

Business Focus

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2022 Legislative Session Preview



Policy Priorities for Business Outlined Inside



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BUSINESS FOCUS

January 2022: Volume XXX, Issue I

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR:

Workforce, Land Use, DEI and Regional Collaboration Among 2022 Focus Areas

It's hard to believe that our community has been facing the ongoing pandemic for nearly two years. It's been extremely difficult on many families, businesses, organizations, and entire cities, but in true Lexington fashion, people continue to look out for one another and support those who need it most. That's what makes us different than a lot of communities. Lexington has overcome tough times before and will do so again by working together to find solutions.

I am excited to continue the momentum created in several key areas under the steady leadership of Commerce Lexington Board Chair Ray Daniels. In the middle of a pandemic, it would have been easy for this organization, our community, and our region to focus on the status quo, but that's not who we are.

Regional leaders and elected officials across our nine-county economic development region have come together to work toward creating a regional action plan to improve our competitiveness. As we travel around the country to study other communities, we've seen time and again that the most economically successful regions have strong collaborative relationships. It's our hope and intent that this initiative will propel Central Kentucky forward for the next generation.

Commerce Lexington has long held that diversity, equity and inclusion are key aspects in our business recruitment and retention efforts. We must continue to look for ways to lift-up those who have been disadvantaged for many years. Our organization is proud to be a part of the Black Faith Leader Collaborative, which advocates for diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as increased procurement opportunities for African American-owned businesses.

One big issue that is stifling our city's ability to create jobs, maintain affordable housing, and generate more equity across our community is the way Lexington uses land. In 2022, Fayette County will begin the important process of developing its next Comprehensive Plan, a document that guides land use policies for our city. It is critical that more diverse voices are at the table so that the goals and objectives of the plan represent the wants and desires of our community and how it will grow for the future. I encourage you to get engaged in this process and find out more about how land use policies impact our economy at www.LexingtonForEveryone.com.

Finally, workforce and having enough skilled workers across our region were already issues for businesses before the pandemic began, and it's even more of a problem now. We must continue to seek innovative ways to provide the right skills to our residents that will help us fill the jobs of today and tomorrow. The Business & Education Network, an affiliate of Commerce Lexington, continues to work with its partners in education and business to introduce students to potential career opportunities, develop a talent retention strategy, and ensure that we have a globally skilled workforce.

I hope you'll join me and many of your colleagues and friends as we talk about some of these focus areas at An Evening With Commerce Lexington presented by Fifth Third Bank on April 6th. Be sure to register at www.commercelexington.com. I look forward to serving as your Board Chair this year and working with you to strengthen this wonderful place we call home.



JOHN GOHMANN
REGIONAL PRESIDENT
PNC BANK

2022 BOARD CHAIR



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Personnel Updates:

Submit your company's awards and milestones or personnel changes and additions to mturner@commercelexington.com. Personnel news might include promotions, additions, awards and milestones, recognitions and certifications and/or appointments. Information is published only as space permits.



Christine Van Tatenhove
The Junkluggers of Lexington & Cincinnati



The Junkluggers is a full service eco-friendly junk removal company on a mission to keep items out of landfills by donating, recycling, and repurposing as much as possible.

How did you get in this industry?

- My family and I were looking to start our own business that filled a unique niche in the Central KY market and also allowed us to work together.
- We chose The Junkluggers because of the unique commitment to serving their communities and the tremendous amount of corporate support.



What do you like most?

- We love helping homeowners and businesses to declutter their space and feel more organized.
- We especially love seeing the faces of relief after our truck pulls away from a completed project!
- It's also such a good feeling to be able to donate unwanted belongings to someone else who can enjoy and benefit from them.



What services do you offer?

- We'll lug away furniture, appliances, electronics, pianos, and more. No project is too big or small, whether it's a retail or office space, storage unit, warehouse, or estate sale.
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development News Submitted by Gina Greathouse, Cheryl Klever, Falon McFarland & Katie Vandegrift

WHO GOT THE MONEY?

Who Got The Money? Figures Show Strong Startup Ecosystem

Commerce Lexington Economic Development and the University of Kentucky Office of Technology Commercialization recently released new data collected from their annual survey on the area's entrepreneurial economic impact for the fiscal year on the *Who Got the Money?* website, www.whogotthemoney.com.

The survey continues to serve as a reminder of the strong ecosystem startups have built in the Lexington region. The 70 responding companies represented industry sectors in biotechnology, AgTech, advanced manufacturing, e-commerce, independent game development, IT and software development, energy technologies and business services. They reported an average salary of \$64,000 for full-time jobs and employed 623 people in Lexington and Central Kentucky. The region's entrepreneurial community created 110 new jobs, raised \$52.1 million in capital, and generated \$77.5 million in revenue.

Who Got the Money? also recognized 24 recipients of the eAchiever Award for excellence in entrepreneurship. These companies received at least \$1 million dollars in funding and/or created five new full-time jobs during Fiscal Year 2020, based on self-reported data from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.

Who Got the Money? gave a Standout Performance award to PowerTech Water, a water purification technology company. The Standout Award recognizes the indomitable entrepreneurial spirit of a local startup that has had impressive revenue growth and success in raising capital.

"Commerce Lexington has provided funding to incubators and programs like 5-Across, which was critical in the founding of ElcetraMet," said Cameron Lippert, Co-founder and CEO at PowerTech Water. "We would not be here today without that event and the support provided by Commerce Lexington. Through its network, we were able to connect with advisors and investors that saw the potential of our technology early on and provided us with valuable resources along our path to commercialization. Our team has experienced incredible growth over the last year, and we have no plans to slow down."

The 2021 Female Founded Startup of the Year award went to Kate Van Pelt, co-founder and CEO of Synaptek, a concussion management platform. This award celebrates the ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and the successful venture funding efforts of one of the survey responder female-founded companies.

Adam Brown, Creative Director and Founder of Marrow, the company sponsoring the award, said of Synaptek, "Frankly, this was the easiest award for Marrow to offer. Anyone who's been paying attention to the startup scene in Lexington knows about Kate Van Pelt, her team, and their exceptional work in concussion management. Marrow is fortunate to be a part of Synaptek's brand strategy at this crucial inflection point as they broaden awareness and grow their footprint in athletic departments across the country."

STAT OF THE MONTH: Manufacturing Horsepower

At one time, there were more horses than people in Central Kentucky. During the 1900's, automobiles replaced horses as a main mode of transportation around the world, but Central Kentucky still relies heavily on foreign direct investment in both industries. At the 2021 Keeneland September Sale, international buyers from Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Singapore, and China were a few of the 27 countries represented in almost \$365 million of sales. These same countries represented over 43% of the region's foreign-owned automotive related plants and suppliers in the area. Toyota, the region's pivotal automotive manufacturer, recently announced a \$460 million expansion. The Georgetown facility produces over 500,000 automobiles every year, which is more than double the horse population in the state.

SPOTLIGHT: West Sixth Brewing

Founded in 2012, West Sixth Brewing is an award-winning brewery based in Lexington, operating four taprooms throughout the state. From its 100-year-old former Rainbo Baking Company building called the Bread Box, West Sixth brews a wide variety of beers that are distributed throughout Kentucky and across the Ohio River in Cincinnati. The team at West Sixth is driven by brewing high-quality creative beers, making a positive social impact on the communities they serve, and creating an awesome place to work. Throughout its history, West Sixth has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to Kentucky-based nonprofits.

West Sixth was the first brewery to can a beer in Kentucky -- the West Sixth IPA. When the first IPA was canned nearly ten years ago, canning was thought of as a way to package "cheap" beer, although now nearly all craft breweries package their beers in cans rather than bottles. Cans are far superior to glass as they don't let in light or air -- the two things that can make a beer go bad. Now, not only can you get dozens of West Sixth beers in cans throughout the state, but you can also come and fill a "Crowler," a 32-ounce single serve can of any draft beer at its retail locations. Sometime in early 2022, Ball (the primary manufacturer of cans in the United States) will be opening a factory in Bowling Green to make the lids for West Sixth's cans very close to home.

BY THE NUMBERS:

For 2021 year-to-date (at press time of this issue), Commerce Lexington's Economic Development Division had responded to calls from:

NEW BUSINESS: 64 new prospects interested in finding a new location or expanding in the Lexington area.

CLIENT VISITS TO LEXINGTON AREA: 5

EXISTING BUSINESS VISITS: 84

EXISTING BUSINESS ATTEMPTS: 227

ACTIVE PROJECTS: 34

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EVENTS

Jan. 25: Next Policy Luncheon Features FCPS Superintendent Liggins

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The next Commerce Lexington **Public Policy Luncheon** presented by **Kentucky American Water** on **Tuesday, January 25**, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at The Campbell House, Curio Collection by Hilton (1375 South Broadway) will enable participants to hear from Fayette County Public Schools Superintendent Demetrus Liggins. The luncheon will mark sixth months since Mr. Liggins took over the role as superintendent, and he will share his thoughts about the state of the school district, ongoing challenges, and opportunities for the future.

Prior to joining FCPS, Liggins most recently served for four years as superintendent of schools



DEMETRUS LIGGINS
FCPS
SUPERINTENDENT

in Greenville Independent School District, an urban district of roughly 6,000 students outside of Dallas, Texas. In 2020, the National School Public Relations Association tapped Liggins as a Superintendent to Watch for his fast-paced leadership and strong communication skills.

TO REGISTER:

The cost to attend this in person event is \$49 per person for Commerce Lexington members, \$59 for non-mem-

bers, and will include lunch and networking. Register on-line at www.commercelexington.com.

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EVENTS



EMERGE Agenda Taking Shape for 2022 Conference on Tuesday, March 8th

The 2022 Commerce Lexington **EMERGE Conference** presented by **Forcht Bank** has been set for **Tuesday, March 8th**, in person at Central Bank Center. This full day of programming for our region's emerging leaders will provide community education and professional development opportunities on a variety of topics through dynamic keynotes, panel discussions, and other fun activities.

Headlining this year's conference will be **Chris Clews**, a speaker and author of the book series *What 80s Pop Culture Teaches Us About Today's Workplace*. He's spoken to a diverse set of organizations and companies, including Visa, DHL, University of Florida, UPenn Medicine, WIFS (Women in Insurance and Financial Services), DisruptHR and more. He's a frequent guest on podcasts with topics ranging from workplace culture to 80s pop culture.



Our morning keynote speaker is **Colene Elridge** (aka Coach Colene), the CEO of Be More Consulting and founder of the EmpowHer Conference. Her decade-plus of HR experience led to her being known as "the fixer," because she's often called to help organizations and leaders create better workplaces, productive teams, and aligned results. Her career in government focused on Affirmative Action, EEO, and Diversity, during which she investigated harassment and discrimination complaints and implemented strategies that resulted in more diverse and inclusive workplaces.



