

2009

The City of **Nicholasville**

*Report to the
Community*

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nicholasville.org



Letter from the Mayor

Dear Fellow Citizens,

There are so many great things happening in our city that I wanted to report what your city government has been doing and is planning to do.

You'll see in this publication many of the projects that are in progress and learn about various services and departments within city government. Your friends and neighbors who work for the city and serve on the Commission and boards have made extraordinary achievements in many areas. I am proud to work with all of them.

I'm energized by all we've accomplished and what we have to look forward to as our city grows. I encourage you to visit the city's website at www.nicholasville.org to keep up with what's happening in Nicholasville. Also, please contact me or any of the Commissioners with questions or suggestions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Russ Meyer

Mayor

New City Commission Begins Work



From left: Commissioner Andy Williams, Commissioner and Vice Mayor John Collier, Mayor Russ Meyer, Commissioner Betty Black, and Commissioner Doug Blackford.

The new Nicholasville Board of Commissioners – Betty Black, Doug Blackford, John Collier and Andy Williams – were sworn in December 18, 2008. Commissioners represent the entire city rather than districts and serve two-year terms. Mayor Russ Meyer is a fully participating member of the commission and can vote on all matters.

New and returning Commissioners have expressed concern about traffic problems, but doing something about them is easier said than done, some Commissioners said. In an interview with the *Jessamine Journal*, Commissioner Williams said he believed one of the best ways to improve traffic flow is through completion of the eastern bypass and the I-75 connector, both of which rely on help from state and federal legislators.

He and Commissioner Collier also believe the number of police officers and firefighters must be increased and that a new fire station on the North side of town is needed. This would improve the city's Insurance Service Office rating, which will lower insurance rates and is an important business recruitment tool.

“Overall, the Commission's goal is to provide better service for the citizens of Nicholasville.”

The new members of the Commission, Black and Blackford, are eager to work on their priorities for the community.

“I am looking forward to making sure the citizens of Nicholasville feel that they have a representative in city government who will sincerely listen to their concerns and will represent them,” Commissioner Black said.

Blackford, a life-long resident of Jessamine County, said he wanted to be more active in Nicholasville and being part of the Commission provides him that opportunity. He told the *Jessamine Journal* that he is interested in keeping young people in Nicholasville and believes bringing more job opportunities here is the way to do it.

“Overall, the Commission's goal is to provide better service for the citizens of Nicholasville.”

—Commissioner Collier

Commission meetings are open to the public and are conducted the first, second and fourth Monday of each month at 5 p.m. at City Hall, 517 Main Street. To receive notices about upcoming meetings and agendas, send an email to info@nicholasville.org and request to be added to the Commission meetings notification list.

Mastering Downtown



New Plan Brings Improvements, New Venues

Like most cities, Nicholasville has been looking for ways to bring people back downtown. Several business owners have refurbished some of our older buildings and have created desirable destinations on Main Street. In addition to what private businesses have done, the

city and county have come together to create a new downtown master plan.

Development of the plan included public meetings to learn what citizens value in a vibrant downtown. Some of the main improvements attendees said they wanted included parks, a downtown community center, better parking, better streetscapes and infill development projects.

Three main themes unique to the community evolved: Palisades, music and the wine industry. Those themes will be incorporated into the final projects.

“This has been a very thoroughly researched plan, and we are so proud that the city of Nicholasville and the Jessamine County Fiscal Court have come together to approve it,” Mayor Russ Meyer said.

The first phase of the plan will begin this summer and will be complete by July 2010. The \$1.5 million project includes lighting, streetscapes, underground utilities and sidewalks for a three-block area of downtown.

“This is just the beginning, but it will give our downtown a real boost,” City clerk Roberta Warren said. “I think the community is going to be very pleased with all the changes. These are issues that have needed to be addressed, and now, with funds from the state, we are making it happen.”

For more information about the downtown master plan, visit www.nicholasville.org, and click on the link on the home page to see the consultants’ presentation.

The Welcome Mat Is Out in Nicholasville

Anyone who's lived in Jessamine or surrounding counties for any length of time knows how quickly Nicholasville has grown over the last few years. As a matter of fact, it is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and is the 13th largest city in Kentucky. With growth comes a question about economic prosperity versus infrastructure costs.

Changes to the city's annexation process have helped growth pay for growth, according to Mayor Russ Meyer. Residential and commercial builders pay an annexation fee and obtain builders' permits that cover fees for new services.

