

2017

The City of
Nicholasville

*Report to the
Community*

nicholasville.org

Report to the Community

Letter from the Mayor

Dear Friends,

As I watch current events unfolding around the world, then look out my front door at our community, one word comes to mind: Oasis.

Nicholasville feels so far from the strife that our world is experiencing right now. From record-shattering hurricane activity to raging, historic fires, and mass shootings that make us all shake our heads in disbelief, our world is facing many challenges. And, it seems our nation is more divided politically than ever.

In contrast, our local governments are collaborating more than ever before to make this a safer, better educated and more enjoyable place to live.

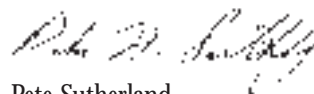
You'll read in this year's Report about the creation of the Joint Tourism Commission. This initiative will streamline and enhance our efforts to promote our community to visitors, which will increase sales for our businesses and provide more revenue for improving services here. Also, the City and the County collaborated to revitalize the Joint Economic Development Authority and purchase additional land for an industrial park. Only a few communities in our state have been able to trust each other enough to work together in these ways.

Also, we are creating more places for people to experience art, music and camaraderie in Nicholasville. The Performance Park is a great example of that. In many ways, it's a simple space: some seating, a little décor, and lighting. But, along with other steps we've taken over the years to beautify and enhance downtown, the impact will be significant.

Our city is blessed with competent, dedicated employees who take the steps needed for most people to not have to think about the work they do. Keeping the streets clean, the lights on and the water flowing in the right directions. We're experiencing a lot of employee transition as some amazing individuals move on to well-deserved retirements. Thankfully, new, well-prepared professionals are stepping up to fill their shoes.

We do face our share of challenges, as running a city is never easy. But Nicholasville is an oasis, thanks to wonderful citizens, a host of hard-working employees and elected officials who truly are public servants.

Very truly yours,



Pete Sutherland
Mayor



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Your City Commission



Commissioners Andy Williams and Betty Black, Mayor Pete Sutherland, and Commissioners Doug Blackford and Patty Teater.

Electric Department Update. KentuckyWired, the Commonwealth's open-access broadband network has hit some snags on the state level, but the City of Nicholasville is ready when the project resumes progress. Electric Department Superintendent Robert Blackford said the City has taken all the steps it can at this time and is eager for the high-capacity Internet service connections, which will enhance communication among government entities, such as between schools, municipalities, public safety agencies and county and state government.

Nicholasville Fire Department Update. The Nicholasville Fire Department added ten new firefighters to the department working towards their staffing goals. The department now has 15 firefighters per day, which is up from 14 in 2016. The fire department has much to celebrate this year, including:

- The installation of 100 percent capture exhaust systems at the three fire stations.
- The launch of a new building inspection program aimed at ensuring apartments, buildings and hotels meet fire safety standards. The department plans to add restaurants and convenience stores to the program in 2018.

- The receipt of an award from the National Fire Safety Council for the department's 15-year fire safety education program for Nicholasville elementary school students and their parents.
- The purchase of body armor that will be used when firefighters respond to active shooter incidents and any other incident involving extreme acts of violence.
- The receipt of an Assistance to Firefighters Grant for \$100,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The recognition of several firefighters for acts of courage on the job. Firefighters recognized in late 2016 included Capt. Mark Kazsuk and firefighters Bruce William Jr. and Jacob Arnold, who earned the Stork Award for safely delivering a baby in an emergency situation, and Lt. Josh Polley and firefighters Loren Bewley and Jermaine Jackson, who earned the Award for Valor for a rescuing a man during a house fire.

Nicholasville Police Department Update. The Nicholasville Police Department has had a year of changes. The department hired four new recruits Calep Clifford, Jermaine Jackson, Cody Smallwood and Matthew Storch who started Academy July 23,

2017. The department celebrated a number of retirees this year including, Detective Kim Hamilton, Detective Christopher Love and Lieutenant Dennis Parrish. In addition to retirement, many former retirees returned to work this year part time to help keep the city safe. Sergeant Shannon Sanders now works traffic enforcement and vehicle collisions, Lieutenant Ronnie Fuller works in the Code Enforcement Division, and Officer Christopher Love returned to work full time on patrol.