Community Engagement Breakout Session topics:

- Public Safety
- Innovation in Lexington
- Creating A More Inclusive Environment
- Distilling & Growing Downtown Lexington
- Neighborhood Development

Professional Development Breakout Session topics:

- Virtual Communication & Presentations
- New Labor Market Dynamics
- Building Your Negotiation Skills Toolbox
- Cryptocurrency
- Healthy Meals for 2, 3, or Just Me
- Managing Your Online Presence

REGISTER:

The cost to attend this full day conference is \$175 per person for Commerce Lexington members, \$195 for non-members. Register on-line at commercelexington.com.

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PUBLIC POLICY

Policy Information Submitted by Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer

State Lawmakers Return for 60-Day Legislative Session in January

Commerce Lexington Inc. is proud to work on behalf of our members and the Central Kentucky business community as an effective public policy voice at all levels of government to improve Kentucky's business climate. Throughout the year, Commerce Lexington's Public Policy Council researches, analyzes and discusses important policy issues from the perspective of how it may affect the Central Kentucky business community, then recommends advocacy position statements. These statements guide the chamber's advocacy efforts for the year.

Please take a few minutes to review the **2022 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS** inside this issue of **BUSINESS FOCUS** to learn about issues Commerce Lexington Inc. will be tracking on behalf of the business community this year at the local, state and federal levels of government.

In January, state lawmakers return to Frankfort for the 60-day Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly. The priority issue will be crafting the next two-year state budget and road fund plan for transportation infrastructure projects. Lawmakers face tough decisions about how to allocate state revenues and resources, including more than \$3 billion in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Addressing the workforce crisis is a top priority for the business community. Businesses of all sizes across sectors are struggling to find people for the open positions. Although this is not a new challenge, the pandemic has exacerbated the issue. According to the Kentucky Chamber Foundation's new report, "20 years in the Making: Kentucky's Workforce Crisis," Kentucky is ranked 48th among 50 states in workforce participation. The causes of the weak statewide rate are many including slow population growth, an aging/retiring population, poor health

outcomes, substance abuse and incarceration. The workforce issue is a complex problem with no silver bullet. Legislators are likely to consider multiple policy solutions this session, such as increasing investments in education and worker training, talent attraction, reforms to the unemployment system, criminal justice policies, childcare, affordable housing, and more.

Another priority issue to increase Kentucky's economic competitiveness is continuing efforts to reform the state's antiquated tax structure. Kentucky made progress with the 2018 reforms that lowered income tax rates and modestly expanded the state sales tax base. Commerce Lexington continues to advocate for reforms to lower individual income tax rates to be more competitive with the rates of surrounding states and move Kentucky toward a more consumption-based model rather than the current model that is heavily reliant on occupational taxes on workers and business taxes. The chamber also supports reforms aimed at providing local governments with more diversity in revenue options.

Commerce Lexington urges members to stay connected throughout 2022 on policy issues. Regular e-mail updates will be provided to members throughout the Legislative Session and the year to keep businesses updated on what's happening in City Hall, Frankfort and Washington, D.C. and the impact of potential legislation to Central Kentucky's economy. If you have questions, need assistance with a policy issue or would like to get involved with advocacy efforts, contact Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer and Director of Regional Engagement, at ajohnson@commercelexington.com.

Legislative Appreciation Event Gives Preview of Upcoming Session

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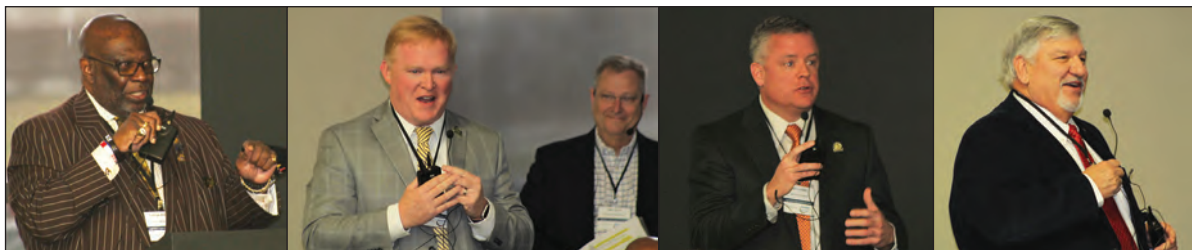
Kentucky 811
LG&E & KU Energy

Commerce Lexington hosted the Legislative Appreciation Breakfast presented by Friends of Coal on December 15th at Kentucky Eagle, Inc. The event enabled the business community to say thank you to our Fayette County state legislative delegation and to learn about key issues facing the Commonwealth ahead of the upcoming 2022 Legislative Session.

Attending the event were State Senators Ralph Alvarado, Dr. Donald Douglas, and Reggie Thomas, along with State Representatives George Brown Jr., Dan Fister, Matt Lockett, and Killian Timoney. Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton also made remarks, and Councilmembers Amanda Bledsoe, Chuck Ellinger, and Josh McCurn were in attendance.



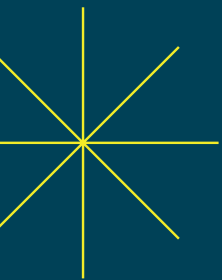
TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton; Senator Ralph Alvarado; Senator Donald Douglas, M.D.; and Senator Reggie Thomas with Commerce Lexington President Bob Quick. BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: Rep. George Brown Jr.; Rep. Killian Timoney; Rep. Matt Lockett; and Rep. Dan Fister. (Photos by Commerce Lex. Staff)



2022 Legislative Priorities



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Advocating for Your Business at All Levels of Government

Business leaders are often too busy attracting investments and creating jobs to focus large amounts of time on monitoring legislation and regulations, analyzing their effect and advocating for their passage, defeat or modification. That's why Commerce Lexington and its Public Policy Council gather the top experts in a variety of industries, harness that knowledge, and advocate for the interests of business in the halls of our State Capitol or the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government to create a more business-friendly environment. Each year, we work with you – our members – to identify issues affecting the business community and spotlight the best public policy solutions. Our strong working relationships with local, state and federal officials mean that you will be well-represented and your voice will be magnified by the more than 1,800 members on whose behalf we speak.

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Kentucky Coal Association is dedicated to informing and educating Kentucky citizens about the coal industry and its vital role in the state's future. We provide a united voice for an industry that has been and remains a critical economic contributor to Kentucky.

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ADVOCATING FOR BUSINESS

Commerce Lexington's Public Policy Division:

Commerce Lexington Inc.'s Public Policy Council is the entity that takes the lead in the organization's advocacy efforts. The council members and chair are all volunteers and represent a variety of large and small businesses, local government, nonprofit organizations, education groups and utilities comprising a broad spectrum of Commerce Lexington's member companies. The Council's Chairman is appointed annually by the Chair of the Board of Commerce Lexington Inc.

- Actively monitors legislative and regulatory activity from Urban County Government, Kentucky General Assembly and the U.S. House and Senate related to priority issues.
- Advocates for priority issues on behalf of the Lexington business community at the local, state and federal level.
- Helps members navigate government agencies and address issues impacting their business
- Manages the Public Policy Council, a committee of volunteer members representing a cross section of chamber membership. The Council develops the Policy Statements each year and guides the Commerce Lexington's position on key issues that impact economic growth.
- Participates in legislative and legal coalitions, submitting letters, filing briefs, and testifying on behalf of business at committee meetings.
- Provides communications to the business community during the Legislative Session and throughout the year about policy issues including bills or ordinances with impacts on business and the local economy.
- Creates numerous educational and networking opportunities throughout the year from members to interact with local, state and federal officials or policy leaders.



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Workforce Crisis:

Lack of access to a qualified and skilled workforce is one of the top issues facing businesses in Lexington and Central Kentucky. Commerce Lexington supports a multi-faceted approach at the local, state and federal levels of government to help solve the workforce crisis. **The priorities include, but are not limited to:**

- **Childcare:** Remove child-care as a barrier to employment by investing in the Child Care Assistance Program, supporting the development of the child-care workforce, and cultivating a mixed-delivery model of high-quality care.
- **Unemployment and re-employment:** Emphasize rapid re-employment for unemployment claimants by enhancing Kentucky's work search requirement, providing more effective re-employment services, and implementing reforms to reduce the amount of time individuals spend on unemployment.
- **Re-entry:** Support successful re-entry for formerly incarcerated Kentuckians by repealing the ban on KEES eligibility for ex-felons, removing barriers to second-chance licensing, ensuring exiting inmates have photo-IDs, and increasing access to expungement.
- **Education:** Invest in K-12 and higher education to increase post-secondary and credential attainment and support efforts to align resources to improve student engagement with career opportunities and pathways.
- **Substance Abuse Disorder:** Reignite efforts to fight the opioid epidemic and substance use disorder crisis by leveraging federal relief dollars and providing necessary resources to communities in most need.
- **Health:** Improve Kentucky's health outcomes, including reducing smoking rates by raising the cigarette tax and removing smokers as a protected class.
- **Resource Alignment:** Support the success of Kentucky's workforce development programs through improved resource alignment, tracking workforce spending, and evaluating programs for return on investment.
- **Training Support:** Support increased investments in education and training programs to upskill more workers to in-demand sectors.

Workforce Investment Funding:

The Federal Workforce Investment Program is a critical component to providing a highly skilled and educated workforce for businesses in the region. Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has been a positive step forward. Kentucky's workforce training system is notably complex with multiple layers and differing agency responsibilities. Programs receive state and federal funding in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and programs range from job-specific skill development to support for job seekers. Commerce Lexington supports continued investments and policy reforms that align and improve existing workforce programs at the state level, and to support local and regional sector partnerships with employers to meet the workforce needs of a 21st Century economy. Especially given the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the local economy, Commerce Lexington urges the

U.S. Congress, Governor and General Assembly to provide for workforce development efforts aimed at immediately engaging dislocated workers with skills training and job placement opportunities in high demand sectors and overhauling incumbent worker programs to help businesses train workers, avert layoffs and encourage upskilling. We continue to support the Work Ready Community, Sector Strategies, High Impact Workforce Investment Boards and Unified Business Services work at the state and local level. Federal and state leadership is vital in policy guidance to states and local communities. Commerce Lexington Inc. also supports investments in education and workforce development programs to help those negatively impacted by the pandemic get the training and skills necessary to excel in the evolving COVID-19 economy.