Additionally, the city has a diverse economy. Unlike some cities or counties, Nicholasville does not rely on one or two large companies for its economic base. Rather it has a variety of types of industries and retailers, most of which are considered small businesses by state and federal government standards.

The influx of population has created a need for additional consumer services, like healthcare and retailers. Brannon Crossing is a good example of new retail venues and restaurants, many of which are enjoying success. St. Joseph and Central Baptist hospitals along with the Lexington Clinic and others have stepped in to provide needed healthcare services along with well-paying jobs.

Although Nicholasville's growth is the envy of other cities across the state, it does come with challenges. Police and fire protection are stretched and more schools are needed. But, city leaders and the Jessamine County Joint Economic Development Authority would much rather see growth than loss of population and jobs like many communities have seen.

"We are fortunate that people want to locate their families and their businesses here," Mayor Meyer said. "Our housing costs are reasonable, our tax structure is sound and we welcome new residents and businesses with open arms."





Public Works Department Works for Better Roads

Unless there's a problem, Nicholasville residents probably don't think much about local streets. But the employees of the Public Works Department have 91 lane-miles of city streets to look after on a daily basis. This includes repairs, storm water drain clean up, ice and snow removal, mowing and a variety of other tasks.

"People don't always realize that there are some streets we're responsible for and some we're not," Superintendent Gary Goldey said. "We have no jurisdiction over state roads even when they run through Nicholasville."

Some of those streets not maintained by the city are KY 169, which includes W. Third, W. Oak and Richmond Ave.; KY 39, which is E. Maple; KY 29, which is W. Maple; and US 27, which includes the bypass and Main Street.

In addition to day-to-day operations, the department picks up bagged leaves every fall and participates in a weeklong countywide clean-up program every spring. During the clean-up, citizens of Nicholasville, Wilmore and rural Jessamine County can get rid of large items that ordinarily aren't picked up.

To report city streets that need repair or sweeping call 885.1121 or email gary_goldey@nicholasville.org.

Many Utility Improvements Underway

Nicholasville's utility system is a little different than most. Although not unique in Kentucky, Nicholasville is one of a small number of municipalities that owns and operates utilities. The main difference in Nicholasville's system and many others is that it is part of city government. Most municipally owned utilities are operated by independent plant boards. Nicholasville's utility fund, a \$20 million per year enterprise, is separate from the city's general fund. The utility fund consists of an electric, potable water and sanitary sewer utility system.

The electric department purchases power from Kentucky Utilities and distributes it to approximately 6,700 customers. The city has invested millions of dollars over the past 20 years to convert the old system to a modern one to accommodate customer growth. This investment was possible through growth and increased customer use and achieved without any increase in rates. Kentucky Utilities recently presented the city a cost increase, which is now being discussed.

Currently, Nicholasville has in excess of \$37 million in water and sewer utility capital improvements, either recently completed, under construction or in the bidding process. Most of the improvements are financed by a combination of state or federal grants and low interest loans. Water utility improvements include a three million gallons-per-day expansion of the city's water treatment plant capacity, replacement of worn out distribution mains in town and line extensions in unincorporated areas. The water treatment plant expansion, at a cost of approximately \$13 million, will increase the treatment capacity from six to nine million gallons-per-day. An additional feeder main extension project will be necessary in the future for use of the full nine million gallons-per-day for extended periods of time.

This spring, the city completed the demolition of the Brown Street Wastewater Treatment Plant. This marks the conclusion of a sanitary sewer project that began in 2007 and involved the construction of over 3.5 miles of sewer mains along with a 1.1 million gallons-per-day expansion of the city's award-winning Jessamine Creek wastewater treatment plant. The Dragstrip Sanitary Sewer Project started in February and marks the culmination of nearly 10 years of trying to secure funding to provide sanitary sewer service to an area of the county that needed a new system. In addition to these projects, the city, in conjunction with the Jessamine County Board of Education, also constructed a replacement lift station, force main and collector sewer that will serve, in part, the new East Jessamine Middle School complex on Union Mill Road. The city also received state grants to construct \$750,000 of other sewer improvements. Construction of two of these projects will begin soon.



St. Louis Helicopter transported and placed a power pole during the recent electrical power supply upgrade made to Nicholasville's raw water intake at the Kentucky River.