The department celebrated a number of promotions and position changes this year including:

(continued on page 9)

City Commissioners and Departments

Doug Blackford

Mayor Pro Tem

Water & Sewer

(Treatment, Distribution and Collection)

Betty Black

Public Safety

(Police & Fire)

Pete Sutherland

Mayor

Administration & Finance

Andy Williams

Electric & Meter

Patty Teater

Street & Cemetery



Joint Effort to put “Heads in Beds and Feet on the Street”

It was a joint effort to unite the community's tourism efforts and the City can't wait for what the future holds. After much lobbying, petitioning and persuading the City of Nicholasville, City of Wilmore and the Jessamine County Fiscal Court now have one organization: The Joint Tourism Commission.

Tommy Cobb, longtime chairman of the Nicholasville Tourism Commission, explained the process of gaining approval.

“Convincing all parties that a merger would be in the best interest of everyone was quite a task. I am proud of all the work that all parties contributed to make this happen” he said.

Everyone involved believes the additional focus on tourism is worth it, since there are many activities, hotels, restaurants and historic sites in the county that visitors don't know about. Now with all governments and volunteers coming together to help promote the county, efforts will reach more people and have a bigger impact.

Cobb is excited for what the future holds with the new Commission.

“This will give us the opportunity to combine financial resources to do more for the whole community. Our hopes are to hire a full-time tourism director and possibly a part-time position. This individual will work to create or enhance existing opportunities and promote them in a way that would generate additional overnight stays in the county,” he said.

Having the Commission in place will help ensure that all parties and bases are covered, with less duplication. In the past, there had been some overlap of events, volunteers spread too thin, and an increase of people simply attending county or city events but staying overnight in other areas.

“Our hopes, by having everyone on board, is that we can bring more people to our county and keep them coming back. We have a lot to offer visitors and we would like for them to stay more than just an afternoon,” Cobb explained.

The approval of the new Commission went into effect in September and appointed representatives have started having meetings.

Cobb said the Commission in no way undermines the long-time and successful efforts of Nicholasville

NOW! and the Nicholasville Tourism Commission, which now will be dissolved. They were a major part of coordinating and overseeing events that drew tourists into the area.

“We can't thank the organizations' volunteers enough for their time and effort to promote our community. We want them to know that they are needed in order to assure success of the new Commission in overseeing, promoting and handling of events and attractions” he said.

The Commission plans to continue efforts aggressively to bring “heads in overnight accommodations' beds and feet on our communities' streets.” They plan on having more events for travelers, community members and to continue enhancing Main Street as they have done in the past.

The new board has been appointed by Kentucky State Statute and consists of the following members who represent various government and tourism sectors: Roberta Warren, Tommy Cobb, David Carlstedt, Steve Vinson, Doug Fain, Joy Watson and Bo Quigg.

An Economic Turning Point

For ages, leaders have ticked off a short list of reasons Nicholasville wasn't attracting more jobs to the area. One of the biggest reasons can now be crossed off that list.

The Jessamine County Joint Economic Development Authority, or JCJEDA, in August closed on an 80-acre lot – on the old Jennette family property west of the bypass – that is expected to become a major recruiting tool for the area. Plans are underway for engineers to begin developing the property to welcome new industries.

“This is a very exciting time for Nicholasville and Jessamine County, thanks to the efforts of our mayor and judge executive,” said City Engineer Tim Cross. “We have such talented and hardworking people here, but many are having to commute to the bigger cities for a good job. This park represents a turning point for us.”

The new park comes on the heels of a few changes in the JCJEDA leadership this year. Upon the retirement of long-time Executive Director Wayne Foster, the authority contracted with the Bluegrass Area Development District and their very capable staff. They have many years of experience in regional planning and industrial development and most recently were involved in landing several manufacturing plants for a new industrial park in Versailles.

The JCJEDA board also underwent some changes this year as Cross became the new chairman of the board following the resignation of Rob Amburgey due to his move out of the area. Having Cross on the board adds another layer of expertise, given Cross' experience with planning and zoning.

In other economic development news this year, two manufacturers completed major expansions and one shopping district prepared to welcome additional tenants.

Ancor Rigid Plastics, a leading supplier of plastic packaging that employs about 235, built a new 350,000-square-foot shipping and receiving facility on 33 acres on Main Street. SMC LLC, which provides electronic manufacturing services and employs about 50, expanded its plant on Enterprise Drive.

