at the bottom of the nation with too many administrators relative to the number of teachers.

Sexton says Kentucky appears to have too many administrators because the governor's "inaccurate" data fail to count instructional aides as part of the teaching

staff. Sexton should know that a Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) study clearly shows that instructional aides add little to academic performance.

Apparently, the KDE funded this study in anticipation that it would result in even more funding. Instead, the study proposed a school model with no K-12 aides in it.

Should Kentucky's schools be a source of public-works jobs or a place where our children can receive a quality education?

For Sexton, the lone bright spot in the state's public education system is college-attendance rates.

However, while Kentucky has shown some improvement in the numbers of students attending college, more than 50 percent require remedial work and the number of graduates

remains woeful. According to the latest U.S. Census data, only about 30 percent of students who enter college in Kentucky graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Employers don't offer good-paying jobs because a prospective employee enrolled in college. It's the degree that counts.

Likewise, Kentucky's students are not going to get a better education simply because KERA began with a great deal of pomp. It's the results that count.

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CEO Dad BY T. STERN AND C. DARBYSHIRE