Fayette County Public Schools:

Commerce Lexington is committed to partnering with Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) in efforts to develop a 21st Century workforce. This includes support for ensuring equitable access, opportunity, and participation for all students, continuing the phased implementation of the school safety plan, and providing learning experiences – both in the classroom and within the community – that will help every child graduate academically prepared, college and career ready, civically engaged, culturally responsive and equipped for the future. We applaud the transparency, transformation, and accountability provided by the district in reporting its progress through status trackers, school and district report cards and an annual State of the Schools convening and Annual Report publication, as well as the alignment of district priorities to annual budget planning. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many pre-existing gaps for students due to the inability for in-person instruction and the lack of technological connectivity for some students in the home. While Commerce Lexington recognizes the need to follow public health guidelines, we encourage FCPS to maintain in-person instruction to help support the needs of all students, close achievement gaps and improve accountability.

Digital Divide:

Commerce Lexington also recognizes the need to address the digital divide that many families in Lexington face when it comes to internet access. Not every family has the financial ability to meet the technology needs of students for remote/distance learning in the home. During the pandemic, some students have lacked access to the internet, hindering their ability to learn. Families have had to resort to augmented technology service providers in sparse public places such as restaurants, libraries, and public offices building made available through community partners for providing WiFi service connection. Commerce Lexington supports efforts to close the digital divide and reduce barriers to access, particularly in homes with students who qualify for federal free and/or reduced priced meal programs.

Quality Investments:

Commerce Lexington supports increasing investments in K12 education in the 2021 state budget, including but not limited to funding for public safety and career-based learning opportunities. We recognize numerous studies have determined that Kentucky's education funding is inadequate and support full funding of public education to the levels required by the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Commerce Lexington is opposed to any cuts to the base SEEK funding and flexible focus funds (i.e. Extended School Services, Preschool, Professional Development, Textbooks and Safe Schools).

Diverse Leadership:

Commerce Lexington supports efforts to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion among district leadership and the elected board member seats.

Early Childhood:

Commerce Lexington fully supports increased investments in early childhood education including universal preschool and the need to build an integrated system of early childhood education that addresses the needs of all children, adults and families. Commerce Lexington is committed to working with the Fayette County Board of Education and other community partners on efforts to increase access of high-need preschoolers to high-quality teaching and learning experiences directly within neighborhoods and communities where they live with high asset needs and concentrated poverty.

School Calendar:

Commerce Lexington supports the General Assembly increasing the number of school days closer to the national average of 180 days, and the international average of 193 days. Commerce Lexington opposes the state mandating a local school district's calendar and advocates for keeping local decision-making reflective of the needs of each community.

School Safety & Resiliency:

Commerce Lexington recognizes the critical importance of ensuring the safety of our children at school, at home, and in the community. We applaud the General Assembly's adoption of SB1 during the 2019 session and call for the full funding of the requirements of the legislation.





Career Readiness:

Commerce Lexington supports efforts to improve Central Kentucky's ability to be a hub for talent acquisition and recruitment in support of satisfying workforce supply chain needs. Workplace apprenticeships and internships, other career-based learning experiences, have proven to be effective channels in developing career readiness. Commerce Lexington supports additional emphasis and an urgency to increase funding for apprenticeships or other work-based learning to prepare today's students for tomorrow's careers. Commerce Lexington supports the General Assembly, Governor's Office, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, state and local Chambers of Commerce, post-secondary institutions, pre-K through 12 school districts, and business partners working in collaboration through regionally based approaches to build workforce pipelines that span the Commonwealth and meet employer needs.

Family & Community Engagement:

Family and community engagement through shared accountability and advocacy is critical to ensuring that Lexington has a world-class system of great schools. As our community has grown and changed, students carry heavier burdens with them to school, such as the effects of food scarcity, housing insecurity, poverty, and community-based trauma, all of which can be barriers to academic achievement. Recognizing that every child deserves a champion, Commerce Lexington supports innovative approaches to support the engagement of families, business leaders, and other caring adults as partners through a community based collective impact model. Commerce Lexington is committed to supporting other efforts that help transform schools from the outside in by strengthening families, neighborhoods and communities.

STEAM Critical to Compete:

Commerce Lexington supports legislative and local district efforts to increase graduates in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) disciplines to meet the ever-growing needs of employers.

Rigorous & Relevant Standards:

Commerce Lexington Inc. supports standards that are designed to be rigorous and relevant to the real world, reflecting the experiences, assets, knowledge, and skills that our young people need for success in life, college and career. In order for Central Kentucky to be positioned to provide the workforce needed to compete for business recruitment and retention, our education standards must ensure the acquisition of rigorous academic content while also fostering critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and other essential 21st Century skills needed to thrive in this complex, rapidly changing world.

Financial Literacy:

Commerce Lexington Inc. supports the inclusion of "Financial Literacy" education in school classrooms. This training can be achieved through traditional curriculum development or through private-public partnerships, such as Junior Achievement of the Bluegrass with the Fayette County Public Schools.

Lexington Public Library:

Commerce Lexington fully supports the Lexington Public Library's work to provide quality educational resources and programs, access to technology, support for early and school-aged education, jobseeker services, and lifelong learning. All library services are available to anyone who lives or works in Fayette County.

Kentucky Educational Television:

Commerce Lexington fully supports the lifelong educational programming and services KET delivers to schools and the public. KET provides access, equity, and quality educational resources focused on student achievement, teacher preparedness and workforce development.





University of Kentucky:

The University of Kentucky's (UK) principles of ensuring student success and protecting the health and well-being of its students, staff and faculty — as well as the larger community it serves — anchored the institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. UK is proud of the exceptional response by members of its campus, many of whom are working tirelessly at the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis. UK established a vaccine clinic at Kroger Field that prioritized COVID-19 vaccinations for K-12 teachers and employees, frontline health workers and emergency first responders as well as those who had underlying health conditions or were deemed most at risk. At its height, more than 4,000 people a day were being vaccinated at what was the state's largest single clinic. The university also was a leader in development of vaccines, conducting a number of clinical trials that drew national attention. As UK HealthCare, UK Research, UK Athletics and other areas return to safe and reinvented normal operations, challenges remain.

Commerce Lexington supports UK in its efforts to secure higher education funding and the **supplemental research relief funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)** contained in the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection and Schools (HEALS) Act and to encourage Congress to work together to pass this critical legislation as universities rise to meet new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Commerce Lexington recognizes and supports the critical role UK plays in workforce development, health care and economic development for Lexington and all of Kentucky. States with nationally recognized public research universities have healthier, more prosperous citizens. Commerce Lexington urges the Governor and General Assembly to continue to support UK by funding the **Performance Funding model** as recommended by the Council on Postsecondary Education.

In the last decade alone, UK initiated or approved some \$2.8 billion in capital investments to improve student success, instruction, research and discovery and health care. Approximately 91 percent of that investment is the result of public-private partnerships, philanthropy, strategic use of university resources and support from UK Athletics.

- UK has a record enrollment this fall of nearly 31,800. These students are succeeding at higher levels, translating to record degree attainment, including nearly 7,500 degrees conferred over the last academic year.
- Faculty and staff researchers added to a growing portfolio of transformative research, discovery and creative scholarship. This past year, UK was awarded nearly \$470 million in research grants and contracts — signifying that UK is a major player among research institutions in the country,



and UK is ranked among the top 10 percent of public institutions for research expenditures. In addition, UK owned 742 worldwide patents in fiscal year 2020, illustrating the commercial opportunities of research and directly impacting the economy of central Kentucky.

- UK HealthCare - Kentucky's top hospital for the last six years—continues to meet the needs of patients and families who require complex, quality health care through its network of providers and state-of-the-art academic medical center. Its Markey Cancer Center was nationally ranked among the Top 50 again this past year, the fifth year in a row.
- Three years ago, UK launched “Kentucky Can: The 21st Century Campaign” — a \$2.1 billion comprehensive campaign focused on six major areas of the university: student success, health care, research, endowment, alumni and athletics. The campaign is designed to engage donors and increase private support for student scholarships and financial aid, research and discovery that addresses Kentucky questions, and to further endow programs critical to the long-term success of the university. UK has raised more than \$1.6 billion toward its goal and now has an endowment of more than \$2 billion for the first time in its history.
- The University recently received a bond rating upgrade from Standard and Poor's S&P Global Ratings from AA to AA+.

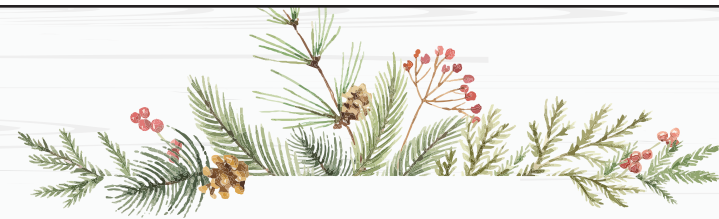
Forbes has named UK among the best employers for diversity; INSIGHT into Diversity recognized UK as a Diversity Champion five years running, and the university has been recognized as a “Great College to Work For” for the fourth consecutive year.



KCTCS / Bluegrass Community & Technical College:

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) is the largest provider of higher education, online education and workforce training in the Commonwealth. Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC), a member college of the system, serves Central Kentucky. The central mission is to provide a well-trained workforce and pathways to a bachelor's degrees in central Kentucky and the Commonwealth. To achieve this goal, KCTCS is aligning its strategic plan with other education and workforce agencies and organizations, BCTC is working with local employers to ensure the curriculum meets local needs, and KCTCS/BCTC is maintaining the lowest tuition of postsecondary institutions in Kentucky. Many Central Kentuckians – including incumbent workers, job seekers who need updated skills, or high school students planning for careers – need access to high quality skills training. Commerce Lexington supports KCTCS and BCTC in their efforts to support regional business development, enhance technical skills training, provide “work ready” employees and create a seamless pathway to a bachelor's degree. To that end, Commerce Lexington supports increasing funding for the post-secondary performance funding model, dual scholarships and work ready scholarships.

The 16 Colleges of KCTCS are on the front lines addressing workforce concerns. KCTCS Colleges help expedite a return to employment through career development and provide access to training and up-skilling. To ensure student and community safety as the summer and fall terms commenced, the Healthy at KCTCS Plan was developed with a focus on student academic and college success in a healthy and safe environment. All 16 Colleges are now offering on-campus and virtual classes and services and are offering multiple learning options for students to provide flexibility--with most of our offerings online or in a combination of classroom/lab and online work. KCTCS Colleges have listened to workforce partners and ramped up short-term training solutions to meet the workforce needs especially of the logistics/ transportation, utilities, manufacturing and healthcare sectors. This is critical toward bringing back Kentucky's economy. Commerce Lexington supports KCTCS in its efforts to get Pell Grants expanded to include short-term, workforce-focused certificates. **Workforce Pell Grants**, also known as short-term Pell Grants, would allow federal financial aid dollars to be used to pay for short-term training or credential programs – programs that have been proven to help workers quickly gain the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs and earn higher wages.