“As much as we celebrate when a new industry comes to town, retaining our existing employers is just as important to our economic development,” Cross said. “These are employers who make a decision to stay here and grow here and serve as a testament to other employers looking to move to the area.”

Brannon Crossing will soon include a few new tenants, Cross said. Home Goods, a discount home fashions retailer, and Drake's, one of the Bluegrass Hospitality Group restaurants, will take up residence soon.

“These businesses aren't going to be major employers, but having them speaks to the quality of life in Nicholasville,” Cross said. “When we have the amenities – shopping, dining, etc. – that people like and that our community deserves, that is a major recruiting tool for major employers.”

Cyclists Be Ready

This year the City of Nicholasville put in a new bike repair station for members of the community. Located in the city parking lot adjacent to Farmers Bank, this repair station offers a number of tools to fix or repair any biking needs. The station even offers a QR Reader that directs visitors to a repair manual. This new repair station encourages cyclists to enjoy our streets safely.



Main Street is booming with businesses and activities that help bring more revenue to the area.



Bike Repair Center pictured here offers cyclists in the area a place for quick fixes to get them back on the road.

On Air in Nicholasville

Local. What's not to love about it? The food is fresher, the service is better, you know the source of the products, and it's the best way to support the local economy.

That's why buying local is one of the biggest trends out there today.

But for local business owners in a small town like Nicholasville situated near a larger city, it can be hard to get word out to the community. Most media are located in larger towns, such as Lexington, so they are more focused on news that is happening there, rather than in the towns around them. Also, buying advertising is expensive because the larger media outlets set their rates on the number of people who see or hear the ads, even if most are not potential customers for the business.

That's where local media comes in. WJNK-FM, 105.9, "Nicholasville's Radio Station," has been well received since beginning operation in late October, 2014. City officials say they value the unique opportunities JessFM offers in getting the word out, especially when timing is essential.

"Every utility experiences problems on occasion, such as power outages or a water main break," said



Will Osbourne hard at work during a live show.



The station's autograph wall is a great representation of station visitors and community members.

Nicholasville Director of Finance and Utilities Bob Amato. "It is important to us to let our customers know what is going on as soon as possible. JessFM has been extremely responsive in these situations, telling people exactly what's happening and providing updates."

In fact, WJNK sports director and morning host Will Osbourne said the station's Main Street location made it easy to look out the window to report on road conditions a couple of years ago when the area experienced an especially heavy snowfall.

"I wound up sleeping here to provide updates, and callers would help out by providing new information on conditions," said Osbourne. "We are here to serve the community, to be a one-stop shop for local news, sports, weather, events and programs as well as interviews and feature stories."

Jessamine County School Superintendent Matt Moore said the school system is fortunate to have a strong partnership with WJNK in support of its students.

"From coverage of athletic events to spotlighting students, staff and programs, WJNK helps our community become more familiar with what makes our district so special," he said. "Local media outlets such as WJNK help us to provide in-depth information on topics and issues facing our school system and gain feedback from our community on what we are doing well and how we can improve to better serve our students."

Local businesses have long looked to the Jessamine Journal for advertising as well as to cover local news.

Similarly, WJNK offers local promotion opportunities.

"I grew up listening to a local station," said Randall Chewning, an agent with R Chewning Insurance Agency, Inc. "I was really excited and immediately wanted to advertise. It allows me to have another type of media to build awareness and branding. I do have people tell me often, 'Hey, heard your ad on the radio!'"

Chewning, who also is Chairman of the Jessamine County Chamber of Commerce, said the overall benefit for him beyond advertising his business is that community announcements and events can be promoted.

"Additionally, the music format is great and I greatly enjoy the programming," he added.

But it's the sports programming that gets the biggest response, said Osbourne. "We provide live streaming, using our free app or with a browser, so people can listen to local sports wherever they are. It's especially popular with grandparents who live out of town or parents who are traveling," he said.

So, not only is JessFM local, you can hear it in real time wherever you are.

"We encourage everyone in our community to support local media, such as the Jessamine Journal and JessFM, as well as all our businesses. It's a win-win situation," said Nicholasville Mayor Pete Sutherland.

“Happy to Serve My Community.”