NJCPR Has Lots of Fun Planned

Good local fun is the name of the game for Nicholasville residents, thanks to a busy recreation department staff, many nice parks and a community that is focused on a healthy lifestyle.

The parks department invites you to join in the fun: sports events, concerts, youth activities and much more. For details and schedules, visit www.njcpr.org or call (859) 885-9787.

NTC Seeks to Lure Visitors Year Round

Most of the Nicholasville Tourism Commission's (NTC) work is done behind the scenes, but you'll recognize the fruits of its labor and that of its partnerships: the overflowing flower baskets that line the streets downtown during the summer; the fun and colorful banners that Paint the Town produces to hang on Main Street; visitor brochures and maps available at the Chamber of Commerce and area hotels; and many special events.

The volunteer commissioners manage the proceeds of the hotel tax, determining how to invest in programs and activities that will promote Nicholasville as "a beautiful, progressive and historic place of interest" and attract and keep recreational, cultural and educational events.

They develop partnerships with community organizations to leverage every penny that comes in. The Jessamine Jamboree, The Kentucky Wine & Vine



Festival, Rock Fence Park Concert Series, Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation events, Chamber of Commerce programs, and Nicholasville Now! events all receive some funding from the NTC to help boost marketing and bring in larger numbers.

NTC President Tommy Cobb said the Commission doesn't sponsor activities directly but its financial support makes the events better. A disc golf tournament put on by the parks department that will bring people in from other states is a good example. It's a unique event that will help bring visitors here, many for the first time.

Sometimes Commission members are out in front, such as when they run the city's booth at the Kentucky State Fair, making sure the hundreds of thousands of visitors get a glimpse of what Nicholasville has to offer and opening the door to and supporting the NFL Hall of Fame as it located in Nicholasville.

Citizens also are encouraged to help the city recruit activities that will bring more visitors to our restaurants, hotels and other businesses. For more details, visit www.nicholasvilletourism.com.

Nicholasville Police and Fire Departments Serve and Protect

Nicholasville is fortunate to have experienced and skilled police officers and firefighters protecting citizens from crime and fire incidents. Both departments have won numerous awards and have built good relationships with the community. According to Police Chief Barry Waldrop, "A good relationship with the community is imperative in public safety. It is the most effective way to stop crime now, and to prevent it in the future."

The Police Department has 59 sworn officer positions and 10 non-sworn personnel. The department has been recognized by state and national agencies for its outstanding community and drug prevention programs. Officers are active in the community overseeing service programs such as DARE, Kid I.D., Citizen's Police Academy and Neighborhood Watch.

Led by Chief Charles Brumfield, the Fire Department has 45 professional firefighters and one administrative assistant providing service from three fire stations spread across the city. In 2007, NFD responded to 1440 calls, including structure alarms, vehicle fires, rescues, hazardous materials incidents, and other emergency situations. There were no fire related deaths in Nicholasville in 2007, an accomplishment that was recognized with an award from the Residential Fire Safety Institute.

As always, in case of an emergency, call 911 for either department. For non-emergency situations, call the Police Department at 885-9467 and the Fire Department at 885-5505.



Nicholasville Fire Chief Charles Brumfield attended a national firefighters conference in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.

For more information on both departments, visit www.nicholasville.org or access the departments directly at www.nicholasvillefire.org and www.nicholasvillepd.org.

Conservative Financial Management Pays Off for City

Government officials often walk a tight rope when it comes to revenue and expenditures. That's because annually they must build a budget based on what they believe taxes and service fees will generate in the near future, not what has been paid in the past or what's in various accounts.

For that reason, the Nicholasville City Commission chooses to budget conservatively. That means they plan for the worst and monitor revenues and expenditures closely. Each year a budget is

submitted, then adjustments are made at key points during the budgeting cycle. Those adjustments are discussed publicly during Commission meetings, as is the budget.

In addition to the transparency that is built into the system, the annual audit, performed by an outside auditing firm, provides a great deal of detail and analysis. The audit is designed to ensure that the city's financial statements are relevant, accurate, complete, and fairly presented.

A detailed audit provided by Fain, Mattingly & Associates for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 resulted in an "unqualified" report, which is the best report auditors give. In addition, it pointed out that Nicholasville's revenues exceeded expenditures and that its assets grew during the year.

The audit is posted on the city's website home page (Nicholasville.org) for anyone who would like to review it.