Season's Greetings



*Wishing you a beautiful holiday season and a
New Year of peace and happiness.*

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT WESBANCO





Effectively Combat Substance Abuse:

Commerce Lexington acknowledges the need to address Kentucky's substance abuse problem and will continue to support public policy efforts to curb this epidemic through a comprehensive approach aimed at prevention, treatment and criminal justice reforms. Substance abuse issues are having a negative impact on our workforce, particularly in terms of increased health care costs, loss of workforce productivity and fiscal impact of incarceration. According to the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, lost productivity, health care costs and drug-related crimes associated with illegal drug abuse cost the Commonwealth between \$2.5 to \$3.6 billion annually. The severity of prescription drug abuse, as well as heroin and other illegal street drugs, continues to be a high priority issue for Commerce Lexington. We applaud the efforts of the University of Kentucky and other government agencies for their efforts to reduce substance abuse and increase treatment options. In the largest grant ever awarded to the University of Kentucky, researchers from UK's Center on Drug and Alcohol Research (CDAR) in partnership with the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet (JPSC) are leading the HEAL grant, a more than \$87 million study aimed at reducing opioid overdose deaths by 40 percent in 16 counties over a four-year period. Commerce Lexington Inc. will continue to partner with local, state and federal officials to address the illness of addiction. We urge officials to direct funding for these efforts in an effective and efficient manner using evidence-based approaches. We also support increased accountability over how these funds are being spent and urge increased transparency in outcome reporting.

Medicaid Sustainability:

The state's General Fund cost for Medicaid benefits has increased 25.6 percent (more than \$400 million) in the past five years (FY 2016-20) as compared to only 16.5 percent for the previous five-year period. Currently, there are more than 1.5 million Kentuckians enrolled in Medicaid—more than 35% of Kentucky's total population. Commerce Lexington supports efforts to create a sustainable Medicaid program to protect critical state investments in education and other vital programs.

Increase the Number of Health Care Professionals in Kentucky:

Many areas of Kentucky are underserved by health care professionals, which contribute to poor access and higher medical costs for our citizens. Commerce Lexington encourages lawmakers to initiate programs and funding or support policies that encourage medical professionals to serve all areas of Kentucky and all Kentuckians.

Reduce Tobacco Use

Usage Kentucky continuously leads the nation in use of tobacco and tobacco related products in adults, among pregnant women and among high school and middle school students. The tobacco related loss of economic productivity is over \$2 billion dollars annually in Kentucky alone. Commerce Lexington fully supports raising Kentucky's cigarette tax on all tobacco and tobacco related products to be more in-line with the national average. CLX supports tax parity on e-cigarettes equal to the tobacco tax rate on traditional cigarettes. Initiatives should be implemented to reduce smoking by Kentucky residents.

Health & Wellness Programs:

Commerce Lexington supports legislation that provides tax credits and incentives to employers for creating health and wellness programs for their employees. Kentucky's population consistently ranks near the top of the list among the states for overall poor health indicators. Poor health among Kentuckians is a drain on the state's resources, leading to increased health care costs for employers and employees, as well as leading to increased utilization of health care services. Health and wellness programs offer employers the opportunity to promote preventive health care and educate and encourage healthy lifestyles among their employees. Health and wellness programs may serve as an effective health care cost containment measure and serve to promote personal responsibility among employees for their own health outcomes. Commerce Lexington will continue to support programs and policies that incentivize companies to educate and promote health and wellness for their employees.



Economic Development Incentives & Partnerships:

Established in 2007, Commerce Lexington continues to strengthen its partnership between the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, the University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Small Business Development Center to encourage economic development, investment and job growth in Central Kentucky. Commerce Lexington supports the development of new incentives and investment strategies to help Kentucky's businesses grow and prosper in today's global economy. Although not a substitute for comprehensive tax reform, Commerce Lexington supports incentive programs designed to encourage the growth of high wage jobs, long-term investment in strategically defined industry sectors, small business promotion, or other significant economic development projects that demonstrate a clear return on investment and would not otherwise occur without the incentive. Commerce Lexington urges lawmakers to continue to support, and in some cases, consider enhancements to the state incentive programs promoting business growth and job creation, such as the Kentucky Business Investment program (KBI), Kentucky Enterprise Initiative Act (KEIA), Kentucky Reinvestment Act (KRA), Kentucky Investment Fund Act (KIFA), SBIR/STTR matching program, and the Kentucky Skills Network workforce training programs. Commerce Lexington supports a modification of the Kentucky Reinvestment Act (KRA) to include service and technology firms in addition to manufacturing firms within the KRA program to retain service and technology jobs in the Commonwealth. Commerce Lexington supports linking the tax credits directly to job retention and would support implementing minimum requirements for companies to meet before the tax incentives become available.

High-Tech Ecosystem:

Commerce Lexington Inc. supports initiatives that encourage the continued development of the knowledge-based economy in central Kentucky. We support policies that facilitate the development and retention of high-tech manufacturing and biotechnology investments in our region and specifically encourage additional research and development and technology transfer activity. Commerce Lexington will be an advocate for public-private partnerships that move ideas to theory, theory to applied research, and applied research to profitable commercial application. To help provide additional financial support enabling such business activity to occur, Commerce Lexington supports the development of seed capital funds that focus on central Kentucky investments and the promotion of innovative companies to existing venture capital firms. Commerce Lexington encourages the federal government to continue the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) and for Kentucky to continue funding the state's match program for these startup companies. We urge state government to support policy

changes to the state's SBIR/STTR grant matching program that target investments in the most viable companies for commercialization, provide those businesses with more entrepreneurial support to aid growth and allow for the state to have a greater return on investment (ROI) for those incentives. Commerce Lexington also supports continued funding of the Kentucky Innovation and the Angel Investors Networks.

R&D Investment Incentives:

American corporations focus their research and development activities on the development of new products, processes, and services while relying on research universities to do basic scientific research. In order to supplement basic research investment by federal agencies, Commerce Lexington supports the establishment of federal and state tax incentives to encourage corporations to make cash investments or endowment gifts to research departments or proof of concept centers of public research universities. Incentives should also be in place to encourage corporations to make investments in high-tech, high-risk start-up technology companies.



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businesses, now
more than ever.**



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Taxes & Regulation

Commerce Lexington recognizes that in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, promoting long-term economic development and job growth must be a top priority when revenue options are being considered. Tax and regulatory policy at all levels of government must be guided by a well-researched, balanced approach that provides for necessary public investments and expenditures, while avoiding policies that could serve as disincentives to economic growth and private sector employment and investment. State and local tax code changes should recognize and encourage long-term future growth and provide sufficient revenue options, so that local governments are able to tailor their tax policy to local conditions. Commerce Lexington encourages lawmakers to monitor the impact of Kentucky's tax code on the private sector and to take action when necessary to ensure Kentucky remains competitive with its surrounding states.

Comprehensive Tax Reform

As the Kentucky General Assembly contemplates comprehensive tax reform, Commerce Lexington strongly urges lawmakers to evaluate existing state and local tax policies and proposed changes by using the following criteria:

- **Effective:** Tax policies should be reviewed to determine the intended or unintended consequences. Tax laws proving contrary to their intention or more burdensome than intended should be repealed or scaled back.
- **Competitive:** Tax policy should promote a positive climate that encourages increased investment and job growth.
- **Revenue Sensitive:** Tax policy should provide sufficient revenues overall to fund critical priorities.
- **Predictable:** Sources of tax revenue should be relatively predictable and stable over time.
- **Equitable:** Tax policy should be fair but must not discourage economic activity, employment, or wage growth.
- **Efficient:** Any tax policy must be designed to facilitate cost efficient compliance and administration.

Local Tax Reform

Commerce Lexington supports an amendment to the Kentucky Constitution, and enabling legislation, that would permit cities and counties, including urban county governments, to enact local tax reform, including local option sales tax that does not exceed one percent with a sunset provision. The local option sales tax would be for funding dedicated to specific local projects, as proposed by the local government and approved by voter referendum.

Revise Limited Liability Entity Tax

Commerce Lexington supported the 2006 Tax Modernization by the General Assembly. However, the creation of the Limited Liability Entity Tax (LLET) and the lack of ability to offset passthrough credits against tax on income from other businesses and other years have become problematic. Commerce Lexington supports efforts to adjust the tax code to encourage entrepreneurial investment in the Commonwealth.

Regulatory Reform

Commerce Lexington urges federal, state and local governments to consider a comprehensive review of the regulations, taxes and fees impacting businesses to determine areas where these policies could be modified, reduced, streamlined or eliminated to improve government efficiency and create a more business friendly environment for Lexington and Kentucky. We encourage sensitivity at the local and state level to regulations that are more stringent than federal regulations that hurt Kentucky's economic competitiveness. Commerce Lexington supports efforts to review local, state and federal regulations and when appropriate, modify, eliminate or streamline regulations to make Central Kentucky more business friendly. Commerce Lexington also strongly urges state and federal officials to support commonsense regulatory reform that restores accountability, transparency and public participation in the rule or regulation making process. Commerce Lexington opposes unfunded mandates trickling down from federal and state agencies that impact local governments without regard to the affordability of the mandates, and the ability of a local community, its businesses and taxpayers to absorb the costs. Commerce Lexington will advocate for regulatory reform efforts at all levels of government. These efforts should include, but not be limited to the following:

- Review of any agency fee increase or regulatory change carefully and examine the fee increases based on need, rate of inflation and economic impact on business. No fee or regulations with significant fiscal impact on business should be increased without the clear approval from the appropriate federal, state or local legislative body with oversight authority.
- Agencies should be asked to demonstrate the economic impact to businesses and local communities of implementing new regulations.
- Consent Decrees or other legal or administrative requirements should take into account and publicly demonstrate the ability of local governments, quasi-governmental agencies, schools and businesses to afford the alternatives demanded by the state and/or EPA. These financial analyses should be conducted by people with experience in developing financial impacts before the solution is finalized.
- If it is determined that the entity cannot reasonably afford the solution required by the state or federal agency, then the state should be required to assist the entity in developing an alternate financial plan.



Employer Rights:

As Kentucky continues to suffer the effects of COVID-19, Commerce Lexington calls on policy makers to protect the rights of employers to use all tools available to stop this terrible disease. Vaccination is key to ending the pandemic, and we must preserve the rights of employers to make decisions that make the most sense for their business, staff, and customers. This includes the right to mandate the vaccine and to use other methods available to stop the virus. Every day, employers are making difficult decisions to ensure they are protecting their workforce and patrons, and these decisions are not made lightly. Employers have an obligation to act, to listen to multiple perspectives, and to balance the needs of the diverse workforce with protecting customers and staff. The laws in place allow employers to do this and account for the fact that all workplaces are different and have varying levels of risk.