Since accepting the position of full-time city attorney, Meghan Tyson has had an eye-opening experience. Growing up in Nicholasville she knew it was a connected city, but really had no idea how much they do for their residents until starting the job in April 2017. She has jumped in full force ready to tackle and learn as much as possible.

“In Nicholasville, you get to know a lot of people, and the community and City have been very helpful and supportive of the transition. I am very grateful to Mr. Arvin and the city staff members who have taken time to show me the ropes of the city work,” Tyson explained.

Most individuals think about city government when they pay their bills and taxes, have trash picked up, snow removed, or need help from the police and fire departments. Tyson admits she was in the same boat.

“I don’t think I fully grasped what all our city does for our community. Embarrassingly enough, I was not even familiar with the structure of different local governments, but it has been exciting and rewarding to help to see projects from start to finish.”

Tyson lights up when she talks about being a part of the City’s work.

“Cities do a lot of work in general that members of the community don’t know about. We have our very own utility department, which makes us unique. We work on large scale projects that help bring jobs to the community. We also help coordinate more family-friendly gatherings like Spooky Time in the City.”

Being a part of the community and now working for the City has been a perfect fit for Tyson.

“I just think Nicholasville is the perfect combination of small town hospitality and big city opportunity. It has grown so much and is going to continue to grow. I look forward to being a part of giving back to my community and helping the town grow.”

**“I just think
Nicholasville is the
perfect combination of
small town hospitality
and big city
opportunity.”**

As City attorney,
Meghan Tyson gets the opportunity
to work with multiple departments at the City.





Nicholasville Chief of Police Barry Waldrop.

How many years have you been with the police department?

I have 32 years of law enforcement experience. Twenty-two of those years was serving as Chief of Police for the Nicholasville Police Department. I thank all of the men and women who work and have worked for the Nicholasville Police Department for allowing me to be their Chief for so long. The citizens of Nicholasville are very fortunate to have the caliber of police officers that we have serving this community and I wouldn't have had this successful career if these men and women weren't out there protecting the citizens of Nicholasville with the integrity, fairness, and professionalism that they exhibit each and every day.

I have enjoyed working with Mayor Pete Sutherland and Commissioners Andy Williams, Betty Black Patty Teater, and Doug Blackford, and thank them for their support of me and the police department. The community is in very capable hands and are fortunate to have leaders who work each and every day to

An Officer Achieved A Legacy

improve the quality of life for our residents. I would also like to thank all the past mayors and commissioners for allowing me to serve as Chief of Police during their tenures.

Tell us what your early years with the department were like.

When I first started as Chief of Police in Nicholasville, the department wasn't what it is today. There were no policies or procedures, no chain of command, no rank structure, no evidence procedures, no training requirements and the equipment was old and deplorable. The morale was very low among the officers due to low pay, poor working conditions and equipment.

I began holding meetings and putting together committees to develop and accomplish certain priorities through five-year, 10-year, and 15-year plans. It took time, but slowly we were able to make the department into what it is today.

What major changes have taken place during your tenure?

Our department made numerous changes during my time here. We have procedures in regards to hiring processes, promotional processes, and lateral transfers. We created an entire policy manual which now has 96 sections within 10 separate chapters. Our department is now in its third accreditation cycle, we've implemented specialized units such as a Collision Reconstruction Team, Special Response Team, Crisis Negotiation Team, Arson Team, Bike Patrol, and an Honor Guard. We have also been able to increase officers' pay, but we still have a long way to go to compete with other departments.

What accomplishment of the department during your tenure are you most proud of?

The biggest accomplishment in my career was building the reputation of the Nicholasville Police Department to become known as one of the best agencies in the Commonwealth. Due to that reputation, federal agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Secret Service sought us out to form partnerships through task forces. This has been very important to our agency as we then received portions of forfeiture money from those agencies. Through the DEA Task Force, we have received \$1.7 million in forfeiture funds since the program started. Without this money, this agency wouldn't have the equipment it has today. We have been able to purchase vehicles, patrol rifles, a new radio system, in-car computers, equipment for our Special Response Team and Collision Reconstruction Team, and many other pieces of equipment. Without these funds, our agency would have been crippled by budget constraints.

What is one thing you had hoped to accomplish that you were unable to accomplish?