School Safety Top Priority for School System, Local Governments

For the last two years, Jessamine County schools have been part of a growing national trend to improve the safety and security of schools. The School Resource Officer (SRO) initiative, a partnership between the Jessamine County School Board, Jessamine County Fiscal Court and the City of Nicholasville, is part of a community policing program that places an officer in each of the middle and high schools.

It is a preventive measure rather than a reactive one and has three areas of focus: law-related counseling, law-related education and law enforcement. The goals are to encourage good citizenship, create respect for law enforcement and, of course, increase safety and security in schools.

“We wanted to be proactive and to have our program in place before we have to react to a situation like so many other communities have been forced to deal with across the nation,” Major John Branscum of the Nicholasville Police Department said.

All groups involved believe the program is a success. Jessamine County School Superintendent Lu Young



From left:
Nicholasville Police Chief Barry Waldrop,
Jessamine County Schools Superintendent
Lu Young, and Jessamine County Sheriff
Kevin Corman worked together
to build the School Resource Officer program.

has said school safety is everyone's responsibility. She believes the best way to identify potential risks and formulate solutions is through input and involvement by students, teachers, parents and government.

School Resource Officers are James Howard, Jacob Jones, Billy King and Sam Wade. Officer Michael Keeton recently left the program to pursue a career with the Kentucky State Police.

“While protecting our schools is important, the biggest success is building positive relationships with students,”



Howard



Jones



King



Wade

Officer Wade said. “Hopefully students will carry that positive experience with them and help them to trust law enforcement officers and work with them in the future. Personally, coming from a family tradition of teaching, I enjoy getting into the classroom and teaching students. Teaching connects you with kids on a whole other level, and everyone benefits. I try to help make these kids become better students; I know they help me become a better officer.”

City Adopts New Logo

“Simple and clean, yet official-looking” may best describe the City of Nicholasville's new logo, used for the first time in this publication. The logo's architectural element, which is screened in gray behind the city's name, represents the portico that is a distinctive feature of the new City Hall's design.

“Our community is growing and our city government is evolving in many ways to better meet our residents' needs. This new logo will be a constant reminder that our role is one of service, looking toward the future while meeting current needs,” Nicholasville Mayor Russ Meyer said.



The logo will be used on letterhead, business cards and all communication materials, such as the city's website, which soon will be updated.

“Some materials will be updated right away, but other uses will be phased in over time,” City Clerk Roberta Warren said. “Within a year or so we hope to have cars, trucks, welcome signs, uniforms and other places our logo is used much more consistent than it has been in the past.”

Big-Picture Planning for Future Development

What might Nicholasville look like in 2028 or even 2038? Nicholasville citizens and city personnel are joining with their Jessamine County and Wilmore peers for a joint comprehensive plan that will answer that question.

“The law requires that communities’ comprehensive plans be reviewed every five years,” said Planning Commission Director Greg Bohnett. “But we are taking that a step farther by developing, in coordination with the Jessamine County – City of Wilmore Joint Planning Commission, a single

document that encompasses the interests of the cities of Wilmore and Nicholasville and the Jessamine County Fiscal Court.”

It’s not a simple process, but the group is making progress. The Bluegrass ADD was selected to help lead the community volunteers and staff through the various steps in March of last year, with an aggressive target date of completing the plan within about a year.

One of the first milestones for the group was a joint vision statement. A key paragraph states, “Our cities offer all the amenities of modern life, while our rural communities and farms keep us grounded in the cherished heritage that makes us unique.”

Although the comprehensive plan will be for the whole county, each of the local governments will still plan and oversee its individual zoning, planning and subdivision regulations.

Citizens have reviewed the draft plan and provided input through public hearings. A final opportunity for public comment will be provided in coming months.

For more information or to comment on the planning process, contact Greg Bohnett at 859.885.9385.

City Hall Update

In late November, Nicholasville Commissioners voted unanimously to delay construction on the new City Hall. However, that does not mean the facility won’t be built.

“We will have a new City Hall,” Mayor Russ Meyer said. “But, we determined that under current national economic conditions it was not the right time to undertake a construction project of this magnitude.”

Citizens will be notified as soon as a new construction schedule has been determined. All existing plans for the building will be executed as originally intended.

“Building a new City Hall is still a priority for us, but we must be prudent about our timing,” Meyer said. “We know it’s a disappointment to postpone it, but I think most Nicholasville citizens agree that it’s the right thing to do.”



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Presorted
Standard
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