Business Liability Protection:

Kentucky's liability climate is a major barrier to economic growth. Lawmakers should pass meaningful reforms to Kentucky's legal liability system and extend the protections in Senate Bill 5, passed in the 2021 Regular Session, which helps support Kentucky's economic recovery by protecting businesses from unwarranted COVID-related lawsuits.

Commerce Lexington also supports effective measures to address the escalating costs of health care and medical malpractice insurance for health providers, to lower health care costs, health insurance premiums, and improve access to care. Commerce Lexington supports further reforms such as a constitutional amendment that would permit the Legislature to consider comprehensive tort reform. Current law in Kentucky also allows unlimited damages for noneconomic losses. These damages are awarded based on pain and suffering, emotional distress, and other intangible injuries that occur because of medical malpractice or personal injuries. In addition, there is no cap on amounts a jury can award in punitive damages. Kentucky is the only state in our region that does not have any form of caps on damages. These damages involve no direct economic loss and have no precise value. It is very difficult for juries to assign a dollar value to these losses, given the minimal guidance they customarily receive from the court. As a result, these awards tend to be unpredictable. The specter of a "jackpot" verdict always in the background discourages many providers from locating in Kentucky and represents a barrier to economic development in the region. Kentucky needs this constitutional change in order to modernize our legal liability system and allow for reforms, such as medical review panels.

Immigration:

Commerce Lexington supports a comprehensive immigration reform package which includes modernizations to the guest worker program which addresses the needs of all Kentucky's work places.

Safer Workplaces:

Commerce Lexington supports allowing employers to share factual and documented information about past employees, without subjecting themselves to undue liability, when providing references to inquiring employers during the hiring process. We also support legislation to allow employers to help fight illegal drug use in the workplace. Commerce Lexington opposes any expansion in the current concealed/carry laws that would allow employees to bring deadly weapons into the workplace.

Public Employee Pension Systems:

Commerce Lexington remains concerned about the financial viability of Kentucky's public employee pension systems, the downgrading of state's bond rating and the negative impact on businesses. Commerce Lexington strongly urges the General Assembly to continue progress toward the goal of establishing equitable retirement and health insurance benefits for new hires that more closely resemble those available in the private sector. Commerce Lexington supports a comprehensive review of all public employee pension systems (including the Kentucky Teachers Retirement System) and related benefits and encourages state legislators to consider other serious structural changes to all systems to assure funding pensions does not cripple state government's ability to provide essential services. Commerce Lexington will continue to monitor reform implementation with emphasis on assuring no benefit increases without full funding and the inclusion of actuarial required contributions in the state budget. Commerce Lexington discourages lawmakers from using bonding to address shortfalls in state pension funds, which could jeopardize the state's financial stability for future generations.

Public Employee Collective Bargaining:

Commerce Lexington strongly opposes public employee collective bargaining. Public employees are afforded significant benefits, job protections, and established rank and pay scales. The adjustment or alteration of these benefits are decisions that can and should be made as a matter of public policy.

Wage Mandates:

Commerce Lexington supports government efforts to find balanced, long-term solutions to the problems confronted by our community. We do not support private sector wage mandates that exceed state or federal guidelines.

Revision of Statute of Limitations:

Commerce Lexington Inc. believes that Kentucky's five-year statute of limitations on employee wrongful termination or discrimination lawsuits places an undue requirement on employers. Commerce Lexington supports changes to Kentucky's statute that would make all employment discharge and discrimination type actions more uniform with federal guidelines while still protecting employees and employers.



Unemployment Insurance:

Commerce Lexington Inc. believes that the integrity of the unemployment insurance trust fund should be maintained and opposes efforts to utilize the fund in ways that are contrary to its original purpose of providing unemployment insurance to temporarily displaced workers. Commerce Lexington will continue to monitor the implementation of the reforms to the state's unemployment insurance system, and support efforts to reform the benefit structure to keep costs and benefits competitive with other states and increase workforce participation. Commerce Lexington supports efforts to provide those out-of-work with access to training and career counseling. To keep unemployment insurance (UI) taxes on Kentucky employers competitive, reforms should incorporate changes to the UI tax structure, and state lawmakers should fully restore the state UI trust fund to pre-pandemic levels. Employers participating in the unemployment insurance program face significant tax increases to recover the trust fund balances to pre-pandemic levels.

Employer & Labor Union:

Maintaining the balance between labor unions and employers is critical to continued job creation. Commerce Lexington Inc. urges federal officials and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to support policies and rulemaking that promote economic growth. We strongly encourage the appointment of a full and balanced NLRB and urge federal and state officials to fight changes to our labor law system that undermine employer-employee relations.

- Maintain a balance of representation on the NLRB, with members properly vetted and ratified through Congress.
- Protect secret ballot elections to form unions.
- Maintain functional grouping of business units that do not pit "sub" or "micro" units against each other in organizing efforts (micro unions).
- Maintain a company's ability to educate employees on the consequences of unionization, do not include binding arbitration provisions, and do not impose one-sided penalties.
- Consider the use of email and social media to misrepresent picketed areas, an Unfair Labor Practice.





Alcohol Industry:

Commerce Lexington supports protecting and growing Kentucky's homegrown Bourbon industry and our booming alcohol beverage industry — including our world class distribution network.

We think it's in the Commonwealth's interest to continue to build on Bourbon's momentum, the growth in Kentucky-based wines & ciders, and our home-brewed craft beers.

Commerce Lexington supports lowering all alcohol taxes — which currently burden our retailers and consumers on many levels. Kentucky is now one of the highest taxed alcohol industries in the country. It is a system that needs complete overhaul to put one of our signature industries in a more competitive light. In particular, Kentucky remains the only place in the world that taxes aging barrels of spirits each and every year. This discriminatory barrel tax puts Kentucky at a competitive disadvantage with other cities and states to attract distilleries, jobs and vital economic and tourism investment. Commerce Lexington supports making the Bourbon barrel tax credit refundable or eliminating the tax altogether while keeping local communities whole, so distillers can reinvest in their local operations and communities.

In addition, Commerce Lexington supports expanding popular private barrel selection programs and establishing a sound regulatory process that offers flexibility in these sales at distillery gift shops and direct-to-consumer shipments. We support parity with wineries and brewers by giving distillers the ability to sell unique bottles at their gift shops; expanding distillery participation and sales at fairs, festivals and farmer's markets; and operating satellite tasting rooms with retail privileges.

Commerce Lexington also supports legislation that will allow all our industry partners to hire employees 18 years old or older to help alleviate severe work and employee shortages in the hospitality industry.

Tourism Development:

The tourism industry is an important component of an overall economic development strategy. Commerce Lexington supports initiatives and incentives designed to enhance the state's tourism and agri-tourism industry's positive impact through the promotion of events and the promotion of central Kentucky as a tourism and agri-tourism destination. COVID-19 had a devastating impact on the local tourism industry, but the tourism in Lexington is positioned to make a strong comeback with the opening of the new Central Bank Center in the first quarter of 2022. To ensure the convention center is competitive and the rest of the industry recovers quickly, we encourage the General Assembly to support the tourism industry's request for American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Equine:

Thousands of acres of horse farms, world class venues, such as Keeneland and the Kentucky Horse Park, and many horse-related national headquarters, including the United States Equestrian Federation, earn Kentucky the title of Horse Capital of the World. The American Horse Council's 2017 Economic Impact Study of the Horse Industry calculated that the industry had a \$3.9 billion economic impact on Kentucky and generated 56,603 jobs. Because of the substantial economic impact that the equine industry has on our region, Commerce Lexington supports initiatives to protect and enhance the future growth of the equine industry. At the state level, these efforts include ensuring continued wagering on historical horse racing, innovative tax approaches, purse increases, increased funding for breeder incentive programs, appropriate funding to maintain the quality of the Kentucky Horse Park, and other assistance to allow our equine industry to remain competitive. Kentucky's sales tax on equine products puts our region and the Commonwealth at a disadvantage with competitor states. Commerce Lexington supports efforts to eliminate this competitive disadvantage in tax reform. Federally, this advocacy includes support for the Market Access Program that enables U.S. agricultural trade associations, cooperatives, state regional trade groups and small businesses to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities; trade policies that open markets for the safe import and direct export of horses; and immigration reform to meet workforce needs in agriculture industries. Commerce Lexington also supports national uniformity in laboratory standards, testing requirements and penalties for Thoroughbred racing, accomplished via federal legislation or alternative means.

Hemp:

Thanks in large part to state leaders and members of Kentucky's Congressional delegation, hemp is now permanently a legal agricultural commodity, no longer considered a controlled substance. After more than a century of prohibition, Kentucky is poised to reemerge as the global leader in hemp production. However, roadblocks remain to the full realization of hemp's potential for farmers and businesses. Commerce Lexington supports efforts that clarify the legality of financial transactions in hemp commerce, and that promote fair and expeditious regulations of hemp products like cannabidiol (CBD) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. We also support the Mayor's efforts to promote ag-tech businesses and the growing hemp industry in Lexington.

Sports Betting:

Commerce Lexington supports allowing sports wagering in Kentucky, as allowed by the 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision. Any legislation to approve sports wagering in the Commonwealth must protect existing signature industries and racing facilities.



Workers' Compensation:

Commerce Lexington applauds the General Assembly for enacting reforms in 2018 to the state's workers compensation system to provide clarity to statutes, improve return to work outcomes and lower costs for employers. We will continue to monitor the implementation of these reforms and support workers' compensation regulations that offer clear and objective definitions of injury and disability, use objective medical findings of impairment for awards, reduce litigation, encourage retraining and education, and return to work while abating growing costs for central Kentucky employers. Commerce Lexington supports legislative or regulatory measures that will help control Kentucky's rising medical and prescription drug costs in workers' compensation cases without disrupting needed services to injured workers.

Criminal Justice Reforms:

Kentucky made important progress to protect public safety with the enactment of corrections reform legislation in 2011 and juvenile justice code reforms in 2014, while establishing a system to control spiraling corrections costs. Commerce Lexington also applauds the Governor and General Assembly for the passage of limited felony expungement legislation in 2016 to help workers limited by a past mistake re-enter and advance in the workforce. Commerce Lexington will continue to monitor, and support when appropriate, support efforts focused on reducing recidivism, making communities safer, increasing our workforce and saving taxpayer dollars.

Public-Private Partnerships:

Commerce Lexington encourages the use of public/private partnerships (P3) by local and state government agencies for the delivery of services and/or the construction and/or management of a variety of infrastructure related projects. To ensure accountability in contracting with private entities, it is essential that proper safeguards be in place to ensure transparency and that quality services are delivered at a lower cost to taxpayers.

Condemnation:

Commerce Lexington is opposed to government acquisition of privately-owned businesses through condemnation for the purpose of operating the business.