In a city this size – 10th largest in the Commonwealth – the pay for our officers isn't what it should be. We have the same quality officers, if not better, as Lexington. We also deal with a lot of the same issues Lexington does, but the pay is so much less. This creates an issue trying to recruit and retain officers. I have worked towards raises for our officers, but it is still way below what these men and women deserve for putting their lives on the line for this community. It seems that benefits are continually taken from our officers (rising insurance costs, change in retirement system, etc) and they can't be blamed for finding better paying jobs

Nicholasville Police Chief Barry Waldrop is set to retire this year. While he tends to shy away from the spotlight, he took time out of his busy schedule to reflect on his career and share his retirement plans.

elsewhere to support their families who sacrifice so much to have a spouse, father, or mother in law enforcement.

I also had hoped our department would be in a new building by the time I retired. The facility we work out of is too small for the 70 employees of our agency and it is very dated. Thirty-six officers work out of a very small squad room which has only room for four computers. They also have only one bathroom and no shower to use in case of exposure. Administration is always having to schedule meeting rooms in other businesses around town for recruiting and promotional interviews, meetings, and training. There have been opportunities

for moves into other locations throughout my career, however, nothing ever came to fruition.

What do you think / hope you will be most remembered for?

I want to be remembered by my officers as someone who was a part of their lives, not just their careers. I have been chief here for 22 years, seen most of my officers get married, seen them have children, and watched those children grow up. I like to think I had a part in helping these officers grow from kids into adults capable of raising families. I hope they also remember me as a loving chief who welcomed their families into this department and into my own life.

What are your retirement plans?

I plan on working somewhere part-time. I don't want to be tied down to a job, but I don't see myself just sitting around either. I would love to work about 20-25 hours a week somewhere. I know I will have a "honey-do" list as well! I also plan on spending a lot of time with my grandchildren. My wife, Brenda, and I have been married for 44 years, having dated through our school days. We have two daughters, two sons-in-law, and two grandchildren.

No day, however, will go by that I won't think about the Nicholasville Police Department and the people still answering the call of service to this great community.

More City Commission News

(continued from page 3)

Promotion of Jason Porch to Sergeant in Code Enforcement, Autumn Howard and Jeff Fryman to Sergeant in Investigations, Henry Blades to Captain of Patrol, Gary Resor and Matt Godsey to Lieutenant in Patrol, Matt Marshall and John Foutch to Sergeant in Patrol, Andrew Staggs and Alexis Jones to Corporal in Patrol.

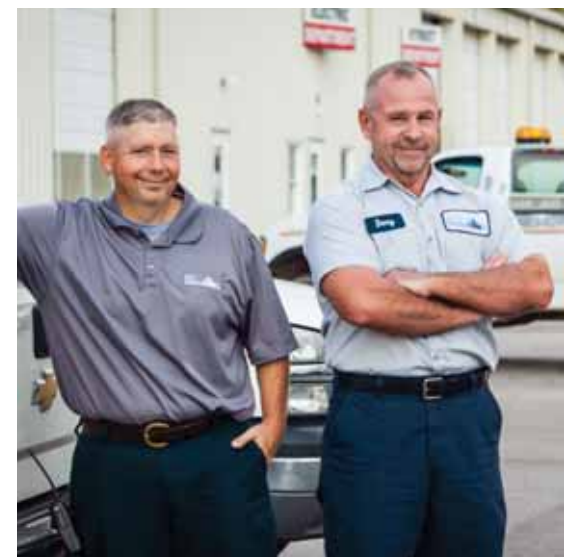
Lateral transfer of Brandon Dennis to Detective, Jacob Jones to Detective, Adam Teater to School Resource Officer, Lieutenant Michael Fleming to Administration/ Record's Division, Colby Warren to Detective and Jason Fraddosio to Detective.

The department issued 4,767 citations, responded to 34,460 calls, including 131 drug overdoses.

Uniform Service

Work uniforms can create a sense of unity, team spirit and safety. This year the City of Nicholasville is using a new uniform service. The service provides employees the opportunity to have a consistent and properly laundered look. Bob Amato with Finance explains that the decision was simple when talking about the benefits.

"This way, our employees, who wear flame resistant (FR) clothing do not have to worry about taking the uniform home and improperly washing and ruining the gear," said Amato. "The service takes care of all the proper laundering and helps keep our employees safe."