Government Efficiency:

Commerce Lexington supports the need for government modernization and increased efficiency. Commerce Lexington will continue to urge the General Assembly to focus on spending reforms across government, including the areas of public employee health benefits, the public employee pension system, corrections and Medicaid.

International Trade:

Kentucky has established itself as a major exporter in a broad range of industries - from manufacturing to agriculture, as well as an attractive location for foreign investments. Kentucky set a new record in 2017 with \$30 billion in exports. These exports directly support 140,000 jobs in Kentucky, with tens of thousands more indirectly supported by exports. Commerce Lexington Inc. urges elected officials to support fair and equitable trade agreements that open new markets and create new opportunities for businesses and workers in our region. We remain concerned about the negative economic impact of tariffs proposed or imposed, as well as the continued uncertainty over the future of trade agreements, on Kentucky's signature industries. Commerce Lexington will continue to monitor these issues, seek feedback from local employers and communicate economic impacts to federal officials.

Land Use Planning:

Commerce Lexington Inc. supports local control and decision-making in the areas of land use planning. Commerce Lexington believes it is imperative for regional communities to collaborate and coordinate regional planning efforts related to natural resources, housing, utilities, economic development, transportation and the possibility of revenue sharing. Through the Bluegrass Alliance and Central Kentucky Policy Group, Commerce Lexington works closely with local governments, economic developers and community leaders throughout central Kentucky to develop a common vision for the prosperity of our region.

- Commerce Lexington encourages communities to develop comprehensive plans that balance the need for housing and economic development while protecting agriculture industries and natural resources.
- Affordability of housing is not just an issue for low-income central Kentuckians. Availability and affordability of housing is an issue of concern for expanding and relocating companies and the talent they need to attract and retain. We must plan for continued growth and development, and we must evaluate the impact each decision has on our ability to develop and maintain housing options within the reach of all our citizens.
- Commerce Lexington supports policies and initiatives to provide a sufficient supply of land that is readily available for economic development opportunities and job creation through a public and/or public-private business park aimed at recruiting high wage jobs.
- Commerce Lexington will continue to advocate for land for job creation to include the following components such as but not limited to: shovel-ready, properly zoned, infrastructure and transportation access, large block tracts, and competitive pricing.



Protect Low Cost Energy:

Commerce Lexington urges local, state and federal officials to support efforts to maintain affordable low-cost, reliable energy for business and residents. Kentucky offers some of the lowest electricity rates in the nation due in large part to the abundance of coal resources, natural gas and two regional transmission organizations as resources for electricity generation. This competitive advantage has allowed Kentucky to attract thousands of manufacturing jobs and energy intensive industries like automotive, steel and aluminum, automotive, aviation and aerospace that employ tens of thousands of Kentuckians. Central Kentucky businesses and economic developers remain concerned about the proposed regulations on carbon emissions, electricity generating facilities, and new regulations on Kentucky's mining industry. Commerce Lexington Inc. supports the U.S. EPA's Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) Rule, which will help Kentucky protect its low energy rates, and the revised definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS), which provides much needed clarity to businesses. We also urge state and federal officials to monitor, clarify definitions and ensure compliance flexibility including Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR), New Source Review (NSR), Clean Water Act Effluent Limitation Guidelines (ELG), and natural gas pipeline safety.

- **Coal:** Supports coal remaining an integral part of our nation's energy portfolio, and ensuring a level playing field for all low cost fuel sources to provide low cost electricity. Coal provides more than 70 percent of Kentucky's electricity helping to make our electricity some of the most economical, reliable, and resilient in the U.S.
- **Mineral Recovery:** Encourage the recovery of rare earth, critical minerals and advanced carbon fiber from the state's coal reserves to protect national security.
- **Natural Gas:** Encourages the investment in production and use of other reliable energy fuels like natural gas and renewable natural gas (RNG). Supports flexibility in compliance and safety regulations. Kentucky's oil and gas industry has a total value production of more than \$1 billion and employs 9,000+ Kentuckians. Commerce Lexington supports financial and infrastructure incentives to help stimulate adoption of natural gas and RNG transportation fuels to ensure that both are readily available for economic development. Central Kentucky could benefit from increased use of compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquefied natural gas (LNG) motor transportation fuels such as those used for in-state and inter-state trucking fleets, waste haulers, delivery and repair vehicles, and personal cars and trucks.
- **Fair Regulations:** Support review, elimination, or updates to outdated or duplicative regulations to ensure a level playing field for all low-cost fuel sources.
- **Research & Technology Investments:** Supports research, development and utilization of new technologies for a cleaner energy strategy for continued reductions in carbon emissions and greenhouse gases while limiting unreasonable adverse impacts on coal and gas industries.

- **Energy Efficiency Measures:** Support investments in energy efficiency measures, alternative fuels and renewable energy to spur economic growth and energy innovation including grant opportunities for the University of Kentucky's Center for Applied Energy Research.

Promote a Sensible Regulatory Approach:

Commerce Lexington strongly supports commonsense regulatory reform that restores accountability, transparency, the use of scientific data and public participation in the rule making process across all local, state and federal agencies. We oppose regulations at the local and state level that are more stringent than federal regulations, and those that result in significant adverse economic impact on citizens, farmers, cities and industries. We urge all levels of government to engage in a thorough review of existing regulations, current MOU's, MOA's and other guidance documents to identify statutes or regulations that need to be clarified, eliminated or modified to increase economic competitiveness for businesses. Commerce Lexington appreciates the U.S. EPA's efforts to provide states with more flexibility in managing their environmental programs and encourages continued efforts to identify more creative ways for states and the U.S. EPA to collaborate on regulatory and enforcement issues.

Storm Water/Sanitary Sewer & Consent Decree Implementation:

Commerce Lexington will continue to monitor implementation processes to ensure the LFUCG's plan to meet EPA requirements is completed in a timely and cost-effective manner. We support periodic, independent performance reviews/audits to ensure taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently by local government throughout project implementation.

Track New Sanitary Sewer & Storm Water Permits & Fees:

Commerce Lexington will continue to engage local and state officials to ensure that requirements of new sewer and storm water permits, fees, applications and guidance documents are not too restrictive and do not exceed state or federal regulations and that the plan and the implementation schedule is feasible and cost effective. We also will continue to educate members about the impact of the new permits.

Air Quality Rules & Regulations:

Commerce Lexington will engage local and state officials regarding the development of the air quality standards to ensure these regulations are not too restrictive, have the least cost impact on business, and protect Kentucky's low-cost energy rates.



Streamline Environmental Permitting:

Implementation of infrastructure projects is critical for community and economic development. Often the public projects are subject to requirements for review of environmental impacts in accordance with the federal National Environmental Policy Act. Although such impacts can and should be considered, the process for evaluation of, and challenges to, infrastructure projects on that basis must be streamlined to assure that important public infrastructure projects are not victims of procedural maneuvering and unnecessary delay. Commerce Lexington supports legislative efforts that:

- Encourage concurrent review and approval of permits, where feasible.
- For critical infrastructure or environmental permits, have a lead agency designated to ensure that good communication is established between the applicant and affected agencies. This person would be responsible to ensure that all permits necessary are identified, permit review timeframes are established and met, or the timeframes for permit review are reduced.
- Allow interested applicants to reimburse the department for overtime costs incurred by employees that work overtime to expedite a permit, modification, license, registration or variance.
- Afford Departments within State Government the ability to hire contractors to expedite issuance of a permit modification, license, registration or variance.
- Have each Agency provide on-line specific information regarding how best to achieve timely permitting decisions; provide clear expectations for applicants to improve the quality of applications; establish performance measures for review staff and develop, improve and encourage electronic permitting tools.
- Ensure that the permitting process will be balanced and will take into consideration economic impact of the project, public need and the requirements of existing environmental laws and regulations.

Support Energy Efficiency Measures:

Across the nation, companies - including those in Central Kentucky - are taking positive measures to make their operations more energy efficient which has led to a reduction in carbon emissions. Commerce Lexington supports voluntary energy management programs, because they are good for the environment and financially good for business. Commerce Lexington supports incentives for companies that go above and beyond their regulatory requirements and recognizing companies who have already implemented positive best management practices to reduce their energy consumption.

Brownfield Redevelopment:

Commerce Lexington strongly supports the use of Brownfield Redevelopment in communities through available state programs such as Kentucky's Bonafide Purchaser Program which reduces liability for future property owners. These programs should be expanded to allow tax incentives, low interest loans or grants or other federal and state matching funds for those committed to redeveloping the state's Brownfield sites.

Water Quality Regulations:

Commerce Lexington supports a process that enhances oversight of the review and approval of changes to new General Permits and other administrative actions that are proposed by state agencies. Commerce Lexington supports the President's Executive Order to rescind and clarify a commonsense approach to developing a Waters of the U.S. rule. It is important to more clearly define how a water will be regulated by the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act. These designation methods should avoid adverse impact on economic development due to unreasonable regulations and permitting.

Solid Waste:

The management of solid waste is a local responsibility and existing law allows local governments the necessary flexibility to develop a solid waste disposal strategy unique to the needs and expectations of their individual communities. Commerce Lexington urges enhanced enforcement and education to address illegal dumping and littering. We support programs such as Eastern Kentucky PRIDE and Bluegrass Greensource that encourage and assist citizens, local governments and schools to clean up illegal trash dumps and other solid waste problems as well as promoting environmental awareness and education. Education remains a critical component in changing the habits and attitudes of individuals across Kentucky. We also support programs that educate Kentuckians on the benefits of recycling, programs that make recycling more convenient, and strategies that develop and enhance market demand for recycled materials. Commerce Lexington believes that this type of multi-faceted strategy will have a more significant, long-term impact in addressing the need for Kentucky to embrace recycling. Some of Kentucky's solid waste statutes are currently more than their federal counterparts. Commerce Lexington supports reasonable, thoughtful reviews and updates to current solid waste rules that will provide consistency and clear direction to the regulated community.

Roads & Bridges:

Having a dependable transportation network is critical to Central Kentucky's economic vitality. Thriving communities must be able to move workers, provide services and transport products to market quickly and safely. Commerce Lexington Inc. fully supports a regional transportation approach, and investments in the infrastructure required to improve interconnectivity in the region and along the state's vital corridors. Maintaining adequate funding for transportation infrastructure remains an issue of concern at both the state and federal levels of government. Commerce Lexington urges lawmakers to find long-term solutions to ensure sufficient, sustainable and reliable funding for all modes of transportation for projects critical to economic development. At the federal level, Commerce Lexington applauds the passage of federal infrastructure legislation to support new investments and continues to support reauthorization bills that ensure long-term funding solutions for all transportation systems. We urge support of critical regional infrastructure to improve connectivity such as the U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD grants for local communities. We also urge Administration officials and Congress to support policies that ensure timelines are

maintained for the completion of environmental impact studies. We also support funding for necessitated utility infrastructure costs required by public improvement projects. Without funding, local utility customers disproportionately bear costs associated with public improvement projects. At the state level, we support modernizing the transportation funding distribution model to make it more equitable for areas with higher levels of transportation activity and needs. Commerce Lexington further supports modernizing the method for funding infrastructure to better reflect the current state of transportation as well as anticipate future needs on our transportation systems.