City employees Scott Taylor and Danny Hammond show off their new uniforms.

Hiring Wave Brings More Recruits



Pictured are Engine 1 First Platoon: Lt. Michael Pierce, FF Loren Bewley, and FF James Martin.

There are lots of new faces at the Nicholasville Fire Department, thanks to a recent upgrade to the firefighter compensation plan that made the department more competitive with other cities and put the department closer to its staffing goal.

A recent hiring wave added 10 new firefighters to the department. Eight new recruits – Justus Branock, Charles Goldey, Jacob Simms, James Martin, Aaron Moss, Alton Shephard, Gabriel McBride and Collin Pinkston – completed training and two firefighters –

Adam Bullock and Zeke Reynolds – transferred from the Somerset Fire Department.

Chief Mark Case credited the city commission, especially Betty Black, who oversees the public safety departments, and Mayor Pete Sutherland for working to bring the department closer to meeting the guidelines set by the National Fire Protection Association, which recommends at least 17 firefighters on duty each day.

“As a result, we saw an increase in the total number of applicants showing interest in joining the department compared to previous years,” he said. “That, in turn, gave us a larger pool of candidates to choose from, allowing us to continue to select not only the most eligible person for the job but also the highest quality of person to serve as a firefighter for the City of Nicholasville.”

Case said the department now has 15 firefighters per day, up from 14 in 2016.

“These additional personnel will help ease the work load faced by our firefighters, increase the safety of our firefighters, and help to eliminate some of the overtime cost associated with running the department,” Case said.

The hiring wave comes on the heels of some retirements and a transfer within the department, said Case. The department lost Keith Grigsby, who retired in late 2016, Jermaine Jackson, who transferred to the Nicholasville Police Department in early 2017, and Lt. Shannon Causey, who retired in June.

The department also celebrated several promotions this year in effort to fill the vacancy created by Causey’s retirement and to create more structure in the department. Promoted firefighters included William Gover, now a lieutenant, and Lieutenants Martin Kazsuk, Johnny Adams, and Michael Bales, who were promoted to the rank of captain.

A Welcome Addition

Assistant City Clerk Kathy Walker has never been one to shy away from a challenge –if it has to be done, she’ll buckle down and do it.


She did it a few years ago, when she learned the archery class her kids enjoyed may be cancelled because there were no coaches. “I couldn’t stand the thought of them losing such a great program, so I decided to get certified as an archery instructor,” she said.

She did it again when she learned there may be an opportunity to become the next Nicholasville city clerk.

At the time, she was an administrative assistant and records division supervisor for the Nicholasville Police Department. She had worked her way up from what was basically a receptionist job – answering phones, greeting visitors as the like – and realized she couldn’t go any further as a civilian.

Walker had just told the police chief that she may start looking elsewhere for a job with advancement opportunities when the chief learned that current Nicholasville Roberta Warren, a 33-year city employee, was fretting about finding and training a qualified successor before she retired.

A lifetime Jessamine County resident, Walker started working on a plan. In 2013, she became Certified Kentucky Municipal Clerk (CKMC) through the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Municipal Clerks Association and this year, she became a Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. In October, Walker was recognized by the Kentucky League of Cities at their annual conference for earning her

A portrait of Kathy Walker, a woman with curly brown hair, smiling and wearing a black cardigan over a patterned top. She has her arms crossed and is standing outdoors with trees in the background.

Kathy Walker is excited to take on her new role as Assistant City Clerk.

Level III: Master of City Governance in the City Officials Training Center Program (COTC).

Her hard work paid off. She is now the assistant city clerk and is training with Warren to become the city’s next official record keeper.

“I have some big shoes to fill,” Walker said of Warren. “She is so knowledgeable about so much. My hope is to learn as much as I can as long as she is here.”

Warren applauded Walker for stepping up to the challenge.

“This is not an easy job, but I have full faith in her,” she said. “I will always be here for Kathy if she needs me, but I know that I would be leaving things in good hands.”

Walker’s connections in the community will serve her well in her new role. A long-time community leader and volunteer, Walker serves as president of the Jessamine County 4-H Council and is a program representative on the Jessamine County Fair Board. She is a member of both the Leadership Jessamine County and Leadership Central Kentucky board of directors. She is president of the Bluegrass Municipal Clerk’s Association and treasurer of the Municipal Clerks Association.