Airports:

Commerce Lexington supports federal and state funding to ensure on-going and stable funding for Blue Grass Airport and the three general aviation airports vital to the regional economy. At the federal level, Commerce Lexington supports passage of the annual Appropriations bills. Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding bills are desperately needed to continue development of the aviation infrastructure needed to support the growth of the region.



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Wireless & Wired Broadband:

Commerce Lexington supports improving Kentucky's wireless and wired broadband infrastructure. We support efforts at the local, state and federal level to increase the deployment of wired and wireless networks across the Commonwealth, while also opposing policies that would impede or hamper investment in digital infrastructure and economic development. A free and open internet has become a platform for innovation and economic activity unmatched in history. Commerce Lexington supports creating incentives for investment in broadband networks throughout the region as this infrastructure is critical to economic development. The COVID-19 crisis has made clear that vibrant economic ecosystems need sufficient broadband connectivity to allow Kentuckians to work and study from home. Kentucky's citizens rely on the internet to not only connect with the outside world but also to access vital news resources and stay up to date on developments in their communities. This trend will only accelerate in the future, and more support is needed for the deployment of robust broadband access in underserved areas where the costs of broadband deployment are particularly high. This requires consideration of creative solutions that will provide access for all. For example, a modernization of the FCC's Lifeline program might allow for the distribution of broadband benefit cards to eligible households so they can secure benefits from certified communications providers as easily as they use SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.

- **Access in Underserved Areas:** FCC and USDA programs like the Connect America Fund, the upcoming Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction and the ReConnect Loan and Grant Program, have provided opportunities for rural broadband providers to seek additional support in the areas they serve (or seek to serve). However, the funding amounts pale in comparison to the task at hand in order to serve unserved areas. Various studies have estimated that it will cost approximately \$80-\$100 billion to connect every home and business in America with fiber. Moreover, existing government programs need to re-evaluate to determine whether they discourage (e.g., through regulatory requirements like the ETC designation) certain well-positioned broadband providers from participating in government funding programs. We urge Congress to increase investment in our future to get broadband into the hands of those who need it, particularly rural or underserved Kentuckians. There are many bills that would address these issues, on both sides of the aisle. One of those, the Broadband DATA Act, passed by Congress in March 2020, will create more accurate broadband maps and direct resources to communities most in need – especially in underserved areas.
- **Pass a Federal Net Neutrality Law:** Commerce Lexington supports thoughtful policies that reflect the needs of the modern marketplace and encourages connectivity, transparency, privacy and accessibility. The “ping-pong” net neutrality debate at the FCC and in the courts has created a policy void that only Congress can fill. The Policy Group believes that Congress should be able to strike an

appropriate balance with a law that balances the needs of consumers to obtain the content of their choice online, while avoiding heavy handed regulation of the broadband providers that would discourage innovation and investment. The new proliferation of state-level net neutrality laws continues, and Congress must step up to avoid a patchwork policy approach that ultimately harms businesses and consumers.

- **Protect Privacy Across the Internet Ecosystem:** Consumers deserve to know that no matter where they go online, they will have the same protections. Varying policies from state-to-state lead to inconsistent safeguards that foster confusion and erode consumer confidence in their interactions online. Commerce Lexington urges Congress to pass a uniform law that provides privacy and data security protections and applies the same standard to all companies, whether internet service or edge providers, across the internet ecosystem.

Railroad:

Commerce Lexington supports short line rehabilitation tax credits to incentivize railroads increase investments, rehabilitate their tracks and expand capacity, which ultimately allows short lines to safely and efficiently serve customers.

Transit:

Commerce Lexington supports state and federal transportation funding for transit agencies in both the rural and urban areas to support workforce and economic development initiatives and the ever-changing travel needs in our communities. Funding should support capital projects and operations, including new service delivery methods especially for low-income workers, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Energy & Utility Infrastructure:

Economic development often requires extensive capital investment for the extension of energy infrastructure to serve new and growing businesses. Commerce Lexington supports legislation and regulatory action to allow Kentucky's utilities to develop financial mechanisms and capital incentives to extend their facilities to new and expanded businesses, industrial and business parks, residential development and other locations which will result in the creation of new economic growth currently without adequate utility services.

Central Ky. Water Supply:

Commerce Lexington supports an efficient, equitable and sufficient water supply for the entire region. Commerce Lexington supports investments in maintenance and upgrades on the lock and dam systems of the Kentucky River to enhance and conserve our region's primary water supply, as well as appropriate, ongoing investments in other water system infrastructure to maintain quality, reliable water service for communities. Commerce Lexington also supports interconnectivity agreements among municipalities throughout Central Kentucky.



Hilton Lexington/Downtown Hosts Business Link on February 8th

The next Commerce Lexington Business Link networking event is set for **Tuesday, February 8**, from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the **Hilton Lexington Downtown (369 West Vine Street)**. The event will enable participants to build their client base and connect with other business professionals, browse our exhibitors, and enjoy great food and drink. Located in the heart of beautiful downtown Lexington, the Hilton Lexington Downtown is connected to Rupp Arena, and close to the University of Kentucky, Blue Grass Airport and Keeneland Race Course. Don't miss this opportunity to experience the great service and hospitality from the staff of the Hilton Lexington Downtown, and find out more about the amenities and features of this signature downtown hotel.

TO REGISTER:

The cost to attend the Business Link event is \$5 for Commerce Lexington members, \$10 for non-members (payable at the door). You can also pre-register for Business Links on-line at www.CommerceLexington.com. If registering online, pick up your beverage ticket at the registration table. **PLEASE NOTE: NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN FOR ONLINE REGISTRATIONS.**

EXHIBIT SPACE:

Limited exhibit space will be available for Commerce Lexington members to showcase their products and services at this event. The cost for exhibit space is \$149 for members or \$99 for nonprofits. Visit commercelexington.com to reserve your space.

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Emerging Leaders of the Bluegrass Continues Programming for 2022

The Emerging Leaders of the Bluegrass presented **presented by Keeneland** is a comprehensive initiative that will

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help emerging leaders expand their capacity to perform in leadership roles within Central Kentucky through professional development, networking, mentoring and community education opportunities. Upcoming programming includes the second part of a Stress Management Series on getting organized led by Professional Development Sponsor ExecuTrain on January 25. Participants will learn how to build a coping toolkit as well as how to implement action to reduce unhealthy stress.

BECOME A PASSHOLDER:

The format is different than other Commerce Lexington programs, as we offer an Annual Access Pass at the introductory price of \$75 for Commerce Lexington members and \$100 for non-members. Purchase your Access Pass today, or find out more on-line at www.emergingleadersbg.com.



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EVENTS

An Evening With Commerce Lexington Postponed to April 6th

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Special Notice to Members:

The concerning news of the rapidly-spreading Covid 19 Omicron variant is looming large on our communities. In consideration of an expected surge after the holidays, Commerce Lexington leadership has decided that our An Evening With Commerce Lexington presented by Fifth Third Bank that was scheduled for January 27 at Central Bank Center should be postponed. Our goal is to have an incredibly successful event that everyone is comfortable attending. By moving the event to **Wednesday, April 6th**, we are more assured of the opportunity to fully socialize and engage with each other during this large premier event. We owe that to you, our sponsors, as well as to our members and the community. Thank you for continuing to be flexible and supportive during these uncertain times. We will move all existing reservations and sponsor commitments forward to the new date. If you have questions, contact Lynda Bebrowsky at lbrowsky@commercelexington.com.

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In 2022, events will start to look more like the "normal" we once knew. Guests are eager to get back to in-person gatherings, but are still cognizant of safety protocols and a safe and clean environment. No longer can events use the pandemic as an excuse, and event goers are more aware than ever before about activation, execution, and the overall experience. Especially for those reintroducing events after a year or two off - it's more important than ever to ensure every detail is considered. Give us a call, and we can help with it all - from venue selection to logistics, registration and ticketing to menu creation, on-site branding and activation, and more. Our team of experts can help with the littlest of details, or the biggest of challenges, no matter the size of your event.



VIRTUAL EVENT

@330: Hook, Line & Sinker: How to Get Scammed Out of Thousands

When it comes to fishing, you can reel in a big catch with the right bait. The same goes for cyber phishing. All a hacker needs is a clever story and a little deceit to turn your employees into suckerfish. Now more than ever, remote and onsite employees are being caught in malicious social engineering nets. Knowing that many small businesses aren't taking proper security measures, bad actors posing as trusted sources are tricking their victims into clicking on infected links and deceiving their way into a business's network.

During the next Commerce Lexington @330 Series event presented by Lexington Event Company on **Tuesday, January 11**, from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. **via Zoom**, Eric Del Valle and Jon-Michael Whitney from 46Solutions will illustrate how cybercriminals take advantage of your employee's trust through the art of social engineering. How do you



ERIC
DEL VALLE



JON-MICHAEL
WHITNEY

prevent users from falling hook, line, and sinker for these scams? Better protection starts with proper awareness and education. Participants will learn how to be prepared and cautious regarding cybersecurity using helpful tips that can save your company hundreds of thousands of dollars.

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TO REGISTER:

Commerce Lexington's @330 events feature a topical presentation that is relevant to the success of entrepreneurs, business owners and business professionals. There is no cost to attend this members' only event. Once you register online at www.commercelexington.com, a Zoom link for the event will be included in the sign-up confirmation e-mail.

Tampa-St. Petersburg Announced as 2022 Leadership Visit Site

Fresh off the success of the Austin Leadership Visit **presented by Central Bank & Trust Co.**, Commerce Lexington is pleased to announce that the annual intercity visit in 2022 will take Central Kentucky leaders to the Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida region, **May 11 - 13, 2022**. We'll spend opening day in Tampa before we travel to St. Petersburg to get a solid understanding of these two communities. Each have unique identities but together they're known for a resurgent economy, a supportive business environment, a highly diverse talent pool, low cost of living and high quality of life.

Commerce Lexington's 2022 Board Chair John Gohmann, Regional President of PNC Bank, said, "Tampa Bay's regional economy has several similarities to Central Kentucky and some key programs and initiatives that we can examine and compare ideas. I hope you'll consider joining our delegation for this important community and region-building intercity visit."

Registration is available on-line now for the 2022 trip at www.commercelexington.com/tampa-st-petersburg-2022.html.

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Skyline of St. Petersburg, Florida





Leadership Central Kentucky Class Explores Franklin County

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Recap by Tish Shade, President/CEO, Frankfort Area Chamber

The Leadership Central Kentucky began the day at the Capitol with breakfast sponsored by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. The group heard updates from John Cox, Manager of Public Affairs, and during a tour, we had a chance to meet and ask questions of State Representative Derrick Graham and Senator Adrienne Southworth. Just before leaving, we heard from Governor Andy Beshear, and we got to take pictures and some selfies with him.

Next, the class stopped at Rebecca Ruth Candies for a sweet treat before lunch at the Frankfort Country Club sponsored by Beam Suntory. Karen Wheeler from Jim Beam shared with us the amazing programs they offer, while letting us have a taste of the Jim Beam Black. During lunch, Frankfort Mayor Layne Wilkerson also welcomed our group to Frankfort and Commissioner of Agriculture Ryan Quarles stopped by to say hello.

We then took off to Boone National Guard to see and get a group photo with a Black Hawk Helicopter. We stepped outside to see one taking



off and landing. We got a bird's eye view of the Emergency Operations Center for all of Kentucky and some of us were lucky enough to get in a photo shoot with a veteran who popped in for his 100th birthday!

Last but not least, we took a tour of Buffalo Trace with legendary tour guide Freddie, who is a third-generation employee and so valued that they named Freddie's Root Beer after him! We had our second Bourbon tasting of the day and then had appetizers with Buffalo Trace's Leadership team. We shopped in the gift shop, which lucky for us had Blanton's on this day, and then headed back to the bus to end our day at the Capitol. It was a great day!

Volunteers Complete Successful 2021 Winner's Circle Campaign

Volunteers completed a successful Winner's Circle campaign by surpassing the total production goal prior to the December 17th Victory Luncheon held at the Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa. Prior to that, volunteers, staff and campaign leadership celebrated their progress during a Reward Social at Belle Vie Medspa in The Summit at Fritz Farm. During the campaign, volunteers from throughout the community working to bring in new members, renewals and membership upgrades, while informing existing members about valuable services and marketing opportunities available through Commerce Lexington.

As of the Victory Luncheon, the top producing teams were **WesBanco Bank, Unified Trust, A Division of American Trust Company, Central Bank & Trust Co., and Community Trust Bank.** Top producing individuals included **Abby Vaughn** (Unified Trust), **Todd Sallee** (Fifth Third Bank), and **Camden Skidmore** (Republic Bank). Watch for more details and final campaign totals inside the February issue of BUSINESS FOCUS magazine.



Winner's Circle top producing volunteers were recognized during the Victory Luncheon on December 17th at the Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa. (Photo by Commerce Lexington Staff)



Leadership Lexington Hears From a Variety of Government Leaders

Recap by Rachel Elam, Wealth Coach of Kentucky, Inc.

Leadership Lexington spent December 9th hearing from Lexington's leaders in government and learned more about how local government operates. The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government became a merged government in 1974 and functions as both a city and a county. Lexington is also a nonpartisan government with an elected mayor and a 15-member legislative council which includes the 12 councilmembers (two-year terms) and three at-large councilmembers (four-year terms).

Councilmember Amanda Mays Bledsoe (District 10) educated the class on the budget process and gave an overview of the city services. We even got to split up in groups and act as councilmembers for a day by making decisions about the budget through a budget simulation.

During the afternoon, the class got introduced to the court system. Judge Melissa Moore Murphy (Kentucky 22nd District Court, 4th Division) moderated a panel with Judge Kimberly Bunnell (Fayette Circuit, 9th Division, Chief Circuit Court Judge), Judge Pamela Goodwine (Court of Appeals, 5th Appellate District, Division 1), Judge Libby Messer (Kentucky 22nd Circuit Court, Division 1), and Vincent Riggs (Circuit Court Clerk). Representatives from the Department of Public Advocacy and The Fayette County Attorney's Office also participated.

Our group later heard from U.S. Congressman Andy Barr, State Representative Killian Ti-

money, and State Senator Reginald Thomas. Lexington has many issues, which is why our local government leaders are trying their best to work together to educate the community on how our local government works and how we can make Lexington a wonderful place for living.

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Kentucky Skill Games LLC
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Kenwick Table
Coffee Shop/Restaurant
Main Contact: Savannah Cox
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Phone: (859) 407-1585
www.kenwicktable.com

Lexington First Insurance
Insurance
Main Contact: Colten Blankenship
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Lexington, KY 40504
Phone: (859) 260-8745
www.lexingtonfirstinsurance.com

Little English
Clothing
Main Contact: Shannon Latham
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Lexington, KY 40511
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www.littleenglish.com

Man O' War Farm
Farms
Main Contact: Susan Bunning
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Phone: (859) 361-2860

Myers Printing, Inc.
Printing Services
Main Contact: Lisa Horm
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Phone: (859) 255-9413
www.myersprint.com

Play Mart, Inc.
Manufacturers-Products
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www.playmart.com

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Springdale Title LLC
Title Companies
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Taylor Made Sales Agency
Equine Research
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Phone: (859) 881-6150
www.taylormadefarm.com

United States Dressage Federation
Non-Profit Organizations
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Lexington, KY 40511
Phone: (859) 971-2277
www.usdf.org

United Surgical Associates, PSC
Surgery
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Lexington, KY 40504
Phone: (859) 977-0761
www.fsalexington.com

PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Corporate Moves, Company Awards and Notable Milestones

Kathy Love, MHA, has been named president of Saint Joseph East in Lexington, which is part of **CHI Saint Joseph Health**.

Dickinson Wright PLLC recently received 23 national rankings and six rankings in Lexington in the "2022 Best Law Firms" report by *U.S. News and Best Lawyers*. The firm received 118 first-tier rankings overall. The rankings, presented in tiers, showcase more than 10,000 law firms ranked nationally and/or by metropolitan region. The Lexington office was ranked Tier 1 in Commercial Litigation, Litigation – Construction, and Trusts & Estates Law, Tier 2 in Appellate Law and Litigation – Environmental, and Tier 3 in Environmental Law.

Independence Bank announced its latest expansion into the Horse Capital of the World. Leading the Lexington market is **Stacy Schanher Berge**. With more than 20 years of banking and business management experience, Berge has an extensive background in monitoring financial performance and meeting treasury client needs.

The **Kentucky Coal Association** has named **Tucker Davis** as its incoming President. Prior to joining KCA, Davis served as a political appointee in the Trump Administration at the U.S. Department of the Interior and most recently managed Winsome Sears' successful campaign for Lt. Governor of Virginia.

Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) named **Christopher Howes** as vice president and chief information officer. He will be responsible for leading the strategic vision for technology solutions for the 16 colleges of KCTCS and serve as a member of the president's cabinet.

The **Kentucky Distillers' Association** recently announced new board officers and directors. **Kevin Smith** of Beam Suntory has been elected Chairman of the 141-year-old non-profit trade group. Board officers will include **Chris Morris** (Brown-Forman) as vice chairman, **Jessica Pendergrass** (Heaven Hill) as secretary, and **Ryan Ashley** (Four Roses) as treasurer. Other 2022 board members include **Mark Erwin** (Bardstown Bourbon Co.), **Will Arvin** (Castle & Key Distillery), **Pauline Rooney** (Diageo North America), **Jacob Call** (Green River Distilling Co.), **Wes Henderson** (Louisville Distilling Co.), **Eri Lapish** (Lux Row Distillers), **Joseph Magliocco** (Michter's Distillery), **Kaveh Zamanian** (Rabbit Hole Distillery), **Marco Barassi** (Wild Turkey), **Shane Baker** (Wilderness Trail Distillery), **Britt**

Kulsveen (Willett Distillery), **Mark Coffman** (Lexington Brewing & Distilling Company) as Proof Director, and **Paul Tomaszewski** (MB Roland Distillery) as Craft Director.

Lexington Habitat for Humanity has named **Elaine Luhr** as the organization's acting Chief Executive Officer, while a search to replace CEO **Rachel Smith Childress**, who is retiring after 15 years of service, is completed.

NAI Isaac announced the promotion of **Jonathan Keller** to Property Manager.

Leigh House has joined **Omni Architects** as a production team member assisting in schematic design, production of design documents, visualizations, and construction documentation.

Stites & Harbison, PLLC received three National Tier 1 rankings in *U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers®* 2022 Best Law Firms, including Litigation – Construction, Litigation – Real Estate, and Trademark Law.

The firm's overall results included 82 metropolitan rankings in six regions and represent 46 legal practice areas.

VisitLEX earned Best in Show along with three gold, four silver, and three bronze awards at the Kentucky Travel Industry Association (KTIA) fall conference. **Mary Quinn Ramer**, President of VisitLEX, was also honored by the association as KTIA's Member of the Year for her tireless work on behalf of the statewide tourism industry.

Wiser Strategies has named **LaDonna Roberts** as office coordinator and **Lindsey Brady** as a writer and content manager.

SUBMIT PERSONNEL NEWS:

Submit your company's awards, personnel changes, additions, or promotions for Business Focus to mturner@CommerceLexington.com. Information is published in the order received and as space permits.



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COMMERCE LEXINGTON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2022:

- 11** **@330 Series presented by Lexington Event Company,** 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. **- SEE PAGE 31**
- 13** **Leadership Lexington presented by McBrayer PLLC:** Arts Day Session.
- 19** **Leadership Central Kentucky presented by LG&E & KU** at Franklin County.
- 25** **Public Policy Luncheon presented by Kentucky American Water,** noon - 1:30 p.m. at The Campbell House, Curio Collection by Hilton (1375 S. Broadway). **- SEE PAGE 6**
- 25** **Emerging Leaders of the Bluegrass presented by Keeneland,** Part II of Stress Management Series; Visit www.emergingleadersbg.com for more.

COVID PROTOCOL:

Based on CDC recommendations, Commerce Lexington recommends participants at its indoor events wear face coverings, except when eating or drinking.

FEBRUARY 2022:

- 8** **UK Economic Outlook Conference,** 8:30 a.m. - Noon, at Central Bank Center. **- SEE PAGE 29**
- 8** **Business Link hosted by Hilton Lexington Downtown** (369 W. Vine St.), 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. **- SEE PAGE 29**
- 10** **Leadership Lexington presented by McBrayer PLLC:** Health & Human Services Day Session.
- 16** **Leadership Central Kentucky presented by LG&E & KU** at Scott County.

MARCH 2022:

- 8** **EMERGE Conference presented by Forcht Bank,** 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at Central Bank Center. **- SEE PAGE 7**

APRIL 2022:

- 6** **An Evening With Commerce Lexington presented by Fifth Third Bank,** 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., at Central Bank Center. **- SEE PAGE 30**