She married Floyd Walker in 2005 and between them they have four children – Dakota, Madison, Jared, and Bowman, who range in age from 11 to 22 – and three granddaughters. She is expecting her first grandson in 2018.

Engineering Our Progress

In case you haven't noticed, Nicholasville is becoming a busy little place. Brannon Crossing is booming, water and sewer upgrades are under contract, apartment complexes and housing developments are springing up, the Eastern Bypass project is moving forward and plans are underway for a new city hall.

"There's just a lot going on; the city is growing," said Tim Cross, a Nicholasville native who returned home to join the planning and zoning staff in 2015. "Someone needs to monitor our many projects – both private and public."

That's where the newly formed Nicholasville engineering office comes into play. Bob Amato, Nicholasville's finance director, said the city created the new department this year, pulling Cross out of the planning and zoning department and broadening his duties to include two key functions – overseeing the city's infrastructure projects and supervising major development projects.

Amato said multiple infrastructure projects – including the installation of roads and upgrades to sewer, water and electric lines – are underway or planned, and the new department will help design and manage the projects. Previously, consulting engineers were hired to support those projects.

"It's important to have an in-house engineer who is up to date on the latest design standards and familiar with our systems and processes to coordinate these projects and ensure that upgrades meet demand and that systems are maintained and proactively improved," said Amato. "We had a good system in place, but having an engineering department will enhance efficiency and ensure that we complete projects in a more timely and cost-effective manner."



Tim Cross and Ryan Weingross review the City's Park Plans.

Cross' department will also help facilitate and monitor major projects like the Eastern Bypass.

"The city engineer will help keep projects on schedule, consult with engineers and contractors and provide information they need from the city, ensure the designs meet the city's needs and make sure projects are cost effective," he said.

City leaders were pleased to have a qualified in-house candidate for the position.

"We had the concept for an engineering department and recognized the experience and talent that we had in Tim," Amato said.

In addition to Cross, the department now includes Ryan Weingross, who previously worked in the Nicholasville water and sewer department. A recent Eastern Kentucky University graduate, Ryan serves as a field engineering assistant.

"His experience with water and sewer will be very valuable as we ramp up our infrastructure projects," Cross said.

Cross said the city currently has about four major projects underway in addition to private sector developments that must be coordinated and monitored.

"Growth is good, but we have a responsibility to monitor and plan it," he said. "Our department will help us keep an eye on the big picture."

Park Transformation Begins



The City's electrical department is hard at work laying the groundwork for the performance park.

The park will fill an empty hole in downtown and is set to bring entertainment and arts to the area.



The new downtown performance park took center stage this fall as city officials assumed management of the project and began beautification work.

The City closed the curtain on plans to hire a contractor to oversee the project after the first call for bids yielded no results and the second call drew only one bidder whose quote was over budget.

"The City of Nicholasville got permission to be our own contractor for the project, and we started lining up work to be completed by city employees," said City Engineer Tim Cross.

Last year, the City purchased an old barber shop on East Maple that allowed an expansion of the park space, which previously included only the lot next to the shop. Work is underway to install concrete, brick pavers, decorative lighting, flower pots and benches.

Cross said he hopes the park will be completed by the end of the year, as long as the weather cooperates and there are no other delays.

"This is a project we are all really excited about," he said. "We're taking an ugly hole on Main Street and really transforming it into a beautiful, usable space that people can enjoy."

The project is being funded by leftover funds from the Streetscape project, a comprehensive downtown facelift that included the installation of mast arms for signal lights and the purchase of a lot for parking.

The park will cost about \$260,000 and is expected to draw more visitors downtown for local performances and improve pedestrian access to shopping and recreation.



A Servant's Heart

As a new – and relatively young – Jessamine County magistrate, Justin Ray quickly learned one thing about Burch Hager. He'd known of Hager since he was a kid – he remembered Hager was a coach for his kids' softball and baseball teams – but he got to see a different side of the man as an elected official.

"He took his responsibility to represent the people in his district very seriously," Ray said. "He was unapologetic about standing up for his beliefs. He wasn't afraid to speak his mind and defend what was right, and he also wasn't afraid to change his mind if he realized he was wrong about an issue. We didn't always agree, but I respected him to the fullest."

Ray and other members of the fiscal court and community mourned the loss of Hager, who died in March in the middle of his term as fifth district



The late Burch Hager was a longtime city employee whose passion for the community shined in his everyday work.

magistrate. He was survived by his wife of 41 years, Debbie, daughter Misty and a son Joshua, who passed away in November.

Hager served as superintendent of the Nicholasville water department, where he worked from 2001 to 2017, before becoming a magistrate in 2010. He was actively involved in the community. An avid coon hunter and knife collector, he was president of the Hickman Creek Coon Club and a member of Bethel

Christian Church, the Professional Kennel Club and the Jessamine County Parks and Recreation Hall of Fame.

As a magistrate, Hager served on the parks and recreation, environmental services and Camp Nelson committees, said Judge Executive David West. West said Hager was an advocate for upgrading the roads throughout the county.

"I had known Burch for many years, and he was dedicated to the people of this county," West said. "He was always the voice of reason."

Because Hager was known for always making the motion to adjourn fiscal court meetings, the court memorialized his service by ruling that the motions, not technically necessary, won't be made again. Burch made the motion to close the meeting the day before he passed.

"In the years to come, there may be people who don't notice that we don't make the motion or know why, but all of us will certainly remember the significant role he played in our community," West said. "His death was a great loss for this community."

City Hall Update

The City has moved one step closer to getting an all-new home, and officials are making sure its finances are in the right place before moving forward.

Finance Director Bob Amato said commissioners will soon receive a report from engineers that will include a cost estimate for the new facility based on discussions with department leaders about what their space needs will be.

Depending on the cost of the proposed building, the report is expected to prompt a vote on whether to move forward with plans to build or to wait a bit longer. City officials have longed for a new building for decades, and purchased 715 N. Main Street, the temporary home of the Farmer's Market, about 10 years ago.

"We're crammed for space here," said Amato. "We've got people spread over two buildings, and we'd like to get our administration and our other departments in one building."

Plans are for the police department to move into the current City Hall when the new one is completed.

The City currently has about 190 employees, and has occupied the current City Hall since the 1970s.

City Engineer Tim Cross said much thought is being given to just how much space the City needs.

"Each department was asked to think about not only what their current needs are, but also what space needs they will have 10, 20, 30 years from now," Cross said. "If you think about how long we've been in our current space, it's safe to say the new space will need to last us just as long if not longer."

Driving Forward on Eastern Bypass



After a few years of stops, starts and stalls, work on the long-anticipated Eastern Bypass revved up this fall as officials began clearing utilities in the path of the proposed roadway and began accepting bids for construction.

If all goes as planned, work on the first phase of the bypass, which will allow commuters traveling east and west of Nicholasville to bypass the downtown area, will begin early next year.

“People will start seeing dirt move in the spring,” said City Engineer Tim Cross. “We’re excited to see some progress taking place.”

The project has experienced a number of delays since it was first added to the state’s six-year highway plan in 2014. The first phase, which includes about 3 miles that will stretch from KY 39 to Sulpher Well Road, is expected to cost about \$22.5 million. The second phase, about 2 miles to connect KY 39 to Kentucky 169, or Union Mill Road, will cost an estimated \$15 million. The final phase will complete the loop with almost 3 miles of roadway between KY 169 and the Nicholasville bypass at an estimated \$38 million.

Some 45,000 motorists, including commercial truckers, are expected to use the bypass, which will include a diamond interchange at U.S. 27 North.

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Cleaner Streets Coming Your Way

The City of Nicholasville purchased a new street sweeper. This new sweeper will help make sure that our community roads are clear of all debris that could cause flooding.

Ross Street Update

After months of closure and a bit of noisiness, work on a bridge at the intersection of Ross and North Second streets concluded this year, making the structure safe many years to come.

The bridge temporarily closed early this year after a state bridge inspector warned that corrosion on a beam made it unsafe.

City Engineer Tim Cross said the project, contracted to The Allen Company, included tearing out the structure and a culvert that allowed water to flow underneath.

“We installed a new cast-in-place concrete culvert,” Cross said. “The old culvert was stone masonry and must have been about 100 years old, so it was past its life expectancy.”

Cross said work was completed on time and under budget. The project was expected to cost \$196,000, but closed at \$194,000. Work started in June and final inspections were in early September.